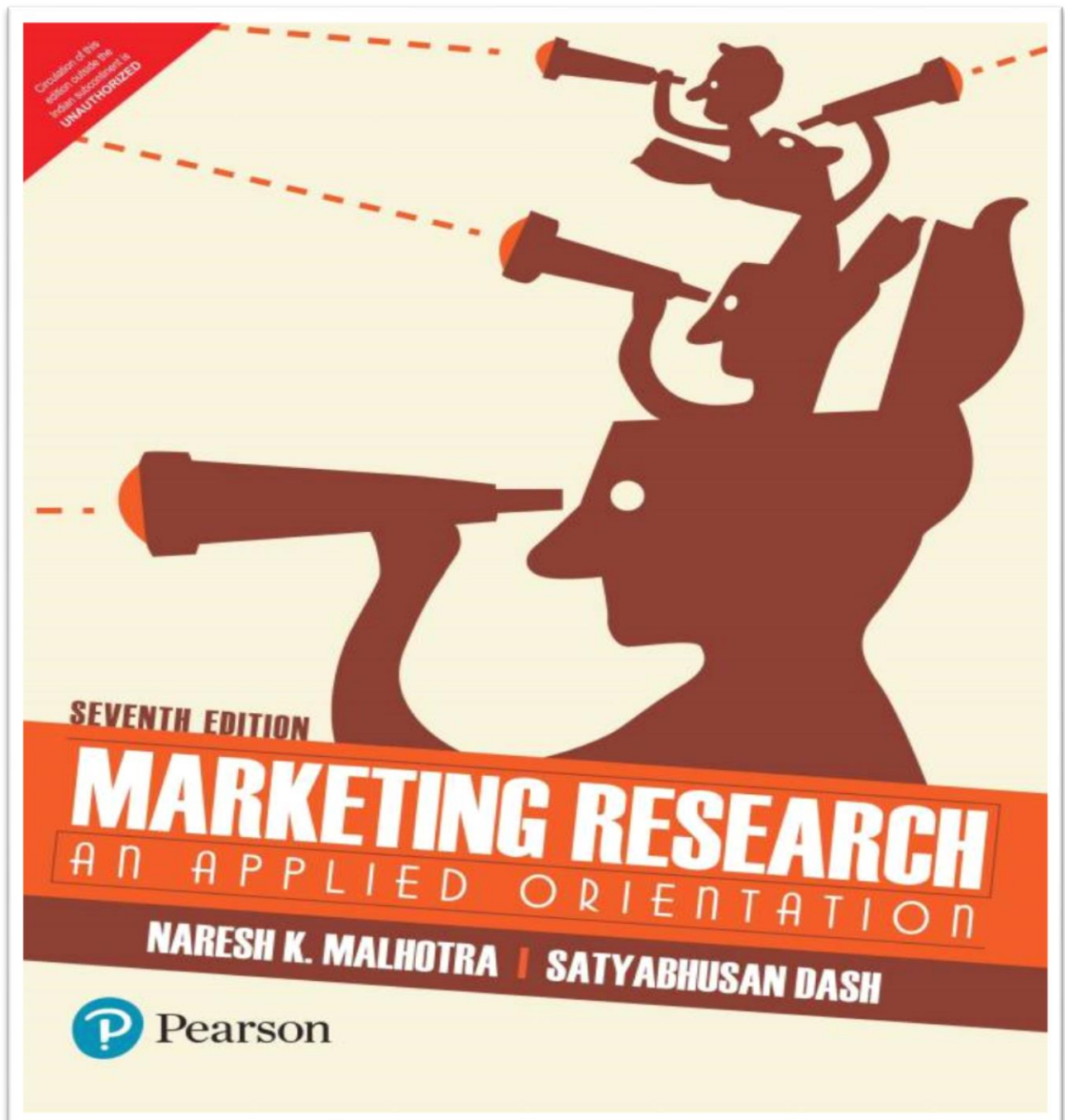


Book Review

Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation
(By Naresh K. Malhotra and Satyabhushan Dash)

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About Book

Introduction

Marketing research is an essential part in marketing. It provides valuable information about the potential of a particular market segment during a specific time. With the economy becoming more and more competitive with each passing day, marketing research is the best way to increase customers' satisfaction and to understand their needs. The book Marketing Research – An Applied Orientation written by Naresh K. Malhotra & Satyabhushan Dash is a comprehensive and practical book which presents a balanced coverage of both qualitative and quantitative aspects of marketing research.

