



BFA410/710

Research Methods

Semester 1 2009

School of Accounting and Corporate Governance

Faculty of Business

Unit Outline

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Contents

Unit description	2
Learning outcomes	2
Generic graduate attributes	2
Learning Outcomes/Generic Graduate Attributes Matrix	3
Learning resources required	3
Details of teaching arrangements	4
Topic schedule	5
Learning expectations and strategies	5
Specific attendance/performance requirements	6
Assessment	6
How your final result is determined	8
Submission of assignments	8
Requests for extensions	8
Penalties	9
Academic referencing	9
Plagiarism	10
Further information and assistance	10
Objectives and readings for each seminar	12

Unit description

The seminars in this unit introduce you to research methods appropriate in the scholarly study of issues in accounting, corporate governance and related disciplines. The seminars are designed to develop your research skills so that you are well-equipped to critique academic and professional studies confidently and competently.

Even more importantly, the seminars are designed to provide you with skills to conduct your own research in a rigorous manner. The material covered includes approaches to theory building; research designs for various projects; the importance of (and threats to) internal and external validity; and data collection and analysis.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

1. identify, and recognise the significance of, the major steps involved in conducting research;
2. describe and apply concepts and definitions of various business research designs and methods and be able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in research designs for particular projects;
3. identify ethical issues in research and demonstrate your understanding of appropriate procedures and protocols in relation to these issues;
4. critically evaluate and review research literature;
5. design experimental research for a particular project, explaining the limitations, advantages, and implications of the technique employed;
6. select, justify and design suitable questions for a survey instrument and be able to analyse data in relation to a particular research question; and
7. demonstrate written and oral communication skills through the presentation of logical and coherent arguments, statements and questions.

Generic graduate attributes

The University has defined a set of generic graduate attributes (GGAs) that can be expected of all graduates. You can find out more about this at:

http://www.learningsupport.utas.edu.au/generic_attributes.html

By undertaking this unit you should make progress in attaining the following attributes:

- **Knowledge:** will be developed by learning and applying new skills in relation to scholarly business research. This will be assessed through the application of knowledge in the development of practical examples for two major types of research designs, the ability to identify key strengths and flaws in research designs and methods, and the ability to recognise research opportunities.
- **Communication skills:** will be developed and assessed through written and oral presentations.
- **Problem-solving skills:** will be developed by demonstrating and critiquing fundamental research design issues in general, and in accounting research projects in particular.
- **Social responsibility:** is developed through the acknowledgement of the need to adhere to ethical standards and guidelines when conducting research.

Learning Outcomes/Generic Graduate Attributes Matrix

Assessment task 1	Participation			
Assessment task 2	Assignment One			
Assessment task 3	Assignment Two			
Learning Outcomes:	Learning outcome 1	√	√	√
	Learning outcome 2	√	√	√
	Learning outcome 3		√	√
	Learning outcome 4		√	√
	Learning outcome 5		√	√
	Learning outcome 6	√		√
	Learning outcome 7	√	√	√
UTas Generic Graduate Attribute				
	Knowledge	√	√	√
	Communication skills	√	√	√
	Problem-solving skills	√	√	√
	Social responsibility		√	√

Matrix adapted from Unit Outline, Faculty of Business, University of the Sunshine Coast 2003

Learning resources required

The prescribed text for this unit is:

Smith, M., 2003, *Research Methods in Accounting*, Sage Publications, London.

This is an introductory level text designed to give you an entry into what are some quite complex ideas and concepts. We will supplement this with additional readings and materials that will be provided to you on a unit CD.

If you wish to consult a more advanced level text, the following is very comprehensive:

Hoyle, R.H., M.J. Harris and C.M. Judd, 2002, *Research Methods in Social Relations*, 7th ed Pacific Grove, Wadsworth Publishing,

The Library also holds a large selection of research methods books that you should consult when you wish to develop your skills in specific areas relevant to the research projects that you decide to pursue.

Library Information Sessions

It is recommended that you make use of library information sessions to further develop your research skills. Information on courses, dates and times is available at: http://www.utas.edu.au/library/assist/tours_workshops.html. The courses listed under “*For postgraduates and staff*” are particularly relevant to this unit.

