MSc in International Business (2024/25)

Marketing Research and Opportunity Analysis

Professors: Roger Pagà, Mercè Roca

Office hours: by appointment
Course Type: compulsory
Credits: 3 ECTS
Term: 1st

1. COURSE PRESENTATION

Course Description

Organizational decisions must be informed by proper quantitative and qualitative research that enable the analysis of alternatives of action. In this course, students will learn the 5 steps of a market research process: 1) problem definition, 2) approach development, 3) research design formulation, 4) data gathering and analysis, and 5) report presentation.

In the *problem definition* and *approach development steps*, complex (and often risky!) decisions (e.g. should we start selling our products in a foreign market?) are transformed into more specific and measurable research questions (e.g. culturally speaking, how does the foreign market differ from the domestic one?). This is accomplished by using theoretical frameworks (e.g. the PESTLE model) as guidelines. Students will be presented with a variety of theoretical frameworks and will also be taught how to find more via database research. The goal here is for students to develop a sense for what kind of information is needed (i.e. what kind of research questions will be helpful) to make managerial decisions.

In the *research design formulation step*, a data collection methodology and a sample of participants are chosen in order to answer the previously-defined research questions. Students will learn a variety of methodologies commonly used in research, from general ones

such as surveys and focus groups, to more specific techniques for marketing and digital marketing studies (concept testing, eye tracking…). Students will also learn a variety of sampling techniques, as well as their pros and cons, so that they can evaluate the representativeness and validity of research studies.

In the *data gathering and analysis step*, students will learn how applied marketing research benefits from interpreting simple descriptive statistics and from building more sophisticated dependency and interdependency models. In the second block of the course, such statistical models will be exemplified in the contexts of consumer preference, segmentation, and positioning analysis. This will help students understand how statistics are used to ground marketing decisions.

Objectives

- Learning to transform strategic decisions into specific, measurable research questions that, when answered, allow for informed decision making.
- Familiarizing oneself with a variety of theoretical frameworks for research.
- Learning a taxonomy of research methodologies, when they should be used, and how to implement them.
- Learning how to select a sample of participants that is suitable given the constraints of a specific research study.
- Learning how data analysis serves to take decisions as exemplified by specific market research analytics techniques.
- Learning how to apply the research and opportunity analysis insights covered throughout the course in the context of all-encompassing and practical cases.

This course is included in the subject **International trade,** which includes the following learning outcomes:

The student will be able to recognise the most advanced knowledge and core competences in the organisation and management of the activities of a foreign trade department.

RA2. Mat.3.1 Identify sources of international information and documentation (public and private) on the business potential of a country and a sector of economic activity.

The student will be able to discriminate the different types of business presence to implement business activities abroad during the resolution of practical cases proposed within the master's degree.

RA3. Mat.3.2 Develop a market research project for decision making in an international business environment.

The student will be able to decide the optimal way for the company to enter international markets by participating in international negotiation processes in the professional

context.

RA4. Mat.3.3 Organise the sales force to be deployed in new markets.

The student will be able to communicate the learning of the activities proposed during the Master in a clear and unambiguous way so that specialised and non-specialised audiences understand the specificities of the subject/discipline in a clear and structured way, providing information that does not generate confusion.

RA5. Mat.3.4 Apply the rules of communication taking into account the different countries where they deploy their commercial strategy.

The student will be able to develop the ability to examine the world and its challenges with a global perspective, from a commitment to fundamental rights, social justice, democracy and the environment in order to act personally and collectively for the well-being of the planet and sustainable development.

RA8. Mat. 3.5 Integrate aspects of sustainability and corporate social responsibility into the international marketing strategy, in line with sustainable development objectives.

