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NATIONAL LEVEL SEMINAR

ON

BUSINESS RESEARCH: STATUS & THRUST AREAS

17th and 18th Feb. 2014

: Sponsored by :
BCUD,
University Of Pune

ISBN-978-81-926851-3-7

Harshvardhan Publication Pvt.Ltd

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Research And Research Ethics

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• MEANING OF RESEARCH

1. Research is a derivative of the French word; „Recherche“ means quest, search, pursuit and search for truth.
2. Research in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge.
3. It is a careful investigation or inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge.
4. It is systematized effort to gain new knowledge.
5. According to Clifford Woody research comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organizing and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and at last carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis.
6. D. Slesinger and M. Stephenson in the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences define research as “the manipulation of things, concepts or symbols for the purpose of generalizing to extend, correct or verify knowledge, whether that knowledge aids in construction of theory or in the practice of an art.”
7. Research is, an original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge making for its advancement. It is the detection of truth with the help of study, observation, comparison and experiment.
8. Research is the systematic approach concerning generalisation and the formulation of a theory.
9. The research refers to the systematic method consisting of enunciating the problem, formulating a hypothesis, collecting the facts or data, analysing the facts and reaching certain conclusions either in the form of solutions(s) towards the concerned problem or in certain generalisations for some theoretical formulation.
10. Research means mission, search, hunt, and exploration for truth. The purpose of research is to discover answers to questions or problems through the application of scientific procedures.
11. Scientific research is a systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical propositions about the presumed relations among natural phenomenon.
12. Research is a careful, critical and disciplined enquiry, varying in technique and method.

13. According to the nature and conditions of the problem identified, research is directed towards clarification or/and resolution of the problem. The purpose of research is to discover answers to questions or problems through the application of scientific procedures.

- **OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH**

The purpose of research is to discover answers to questions through the application of scientific procedures. The main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered as yet. Though each research study has its own specific purpose, we may think of research objectives as falling into a number of following broad groupings:

1. To gain familiarity with a phenomenon or to achieve new insights into it (**studies with this object in view are termed as exploratory or formulative research studies**);
2. To portray accurately the characteristics of a particular individual, situation or a group (studies with this object in view are known as descriptive research studies);
3. To determine the frequency with which something occurs or with which it is associated with something else (**studies with this object in view are known as diagnostic research studies**);
4. To test a hypothesis of a causal relationship between variables (**such studies are known as hypothesis-testing research studies**).

- **MOTIVATION IN RESEARCH**

What makes people to undertake research? This is a question of fundamental importance. The possible motives for doing research may be either one or more of the following:

1. Desire to get a research degree along with its consequential benefits;
2. Desire to face the challenge in solving the unsolved problems, i.e., concern over practical problems initiates research;
3. Desire to get intellectual joy of doing some creative work;
4. Desire to be of service to society;
5. Desire to get respectability.
6. Curiosity about unknown
7. Desire to understand the cause and effect of wide spread social problems
8. Appearance of novel and unanticipated situations
9. Desire to discover new and test old scientific procedure as an efficient way to gain useful and fundamental knowledge.

However, this is not an exhaustive list of factors motivating people to undertake research studies. Many more factors such as directives of government, employment conditions, curiosity about new things, desire to understand causal relationships, social thinking and awakening, and the like may as well motivate (or at times compel) people to perform research operations.

- **TYPES OF RESEARCH**

The basic types of research are as follows:

1. **Descriptive vs. Analytical:** Descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present. In social science and business research we quite often use the term **Ex post facto research** for descriptive research studies. The main characteristic of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables; he can only report what has happened or what is happening. Most ex post facto research projects are used for descriptive studies in which the researcher seeks to measure such items as, for example, frequency of shopping, preferences of people, or similar data. **Ex post facto studies** also include attempts by researchers to discover causes even when they cannot control the variables. The methods of research utilized in descriptive research are survey methods of all kinds, including comparative and correlation methods. In analytical research, on the other hand, the researcher has to use facts or information already available, and analyze these to make a critical evaluation of the material.
2. **Applied vs. Fundamental:** Research can either be applied (or action) research or fundamental (to basic or pure) research. Applied research aims at finding a solution for an immediate problem facing a society or an industrial/business organisation, whereas **fundamental research** is mainly concerned with generalisations and with the formulation of a theory. "Gathering knowledge for knowledge's sake is termed „pure“ or basic research." Research concerning some natural phenomenon or relating to pure mathematics are examples of fundamental research. Similarly, research studies, concerning human behaviour carried on with a view to make generalisations about human behaviour, are also examples of fundamental research, but research aimed at certain conclusions (say, a solution) facing a concrete social or business problem is an example of applied research. Research to identify social, economic or political trends that may affect a particular institution or the copy research (research to find out whether certain communications will be read and understood) or the marketing research or evaluation research are examples of applied research. Thus, the central aim of applied research is to discover a solution for some pressing practical problem, whereas basic research is directed towards finding information that has a broad base of applications and thus, adds to the already existing organized body of scientific knowledge.
3. **Quantitative vs. Qualitative:** Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e., phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind. For instance, when we are interested in investigating the reasons for human behaviour (i.e., why people think or do certain things), we quite often talk of „Motivation Research, an important type of qualitative research. This type of research aims at discovering the underlying motives and desires, using in depth interviews for the purpose. Other techniques of such research are word association tests, sentence completion tests, story completion tests and similar

other projective techniques. Attitude or opinion research i.e., research designed to find out how people feel or what they think about a particular subject or institution is also qualitative research. Qualitative research is especially important in the behavioural sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour. Through such research we can analyse the various factors which motivate people to behave in a particular manner or which make people like or dislike a particular thing. It may be stated, however, that to apply qualitative research in practice is relatively a difficult job and therefore, while doing such research, one should seek guidance from experimental psychologists.

