One of the most important issues in marketing is the collection and analysis of market-related information, and the ability to use and to interpret it. The second edition of Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation claims to provide the knowledge and skills for doing so. It follows on from the success of initial editions in the United States and the related international and Spanish translations. Examples from Australia, New Zealand and Asia in this book allow readers to put theoretical perspectives into tangible local situations, thus increasing interest and understanding.

Content

The book is organized into seven parts with a total of twenty chapters. Considering this, the opening statement that the organization of the book is according to a conceptualisation of the marketing research process as a six-step framework, somewhat confuses the reader. However, the initial confusion quickly gives way to a full understanding when the framework is explained in Chapter 1 and the progression through the steps is highlighted on the framework at the commencement of each of the following chapters 2 - 20. This step-by-step consideration of the marketing research process makes perfect sense and favourably distinguishes this book from a number of similar publications that start belatedly with the research design and conclude prematurely after the data preparation and analysis step.

Part 1 of this book contains four chapters. They cover the first three steps in the marketing research process by providing an introduction to the topic, defining the marketing research problem, developing an approach (including the specification of research objectives), and discussing issues of research design and research proposal.

The following Parts 2, 3 and 4 then expand on the third step in the framework: the formulation of the research design. Corresponding chapters 5 - 10 describe research methodologies extensively. Exploratory, qualitative and quantitative research methods are being addressed in detail with thorough discussions of respective advantages and disadvantages. Not only are types of information presented that are commonly collected in marketing research but additionally the appropriate scales for obtaining them are covered in the individual chapters. Anyone involved in designing questionnaires will appreciate corresponding guidelines that the book provides as well as discussions of procedures, techniques and statistical considerations involved in sampling.

Covering data collection and data preparation issues, Part 5 corresponds to the fourth step in the marketing research process. The authors present a discussion of fieldwork and the preparation of data ready for analysis. Actual data analysis, the fifth step, is covered in Part 6. Seven chapters introduce and discuss basic and advanced techniques in detail, including frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, hypotheses testing, analysis of variance, regression analysis, discriminant analysis, factor analysis, cluster analysis, multi-dimensional scaling and conjoint analysis. Emphasis is placed on a thorough explanation of procedures, interpretation of results and managerial implications, although with little attention given to alternative statistical approaches.

Part 7 deals with communicating the research project, constituting the sixth and final step in each marketing research process. Details and issues of report preparation and oral presentation are presented in the corresponding single chapter.

Changes from the First Edition

The strengths of this book remain its depth and breadth of coverage of the marketing research process. A distinct improvement compared to the first edition is that chapters have been reorganized and now provide an enhanced structure corresponding to the marketing research process.
process. Accordingly, Chapter 1, introduction to marketing research, has been expanded.

Chapter 5, secondary data methods, has been supplemented by an extensive section on electronic and Internet research, now including coverage of “hot” issues like scanner data, computerized databases and the World Wide Web as an on-line source of secondary data.

Completely rewritten and also expanded, Chapter 6, qualitative research methods, in its updated form now provides a good coverage of related techniques and applications addressing focus groups, in-depth interviews, projective techniques and the analysis of qualitative data. Although not as extensive as the seven chapters on quantitative research, it now reflects the widespread and varied use of qualitative research. Few marketing research texts give adequate coverage to observation as a research technique. This chapter provides a rationale for using qualitative research, and lays out the procedures by which observational data can be systematically and objectively collected.

Upgrading the first edition’s one-colour printing to a two-colour layout (black and red) added to the ease of navigation in the second edition. Numerous figures, tables, pictures, illustrations and examples help explain the basic concepts. International and Internet examples have been added to most chapters making the book more appealing to a broader audience. The applicability of the book has been improved by inclusion of SPSS output examples along with guidelines on how to run SPSS in order to execute all statistical procedures. Although SPSS is clearly the software application preferred by the authors, marketing research data analysis procedures are illustrated along with other popular programs like SAS, BMDP, Minitab and Excel. The new edition also comes with a CD that includes a SPSS student version and data sets for various comprehensive case studies covered in the book. More and updated case studies are presented in a special section at the end of the book. Finally, a new Companion website has been set up (www.prenhall.com/malhotra au).

Suitability for Target Audiences

The purpose of this book goes beyond a mere familiarization of readers with a variety of popular techniques used in the collection and analysis of marketing research. It aims at developing an ability to collect, use and interpret marketing information. With the more balanced coverage of both qualitative and quantitative techniques, the content is comprehensive, practical and up to date.