Related SDGs

SDG 4: Quality education
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth
SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure
SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production

2. COURSE LEARNING PLAN

Methodology

The course involves 11 three-hour sessions for a total length of 33 hours. The course is divided in two main blocks:

BLOCK 1: FUNDAMENTALS OF MARKET AND OPPORTUNITY RESEARCH

Sessions 1 to 6 will cover the more theoretical aspects of the course, focusing on the problem definition, approach development, and research design steps of the research process. Documentation summarizing each topic will be uploaded before each session. Students are expected to participate during the lectures; the goal is to achieve a dialogue between the lecturer and the students, rather than a monologue in which the lecturer talks and students passively listen to him. Most of the topics covered will include group assignments that will give students an opportunity to apply what they learnt.

BLOCK 2: MARKET RESEARCH ANALYTICS AND APPLIED METHODS

Sessions 7 to 11 will cover the practical application and quantitative part of the course, focusing on the data gathering and analysis stage of the research process. The emphasis will be on data interpretation and on drawing conclusions, rather than the mathematical foundations behind the presented statistical techniques. As such, some of the sessions will require the use of software, and the sessions will remain applied and practical.

Notice: the competences, the learning outcomes, the assessment elements and the quality of the learning process included in this Teaching Plan will not be affected if during the academic trimester the teaching model has to switch either to a hybrid model (combination of face-to- face and on-line sessions) or to a complete on-line model.

Evaluation criteria

The following elements will be evaluated and weighed to calculate the final grade of the course:

Continuous Evaluation:

- Group assignments from Block 1: 35% of the final grade
- Individual and group assignments from Block 2: 15% of the final grade

Final Exam: 50 % of the final grade. The final exam will feature a combination of multiple-choice questions and mini cases.

Students need to obtain a **minimum of 4 in the final exam** to pass the course. This condition applies to both the regular exam and the retake exam. The final course grade of students that do not obtain a minimum of 4 in the exam will be the minimum between 4 and the final grade computed from the different evaluation elements (with the weights set above).

Retake conditions

Students that fail the evaluation of the course will have a retake exam opportunity that will be programmed in accordance with the academic calendar. If a student must retake the exam, their **maximal grade for the course will be a 5,0 (out of 10,0).**

General Issues

Students are required to attend 80% of classes. Failing to do so without justified reason will imply a Zero grade in the participation/attendance evaluation item and may lead to suspension from the program.

Students who fail the course during the regular evaluation are allowed ONE re-take of the evaluation, in the conditions specified above. If the course is failed again after the retake, the student will have to register again for the course the following year.

In case of a justified no-show to an exam, the student must inform the corresponding faculty member and the director(s) of the program so that they study the possibility of rescheduling

the exam (one possibility being during the "Retake" period). In the meantime, the student will get an "incomplete", which will be replaced by the actual grade after the final exam is taken. The "incomplete" will not be reflected on the student's Academic Transcript.

Plagiarism is to use another's work and to present it as one's own without acknowledging the sources in the correct way. All essays, reports or projects handed in by a student must be original work completed by the student. By enrolling at ESCI UPF BSM Master of Science and signing the "Honor Code," students acknowledge that they understand the schools' policy on plagiarism and certify that all course assignments will be their own work, except where indicated, by correct referencing. Failing to do so may result in automatic expulsion from the program."

Content and learning activities

Session	Instructor	Topic	Activities
1	R. Pagà	**Introduction to Marketing Research (MR)** • Illustration of MR using two practical - and real- examples of international MR (Boeing and Toyota) • Definition of MR and the MR process. • Introduction on various types of MR: market potential research, brand image research, concept testing, price sensitivity research etc. Examples and discussion on how and when it is done. • Illustration of the additional complexity of international MR vs. domestic MR (Example: Mattel Barbie).	
2	R. Pagà	**First stages of the MR process: problem definition and approach development** • Illustration of problem definition and approach development (real case: the Harley brand). • Challenges and complications that may exist within problem definition and approach development: Notes: • We will deal with desk research and introduce students to some examples of databases that may be useful to them. Presenting desk research as a	**Assignment 1**: Case study on Identifying relevant theoretical frameworks and research questions.