Chapter Scheme

The book consists of 24 chapters which have been divided in 3 parts. First part provides basic introduction to the research, definition of research problem and development of a suitable approach to it. As these are very crucial for the success of any marketing research project. Part two focuses on the research design formulation. In the first part of it, author tried to explain the exploratory, descriptive and causal research designs. And in the lateral part the measurement & scaling, questionnaire and sampling techniques with statistical considerations involved are explained in detail with suitable examples which is very useful for researchers. Third and the final part of the book is data collection, preparation, analysis and reporting. This part discusses the process of data preparation and how to make them suitable for analysis. The author has very well described both basic data analysis techniques for example, frequency distribution, cross tabulation, hypothesis testing etc. as well as advanced data analysis techniques for example discriminant analysis, logic analysis, factor analysis, cluster analysis, structural equation model etc. this part also covers report preparation, presentation as well the international dimension of marketing research.

Overview

The book has been written with a contemporary mindset, which have a balanced orientation of both theoretical and practical aspects. Opportunities for learning and testing have been provided with extensive exercises and activities. Concepts have been explained with real life and updated examples from marketing research perspective. Concept maps are given at the end of each chapter that helps readers to visualize the interrelated concepts. Ethical focus has been kept in every chapter of the book which talks about the ethics from the perspective of all the respective stakeholders. Every chapter of the book briefs the framework of marketing research in international perspective. The book is also useful to learn SPSS and SAS on your own by providing details step by step in each chapter. In the ending part of the book comprehensive cases are given with real questionnaire and data that helps to test the understanding of each chapter. The book has covered very well how to understand the fundamental principles of marketing research and how to apply them in real life marketing situations.

Part 1

Chapter 1: Introduction to Marketing Research

This chapter emphasized on how the marketing research is done. Many real life examples of marketing research were given. It was found that marketing research is an integral part of marketing information system and decision support system. It also includes some active research, experimental research and decision research with exercise.

Chapter 2: Defining Marketing Research problem and developing an approach

This chapter included how the marketing research problem is defined and how an approach is developed to the same. As it is the most important task to do for any research project, before conducting the research programme. Pre requisite of a research programme are explained so well and in a systematic manner that involves discussions, pilot surveys, case studies etc.

Part 2

Chapter 3: Research Design

This chapter focuses on defining what is research design, i.e. what can be the different types of research that we conduct, and how are they different from each other. Major types of research are either exploratory or conclusive. Explanations are well supported by activities and examples. In the lateral part of chapter potential errors to the research design are discussed in brief. Errors are the variation in the mean value from the observed mean of the population

Chapter 4: Exploratory Research Design: Secondary Data

Primary data of particular purpose is collected by research scholars. Secondary data is the data that has already been collected, other than the problem at hand. Collected data helps the scholar to formulate an appropriate research design. Analysis of secondary data may provide valuable insights for conducting primary analysis. Secondary data should be analyzed so carefully and thoroughly for its reliability and validity as it becomes the basis of the research. Later part of the chapter emphasized on the application of secondary data in computer mapping and how technology can be used to analyze secondary data

Chapter 5: Exploratory Research Design: Qualitative Research

Qualitative research and secondary data comprise the major part of research project. Qualitative research is used for generating hypothesis and identifying variables that should be included in the research. The chapter discussed how qualitative research is different from quantitative research, its role and various techniques. People may be unwilling or unable to answer certain questions that tap their subconscious, so for those cases, required information can be obtained through qualitative research.

