

SPECIAL METHODS OF BUSINESS ANALYSIS

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Abstract: Business analysis is a cornerstone of informed decision-making, enabling businesses to evaluate performance, optimize resources, and forecast future trends. Beyond traditional approaches like horizontal and vertical financial statement analysis, special methods of economic analysis offer deeper insights into complex economic processes and uncover hidden patterns. This article explores key special methods, their features, and practical applications.

Key words: factor analysis, regression analysis, cluster analysis, scenario analysis, SWOT analysis

Business analysis is the process of evaluating a company's economic prospects and risks. This includes analyzing a company's business environment, its strategies, and its financial position and performance. Business analysis is useful in a wide range of business decisions, such as whether to invest in equity or in debt securities, whether to extend credit through short- or long-term loans, how to value a business in an initial public offering (IPO), and how to evaluate restructurings including mergers, acquisitions, and divestitures

Factor analysis examines how specific factors influence an economic indicator. It quantifies the impact of variables such as sales volume, pricing, or production costs on outcomes like profitability.

Example Application: A company experiencing declining profitability uses factor analysis to determine whether rising raw material costs or reduced sales volumes are the primary cause.

Advantages:

- Identifies key drivers of performance changes.
- Supports prioritization of factors for management focus.

Disadvantages:

- Requires accurate data and a robust model.
- Complex when accounting for all potential factors.

Regression Analysis Regression analysis establishes mathematical relationships between economic variables, enabling the prediction of a dependent variable based on independent ones.

Example Application: Forecasting product demand based on consumer income levels, competitor pricing, and advertising expenditure.

Advantages:

- High predictive accuracy with quality data.
- Accommodates multiple variables.

Disadvantages:

- Demands statistical expertise and software.
- Sensitive to outliers and inaccurate data.

Cluster Analysis Cluster analysis groups objects—such as customers, regions, or products—based on shared characteristics. This method identifies segments with common economic traits, facilitating targeted strategies.

Example Application: Segmenting a customer base to pinpoint groups with high sales growth potential.

Advantages:

- Simplifies analysis of large datasets.
- Enables tailored approaches for different segments.

Disadvantages:

- Requires data preprocessing.
- Results depend on chosen clustering criteria.

Scenario Analysis Scenario analysis models different future scenarios (optimistic, pessimistic, and most likely) to assess their impact on economic indicators.

Example Application: Evaluating how rising energy prices might affect production costs.

Advantages:

- Prepares businesses for uncertainty.
- Simplifies decision-making under risk.

Disadvantages:

- Relies on assumptions that may be subjective.
- Challenging to account for all possible scenarios.

Value Chain Analysis

Value chain analysis examines all stages of product or service creation to identify opportunities for cost reduction and efficiency improvements. It highlights processes that add the most value and those needing optimization.

Example Application: Streamlining logistics to reduce transportation costs.

Advantages:

- Comprehensive approach to process evaluation.
- Uncovers competitive advantages.

Disadvantages:

- Requires detailed process knowledge.
- Relies on accurate internal data.

SWOT Analysis from an Economic Perspective An economically focused SWOT analysis evaluates a company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in terms of financial and market factors.

Example Application: Assessing the feasibility of entering a new market based on financial resources and competitive dynamics.

Advantages:

- Simple and versatile.
- Links internal and external factors.

Disadvantages:

- Subjective assessments.
- Lacks quantitative outputs.

Special methods of economic analysis provide powerful tools for in-depth exploration of economic phenomena. They enable businesses to diagnose issues, forecast outcomes, optimize resources, and develop effective strategies. However, their success hinges on data quality, analytical expertise, and the appropriate selection of methods for specific tasks. Combining multiple methods often yields the most comprehensive insights, supporting well-rounded conclusions.

By employing special methods of business analysis, businesses gain not only a deeper understanding of their operations but also a competitive edge in a rapidly evolving market.

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