Details of teaching arrangements

Ten intensive seminar sessions will be conducted early in the year. The specific dates are set out in the schedule below. More detailed information on each session and the required readings is provided towards the end of this unit outline. Each seminar will run for around three hours. In most sessions, the coordinator will lead the seminar presenting material, with ample time for you to pose questions and make comments. Each seminar, except for the final one, will end with an interactive discussion session based around broad questions posed for each seminar. You are expected to participate fully in this discussion and it is assessable.

Occupational health and safety (OH&S)

The University is committed to providing a safe and secure teaching and learning environment. In addition to specific requirements of this unit you should refer to the University’s policy at: http://www.admin.utas.edu.au/hr/ohs/pol_proc/ohs.pdf

Topic schedule

Research fundamentals (Week 0)		
1	Monday Feb 16 2.00 – 5.00	An introduction to the philosophy of research and an overview of the research process
2	Wednesday Feb 18 9.00 – 12.00	Research design and validity
3	Thursday Feb 19 2.00 – 5.00	The role of literature, literature reviews and critiques
Research designs – 1 (Week 1)		
4	Monday Feb 23 2.00 – 5.00	Experimental designs
5	Wednesday Feb 25 9.00 – 12.00	Surveys and questionnaires
6	Thursday Feb 26 2.00 – 5.00	Qualitative field work
<i>Assignment One due 5.00 pm Tuesday March 3</i>		
Research designs – 2 (Week 2)		
7	Thursday March 5 10.00 – 1.00	Analysing qualitative data
8	Thursday March 5 2.00 – 5.00	Archival research and sampling
Analysing numerical data (Week 3)		
9	Tuesday March 10 9.00 – 12.00	Descriptive and inferential statistics
10	1.00 – 3.00	Using <i>SPSS</i> - a hands-on session
<i>Assignment Two due 5.00 pm Friday March 13</i>		

Learning expectations and strategies

Expectations

The University is committed to high standards of professional conduct in all activities, and holds its commitment and responsibilities to its students as being of paramount importance. Likewise, it holds expectations about the responsibilities students have as they pursue their studies within the special environment the University offers.

The University's Code of Conduct for Teaching and Learning states:

Students are expected to participate actively and positively in the teaching/learning environment. They must attend classes when and as required, strive to maintain steady progress within the subject or unit framework, comply with workload expectations, and submit required work on time.

Learning strategies

It is intended that most of your learning will be done through your reading, independent study, and written assignments. There will also be ample opportunity for your questions and interaction during the scheduled sessions. It is imperative that you come to these sessions having thoroughly pre-read the prescribed materials and prepared to raise any areas of particular interest or concern. You should allow ample time prior to each session to read and consider the required material.

This is a demanding unit worthy of an honours or post-graduate university course. It is intended to introduce you to many new, and often complex, concepts, and to extend your knowledge of the philosophy of research, the various methodologies and designs used to structure research. As it forms part of an advanced course, **all** aspects of your work are expected to be of a high standard, both in academic content and quality of presentation.

Specific attendance/performance requirements

Unless prevented by illness or other acceptable reason, you are expected attend all of the scheduled seminars and to make all of the presentations scheduled for this unit. You are also required to complete the prescribed readings *before* each seminar and submit all assignments.

It is expected that you will attend all of the School's Research Seminar presentations. Furthermore, you are expected to read each paper in advance and to participate in the discussion. You are also expected to participate during class seminar sessions.

Assessment

Assessment task	Date due	Weighting
1. Class participation	Session 1 - 9	20%
2. Assignment 1: Ethics, literature review and experimentation	March 3	40%
3. Assignment 2: Interviews, survey design and quantitative data analysis	March 13	40%

Assessment details

Participation

Task description For Seminars 1 – 9, “Points to Ponder” are posed (see *Session Objectives and Readings* later in this outline). These will form the basis of assessable discussion that will occur towards the end of each seminar.

Links to unit’s learning outcomes All

Assessment criteria / guidelines

- Thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics
- Sophisticated argument demonstrating original insight
- Lively, engaging and stimulating debate
- Ability to steer the direction of the discussion
- Ability to respond to others in a timely and insightful way

Assignment 1

Task description Prepare a literature review of four specified articles. Design an experiment appropriate to assess a related research question. Identify the ethical issues involved in conducting this experiment and describe the procedures necessary to obtain ethical clearance from the University of Tasmania, including completion of the appropriate application form.

