

How to Conduct Research and What to do with it.

Selected Readings



Alreck, Pamela. & Settle Robert. (1995). *The Survey Research Handbook*. (2nd ed.) Boston: McGraw-Hill. Simply put, this book covers all the necessary steps to follow for anyone with little to no knowledge of conducting research. The authors have diligently put together this book as a resource that can be followed from beginning to end. The summaries at the end of each chapter makes it an even easier book to refer to once a good grasp of the topic has been obtained. As a user friendly book, any body interested in or conducting research will find it a very useful tool

Babbie, Earl. (1990). *Survey Research Methods* (2nd ed.) Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing. Fundamental and practical, this book shows the connection between the theoretical logic behind methodology and the concrete skills required to conduct research. It can be used by anyone interested in conducting a survey. But more specifically, methodology students, beginning researchers and research consumers will benefit the most from this book.

Coffey A. & Atkinson P. (1996). *Making Sense of Qualitative Data*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. This book is user-friendly and accessible. The authors present a diversity of approaches that they analyze using a number of techniques. This book describes and illustrates a number of key, complementary approaches to qualitative data and offers practical advice on the many ways to analyse data, with special attention paid to the possibilities of computer-aided analysis.

Denzin, Norman & Yvonne S. Lincoln (eds.) . (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. The contributors to this book painstakingly put together a text that covers the historical aspects of research then moves to applied qualitative research traditions right down to examining the methods of collecting and analysing empirical materials and ends with speculations about the future of qualitative research. Readers of this book will find that it is intended for people with a fairly good grasp of research methodology. Beginners to the world of research might not find this book very user-friendly as it is not intended for them.

Fink, Arlene. (1998). *Conducting Research Literature Reviews: From Paper to the Internet*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. This book with five chapters goes into details in explaining important issues in research. The chapters cover things such as what a literature review is and ways to search for literature on the internet. Also discussed is how to conduct literature review and ends with how to do descriptive reviews to meta-analyses. Including summaries and exercises at the end of each chapter, readers get a chance to quickly review what they have read and also are able to do some practical work. This book is a good source of information for anybody who wants to or is conducting literature reviews.

Fink, Arlene (ed.). (1995). *The Survey Kit*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. This kit is comprised of the following 9 volumes; The Survey Handbook, How to Ask Survey Questions, How to Conduct Self-Administered and Mail Surveys, How to Conduct Interviews by Telephone and in Person, How to Design Surveys, How to Sample in Surveys, How to Measure Survey Reliability and Validity, How to Analyze Survey Data, How to Report on Surveys. Some of the topics covered are; the four survey types, types of questions to ask during pilot tests, how to ask survey questions, various types of self-administered questionnaire, to effectively collect survey data through. All books in the series contain instructional objectives, exercises and answers, examples of surveys in use and illustrations of survey questions, guidelines for action, checklists of do's and don'ts, and annotated references. Well laid out, this book is a very useful tool for research and should be considered indispensable for any researcher.

Fisher, Andrew & James R. Foreit.. (2002). *Designing HIV/AIDS Intervention Studies: An Operations Research Handbook*. New York: Population Council. By assuming that the reader of this handbook already has some background in research designs, the authors want to focus on developing already existing knowledge. The focus is also on proposal development as well as a good tool that can be used in workshops and courses on research design. The chapters are short and easy to navigate through making this handbook easy to use as a quick reference. By also reviewing key concepts and methods essential for conducting HIV/AIDS field research studies, the Handbook helps program administrators and health policymakers understand how operations research works and how to use research findings to improve HIV/AIDS service delivery.

Herman, Joan. (1987). *The Program Evaluation Kit (2nd edition)*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications. This volume of nine books (*Evaluator's Handbook; How to Focus an Evaluation; How to Design a Program Evaluation; How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation; How to Assess Program Implementation; How to Measure Attitudes; How to Measure Performance and Use Tests; How to Analyse Data; and How to Communicate Evaluation Findings*) is designed for people who want to, or are conducting program evaluation. Taking the reader from the first stage of planning to reporting of findings, the authors have painstakingly put together in one volume, something that many in the field could have only dreamt off, not too long ago. It encompasses every aspect an evaluator can think of, yet at the same time concise and easy to find exactly what you are looking for. Be it for more specific areas like how to use qualitative methods in evaluation to how to analyse data, it addresses everyone needs and level of expertise. Whether you are a beginner to evaluation or a veteran at it, this kit is a vital resource.

Krueger, Richard A. & Mary Anne Casey. (2000). *Focus Groups: A practical Guide for Applied Research*. (3rd ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Focus groups discussion (FGD) is a very powerful tool to use to gather information. This book details literally, everything you need to know about conducting FGD. With illustrations and summaries of each chapter, it gives the reader a quick view about what is covered in the coming chapter. If you have never ever conducted a FGD, you will find this book very helpful to guide you to a successful first FGD.