Chapter 6: Descriptive Research Design: Survey and Observations

Objective of descriptive research is to get to know the descriptions of something- in research it usually means market characteristics or functions. The chapter describes the major tool of the descriptive research that is survey and observation that is based on primary quantitative data. Survey is a traditional way that includes; telephone interview, personal interview, computer assisted interviews etc. observations include; personal observation, mechanical observation, audit etc. The relative advantages and certain ethical issues that arise while applying these methods are also discussed.

Chapter 7: Causal Research Design: Experimentation

Causality defines cause and effect relationship. Chapter focuses on the concept of causality, its conditions, and role of validity in experimentation.

Chapter 8: Measurement and Scaling: Fundamentals and Comparative Scaling

This chapter describes the concept of scaling, and measurement, and fundamental scaling techniques. In measurement we assign numbers or other symbols to characteristics of objects as per the set rules and in scaling we generalize continuum upon which measured objects are located. All the four primary scales of measurements i.e. nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio are well defined with suitable examples, and it has been found that nominal scale represents the most basic and ratio scale represents highest level of measurement. Moving on further, comparative and non-comparative scaling techniques are discussed. Comparative scaling leads to a direct comparison of stimulus object with another. Whereas, non-comparative scaling leads to scaling of each stimulus object independently of the other object in the stimulus set.

Chapter 9: Measurement and Scaling: Non- Comparative Scaling techniques

Comparative scaling techniques have been explored in detail in the previous chapter, now this chapter focuses on the non-comparative scaling techniques. Non comparative scaling can either be continuous or itemized. It has been explained how the researcher should select a particular scaling technique in a given situation as the choice should be based on theoretical and practical considerations. The chosen scaling technique by the researcher should be one that generates highest level of feasible information. The scales are also to be evaluated in terms of reliability and validity. Reliability refers to the consistency of results and validity refers to the accuracy of measurement.

Chapter 10: Questionnaire and Form Design

This chapter discusses the importance, objectives, steps involved and guidelines for developing a sound questionnaire, as it is an important step in formulating a research design. A questionnaire must motivate respondent to complete the interview and give the needed information required by the respondents. It must specify what is to be observed and how the behaviour is to be recorded.

Chapter 11: Sampling Design and Procedures

This chapter focuses on fundamental concepts and necessary qualitative considerations and types of the sampling. Sampling techniques are classified into probability and non-probability techniques. In probability sampling each element has an equal probabilistic chance of being selected. Whereas, non-probability sampling relies on the personal judgment of the researcher. It has been explained that how a researcher should make a choice between probability and non-probability sampling i.e. based on the nature of research, degree of error tolerance, relative magnitude of sampling and non-sampling errors, variability in the population, statistical and operational considerations.

Chapter 12: Sampling: Final and Initial sample size determination

“The size of sample is determined not only by statistical calculations, but also by managerial considerations including time and costs”

BEVERLY WEIMAN, President and CEO

(Survey Sampling International)

This chapter describes the sampling distribution, statistical interpretation, standard error and sampling size. It is defined that statistical approaches to sample size determination are based on confidence interval. Chapter also covers the non-response issue in the sampling, and also the ways to adjust it.

Part 3

Chapter 13: Fieldwork

This chapter describes the fieldwork process, explains the selection, training and supervision of fieldworkers, validation of fieldwork and the evaluation of fieldworkers. The chapter basically emphasize on the role of fieldworkers in data collection process. As researchers either develop their own organization or contact with other external work agencies for collecting data.

Chapter 14: Data Preparation

This chapter focused on how the collected data is processed and interpreted. The chapter has very well defined the data cleaning process and ways to treat illegible missing and inconsistent responses. Emphasis has also been given on data analysis strategies and univariate and multivariate statistical techniques of data preparation.

Chapter 15: Frequency Distribution, Cross Tabulation and Hypothesis Testing

This chapter describes the basic data analysis associated with Parametric and Non Parametric hypothesis testing, frequencies including measures of location, variability and shape as well as cross tabulation with its associated statics such as chi square, phi coefficient etc.