Task length 4,000 words (maximum)

Links to unit’s learning outcomes Learning outcomes 1- 5 and 7

Assessment criteria / guidelines

- Demonstrated understanding of the articles reviewed
- Ability to integrate the material into a coherent review
- Quality of discussion and argument
- Relevance and comprehension of material particularly in relation to the underlying research goal
- Appropriate justification and explanation of the research design and method having regard to issues of control, the implementation of an experimental manipulation and the construction of an appropriate setting for the experiment
- Understanding and application of proper ethical procedures
- Clear precise and economical expression
- Correct style and presentation

Date due 5.00 pm Tuesday March 3

Assignment 2

Task description Explain how focus groups can be used to inform research and the benefits and problems associated with their use. Develop a survey instrument and explore, display and critically analyse data in relation to a particular research question.

Task length 4,000 words (maximum)

Links to unit's learning outcomes Learning outcomes 1, 2, 6 and 7

Assessment criteria / guidelines

- Demonstrated understanding of the use of focus groups
- Reliability and validity of survey instrument as a mode of measurement for the research project, particularly in relation to question structure, content, sequence, type, amount, wording, terminology, lack of ambiguity and appropriate use of closed/open ended questions.
- The data analysis will be assessed with regard to accuracy, relevance of material, quality of discussion, conclusions, clear, precise and economical expression, style and presentation.
- Clear precise and economical expression
- Correct style and presentation

Date due 5.00 pm Friday March 13

How your final result is determined

Your final result is determined by the sum of grades that you receive on the three assessment tasks.

Submission of assignments

Assignments are to be submitted via the assignment box, Level 5, Commerce and Economics Building, Hobart campus. To complete the requirements for this unit you must submit both assignments.

Requests for extensions

Consistent with the Faculty's policy on late submission, extensions of time will only be granted on medical or compassionate grounds. They will not be granted because of work or other commitments. Requests for extension must be made to the unit coordinator in writing on the School's Application for Late Submission Form available at <http://www.utas.edu.au/accg/studentres.htm> before the due date of the assignment. Medical certificates or other evidence, which supports the application, must be attached and must contain information which justifies the extension sought.

Penalties

Over-length Work

If you submit over-length work you will be asked to resubmit the work within 48 hours. There will be an automatic 10% penalty of available marks and 10% for each day that you are late in resubmitting.

Late Submission of Continuous Coursework

Coursework that is not handed in by the agreed completion date will incur a penalty of 10% of the available marks for each day, or part day, the assignment is late.

Review of results and appeals

You may request a formal remark of your original submission (in accordance with Rule of Academic Assessment 2, Clause 22.1). Under the Rule of Academic Assessment 2, clause 23, you may also request a review of your final result in a unit. For further information see: <http://acserv.admin.utas.edu.au/rules/Rule2.doc>

Academic referencing

In your written work you will need to support your ideas by referring to scholarly literature, and other sources of information such as the accounting regulatory bodies. It is important that you understand how to correctly refer to the work of others and maintain academic integrity. Failure to appropriately acknowledge the ideas of others constitutes academic dishonesty (plagiarism), a matter considered by the University of Tasmania as a serious offence.

The appropriate referencing style for this unit is the Harvard referencing method. You are encouraged to read Fleet, W., Summers, J. & Smith, B. 2006, *Communication Skills Handbook for Accounting*, Wily, Melbourne which provides detailed information about using the Harvard referencing system. Further information on presentation of assignments, including referencing styles is available from the Library at: <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/assist/gpoa/gpoa.html>

The Faculty guide is currently undergoing an update and will be available later in the semester.

Please read the following statement on plagiarism. Should you require clarification please see your unit coordinator.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. It is taking and using someone else's thoughts, writings or inventions and representing them as your own; for example, using an author's words without putting them in quotation marks and citing the source, using an author's ideas without proper acknowledgment and citation, copying another student's work.

If you have any doubts about how to refer to the work of others in your assignments, please consult your lecturer or tutor for relevant referencing guidelines, and the academic integrity resources on the web at. <http://www.academicintegrity.utas.edu.au/>

The intentional copying of someone else's work as one's own is a serious offence punishable by penalties that may range from a fine or deduction/cancellation of marks and, in the most serious of cases, to exclusion from a unit, a course or the University. Details of penalties that can be imposed are available in the Ordinance of Student Discipline – Part 3 Academic Misconduct, see <http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/legislation/>

The University and any persons authorised by the University may submit your assessable works to a plagiarism checking service, to obtain a report on possible instances of plagiarism. Assessable works may also be included in a reference database. It is a condition of this arrangement that the original author's permission is required before a work within the database can be viewed.

