Research Methods for Business Studies

Coordinator: Joris Demmers

Period: September 2024

Planning

The course consists of six sessions of 3 hours each. Preferably on Thursday morning. Specific dates and times are still to be communicated.

Learning goals

- Understand the fundamental principles of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research.
- Critically analyze and evaluate different research designs to understand their strengths and weaknesses.
- Acquire skills to design a research project, including selecting the appropriate methodology and data collection techniques.
- Apply various data collection methods, such as interviews, surveys, or observational studies, in appropriate contexts.

Assessment

Assessment for the course consists of weekly assignments.

Summary

PhD students are expected to conduct original research that contributes to the advancement of knowledge in their field. To achieve this, they will need to have a strong foundation in research methods, and the ability to critically evaluate and apply different research methods to answer research questions.

This course is designed to provide PhD students with a comprehensive understanding of the research methods used in the field of business studies, and how they can be applied to conduct rigorous and impactful research.

This course will cover a range of topics related to research design, data collection, and data analysis. PhD students will learn about both qualitative and quantitative research methods, and how they can be used to address different research questions. They will also learn about mixed methods research, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon.

By the end of this course, PhD students will have a strong foundation in research methods and the skills necessary to conduct original research that can make a meaningful contribution to the field of business studies.

Content of the sessions

Session 1: Mixed Methods

This session will introduce students to the concept of mixed methods research, a methodology that combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The focus will be on understanding when and why mixed methods are beneficial for research projects, as well as the challenges and considerations involved in integrating diverse data types. Students will explore case studies that effectively utilize mixed methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of research questions.

Session 2: Qualitative Research

This session will delve into the realm of qualitative research methods, covering key techniques such as interviews, focus groups, and observational studies. The emphasis will be on understanding the value of qualitative data in capturing complex, nuanced phenomena and how to ensure rigor and validity in qualitative research. Various approaches to data collection and analysis will be discussed.

Session 3: Surveys

This session will equip students with the knowledge to design, administer, and interpret surveys for research purposes. Topics will include questionnaire design, sampling strategies, and methods to improve response rates. The session aims to provide a foundational understanding of survey methodology that can be applied across various business research contexts.

Session 4: Experiments

This session will focus on experimental research methods, covering experimental design, control variables, and hypothesis testing. Students will learn about the advantages and limitations of experimental research, as well as ethical considerations specific to conducting experiments. The session aims to provide a foundational understanding that can be applied across various business research contexts.

Session 5: Digital Research

Digital research methods will be the focus of this session, exploring techniques such as web scraping, sentiment analysis, and big data analytics. Students will learn about the opportunities and challenges presented by digital data, including issues related to data quality and ethics.

<u>Session 6: Secondary Data Research</u>

The final session will cover the use of secondary data in research, discussing the types of secondary data, their sources, and how to evaluate their quality and relevance. Ethical considerations specific to using pre-existing data will also be discussed. The session aims to equip students with the skills to effectively incorporate secondary data into their research projects, either as a standalone method or in conjunction with primary data.