		tool to obtain theoretical frameworks that can be useful during the approach development stage. • We will deal with how the same managerial problem can have different research problems when MR is international instead of domestic (Coca Cola example). • We will deal with some moral conflicts that may arise between MR company and client company during these stages of problem definition and approach development.	
3	R. Pagà	**Third stage of the MR process: Research designs** • Presentation of various types of research designs (exploratory vs. descriptive vs. causal). • Experiments as a form of conclusive MR: methodology and examples. • Errors that can be made when designing your MR: classification and examples	**Activity:** experimental designs
4	R. Pagà	**Qualitative research designs in detail:** • Focus groups, in-depth interviews and projective techniques. • How to implement these techniques (online and offline in the case of Focus Groups) and aspects to consider. • How to structure and analyze the data obtained from these techniques and how to obtain insights.	**Assignment 2:** experimental designs and focus groups.

5	R. Pagà	**Quantitative research designs in detail:** The focus will be on surveys and the following aspects of survey building: • Administration methods • Question structure • Question wording • Question order • Measurement scales • Survey pretesting	**Assignment 3:** survey building
6	R. Pagà	**MR in the context of digital marketing** The MR process applied to problems in the world of digital marketing: • How to increase conversion rate? • How to increase website traffic? Note: This last topic involves a short introduction to digital marketing concepts such as SEO and SEM, and covers a few market research techniques that make special sense in the digital world (e.g., eye tracking). The topic will also discuss a few things about consumer behavior in the context of website browsing.	
7	M. Roca	**Market Research Analytics:** Importance of Data Analytics, sampling plan and data gathering.	Class exercises
8	M. Roca	**Techniques for Marketing research** Conjoint Analysis an exemplification for Consumer Preference Analysis	Class exercises
9	M.Roca	**Data analysis in** Marketing research Cluster Analysis an exemplification for STP	Class exercises
10	M.Roca	**Market Research in practice 1.** Presentation of practical applications of market research analytics with the participation of ESCI-UPF alumni.	

11	M.Roca	**Market Research in practice 2.** Market Research services. Presentation by Kantar (Cristina Perez).	
EXAM	R Pagà & M. Roca	Final Exam	

Total student workload (including self-study): 75 hours.

3. PROFESSORS

Pagà, Roger: holds a PhD in Economics, Finance and Management from Pompeu Fabra University. Is a Lecturer at the Barcelona School of Management at Pompeu Fabra University (UPF-BSM). He has served as the academic coordinator of the M.Sc. in Marketing at UPF-BSM. Before joining UPF-BSM's core faculty, he collaborated with Toulouse Business School as a lecturer. He teaches both at UPF-BSM and at ESCI-UPF School of International Studies. His courses cover a broad set of topics within the area of marketing, ranging from consumer behavior, to market research, to data analysis. His scientific work places special emphasis in the areas of consumer behavior, social psychology, and decision making. He is also involved in knowledge transfer activities about the circular economy (Mercadona Chair in Circular Economy).

Roca, Mercè: holds a PhD from Leeds University Business School and a Master's Degree in Economics and Management from Universitat Pompeu Fabra. Director of the MScIB program. She is member of several active UPF research groups the ESCI-UPF Research in International Studies and Economics (RISE), the UNESCO Chair in Climate Change and Life Cycle Analysis, the MANGO Chair in CSR at ESCI-UPF, and the Business Analytics Research Group (BARG) at UPF. She is an expert in Market Research Analytics Techniques and is interested in the application of qualitative and quantitative market research techniques in the following domains: international business management and marketing; consumer/citizen behavior and decision making; sustainability, CSR, recycling and behavior; organizational practices towards sustainability; circular economy and alternative market mechanisms; the management of multiculturalism.

4. BIBLIOGRAPHY/RESOURCES/ READING MATERIALS

- Burns, A. C., & Bush, R. F. (2004). *Marketing research: Online research applications*. Prentice Hall.

- Malhotra, N. K. (2008). *Marketing research: An applied orientation, 5/e*. Pearson Education India.
- Curwin, J., Slater, R., Eadson, D. (2015). *Quantitative methods for business decisions* (7th ed.). Andover: Cengage Learn.