

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	x
<i>List of Tables</i>	xii
<i>Preface to the Third Edition</i>	xv
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xvi
1 Understanding research	1
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Nature and purpose of business research	3
1.3 Classifying research	4
1.4 Academic levels of research	9
1.5 Overview of the research process	10
1.6 Developing a research strategy	12
1.7 Characteristics of good research	15
1.8 Conclusions	16
Activities	16
Progress test	16
2 Making academic decisions	19
2.1 Introduction	21
2.2 General entry requirements for degree programmes	21
2.3 General standards for research at different levels	22
2.4 Choosing an institution	26
2.5 Employability	28
2.6 Supervision	29
2.7 Conclusions	33
Activities	33
Progress test	34
3 Dealing with practical issues	35
3.1 Introduction	37
3.2 Funding the research	37
3.3 Knowledge, skills and personal qualities	38
3.4 Generating a research topic	40
3.5 Negotiating access	43
3.6 Ethical issues	45

3.7	Planning and administration	47
3.8	Conclusions	51
	Activities	51
	Progress test	52
4	Identifying your research paradigm	53
4.1	Introduction	55
4.2	The two main paradigms	55
4.3	Assumptions of the main paradigms	58
4.4	Comparing the two main paradigms	61
4.5	Pragmatism	66
4.6	Conclusions	67
	Activities	68
	Progress test	69
5	Choosing a methodology	71
5.1	Introduction	73
5.2	Link between paradigm and methodology	73
5.3	Methodologies associated with positivism	74
5.4	Methodologies associated with interpretivism	78
5.5	Triangulation	85
5.6	Conclusions	85
	Activities	86
	Progress test	87
6	Searching and reviewing the literature	89
6.1	Introduction	91
6.2	Searching the literature	91
6.3	Referencing	96
6.4	Reviewing the literature	100
6.5	Avoiding plagiarism	103
6.6	Conclusions	104
	Activities	105
	Progress test	107
7	Writing your research proposal	109
7.1	Introduction	111
7.2	Overview of research design	111
7.3	The research problem	112
7.4	Purpose of the research	115
7.5	The research questions	117

7.6	Writing the research proposal	121
7.7	Conclusions	129
	Activities	138
	Progress test	139
8	Collecting qualitative data	141
8.1	Introduction	143
8.2	Overview of qualitative data collection	143
8.3	Interviews	144
8.4	Protocol analysis	148
8.5	Repertory grid technique	150
8.6	Diary methods	152
8.7	Observation	153
8.8	Focus groups	155
8.9	Grounded theory	157
8.10	Conclusions	158
	Activities	159
	Progress test	159
9	Analysing qualitative data	161
9.1	Introduction	163
9.2	Overview of qualitative data analysis	163
9.3	Quantifying methods	164
9.4	Main issues in non-quantifying methods	166
9.5	General approaches	169
9.6	Quasi-judicial method	174
9.7	Methods based on personal construct theory	175
9.8	Grounded theory	179
9.9	Evaluating the analysis	182
9.10	Conclusions	183
	Activities	183
	Progress test	184
10	Collecting data for statistical analysis	185
10.1	Introduction	187
10.2	Overview of data collection in a positivist study	187
10.3	Vairables	188
10.4	Data collection methods	191
10.5	Designing questions	198
10.6	Coding questions	207
10.7	Sampling methods	209

10.8	Conclusions	213
	Activities	214
	Progress test	216
	Appendix	218
11	Analysing data using descriptive statistics	219
11.1	Introduction	221
11.2	Statistics	221
11.3	Getting started with <i>SPSS</i>	222
11.4	Frequency distributions	230
11.5	Measuring central tendency	240
11.6	Measuring dispersion	244
11.7	Normal distribution	247
11.8	Conclusions	252
	Activities	253
	Progress test	253
12	Analysing data using inferential statistics	255
12.1	Introduction	257
12.2	Planning the analysis	257
12.3	Tests of difference	260
12.4	Tests of association	263
12.5	Correlation	267
12.6	Linear regression	273
12.7	Time series analysis	279
12.8	Conclusions	287
	Activities	288
	Progress test	289
13	Writing up the research	291
13.1	Introduction	293
13.2	Planning the research report	293
13.3	Structure and content	298
13.4	Presenting qualitative and quantitative data	306
13.5	General standards	312
13.6	Getting published	315
13.7	Conclusions	318
	Activities	318
14	Troubleshooting	321
14.1	Introduction	322

14.2	Getting started	322
14.3	Managing the process	323
14.4	Identifying a topic and/or a research problem or issue	323
14.5	Making a preliminary plan of action	323
14.6	Finding a theoretical framework	324
14.7	Writing the proposal	324
14.8	Deciding the methodology	325
14.9	Searching and reviewing the literature	325
14.10	Collecting research data	326
14.11	Organizing qualitative research data	326
14.12	Analysing the research data	327
14.13	Structuring the dissertation or thesis	327
14.14	Writing the dissertation or thesis	327
14.15	Dealing with writer's block	328
14.16	Achieving the standards	329
14.17	Eleventh-hour strategies for writing up	329
	<i>Glossary</i>	331
	<i>References</i>	343
	<i>Index</i>	353