For further information on this statement and general referencing guidelines, see <http://www.utas.edu.au/plagiarism/> or follow the link under 'Policy, Procedures and Feedback' on the **Current Students** homepage. <http://www.utas.edu.au/students/>.

Further information and assistance

If you are experiencing difficulties with your studies or assignments, have personal or life planning issues, disability or illness which may affect your course of study, you are advised to raise these with your lecturer in the first instance.

There is a range of University-wide support services available to you including Teaching & Learning, Student Services, International Services. Please refer to the **Current Students** homepage at: <http://www.utas.edu.au/students/>

Should you require assistance in accessing the Library visit their website for more information at <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/>

If you have a problem...

- of an administrative nature or academic nature please see the unit coordinator
- if you have any concerns in relation to this unit, then in the first instance you should discuss the matter with the coordinator. However, if you do not feel comfortable approaching the coordinator, or if you have a discussion with your lecturer and are not satisfied with the outcome, then you are encouraged to contact one of the Ombudspersons listed below, who also teach in the School of Accounting & Corporate Governance.

Mr Peter Collett
Room: 502, Faculty of Business
Building, Hobart
Ph: (+61 3) 6226 2192
email: Peter.Collett@utas.edu.au

Ms Sue Conway
Room D111
Launceston
Ph: (+61 3) 6324 3068
email: Susan.Conway@utas.edu.au

Discussions with the ombudsperson will be kept in the strictest confidence. If you wish to pursue the matter further, they will provide advice as to how this can be done. The University also has formal policies, which can be accessed at:
http://www.admin.utas.edu.au/ac_serv/complaints_info.html

You can also approach Dr William Maguire, the Honours Coordinator to discuss any aspects of your program.

Dr William Maguire
Room: 422, Faculty of Business Building, Hobart
Ph: (+61 3) 6226 2277
email: William.Maguire@utas.edu.au

Students with Disabilities –University & Faculty Equity Plans

Goal 1 of the University of Tasmania Equity Plan provides for: “An inclusive teaching and learning environment that values diversity, supports the pursuit of academic excellence and produces high quality education and employment results for all students and staff”. The Faculty of Business Equity Plan facilitates the University Plan at an operational level and has developed an ‘Action Plan’. The Action Plan for Goal 1 lays down procedures to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, have equal access to lecture and course materials. The School of Accounting & Corporate Governance complies with these procedures.

Objectives and readings for each seminar

Seminar One: An introduction to the philosophy of research and an overview of the research process

Monday February 16, 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Readings: Smith, Chapters 1, 2 and 5

Abdel-khalik, R. and B. Ajinkya. 1979, *Empirical Research in Accounting*, AAA, Florida: Chapter 2

NHMRC and AVCC *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007) Sections 1 and 2 and Chapter 3.1

Ticehurst, G. and A. Veal. 2000, *Business Research Methods: a managerial approach*, Pearson, Frenchs Forest: Chapter 2

Objectives: To understand the nature of research and what constitutes “good” research

To appreciate the different world views that might be adopted by researchers and obtain a broad understanding of positive and interpretive approaches

To be able to distinguish scientific and non-scientific approaches to research

To consider how research topics might be identified and understand what constitutes a researchable question

To understand how to state suitable questions in the form of research hypotheses

To appreciate the fundamental importance of ethics in research and be aware of the key ethical issues that might arise in accounting and accounting-related research

Before the session:

Read Smith Chapters 1 and 2 first followed by Ticehurst and Veal and then Abdel-khalik and Ajinkya. These are introductory readings designed to give you a broad

overview of the nature of research and research approaches. We will spend much of this first introductory session exploring these rudimentary concepts.

In the session we will also consider the importance of ethics and the key ethical issues that arise in research. In preparation you should read Smith Chapter 5 and the specified sections of the NHMRC and AVCC *Statement*. You should also consult the University of Tasmania's website with the aim of learning what advice is available there and the processes researchers must follow in order to obtain ethical clearance for their research.

Points to ponder:

Which world view is more valid, positivist, interpretivist or critical?

What is the role of theory in research?

Many academic researchers use their students as subjects in their research studies. Is this ethical?