Mason, Jennifer. (2002). *Qualitative Researching*. (2nd. Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Call it an introduction to qualitative research, this book focuses on the key areas to focus on while doing this type of research. Though navigating through it may not seem as easy as the author may have thought, should the reader be able to successfully go through it, they will come out haven learnt quite a lot which they will be able to use as first time researchers. More advanced researchers, could find it helpful more as a refresher, should they need to be reminded about one or two things. Topics covered are: research strategy and design; data sources; methods and approaches; observations; visual methods; and representation and the making of arguments with qualitative research.

Morse, J. (ed.). (1997). *Completing a Qualitative Project*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. This book explores a wide range of topics, from the nuts and bolts (protecting participants' confidentiality, finishing a project, developing the writing topic, and finding other approaches), to the angst of the publishing process (critiquing qualitative research dealing with rejection and responding to criticism) and from the methodological (linking qualitative and quantitative research, and performing

participatory action research and qualitative meta-analysis) to application (generalizability in qualitative research, the politicking of research results, and qualitative research in policy development).

Rossi, Peter, Freeman, Howard, & Mark W. Lipsey. (eds.). (1999). *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*. (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications. This book targets students, practitioners, novice social researchers, public officials, sponsors of social programs as well as those who have just shown a keen interest in research. Though it might seem too elementary for the very experienced evaluators, to the less experienced ones, it provides an introduction to the range of research activities used in appraising the design, implementation, and utility of social programs. This edition includes latest techniques and approaches to evaluation as well as guidelines for how evaluations should be tailored to fit programs and social contexts. For those who may want to venture deeper into critical topics, the authors have provided references which they will find valuable.

Schensul, Jean. & Margaret D. LeCompte. (eds.). (1999). *Ethnographer's Toolkit*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press. The Ethnographer's Toolkit is designed with the novice fieldworker in mind. Dealing with a focus area that might be unfamiliar to many, the authors take the steep in explaining what ethnographic research is, what is essential about its methods, how to analyse and interpreting ethnographic research, the role of the researcher and using the ethnographic data. All this is done in a series of seven books in somewhat reader-friendly language. The author does well by using case studies, checklists, key points to remember, and additional resources to consult, help the reader fully understand the ethnographic process. The reader should not be worried should they not have a complete grasp of

the book despite its user-friendly nature due to the fact that the authors try to cover a lot of information on a topic that is quite full of details.

Stine, Robert & John Fox John. (eds.). (1997). *Statistical Computing Environments for Social Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Statistical computing has come a long way from the days when of preparing batches of cards and waiting hours for reams of printed output, to the many varied statistical computing programs we have today. This book describes in-depth seven statistical computing environments namely; APL2STAT; GAUSS; Lisp-Stat; Mathematica; S; SAS/IML; Stata. It also shows how researchers have extended one of the computing environments - Lisp-Stat to produce significant statistical applications employing graphical interfaces to statistical software. Geared towards the advanced user of statistical computing, the book can be quite resourceful since it goes through amongst the most used programs for statistical computing.

Stouthamer-Loeber, M. & Van Kammen, W. (1995). *Data Collection and Management: A Practical Guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. This book offers helpful information on managing research projects. By stressing how to use good standards for data collection and processing, the authors cover such important how-tos as planning research activities; making budgetary decisions and keeping the budget under control; hiring, training, and supervising field interviewing staff; establishing whether interviewers are ready to start interviewing; and ensuring high participant acquisition and retention rates - including techniques for locating lost participants. The book also covers the use of computerized information systems for the tracking of data collected and the data management process.

Witkin, Belle & James Altschuld. (1995). *Planning and Conducting Needs Assessments: A Practical Guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Ideal for educators, health specialists and workers in other human service area, this book is written simply and directly enough to be a hands-on guide for needs assessment users and practitioners. It is divided into two parts with focus on planning and managing needs assessments on the one hand and methods of conducting a needs assessment on the other hand. With a list of 24 recommended readings, the reader might feel the need to gather more information but will have little need to do this due to the comprehensive nature of the book.

Wong-Rieger, Durhane & Lindee David. *A Hands-On Guide to Planning & Evaluation: How to plan and Evaluate Programs in Community-Based Organizations*. Canadian Hemophilia Society. This guide diligently summarises and gives a good introduction to planning and evaluating education and prevention programs for community-based AIDS groups. In discussing things like types of evaluation to step by step guide to program design, the book covers everything for its reader. The reader will be very pleased to know that the book offers a number of practical exercises which will assist in program planning and evaluation. All in all, this is a very handy book which is recommended by anyone who is doing or planning to do planning and evaluation especially for AIDS education and prevention.

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