Among the beneficiaries of this book are research suppliers who will find the additional provision of extensive descriptions of research methodologies valuable. The “how-to” approach throughout the chapters certainly appeals to marketing research practitioners and the abundance of examples makes it easy to transfer the procedures to a particular task at hand. Moreover, the ways in which managers use marketing research findings to improve decisions are continually emphasized throughout the text. The inclusion of additional tools such as the research brief outline and the research proposal outline emphasizes the business and managerial orientation. Nevertheless, a familiarity with basic marketing concepts (e.g. positioning, loyalty, advertising effects) is desirable for using the book effectively. A sufficient number of indices and glossary terms at the end of the edition also make for easy use of the text as a reference book.

There is no doubt, that in addition to its value to marketing research practitioners, the book should be recommended for adoption as a textbook at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level. The depth and breadth of topics encompass both levels. The support package accompanying the text is impressive, including a Website, an Instructor’s Manual, PowerPoint slides, exercises in marketing research, and a test bank. While the Website (www.pearsoned.com.au/cw/) contains PowerPoint slides, the Instructor’s Manual - closely tied to the text - offers specific suggestions for teaching each chapter at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. In addition, answers to all end-of-chapter exercises as well as a complete set of solutions to all cases are provided. The companion SPSS-CD-ROM contains a student version for SPSS 10.0, data files for selected case studies and two corresponding questionnaires. Structured by chapter, the test bank holds multiple response, true / false, and definitional questions as an input for designing exams or quizzes.

All the commonly used univariate and multivariate data analysis techniques are discussed extensively yet simply, making the book suitable not only for use in courses on marketing research but also in courses on research methods and marketing data analysis. I particularly liked the way in which statistics associated with various analyses (i.e. ANOVA, regression, discriminant, factor, cluster, conjoint analysis and MDS) are introduced at the very end of each data analysis chapter; these give a comprehensive overview and students can easily refer to the definitions. As appears to be almost mandatory for text-
books with a U.S. American background, the publication could serve as a role model for a didactically valuable structuring of the content: Each chapter unfolds according to the following sequence: objectives - overview - basic concept - specifics - summary - key terms and concepts - acronyms - exercises - internet and computer exercises - notes. Considering the layout, the newly introduced second (red) colour is used sparingly for emphasis, highlighting (e.g. headlines), figure components, and World Wide Web sections. This adds to a crisp and visually appealing layout. A problem of general nature, that is not restricted to this book, is that URLs listed under “Internet and computer exercises” do not stay current (e.g. www.depaul.edu/ethics).

Coverage of Research Objects

The new edition has been revised and upgraded with numerous real life examples offering instructors, students and research suppliers a very good coverage of objects and regions. Although with a geographical focus on the larger Asia-Pacific region, the range of international examples extends beyond Australia and New Zealand, covering cases from China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, the U.S. and other countries around the world. Accordingly, cultural differences and their implications for different stages in the marketing research process are repeatedly emphasized, a refreshing wider perspective when compared with U.S.-only textbooks that sometimes seem to neglect the fact that there is a world outside the national borders. The range of objects covered by the “Australasian” edition contains the full spectrum of products and services that one may encounter when conducting marketing research: from consumer goods, to financial services, to tourism and hospitality marketing, to agricultural products, to governmental and non-profit marketing challenges.

Summary

Based on an original American text that is itself a valuable contribution to any marketing research subject, this “Australasian” perspective is a much improved and highly recommended edition. It draws on the strengths of the original and the authors seamlessly integrate material to reflect marketing research practice in the larger Asia-Pacific region. The regionalisation of the text is very well accomplished. The book achieves a comprehensive introduction to marketing research with a balanced coverage of both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Several significant changes have been made to make it more relevant to an audience in Australia, New Zealand, and Asia. This includes the addition of new practitioners’ perspectives, examples, figures, technology updates, electronic and Internet marketing notes, and a revised and expanded chapter on qualitative research. Combining both easy reading with considerable depth of coverage, this is an excellent textbook for both undergraduate and postgraduate students, providing them with examples of current practice. Beyond its usefulness for students of modern marketing research, the text is also a valuable resource for managers who are either commissioning research or disseminating and operationalising its results.

However, the updates and additions come at a price. Counting over eight hundred pages, the book places itself among the heavyweight publications. Despite the recommended retail price of $89.95 AUS, the book is a highly recommended buy providing much more than just “an applied orientation”.

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