4. **Conceptual vs. Empirical:** Conceptual research is that related to some abstract idea(s) or theory. It is generally used by philosophers and thinkers to develop new concepts or to reinterpret existing ones. On the other hand, empirical research relies on experience or observation alone, often without due regard for system and theory. It is data-based research, coming up with conclusions which are capable of being verified by observation or experiment. We can also call it as experimental type of research. In such a research it is necessary to get at facts firsthand, at their source, and actively to go about doing certain things to stimulate the production of desired information. In such a research, the researcher must first provide himself with a working hypothesis or guess as to the probable results. He then works to get enough facts (data) to prove or disprove his hypothesis. He then sets up experimental designs which he thinks will manipulate the persons or the materials concerned so as to bring forth the desired information. Such research is thus characterised by the experimenter's control over the variables under study and his deliberate manipulation of one of them to study its effects. Empirical research is appropriate when proof is sought that certain variables affect other variables in some way. Evidence gathered through experiments or empirical studies is today considered to be the most powerful support possible for a given hypothesis.
5. **Some Other Types of Research:** All other types of research are variations of one or more of the above stated approaches, based on either the purpose of research, or the time required to accomplish research, on the environment in which research is done, or on the basis of some other similar factor. Form the point of view of time, we can think of research either as **one-time research or longitudinal research**. In the former case the research is confined to a single time-period, whereas in the latter case the research is carried on over several time-periods. Research can be **field-setting research or laboratory research or simulation research**, depending upon the environment in which it is to be carried out. Research can as well be understood as **clinical or diagnostic research**. Such research follows **case-study methods or in-depth approaches** to reach the basic causal relations. Such studies usually go deep into the causes of things or events that interest us, using very small samples and very deep probing data gathering devices. The research may be **exploratory** or it may be **formalized**. The objective of exploratory research is the

development of hypotheses rather than their testing, whereas formalized research studies are those with substantial structure and with specific hypotheses to be tested. **Historical research** is that which utilizes historical sources like documents, remains, etc. to study events or ideas of the past, including the philosophy of persons and groups at any remote point of time. Research can also be classified as *conclusion-oriented* and decision-oriented. While doing conclusion oriented research, a researcher is free to pick up a problem, redesign the enquiry as he proceeds and is prepared to conceptualize as he wishes. Decision-oriented research is always for the need of a decision maker and the researcher in this case is not free to embark upon research according to his own inclination. Operations research is an example of decision oriented research since it is a scientific method of providing executive departments with a quantitative basis for decisions regarding operations under their control.

- **RESEARCH PROCESS**

Before embarking on the details of research methodology and techniques, it seems appropriate to present a brief overview of the research process. Research process consists of series of actions or steps necessary to effectively carry out research and the desired sequencing of these steps.

The research process consists of a number of closely related activities. The following order concerning various steps provides a useful procedural guideline regarding the research process:

1. Formulating the research problem
2. Extensive literature survey
3. Developing the hypothesis
4. Preparing the research design
5. Determining sample design
6. Collecting the data
7. Execution of the project
8. Analysis of data
9. Hypothesis testing
10. Generalisations and interpretation
11. Preparation of the report or presentation of the results, i.e., formal write-up of conclusions reached.

- **RESEARCH ETHICS**

- **Objectives in research ethics**

1. The first and broadest objective is to protect human participants.
2. The second objective is to ensure that research is conducted in a way that serves interests of individuals, groups and/or society as a whole.
3. Finally, the third objective is to examine specific research activities and projects for their ethical soundness, looking at issues such as the management of risk, protection of confidentiality and the process of informed consent.

- Introduction:

Research ethics involves the application of fundamental ethical principles to a variety of topics involving scientific research.

The application of fundamental ethical principles to a topics like

1. The design and implementation of research involving human experimentation, animal experimentation.
2. Various aspects of academic scandal, including scientific misconducts (such as fraud, fabrication of data and plagiarism),
3. Whistle blowing (wrongdoing within an organization to the public or to those in positions of authority); regulation of research, etc. Research ethics is most developed as a concept in all the scientific research.
4. Research in the social sciences presents a different set of issues than those in medical research.

The scientific research enterprise is built on a foundation of trust. Scientists trust that the results reported by others are valid. Society trusts that the results of research reflect an honest attempt by scientists to describe the world accurately and without bias. But this trust will endure only if the scientific community devotes itself to exemplifying and transmitting the values associated with ethical scientific conduct.

There are many ethical issues to be taken into serious consideration for research. Sociologists need to be aware of having the responsibility to secure the actual permission and interests of all those involved in the study. They should not misuse any of the information discovered, and there should be a certain moral responsibility maintained towards the participants. There is a duty to protect the rights of people in the study as well as their privacy and sensitivity. The confidentiality of those involved in the observation must be carried out, keeping their anonymity and privacy secure. As pointed out in the BSA for Sociology, all of these ethics must be honoured unless there are other overriding reasons to do so - for example, any illegal or terrorist activity.

Most people learn ethical norms at home, at school, in temple, in church or in other social settings. Although most people acquire their sense of right and wrong during childhood, moral development occurs throughout life and human beings pass through different stages of growth as they mature. Ethical norms are so everywhere that one might be tempted to regard them as simple commonsense. On the other hand, if morality were nothing more than commonsense, then why are there so many ethical disputes and issues in our society?

One reasonable explanation of these disagreements is that all people recognize some common ethical norms but different individuals interpret, apply, and balance these norms in different ways in light of their own values and life experiences.

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