

Welcome to this semester's course on qualitative research methods.

Research is all around us in society. Newspapers and the television report research findings, and of course as students you are in regular contact with it in the books and journals you read. Good quality research helps us understand an issue better. As managers it helps you take actions with greater certainty and confidence. That confidence is based on the knowledge that your research findings are of a good quality: you can trust and rely on them.

In this course we will look at the methodology and methods connected with *qualitative approaches*. This means the collection of the data does not involve numbers. It is a powerful and exciting way to describe and identify some of the key characteristics of an issue being studied. Maybe, *for example*, you are making kitchens in Taiwan. You need to know what the main things are that a Taiwanese customer needs/expects from their kitchen. Qualitative research will help explore that type of issue and create answers that are not possible from quantitative research (based on numbers).

To do qualitative research means that we need to understand the ideas and procedures. These are quite different from quantitative research. But this course will help you learn, explore and gain confidence in using a qualitative approach. This will help you have confidence in the final quality of your findings. This is important when you are doing – and defending - your own research. It is also important as a manager that you can assess the quality of the research that is given to you.

During the course you will:

- Learn the skills and knowledge to undertake qualitative research in a business setting.

In particular you will:

- Consider what makes a good quality research proposal.
- Understand the principles of data collection techniques and develop skills in their use.
- Understand the concept of data analysis and develop skill in this area.
- Develop report writing techniques.

Course materials

- The main course book is, Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill, “Research Methods for Business Students”, FT Prentice Hall, (3rd Edition), 2003. ISBN 0-273-65804-2
The agent is: Gino Kuo (e-mail: gino.kuo@pearsoned.com.tw; tel (m): 0910 279790)
- The lecture slides will be made available.
- Other materials will be provided during the course.

Course teaching approach

The overall approach will be participative between the course leader and the students. The course will be taught through lectures, in-class skill building exercises, case examples and the term project. Each week we will have a lecture to identify the key issues. Case examples – from actual projects – will be

used for discussion. In some classes we will use exercises to help you develop skills in the research techniques. The course will be based on a term project that will guide you through the structure of a qualitative research project.

Assessment

The course will be assessed as follows:

Action	<i>Percentage of course credit</i>
Research proposal	15
Mid-term report and presentation	30
Review of analysis	15
Final report and presentation	30
Participation	10

Qualitative research is challenging, different and, very interesting. This makes it fun and enjoyable to do. I look forward to teaching and working with you during this next semester.

Dr. James Stanworth

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topics	Reading ¹	Notes ¹
Week 1		Course introduction The nature of business research	Chapter 1	Please get the MS book. Please get familiar with this book.
Week 2		Research idea and writing the research proposal	Chapter 2	
Week 3		Research proposal	Chapter 2	
Week 4		Making a critical review of the literature.		
Week 5		Review of research proposals (term project)	Chapter 3	
Week 6		Research strategy	Chapter 4	
Week 7		Obtaining and keeping access. Research ethics	Chapter 5	
Week 8		Selecting a sample	Chapter 6	
Week 9		Mid-term presentations (term project).		
Week 10		Data collection through observation	Chapter 8	
Week 11		Data collection through interviews	Chapter 9	
Week 12		Other data collection techniques		Material to be distributed
Week 13		Analysing qualitative data – 1	Chapter 12	
Week 14		Analysing qualitative data – 2		To be distributed
Week 15		Review of analysis (term project)		
Week 16		Report writing	Chapter 13 (to top p.435)	
Week 17		Case study		To be advised
Week 18		Report and final presentation (term project).		