List of figures

1.1	Overview of the research process	10
1.2	Island of research	13
2.1	Changing attitudes shown by students during their research	32
3.1	Stages in the research process	39
3.2	Attributes needed during the main stages in the research process	40
3.3	Mind map for the topic: academic research	42
3.4	Relevance tree for the topic: business communication	43
4.1	A continuum of paradigms	57
7.1	Main steps in research design	112
7.2	Identifying a research problem	113
7.3	Identifying research questions	118
7.4	Example of deconstruction 'Tall people have a better chance of gaining high rank in the UK'	124
8.1	Types of protocol	149
9.1	Events flow network: students' learning and work experience	173
9.2	Example of a cognitive map	178
10.1	Overview of the data collection process	188
10.2	Designing a questionnaire or interview schedule	192
10.3	Main steps in selecting a random sample	210
11.1	SPSS Data Editor	225
11.2	Variable View of Data for URN 42.sav	226
11.3	Data View of Data for URN 42.sav	227
11.4	Recoding into a different variable	228
11.5	Generating a frequency table	232
11.6	Generating a cross-tabulation	233
11.7	Generating a chart	235
11.8	Bar chart for Turnovercat	236
11.9	Pie chart for Turnovercat	237
11.10	Histogram for Turnover	237
11.11	Generating a stem-and-leaf plot	239
11.12	Generating measures of central tendency	242
11.13	Generating measures of dispersion	246
11.14	A normal frequency distribution	247
11.15	A positively skewed frequency distribution	248
11.16	A negatively skewed frequency distribution	248
11.17	Proportion of a normal distribution under 1 standard deviation	249
11.18	Generating descriptive statistics and testing for normality	250

12.1	Running a Mann-Whitney test	261
12.2	Running a chi-square test	263
12.3	Scatterplot showing positive linear correlation	269
12.4	Scatterplot showing negative linear correlation	269
12.5	Scatterplot showing no correlation	270
12.6	Scatterplot showing non-linear correlation	270
12.7	Running Spearman's correlation	271
12.8	Running a logistic regression	275
12.9	Production indices 2003–8	281
12.10	Deflated profit 1982–6	282

List of tables

1.1	Classification of main types of research	4
1.2	Examples of research classified by purpose	5
1.3	Indicative structure of a dissertation or thesis	12
1.4	Characteristics of good and poor research projects	15
2.1	Main degrees and associated research reports	22
2.2	Typical length of a dissertation or thesis	25
2.3	Criteria to be satisfied by a dissertation or thesis	25
3.1	Morphological analysis for the topic: research	41
3.2	Approximate length of research degrees	48
3.3	Approximate time for main stages of research	48
4.1	Approaches within the two main paradigms	58
4.2	Assumptions of the main paradigms	58
4.3	Typology of assumptions on a continuum of paradigms	61
4.4	Features of the two main paradigms	62
5.1	Methodologies associated with the main paradigms	74
6.1	Examples of Boolean operators used in ProQuest	94
6.2	Key data required for referencing	95
6.3	Recording and categorizing previous studies	101
7.1	Examples of research problems	113
7.2	Assessing the availability of data	114
7.3	Units of analysis	116
7.4	Indicative structure of a research proposal	122
7.5	Research budget	126
8.1	Types of interview question	145
8.2	Examples of probes	146
8.3	Example of a repertory grid	152
9.1	Examples of coding units	165
9.2	Files documenting the study	171
9.3	Effects matrix: Organization changes after implementation of the ECRI Program	173
9.4	Rules for the quasi-judicial method and legal equivalents	174
10.1	Determining sample size from a given population	211
11.1	Variables in the analysis	229
11.2	Frequency table for Turnovercat	232
11.3	Cross-tabulation for Volaudit and Turnovercat	234
11.4	Charts for different types of data	234
11.5	Measures of central tendency for Turnover	243

11.6	Measures of dispersion for Turnover	247
11.7	Descriptive statistics and normality tests for Turnover	250
11.8	Choosing appropriate descriptive statistics	252
12.1	Variables in the analysis	258
12.2	Bivariate and multivariate analysis	260
12.3	Mann-Whitney test for Turnover, Check, Quality, Credibility and Creditscore	261
12.4	Chi-square tests for Volaudit against Family, Exowners, Bank and Education	264
12.5	Spearman's rho for Turnover, Check, Quality, Credibility and Creditscore	272
12.6	Logistic regression for Volaudit	276
12.7	House price index 1971–6	280
12.8	Production indices 2003–8	280
12.9	Deflated profit 1982–6	282
12.10	De-trended series for ice-cream sales (m) 2004–8	285
12.11	Seasonal index for ice-cream sales (m) 2004–8	286
12.12	De-seasonalized data for ice-cream sales (m) 2004–8	286
13.1	Planning and writing strategies adopted by students	293
13.2	Indicative time for writing a PhD thesis	295
13.3	Typical length of a dissertation or thesis	298
13.4	Indicative structure of a research report	299
13.5	Elements and general criteria used to assess a dissertation or thesis	312
13.6	Indicative assessment criteria for a dissertation or thesis	313
13.7	Indicative lengths of articles	316