Chapter 16: Analysis of Variance and Covariance

In this chapter, the author describes the Analysis of Variance and Covariance procedures and their relationship with other techniques. The key emphasis has been made on specialized ANOVA techniques applicable to marketing i.e. repeated measure ANOVA, non-metric analysis of variance, and multivariable analysis of variance (MANOVA).

Chapter 17: Correlation of Regression

This chapter describes the concept and types of Correlation in detail which provides a foundation for Regression Analysis. Starting from Simple Bivariate case to Multiple Regression Model, the chapter has explained every concept of Regression very well. The chapter also covers the topics of special interest such as, stepwise regression, cross validation, multi-collinearity etc.

Chapter 18: Discriminant and Logit Analysis

The chapter describes the concept, objectives, model, procedures and applications of discriminant analysis in marketing research. Binary logit model has also been compared with discriminant analysis and regression analysis with special reference to its advantages.

Chapter 19: Factor Analysis

The chapter discusses the basic concept of factor analysis, its model, its advantages, procedure for conducting factor analysis which includes problem formulation, construction of correlation matrix, selection of an appropriate model and determination, rotation and interpretation of factor. It also explains how factor analysis is different from analysis of variance, multiple regression and discriminant analysis.

Chapter 20: Cluster Analysis

“Cluster analysis helps to identify groups or segments that are more like each other than they are like members of other groups or segments.” –

Tom Myers, Senior Vice President,

(Client Services Manager, Burke, Inc.)

This chapter focuses on concept, scope, procedures and importance of cluster analysis in marketing research. Special emphasis has been given on discussing the steps involved in conducting cluster analysis in the context of hierarchical clustering followed by application of non-cluster hierarchical clustering.

Chapter 21: Multidimensional Scaling and Conjoint Analysis

This chapter on data analysis describes two related techniques for analyzing consumers' perceptions and preferences i.e. Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) and conjoint analysis. Basic concept, scope, steps involved in both the techniques has been explained in detail. MDS is used for obtaining spatial representations of respondents' perceptions and preferences, whereas conjoint analysis attempts to determine the relative importance consumers attach to salient attributed and the utilities they attach to the levels of attributes. These two techniques are complementary to each other.

Chapter 22: Structural equation Modeling and Path Analysis

In the previous chapters of Part 3(i.e. from chapter 14 to 21), the author has gone through single statistical techniques, now this chapter explain a unified analysis which is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Rather than exploratory SEM is used as a confirmatory technique, which is based on theory. So, all the relationship must be specified before this model can be estimated. In this chapter basic concept, theory, model steps involved, path diagram, constructs model fit of SEM has been explained in detail with suitable examples.

Chapter 23: Report Preparation and Presentation

After all research work has been completed, Report preparation and its presentation is the final step in a research project. Preparation of a comprehensive, well documented and appropriately referenced research report is an essential part of a valid research experience. It begins with the interpretation and analysis of data and results and it ends with the conclusions and recommendations. The chapter focuses on the importance, requirements, process and guidelines of report preparation and presentation

Chapter 24: International Marketing Research

Due to the globalization of the market, as the world economy is being unified, International marketing research is growing rapidly. International Marketing Research is more complex and challenging than Domestic market research because of the prevalent multidimensional dynamic environment in different countries.

Conclusion

The particular book has been chosen for review because as a researcher we wanted to go through a detailed book which can cover all the aspects of marketing research. This book is different from other books available in market as it provides an updated, comprehensive and stepwise understanding of the marketing research process with a balanced mixture of theory and illustrations. Most of the other books of same title are too theoretical and just provide definitions with practically no illustration and numerous method and technique explained have become obsolete and redundant in the current scenario. Whereas, this book provides a rigorously researched text with a contemporary point of view of marketing research Book has helped me to learn marketing research in details with very well explained illustration and case studies. This book is also proved to be very useful to learn SPSS and SAS by providing detailed steps.

As a whole, the book is satisfactory and can serve as a source of information for teachers, researchers and learners to study marketing research in a comprehensive manner. The authors deserves to be congratulated for introducing such a useful book in the field of research.

