

MARK 3220: Marketing Research

Spring 2018

Syllabus

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Course Description

This course provides the basic principles and tools in marketing research: from problem formulation to research design, and from data collection to data analysis. During this course, you will acquire the insights to translate practical marketing problems in adequate research questions. You will also obtain the skills to answer these research questions by designing an appropriate research approach, collecting data and analyzing these data using computer software. Based on these skills, you will also be able to evaluate and interpret research reports from clients' perspective.

'Learning by doing' will be an important feature of this course.

One of major objectives of the course is to give you some 'hand-on' exposure to techniques that are fundamental to most marketing research. To that end, you will conduct a small-scale research project together with a group of classmates. The project will help you understand the concepts and methods in class and prepare you for conducting large-scale research in your future career.

Prerequisites (strict)

Marketing Management (MARK2120) and Business Statistics (ISOM2500)

Method of instruction

This course consists of lectures, tutorials, group research projects, and presentations. During the lecture, we will discuss the marketing research process and the various research tools that marketing researchers use. You are expected to think critically and voice your opinions about the various research methods and conclusions that real marketing managers can draw from them. As outlined in the course grading section, your class participation will be graded. To exercise critical thinking and to improve the quality of your class participation, you will need to come to class prepared. This means you should always read the assigned materials ahead of time.

The tutorials will start during the second half of the course. During these tutorials you will get the opportunity to analyze marketing data using the SPSS software.

An important part of this course is the group research project. Based on a relevant marketing problem decided by your group, you will execute a full marketing research project. Your group is expected to present one research report in class. As outlined in the course grading, the research project forms the most important part of your grade. Hence, similar to business situations, to deliver a good research project and to not disappoint your team members, all groups members are expected to contribute equally to the research project. Any dispute should be handled amicably and among yourselves. The formation of groups will be discussed in class. Teams are meant to last the entire semester.

Reading material

Brown, Suter, and Churchill, *Basic Marketing Research: Customer Insights and Managerial Action*, **9th Edition**, Cengage Learning, - Available in the campus bookstore.

Software and survey tools

Most of the data analysis can be done in Excel. However, we will also rely on SPSS for more advanced analysis. SPSS is an intuitive, menu-based program that you can easily learn on your own. If, however, you are already familiar with a different package such as R, Stata, SAS, and Matlab, feel free to use

it. We offer tutorials on how to use SPSS. You can access to SPSS through either Computer Barn A (<http://itsc.ust.hk/services/academic-teaching-support/facilities/computer-barn>) or Virtual Barn (<http://itsc.ust.hk/services/academic-teaching-support/facilities/virtual-barn>).

For the class project, most of you will conduct survey studies. There are various ways of distributing questionnaires. Online survey is one of effective ways. There are many online survey tools available in the market (e.g. Qualtrics, SurveyMonkey, and Google Forms). HKUST students now can use Qualtrics to conduct survey studies. For instructions on creating a Qualtrics account, please check ITSC's website. Qualtrics is easy and user-friendly. You could learn how to use it by your own.

Course grading

Assignment weights

Quiz 1 (Best of three exams)	20 points
Quiz 2 (Second best of three exams)	20 points
Individual Class Participation	8 points
Group Project:	
Research Proposal	5 points
Exploratory Research	10 points
Questionnaire design	5 points
Presentation	10 points
Final Report	20 points
Marketing Experiment	2 points

Quizzes

There are three quizzes designed to assess how well you understand the course materials as the course progress. The first two quizzes take place midway while the final one takes place during the final exam period (to be scheduled). Quiz questions cover materials addressed in the lectures. Therefore, attending lectures is essential for good marks. Most of the lectures are based on the textbook, which provides more detailed explanations and cases that help you understand the concepts in class. You may find the textbook very useful when preparing for the quizzes.

We understand that personal circumstances (e.g., illness, accidents, interviews, etc.) may sometimes cause students to miss or underperform during a quiz. To help protect your grade against such unfortunate events, I will count only your best 2 (out of 3) grades. Therefore, and also out of fairness towards other students, there will not be a make-up exam.

Individual class participation

Class participation is evaluated on the quality and the frequency of your comments, i.e., on your contribution to the learning experience of the class. Note that quality is not the same as quantity. You will be evaluated according to the following guidelines:

- *Very Good*: The student provides great additional insights, gives correct answers on questions that came up during the lectures, and ask questions.
- *Good*: The student provides additional insights, gives reasonable answers on questions that came up during the lectures and asks questions.
- *Satisfactorily*: The student asks questions. Remember: all questions are relevant. So please, do not hesitate to ask your questions during the lecture, there are probably more students with the same question.
- *Unsatisfactorily*: The student disrupts the class (e.g., by chatting, not switching off mobile, arriving late), is absent or does not pay attention.
- Some discussions are neutral and not graded. For example, the instructor may call upon someone with experience in a country, culture, or company.

Group Project

The group project provides you with an opportunity to apply your learning to real-world problems. You will have better understanding of the course materials by this learning-by-doing opportunity. The group project consists of the following steps.