Seminar Two: Research design and validity

Wednesday February 18, 9.00am – 12.00 noon,

Readings: Smith, Chapter 3

Cooper, D. and P. Schindler. 2003, *Business Research Methods (8th ed.)*, McGraw Hill, Boston: Chapter 6

Page, C. and D. Meyer. 2003, *Applied Research Design for Business and Management*, Macquarie Park, McGraw Hill Australia: Chapter 3

Objectives: To understand what is meant by “research design”

To identify eight important aspects of any research design and consider the variation that might be encountered in each of these eight aspects

To understand the importance of internal validity, construct validity and external validity to any research design and to be aware of the key threats to the validity of a research design

To appreciate why operational definitions of variables are fundamental to empirical research

To learn about the different types of variables that might be involved in assessing a particular research question

Before the session:

Read Cooper and Schindler first as this is what we draw from when discussing the eight aspects of research design. These are summarised in Exhibit 6-1 on page 147 and expanded upon throughout the chapter.

Next read Smith Chapter 3 for reinforcement of the important issues associated with validity. Finally read the chapter from Page and Meyer. In the last part of the session we will focus on the need to operationalise research concepts as variables and explore some of the issues associated with doing this.



Points to ponder:

What is it more important to try to achieve – internal validity or external validity?

Why is it hard to establish causality?

Would you expect construct validity to remain stable over time?

Seminar Three: The role of literature, literature reviews and critiques

Thursday February 19, 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Readings: Jankowicz, A. 2005, *Business Research Projects (4th ed.)*, Thompson, Yorkshire: Chapter 7

RMIT Study and Learning Centre *Writing the Literature Review / Using the Literature* accessible at:
http://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu/content/2_AssessmentTasks/04literature.htm#

Objectives: To understand the role of the literature review in the research process

To identify the stages involved in writing a literature review

To be aware of various sources of literature and their characteristics

To consider strategies that might be used to search the literature

To understand what is involved in providing a critical review of the literature

To overview aspects of documenting and referencing the literature

Before the session:

Read Jankowicz first to obtain a broader view of the literature review process and then refer to RMIT's guide which provides an excellent and useful summary along with some constructive advice on preparing your review. Consult the library to see what sorts of services it provides to help you with this aspect of your research.

Points to ponder:

Do issues of validity in research design also apply to the literature review process?

If you are having problems finding relevant material for your research project when you are searching data bases, what might be possible reasons for this?

When do you have enough literature?



Seminar Four: Experimental designs

Monday February 23, 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Readings: Smith, Chapter 6

Schulz, A. 1999, “Experimental research method in a management accounting context”, *Accounting and Finance*, 39(1): 29 – 51

Zikmund, W. 2003, *Business Research Methods*, (7th ed.), Thompson, Ohio: Chapter 12

Objectives: To understand the difference between true and quasi experimentation

To identify situations where the true experiment is appropriate

To be aware of the importance of randomisation to experimentation

To understand the major types of experimental designs and their associated strengths, weaknesses and validity threats

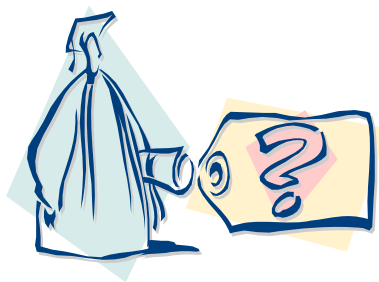
To discuss the major operational issues that may be encountered when conducting experimental work

To appreciate the importance of ethical conduct in experimentation and to be aware of the particular ethical issues that might arise

Before the session:

Read Smith then Zikmund for an understanding of the experimentation process and the different designs that might be used. Focus particularly on the strengths and weaknesses of each design and try to identify situations where each might be useful.

Next read the article by Schultz. This is an excellent illustration of operationalising an experimental design. It also highlights problems that were encountered in its conduct, lessons that were learned and improvements that could be suggested with the benefit of hindsight.



Points to ponder:

Is experimental research too divorced from reality to be useful?

Where do you get your subjects from?

What if the treatment fails to be perceived by your subjects?

