

Book Review

Research Methods: A Tool for Life

4th edition

2019

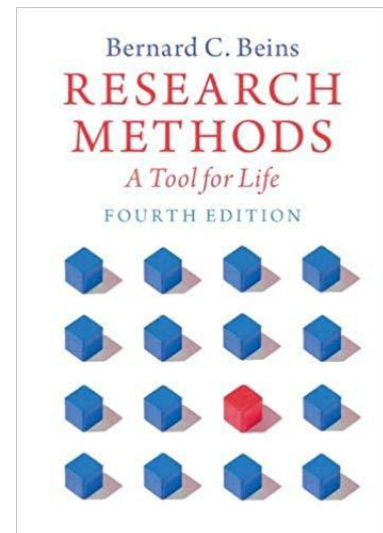
Author: Bernard C. Beins

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This book is now in its fourth edition with the earlier three editions being well-received. The book is tailored to undergraduate students and graduate research students, with useful appeal for emerging researchers.

The book was well presented, with 14 main sections divided across four Parts, ending with three useful appendices on writing a research report/paper, statistical review methods, and statistical tables.

Part One explains the understanding of research, covering a variety of important elements including the purpose and importance of research to understanding the world around us. The fundamental aspects of the growing importance of research ethics are explained, including providing high profile historical cases of unethical research practices, the legal requirements around research ethics, understanding social context, and challenging spaces such as using deception as part of a research method. The section also covers how to develop valid and robust research questions, creating research ideas, conducting literature reviews, and participant selection processes. It then broadly explains various methods for measuring and sampling for effects.

Part Two was focused on the experimental approaches. After discussing the general principles of experimentation, it goes on to explain a series of data collection methods. This section explains experimentation of single independent variables which includes discussion around dependent variables and ways to help understand the results collected. This section was followed by discussion of data collection of multiple independent and dependent variables, a space likely more familiar to most WIL researchers, including introductory discussion on statistical analysis of multiple variables.

Part Three covers correlations and non-experimental designs. It begins with explaining the understandings of using survey research and complexities within. It then expands further to explain determining correlations and predictions, including a variety of statistical tests that can be used and also covers multiple variable regressions and statistical modelling. It further explains on the differentiating correlation from causation and scientific observations from casual observations, ending with discussion around longitudinal studies.

Part Four discusses the important aspects of the tensions between culture and research. Researchers who use human participants need to remain mindful that different cultures have different ways of understanding the world around us and will use different notions to explain the significance of particular event. This section explores the need of this awareness, including cultural perspectives, ethnicity, cross-cultural concepts, minority and disadvantaged groups, gender differences, prior biasness and stereotypes, and further underlying challenges for researchers.

There are three useful appendices included that require drawing attention to. The first appendix provides good information around writing and structuring a research report, something graduate students will greatly appreciate, and the second provides further details around conducting statistical analysis. The last appendix presents statistical tables that, with today's powerful statistical software packages, will probably be seldom used, but nevertheless will still be useful for those with a deeper understanding of statistics or those preferring a more traditional approach to statistical analyses.

What was particularly appreciative of the author's writing approach within this book was that the information was presented in an easily digestible way, supported by many easily understandable examples from a variety of contexts and well-known historical events. This book will have great appeal to undergraduate students learning introductory research methods and WIL graduate students who are developing their research approach for their study. This book may also have appeal to the more established researchers who need an easy to understand research methods when are engaging with an unfamiliar research approach. This book will also be a valuable required reading resource for undergraduate and graduate research methods courses.

The author has also co-authored a related counterpart book through the same publisher that largely covers the same content material as this book, however, within the context of Psychology and with an expanded section on statistics and data analyses; Beins and McCarthy, *Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology*, 2nd edition, 2019, ISBN: 978-1-108-42311-3 (hardback) and 978-1-108-43624-3 (paperback).

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