Step 1: Form groups and select research topic

Outputs: Group formation and research topic (**Due: 2/23, Fri, 5pm**)

- Each group consists of 4 or 5 students from the same session and hands in the group member form by February 23 after which the change of group membership is not allowed.
- Each group should have its own name to be used throughout the course. Be creative on the group name. Consider it the brand name of your group.

- Each group is expected to provide a color photo of the whole team. Please add a not indicating the corresponding name of each person in the photo.
- Each group should submit a brief summary of the topic of the project (no more than two pages), discussing the background of the topic, problem formation (decision and research problems), and plans of research design.
- In sum, the submission should include two separate files:
 - Information about the group name, each group member (official name and nick name used in the name tag), and a color photo.
 - The summary of your project topic.

Step 2: Refine research problems and design

Outputs: Research proposal (**Due: 3/9, Fri, 5pm**)

- Once you get the feedback from us, you should start working on a formal research proposal. It is recommended that you submit the proposal as soon as possible (even before the deadline) so that you can start conducting exploratory research (Step 3).
- The research proposal should include details about:
 - Problem formulation
 - ◆ What is (are) the decision problem(s)?
 - ◆ What are the research problems?
 - Research design
 - ◆ To address each of research problem, what research design and method will you adopt?
 - Plan for data collection and analysis
 - ◆ For each of the research method, how will you collect the data (e.g., who will you recruit as the participants for your interview or focus groups? How many? Through what channel)?
 - ◆ For each of the method, how will you analyze the data if you collect them?
 - Time schedule
- Please limit your proposal to three to five pages

Step 3: Conduct exploratory research, **and** draft a questionnaire for descriptive research or design an experiment

Outputs: Summary of exploratory research, and questionnaire for descriptive research or experiment **(Due: 4/6, Fri, 5pm)**

- In this step, you should conduct some exploratory research that helps you revise your research plan and design your questionnaire or experiment for more in-depth data analysis.
- Each group should submit a report with a summary of exploratory research AND a draft of questionnaire design (or experiment)
 - For each research method you used, state the objectives (what are the research problems to be addressed), provide details about how you collected the data (who are the subjects, where and how did you conduct the study), and finally interpret and conclude the results (what are the key findings).
 - It is strongly recommended that you videotape the focus group studies or depth interviews if feasible. The videos may be quite useful later (in presentation or writing the final report). You can submit one of the videos (small-sized) as part of your report.
 - Having all the results from the exploratory research, if you decide to make changes to the original research problems you started with, then you should summarize and discuss the changes.
 - The summary report should not exceed 10 pages.
 - In a separate document, please provide a draft of your questionnaire for the descriptive research in the next stage or report of experimental design. If you design the questionnaire using some online tool, please provide a screenshot of each page.

Step 4: Conduct descriptive research (or experiment) and analyze data

Output 1: Oral Presentation (5/4 and 5/7, class time)

- Each group has 10 to 15 minutes (including Q&A) to present their report. The order of the presentation will be randomized.
- The presentation should summarize the essential elements of your research project. A guideline for research presentation will be provided in the lecture (Reporting research).
- Due to time constraint, it is recommended that the presentation cover the most important points and results of the research project. Do not try to present every detail. Some minor findings or technical details can be summarized in the final report.

Output 2: Final report (Due 5/11, Fri, 5pm)

- After your presentation, each group should write up a final report that is no more than 15 pages

(excluding the appendix, cover page, and table of content). A guideline for writing project reports will be provided in the lecture (Reporting research).

- Similar to the oral presentation, the final report should cover the key process of marketing research that you have learned in class. Since the exploratory research has already been summarized in detail in the report of step 3, you should simply provide a very brief summary of the exploratory results and place the emphasis on the descriptive research or the experiment.

Remarks

- Submission on Canvas

You should submit all group assignments on Canvas. Each group should delegate one person to submit the work instead of making multiple submissions by different group members.

- Project discussions

We will provide feedback to help you improve your project. Two classes are scheduled for the project discussions: 3/2 Fri, and 4/23 Mon. You should come to the classroom and please be seated with your group members. The instructor will meet each group in the classroom to discuss the progress and resolve any questions related to the project.

- Grading

Please note that when grading the project, we will take how well you incorporate the feedbacks in the earlier steps into account. Therefore, the grade is an overall assessment of how you learn throughout the whole project.

- Peer reviews

For the research project and presentation everyone will receive the same grade. As in professional research project, every team member should invest appropriate time and effort. I realize that this may not always be the case. Hence, I have devised a peer-review system, which will give you the opportunity to evaluate your teammates' contribution to the research project. Based on the peer evaluation, I **may** adapt the grades of individual students to fairly represent their input.

Marketing experiment

In accordance with HKUST's research mission, students in all marketing courses are expected to complete a research requirement during the semester. The purpose of this assignment is to give you a brief acquaintance with the type of research conducted in behavioral sciences. You can fulfil this

requirement in one of two ways. First, by signing up for two marketing experiments. Second, by writing two-gate critiques of academic articles. You are advised not to wait until the final weeks of the semester to participate in the marketing experiment.