Seminar Five: Surveys and questionnaires

Wednesday Feb 25, 9.00am – 12.00noon

Readings: Smith, Chapter 7

Hartikainen, O. and S. Tortsila. 2004. “Job-related Ethical Judgements in the Finance Profession”, *Journal of Applied Finance*, 14(1): 62-76

Roberts, E. 1999. “In defence of the survey method: An illustration from a study of user information satisfaction”, *Accounting and Finance*, 39(1): 53-77

Saunders, M., P. Lewis, and A. Thornhill. 2003, *Research Methods for Business Students (3rd ed.)*, Prentice Hall, Essex: Chapter 10

Objectives: To understand what surveys are (and what they are not) and be familiar with the types of surveys that might be conducted

To consider the advantages and disadvantages of using a questionnaire to collect data

To identify the key administrative issues associated with carrying out a study using questionnaires

To understand the principles of good questionnaire design and question construction

To revisit the concepts of ratings and measurement scales in the context of good questionnaire design

To be aware of the sources and types of errors that might be associated with the use of questionnaires

To consider issues of reliability and construct validity when attempting to measure complex constructs with questionnaire data

Before the session:

Read Smith then Saunders et al to obtain an understanding of the survey process and all aspects of questionnaire design. Try to obtain an appreciation of how crucial

attention to detail is in every aspect of the design and implementation of questionnaire-based research.

Next read Robert's work which describes a survey that she undertook. As well providing insight into aspects of the process, she also gives a quite comprehensive and balanced assessment of the survey approach.

Finally read Hartikainen and Tortsila. In doing so, adopt a critical stance and identify what you see as shortcomings in the way in which this questionnaire-based research has been conducted.



Points to ponder:

Is there any truth in the comment that survey research is too restricted because of the highly structured nature of questionnaire instruments?

What would you do differently if you were Hartikainen or Tortsila?

Seminar Six: Qualitative field work

Thursday February 26, 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Readings: Smith, Chapter 8

Baker, T. 1999, *Doing Social Research (3rd ed.)*, McGraw Hill, Boston: Chapter 8

Neuman, W. 2003, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches (5th ed.)*, Allyn and Bacon, Boston: Chapter 11

O'Donovan, G. 2003, *Interview data: validity and analysis issues*. 2nd Australasian CSEAR conference, Bathurst, NSW, April 27 – 29

Objectives: To understand the nature of qualitative research and how it differs from the more quantitative approaches

To understand the nature of case-based research

To become familiar with the major approaches used in such research

To be aware of the concerns sometimes directed at qualitative research and be able to implement appropriate strategies to mitigate these

Understand the procedures and planning necessary to carry out effective interviews

Understand the procedures and planning necessary to carry out effective focus groups

Before the session:

Start your reading with Baker as this provides the broadest overview of the area. As you read think about the role that qualitative rather than quantitative research plays in advancing understanding and what its key strengths are. In doing so, identify the sorts of research issues for which qualitative approaches may be better suited than quantitative ones.

Next read Smith followed by Neumann. Your focus here should be more on understanding how the various approaches to qualitative or field research can be implemented and the strategies that should be used to promote its accuracy, reliability and replicability.

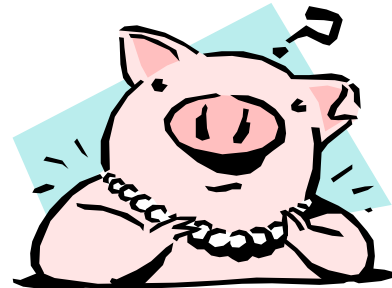
Finally read O'Donovan's paper. This illustrates how one particular piece of qualitative research was carried out and it pays specific attention to issues of validity and procedure. It is a case study that uses interview techniques to collect data and the paper takes you all the way from the initial decision about selection of cases through to explaining how the interview data were analysed.

Points to ponder:

How might gender stereotyping affect data collected via interviews?

Is participant observation ethical?

Why is triangulation so important in qualitative work and how might triangulation be achieved?



Seminar Seven: Analysing qualitative data

Thursday March 5, 10.00am – 1.00pm

- Readings:** Bryman, A. and E. Bell. 2003, *Business Research Methods*, Oxford University Press, Oxford: Chapter 19
- Le Compte, M. 2000, “Analysing Qualitative Data”, *Theory into Practice*, 39(3): 146-154
- Seidel, J. 1998, *Qualitative Data Analysis at:*
<http://www.qualisresearch.com/>
- Yin, T. 2003, *Case Study Research: design and methods (3rd ed.)*, Sage, California: Chapter 5

- Goals:** To be aware of the characteristics of qualitative data and the general strategies that can be used in its analysis
- To understand the basic steps in the major analytical strategies and techniques
- To consider aspects of data validity

Before the session:

Start your reading with Bryman and Bell in order to obtain a broader overview of the nature of qualitative data analysis, the major approaches that might be used and the key issues that arise during the analysis process. Next move to the chapter by Yin. Yin is considered to be an authoritative source in the area of case study method. This reading takes you through three general analytic strategies that can be adopted to guide analysis and five specific techniques can be employed in analysing case study data.

