Teaching Research Methods in Public Administration

Part of the Advances in Public Policy and Administration (APPA) Book Series

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Description:
While there are many ways to collect information, many students have trouble understanding how to employ various research methods effectively. Since everyone learns and processes information differently, instructing students on successfully using these methods continues to be a challenge.

Teaching Research Methods in Public Administration combines empirical research and best practices on various research methods being employed by administrators.

Readers:
This publication is an essential reference source for academics, public administration practitioners, and students interested in how information is gathered, processed, and utilized.


Topics Covered:
- Data Analysis
- Deductive Research
- Empirical Tools
- Experimentation
- Mixed Methods Approaches
- Policy Analysis
- Program Evaluation
- Research Ethics
- Surveying

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Preface
- What Makes This Book Different From Other Texts?
- Content and Structure of the Book

Chapter 1: The Tools of Social Science Research
- The Nature and Tools of Empiricism
- Surveys
- In-Depth Interviews
- Surveys vs. Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Field Observation
- Experimentation
- Existing Data
- Deductive v. Inductive Empirical Tools

Chapter 2: The Deductive Research Question and Literature Review
- Crafting a “Researchable” Research Question
- What Exactly Is a Hypothesis?
- Is the Topic and Question “Researchable”?
- Conducting a Relevant Literature Review
- What is a Literature Review?
- Conducting a Literature Review
- Writing a Literature Review
- Literature Review Terminology

Chapter 3: The Unit of Analysis and Variables
- What is a Unit of Analysis?
- Types of Variables and Identifying Variables
- Extraneous Variables
- Defining Variables

Chapter 4: Measuring Variables
- What Does Measurement Entail?
- Survey Example
- Experimentation Example
- Existing Data Example
- Measurement Reliability and Validity

Chapter 5: Writing and Delivering Survey Questions
- The Science of Writing Survey Questions
- The Pre-Test
- How a Pre-Test Works
- Methods of Delivering Survey Questions
- Writing Questions for Different Delivery Methods
- Delivering Telephone Surveys
- Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) and Internet Surveys
- Biases Inherent to Surveys
- Survey Research Designs

Chapter 6: Designing Experiments
- The Gold Standard of Experimental Design
- Two Groups (at least)
- Random Selection
- Pre-Test and Post-Test
- Quasi-Experimental Designs
- Non-Equivalent Two Group
- Pre-test / Post-test One Group
- Interrupted Time Series
- Natural Experiment
- Internal Validity

Chapter 7: Existing Data as a Measurement Tool
- Finding Existing Data
- Existing Data Example 1
- Existing Data Example 2
- Existing Data Example 3

Chapter 8: Program Evaluation
- What is Program Evaluation?
- The Importance of Stakeholders
- Obtaining Stakeholder Data
- Types of Program Evaluations
- Needs Assessment
- Assessment of Program Theory
- Assessment of Program Process
- Program Impact Assessment
- Program Efficiency Assessment
- Planning an Evaluation
- Ethical Issues When Conducting Program Evaluations

Chapter 9: Policy Analysis
- What a Policy Analysis Entails
- Introduction
- Historical Background
- Literature Review
- Stakeholder Assessment
- Description of Policy Options
- Options Assessment Criteria
- Options Assessment
- Recommendation

Chapter 10: Qualitative and Mixed Methods Approaches
- Qualitative, Inductive Methods
- In-Depth Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Field Observation
- The Qualitative Research Question
- Making Sense of Qualitative Data
- Qualitative Research Designs
- A Mixed Method Approach to Social Science Research
- The Limitations of Qualitative Research

Chapter 11: Sampling
- What Is Sampling?
- Types of Sampling
- Simple random sampling (SRS)
- Systematic sampling
- Stratified sampling
- Cluster sampling
- The Terminology of Random Sampling
- Non-Probability Sampling Techniques
- Convenience sampling
- Quota sampling
- Snowball sampling
- Purposive sampling
- Random Digit Dialing (RDD)
- Should You Always Sample?

Chapter 12: Practical Data Analysis
- Levels of Measurement and Coding Your Data
- Ensuring Data Accuracy: The Importance of Data Cleaning
- Composite Measures
- Univariate Analysis
- Bivariate Analysis
- Multivariate Analysis

Chapter 13: Research Ethics
- Ethics Lessons and the Movie Ghostbusters
- Informed Consent
- Deception in Research and “Covert” Research
- The Role of IRBs in Promoting Ethical Research

Appendix 1: Elements of a Research Proposal
Appendix 2: Sample Syllabus
Appendix 3: Teaching and Learning Tips
Appendix 4: Electronic Resources
Appendix 5: For Further Reading
Glossary of Key Terms