School of Professional Advancement
Course Outline

Course Title   Research Methods

Course Type   Foundation

Course Description

On daily basis, managers within organizations constantly engage themselves in analyzing and studying variety of issues related toseveral aspects of business activity. In doing so, they are involved in some form of research activity which enhances their knowledge of the subject matter. As managers make decisions, fruitful insights from research activity can go a long way. However, making right decisions requires managers to undergo a process of research which is aimed at understanding the nature of the problem, revisiting scholarly effort, framing the issue properly and implementation of possible remedies.

Knowledge of research not only helps managers to look at the available informationin sophisticated and creative ways in the fast-paced global environment, but also improves their capability to effectively select the relevant information required for understanding the issue at hand. In this way, managers would be able to identify the critical issues, gather relevant information, analyzing the data in ways that would help decision making,and implementthe right course of action, are all facilitated by understanding business research. After all, decision making is merely a process of choosing from among alternative solutions to resolve a problem and research helps to generate viable alternatives for effective decision making.

This course has been designed in order to provide the basic understanding of business research methods. Students taking this course would be able to put forward a systematic and organized effort in order to investigate a specific problem encountered in the work setting that needs a solution. Such a process would comprise a series of steps designed and executed, with the goal of finding answers to the issues that are of concern to the manager in the work environment.

Format of the Course:

The text book of this course serves as the outline of the important topics which will be covered throughout the study sessions. It contains majority of the important concepts required to improve the basic understanding of the course and contain variety of applied examples from business

arena. In addition, new material covering the basics of both qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques will be introduced as the course advances in later stages of study sessions. Students will be introduced to basic research articles relevant to their field of interest and study sessions will be held in order to supervise their learning. Furthermore, students will also be introduced to basic search engine 'Google Scholar' which will aid them in finding most relevant scholarly work for the completion of their assignments and research project. Students will be highly encouraged to participate in class discussion, raise relevant questions and share their useful insights.

Course Objective

By the end of the course, you will have honed the following capabilities:

1. Identify and properly frame an issue/problem grounded in an organizational setting;
2. Properly analyze the relevant information, conduct a literature review, present research questions and objectives;
3. Construct a valid theoretical and conceptual framework;
4. Collected qualitative and quantitative data while ensuring validity and reliability issues;
3. Provide concrete evidence both qualitative and quantitative in nature of an argument;
4. Write in a concise and coherent manner;
6. Listen to, respect and heed the advice and ideas of others;
7. Present recommendations in a form of a group in order to effectively support your positions.

Students Outcomes

- Ability to understand and apply various research terminologies.
- Ability to clearly define the broad problem area, array of issues and proper framing of the main issue.
- Ability of conduct a comprehensive literature review in chronological and thematic format with proper referencing.
- Ability to represent literature findings in a summarized graphical format.
- Ability to produce a comprehensive theoretical and conceptual framework.
- Understanding of formulating a research design, defining a clear purpose of the study and highlighting key elements of research design.
- Ability to produce a comprehensive research report pertaining integral parts of the report.

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Course Content:

Session 1: Introduction of class

One-to-one orientation

Course Introduction, Teaching Methodology & Assessment Criteria

Distribution of course packs

Highlighting course significance

Session 2: Introduction to Research

Reading 1: Chapter – 1 of the Text Book

Key concepts:

- Definition of research

- Business research and its different types

- Researcher as consultant

- Internal versus external consultants

- Ethics and business research

Learning Outcomes

The main learning objective of the reading is to provide a basic understanding of the term research, highlighting the importance of research within business. Students will be introduced to different types of business research. Managerial effectiveness through knowledge about research will be emphasized.

Key concepts:

- Hallmarks of scientific research

    o Purposiveness

    o Rigor

    o Testability

    o Replicability

    o Precision and Confidence

    o Objectivity

    o Generalizability

- Scientific research in the management area

- Deduction and induction

- The hypothetico-Deductive method and its application in organizations

- Other types of research
  - Action research
  - Case studies

Learning Outcomes

It is important to note that the format of this course generally follows quantitative research methodology which is more suitable for identifying and providing solutions of the problems grounded in an organizational context and require timely action. For this reason, the basics of hypothetico-Deductive method will be introduced to the students. The hallmarks of scientific research will be introduced to the students. The building blocks of science in research will also be introduced. In addition,basic knowledge of other types of research such as, case studies and action research will also be highlighted.

Session 4: The Research Process:

Key concepts:

- The research process for applied and basic research
- Preliminary data collection
- Literature survey (collection benchmark studies)
- Problem definition

Learning Outcomes

The research process for Applied and Basic research will be highlighted. Students will be able to properly define broad problem area of the study and understand basic preliminary data collection techniques. Students will be briefly introduced to importance of conducting a literature survey. However a separate comprehensive study session will be held towards conducting a literature review.

Session 5: Identifying Research Problem and Introduction

Learning Outcomes

This session is specifically design to enable students towards conducting a comprehensive literature review. Students will be introduced to both thematic and chronological literature analysis. Variety of research journals will be introduced to the students relevant to their field of interest from where rich information can be extracted related to their area of study.

Session 6: How to Write Literature Review -1

Key concepts:

- The need for establishing a theoretical framework
- Variables and their types
    - Difference in terms of dependent and independent variable
    - Difference in terms of moderating and mediating variable

Learning Outcomes

Theoretical framework represents a bird's eye of the research model under study. Students will be introduced to the concept of variable development and theoretical underpinnings. Both dependent and independent variables will be presented in a form of exemplary exercises. Practice exercises will focus on the development of theoretical frameworks on the basis of comprehensive literature survey.