Now read Seidel’s advice on the qualitative data analysis process followed by LeCompte’s work. Both of these readings engage you more in the process of actually carrying out coding and analysis of this sort of data.

Points to ponder:

Can you protect yourself against criticism that your analysis of your qualitative data has been selective and biased?

What to do with inconsistent or negative findings?

How much is enough data?



Seminar Eight: Archival research and sampling

Thursday March 5, 2.00am – 5.00pm

Readings: Smith, Chapter 9

Hoyle, R.H., M.J. Harris and C.M. Judd, 2002, *Research Methods in Social Relations*, 7th ed Pacific Grove, Wadsworth Publishing, Chapter 13

Kolbe, R. and M. Burnett. 1991, "Content-Analysis Research: An examination of applications with directives for improving research reliability and objectivity", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18(2): 243-250

Sekaran, U. 2003, *Research Methods for Business: A Skill-Building Approach (4th ed.)*, Wiley, New York: Chapter 11

Objectives: To understand the nature of non-randomised designs and when their use is appropriate

To understand the key elements of a time-series design

To understand the key elements of a cross-sectional design

To be aware of threats to validity in such designs and consider how control procedures can be implemented

To understand the fundamentals of sampling procedures and the features of different sampling designs

To consider issues of sample size and generalisability

To discover how content analysis can be applied to secondary data

Before the session:

Start with Smith to obtain a broad introduction to the area. Then read Hoyle et al to obtain an deeper understanding of non-randomised approaches and the different

designs that might be used. Focus in particular on the differences between cross-sectional and time series designs and think about the sorts of questions that each type of design might help to answer.

Now read Sekaran in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of issues associated with sampling approaches and procedures.

Finally move Kolbe and Burnett which gives a good overview of the major methodological issues associated with the use of content analysis.

Points to ponder:

When is the sample size for non-randomised designs large enough?

Is experimentation superior to non randomised approaches?

Can content analysis really be rigorous?



Seminar Nine: Descriptive and Inferential statistics

Tuesday March 10, 9.00pm – 12.00pm

Readings: Smith Chapter 4

Cavana, R., B. Delahaye and U. Sekaran. 2001, *Applied Business Research: qualitative and quantitative methods*. Wiley, Queensland: Chapter 13 and Appendix One

Objectives: To be aware of the importance of organising and documenting your data prior to analysis

To be aware of the major procedures used to explore and describe the properties of your data

To understand the nature of inferential statistics

To be aware of the difference between parametric and non-parametric statistics and when the use of each is appropriate

To become familiar with the major tests used to assess associations and differences between variables

Before the session:

Read Cavana et al's Appendix I first as this is a refresher on basic statistical procedures. Now read Smith to become acquainted with some of the empirical approaches more commonly adopted in our field. Finally move to Cavana et al's Chapter 13. This chapter contains a number of illustrations that use SPSS. Do not worry if you are not familiar with this software. We will explore its use in the next session. Focus more on the explanations of the tests that are being presented.



Points to ponder:

If you fail to reject the null hypotheses investigated in a particular project, has the research been pointless?

Are parametric approaches better than non-parametric ones?

Why not use higher levels of significance to increase your chances of finding a significant result?

Seminar Ten: Using SPSS – a hands-on session

Tuesday March 10, 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Readings: Cavana et al. Chapter 13

Kinnear, P. and C. Gray. 2006, *SPSS 14 Made Simple*,
Psychology Press: Hove Chapter 2

The following may also be useful to consult when using SPSS:

Coakes, S. and L. Steed. 2003, *SPSS Analysis without Anguish*,
Wiley, Queensland

Objectives: To become familiar with the ways in which data can be entered
into SPSS

To learn how to work in “variable view” to specify information
about the variables to be analysed

To become familiar with the structure of the SPSS analysis menu

To carry out some simple analysis using SPSS

Before the session:

Read Kinnear and Gray in readiness for a hands-on practical session using the SPSS software. Review Cavana to remind yourself of the examples of SPSS use that were provided in Chapter 13.

