

The nature of business and management research

By the end of this chapter you will be able

- Be able to outline the purpose and distinct focus of management research;
- Be able to place your research project on a basic-applied research continuum according to its purpose and context;
- Understand the stages you will need to complete (and revisit) as part of your research process;
- Have an overview of this book's purpose and structure;
- Be aware of some of the ways you can use this book,

Introduction to the research process

Things to consider

- Realities and pitfalls of research
- Approaches, strategies and methods
- Techniques and procedures for data collection and analysis
- Appropriate use of information technology

Terminology

Methods -

The techniques and procedures used to obtain data

Methodology -

The theory of how research should be undertaken

Saunders *et al.* (2009)

Some ways in which the term “research” is used wrongly

- Just collecting facts or information with no clear purpose;
- Reassembling and reordering facts or information without interpretation
- As a term to get your product or idea noticed and respected.

The nature of research

Definition:

‘Something that people undertake in order to find things out in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge’

Saunders *et al.* (2009)

Characteristics:

- Data are collected systematically
- Data are interpreted systematically
- There is a clear purpose to find things out

What does it suggest “systemically” and to “to find out things”

- “systematic” suggests that research is based on logical relationships and not just beliefs.
- “to find out things” suggests there are a multiplicity of possible purposes of your research. These may include describing, explaining, understanding, criticizing, and analyzing.

Features of business and management research (1)

- Managers draw on knowledge from other disciplines
- Managers are more likely to allow access if they see commercial or personal advantage
- Managers now tend to be as educated as the researchers
- Managers require research to have some practical consequence

Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2008)

Features of business and management research (1)

Key debates

- Knowledge production –
(Modes 1 and 2 knowledge)
- The ‘relevance gap’
- ‘Evidence based’ management
- Basic and applied research

Mode one

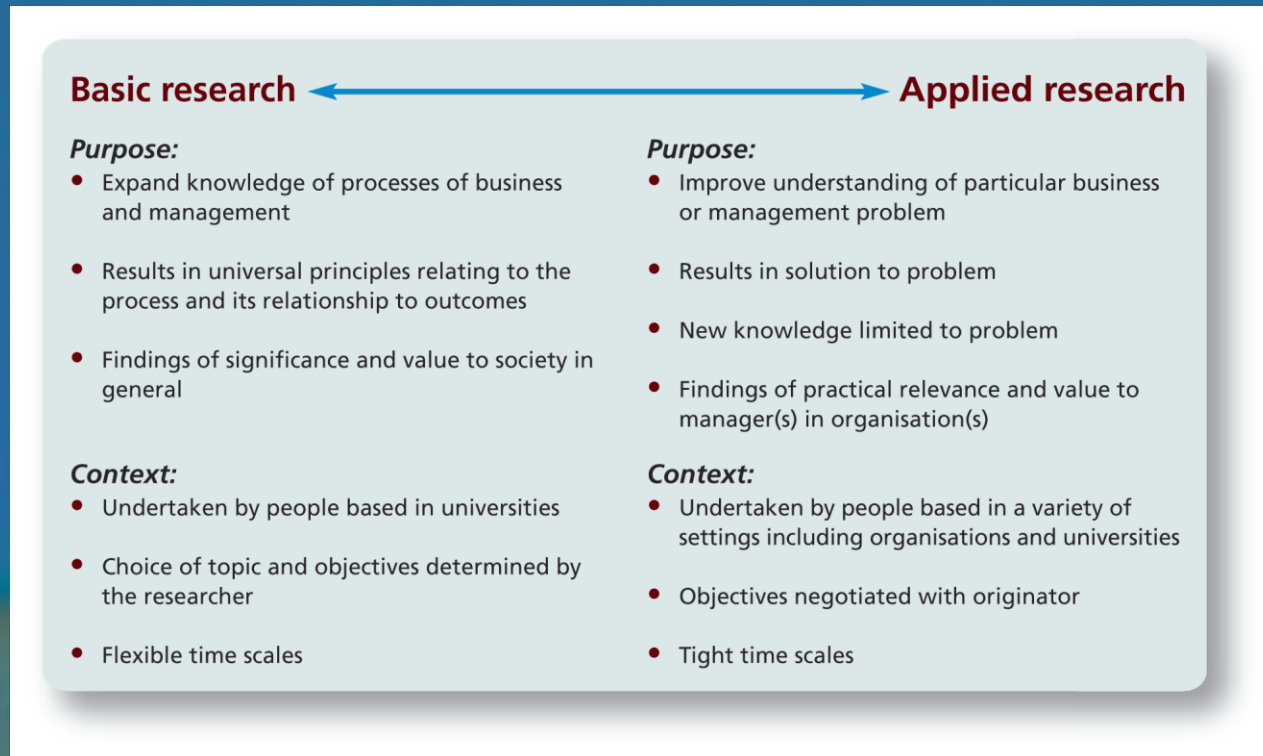
Mode one knowledge creation emphasizes research in which the questions are set and solved by the academic interests, emphasizing a fundamental rather than applied nature, where there is little if any focus on utilization of the research by practitioners.

Mode two

- Mode two emphasizes a context for research governed by the world of practice, highlights of collaboration both with and between practitioners.
- Based upon this it has been argued that research within the mode two offers a way of bringing the supply side of knowledge represented by universities together with the demand sides represented by the business.

Features of business and management research (2)

Basic and applied research



Sources:

authors' experience; Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2008); Hedrick *et al.* (1993)

Figure 1.1 Basic and applied research

The research process (1)

Stages of the research process

- Formulating and clarifying a topic
- Reviewing the literature
- Designing the research
- Collecting data
- Analysing data
- Writing up

Based on Figure 1.2: Saunders *et al.* (2009)

The research process (2)

Factors to consider

- The impact of your personal feelings and beliefs
- Access to data
- Time and other resources
- Validity and reliability of the data
- Ethical issues

Purpose of the book

To help you undertake research by being

- Clear about what you are doing
- Why you are doing it
- The associated implications of what you are about to do

Overview of the Chapters (1)

- Tutorials for data analysis software
- Smarter Online Searching Guide
- Terminology that is defined and explained
- Examples of research projects
- Checklists for focused guidance

Overview of the Chapters (2)

Each Chapter contains:

- A summary of key points
- Self- check questions – and answers
- Review and discussion questions
- References and further reading
- A case study that highlights real research issues

Final Sections

- Bibliography
- Appendices
- Glossary
- Index

Summary: Chapter 1

Business and management research

- Is transdisciplinary
- Engages with both theory and practice
- Involves undertaking systematic research
- Should be undertaken with rigour

Summary: Chapter 1

The book acts as a guide to the research process
by providing:

- a series of research examples
- checklists to help you acquire relevant knowledge
- review and discussion questions
- self-check questions - and answers
- guidance as you generate material for your project report

And finally.....

**“there is no one best way for
undertaking all research”**

Saunders et al. (2009)