Session 7: How to Write Literature Review -2

Session 8: Research Design

Key concepts:

- What is a research design
- Nature of the study
    - Exploratory
    - Descriptive
    - Cause and effect (Hypothesis testing)
    - Case study analysis
- Unit of analysis: Individuals, groups, organizations and cultures
- Time horizon study designs
    - Cross-sectional studies
    - Longitudinal studies

Learning Outcomes

Different types of research calls for employing variety of research designs. For this reason, knowledge about various types of research will be highlighted in relation to suitable research designs for inquiry.

Session 8: Measurement of Variables: Operational Definition and Scales

Key concepts:

- How variables are measured?

- Operational definitions

- Scales

  o Nominal scale

  o Ordinal scale

  o Interval scale

  o Ratio scale

- Sources of data

- Primary and secondary sources

- Data collection methods

  o Interviews

  o Questionnaires

  o Other methods

  o Observational surveys

  o Ethics in data collection methods

Learning Outcomes

Both qualitative and quantitative of data collection methods will be introduced with focus on questionnaire and interview based survey types. Students will be able to understand the use of different data collection methods in particular situations. Students will also be introduced to the advantages and disadvantages of various types of data collection methods. Students will be able to understand ethical issues while collecting data.

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Learning Outcomes

Different Types of Variables will be introduced along with their suitable scales for measurement. A brief introduction to SPSS software will also be conducted. Data collection, operational definition, entry in SPSS and conducting descriptive statistics will be discussed. Students will be able to choose right scales of measurement for different types of variables (Nominal and categorical). Students will also be able to make variables in SPSS software according to their types.

Session 9: Selection of Instrument

Key concepts:

- Different types of rating scales
    - Dichotomous
    - Multi-chotomous
        - Likert scales
        - Category scales
- Ranking scales
- Reliability
- Validity

Leaning Outcomes

Compared to the previous session, this session will take one step further to highlight different types of commonly used scales in operationalization of variables. Students will be able to correctly use different types of dichotomous and multi-chotomous scales for measuring different types of variables. In addition, students will be able to ensure validity and reliability of instrument while employing different scale techniques.

Session 10: Sampling Techniques

Key concepts:

- Population element, population frame, sample and subject
- Reasons for sampling
- Probability sampling techniques
    - Simple random sampling
    - Complex probability sampling
    - Review of probability sampling designs
- Non-probability sampling techniques
    - Convenience sampling
    - Purposive sampling
    - Non probability sampling designs
- Issues related to the determination of sample size

Learning Outcomes

Sampling is one of the most important decisions that a researcher has to take before actually collecting the data from the respondents. Focus of this class would be to highlight the important sampling techniques as well as the criteria for the selection of appropriate sample size. Class

exercises will also be conducted on the sampling technique selection criteria and selecting an appropriate sample size. At the end of this session, students will be familiar with the concepts of 'population of interest', 'sampling techniques', and 'unit of analyses' and 'determination of sample size'.

Session 11: Data Analysis and Interpretation (1)

Learning Outcomes

Sessions on data analysis techniques will be completed in two parts. The first session will focus on the analysis of quantitative data. As students would be familiar with different data types and introduced to quantitative data analysis tool 'SPSS', it would be easy to take one step further and introduce the concept of basic 'regression technique'. At the end of this session, students would be also to properly opertionalize variables, codify variables, enter the data in SPSS, perform basic descriptive analysis such as mean, median, mode of data, represent data through graphs such as histogram, pie charts and bar charts, perform basic linear regression on dependency models.

Session 12: Data Analysis and Interpretation (2)

Learning Outcomes

The second session will cover basic qualitative data analysis technique of content analysis. In the same session students will be introduced to qualitative data analysis software, 'Nvivo'. At the end of this session students would be able to properly codify the rich qualitative data, perform thematic analysis and extract a conceptual map from it.

Session 13: The Research report

Reading 13: Chapter 13 of the Text Book

Learning Outcomes

A complete format of a research project report will be introduced. Students will be highlighted to all the integral parts of a comprehensive research project report. At the end of the session, students will be given samples of different research project reports relevant to their area of study.

Session 14-5: Presentations (Term Paper Presentation)

Topics for presentations:

1. Identifying and explaining secondary sources of data collection

2. Data collection through interview surveys

3. Data collection through questionnaire surveys

4. Data collection through observational methods

5. Data collection through focus groups

6. Data collection through analysis of texts

7. Explaining and understanding ethical issues related to data collection methods

Recommended Book (s) & Text:
Sekaran, U.(2013). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
Veal A.J. (2005). *Business research methods: A managerial approach.* Malaysia: Pearson Education Australia
Reference Book

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Class Participation	35
Class Activities	15
Presentation	15
Final Term Exam	35
Total	100

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CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

Session	Sub-Topic	Readings	Activities
1	Introduction to Class	--	Orientation
2	Introduction to Research		
3	Scientific Investigation		
4	The Research Process (part1)		
5	Conducting Literature Survey		
6	The Research Process (part2)		
7	The Research Process: Elements of Research Design		
8	Measurement of Variables: Operational Definition and Scales		
9	Measurement: Scaling, Reliability and Validity		
10	Data Collection Methods		
11	Sampling Techniques		
12	Data Analysis and Interpretation (Quantitative)	Chapter – 12	SPSS based class exercises In-class discussion
13	Data Analysis and Interpretation (Qualitative)	Chapter – 12	SPSS based class exercises In-class discussion
14	The Research report	Chapter – 13	**In-Class Activity No.5: (3 marks)** Give a title to and write the introductory section of any study you might like to conduct. Perform this activity in a form of group
15	Presentations		In class presentations