Course learning outcomes

Marketing research serves as a central basis for marketing strategy and firm profitability by providing information relevant to marketing decision making. It is critical for marketing managers to understand the nature of marketing research and to be able to specify what information to seek, how to get it, and how to utilize it in marketing decisions. This course is aimed to provide students with an overview of marketing research in terms of needs, definition, process, analysis, and reporting. Generally, on completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Translate management problems into tangible research questions
- Demonstrate understanding of basic concepts and methods of marketing research
- Evaluate the quality of marketing information and identify the biases in and/or the limitations of marketing information
- Identify the most appropriate research methods in various conditions
- Analyze marketing research data using the statistical software package SPSS
- Apply research results for a better marketing decision making
- Design and implement a research project that include (i) problem identification (ii) research design (iii) data collection design (iv) sampling design (v) data analysis and solution generation

Questions about the course

Your teammates are obviously your number one source of help. You will need to work together a lot. If you need any additional help, you may always contact Lily Wong, your teaching assistant. You can find her email on the first page of the syllabus. I must remind you, however, Lily assumes responsibility for many other students. Hence please respect her time. This means checking your classmates first if you are uncertain about general class issues. If there are things for which you think only I can help you, please come see me after or before class rather than send me an email. I will

come to class five or ten minutes before the class time. I also have one and half hour break between two sessions on Monday and Friday. I will gladly address your question/comment right away if I can. If not, I will set up a time to meet with you in my office.

Class schedule

Lectures are on Monday (L1 13:30 ~ 13:50, L2 16:30 ~ 18:00) and Wednesday (L1 09:00 ~ 10:20, L2 12:00 ~ 13:20) in room LSK 1001. Starting from March 13, there will be tutorials on Tuesday (18:00 ~ 19:50) to practice skills on marketing research data in room LSK G005. The detailed schedule is outlined below:

Date	Topic	Assignment and readings
2/2 (Fri)	L1. Introduction	Ch 1
2/5 (Mon)	L2. Marketing Research Process	Ch 2 and 3
2/9 (Fri)	L3. Research Design I: Exploratory Research	Ch 4
2/12 (Mon)	L4. Research Design II: Descriptive and Causal Research	Ch 8 and 9
2/23 (Fri)	L5. Data Collection I: Methods and Measurements	Ch 11 and 12 Due Feb 23: Team member from and project topic
2/26 (Mon)	L6. Data Collection II: Questionnaire Design	Ch 13
3/2 (Fri)	Project Discussions 1	
3/5 (Mon)	No class (quiz preparation)	
3/6 (Tue)	Quiz 1	
3/9 (Fri)	L7. Data Collection III: Sampling	Ch 14 and 15 Due Mar 9: Research Proposal
3/12 (Mon)	L8. Data Analysis I: Preliminary Steps	Ch 16
3/13 (Tue)	<i>Tutorial 1</i>	
3/16 (Fri)	L9. Data Analysis II: Descriptive Analysis	Ch 17 (Basic univariate statistics)
3/19 (Mon)	L10. Data Analysis III: Hypothesis Testing 1	Ch 17 (Hypothesis testing)
3/20 (Tue)	<i>Tutorial 2</i>	
3/23 (Fri)	L11. Data Analysis IV: Hypothesis Testing 2	Ch 18 (Independent and paired sample t-test)
3/26 (Mon)	No class (quiz preparation)	
3/27 (Tue)	Quiz 2	
4/6 (Fri)	L12. Data Analysis V: Regression Analysis 1	Ch 18 (Regression) Due Apr 6: Exploratory Research
4/9 (Mon)	L13. Data Analysis VI: Regression Analysis 2	Supplemental reading
4/10 (Tue)	<i>Tutorial 3</i>	
4/12 (Fri)	L14. Guest Lecture I: New marketing research methods*	

4/16 (Mon)	L15. Guest Lecture II: Marketing research case: Conjoint analysis**	
4/20 (Fri)	No class (Group project preparation)	
4/23 (Mon)	Project Discussions 2	
4/27 (Fri)	L16. Reporting Research	Ch 19 and 20
4/30 (Mon)	L17. Synthesis	
5/4 (Fri)	Student Presentations 1	
5/7 (Mon)	Student Presentations 2	Due May 11: Final Report
May	Quiz 3 (to be scheduled)	

Guest lectures

Two senior PhD candidates are invited to give talks on 4/12 and 4/16, respectively. They are experts of quantitative marketing and marketing modelling. The first guest lecturer will talk about new marketing research methods. If time permits, he may present his research on collecting and analyzing online Word-of-Mouth data. The second guest lecturer will talk about her research on gift giving behavior. She investigates gift giving behavior by conjoint analysis. When she presents her research, she may briefly introduce conjoint analysis, which is very useful and widely used technique.