

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

WHAT IS RESEARCH?

- A process for collecting, analyzing and interpreting, information to answer questions relating to a phenomenon
- A structured inquiry that utilizes acceptable scientific methodology to solve problems and create new knowledge that is generally applicable.
- A systematic method of discovering new facts, verifying old facts, their sequences, inter-relationships, casual explanations and natural laws which govern that.
- It is simply the manner in which men and women solve the problems in their attempt to push back the frontiers of human ignorance.
- A careful systematic study in some field of knowledge undertaken to establish facts
- A carefully designed activity to solve problems and to expand knowledge
- Obtaining information through empirical observations that can be used for the systematic development of logically related propositions attempting to establish casual relations among variables.
- "To know about our world"
- A systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical proposition about the presumed relations among natural phenomenon
- Therefore, the research may be defined as **"an organized, systematic, data based, critical, objective, scientific inquiry or investigation into a specific problem, undertaken with the purpose of finding answers or solutions to it."**
- In this way research provides the needed information that guides the planners to make informed decisions to successfully deal with the problems. The information provided could be the result of a careful analysis of data gathered firsthand or of the data that are already available with an organization.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

i. Controlled

It includes setting up a study in such a way that minimizes the effects of other factors on the outcome.

ii. Systematic

Investigation must be carried out following a certain logical sequence.

iii. Valid and Verifiable

Observations made through scientific method could be verified again to confirm or refute the previous findings. It indicates that whatever you conclude on the basis of your findings is correct and can be verified (confirmed) by you and others.

iv. Empirical

The results of study are based on hard evidence gathered from information collected through real life experiences or observations.

v. Critical

The procedures used for study and the methods for data collection, are free from any drawbacks.

vi. Rigorous

The procedures used to find answers to research questions are relevant, appropriate and justified.

vii. Ethical and Ideological Neutrality

The conclusions drawn through data analysis should be objective; that is, they should be based on the findings derived from actual data, and not on our own subjective or emotional values.

viii. Cumulative

Prior to the start of any study the researchers try to scan through the literature and see that their study is not a repetition in ignorance. Instead of reinventing the wheel the researchers take stock of the existing body of knowledge and try to build on it. A linkage between the present and the previous body of knowledge has to be established, and that is how the knowledge accumulates.

ix. Deterministic

Science is based on the assumption that all events have antecedent causes that are subject to identification and logical understanding. For the scientist, nothing “just happens” – it happens for a reason. The scientific researchers try to explain the emerging phenomenon by identifying its causes.

x. Statistical Generalization

Generalizability refers to the scope of the research findings in one organizational setting to other settings. Obviously, the wider the range of applicability of the solutions generated by research, the more useful the research is to users.

xi. Rationalism

Science is fundamentally a rational activity, and the scientific explanation must make sense. Religion may rest on revelations, custom, or traditions, faith, but science must rest on logical reason.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RESEARCH AND NON-RESEARCH ACTIVITY

- Meeting the above criteria as closely as possible
- Reliance on certain methods of gathering data which are valid and reliable
- Orientation to the achievement of specific goals
- Dealing the matters relating to research in unbiased way without introducing own vested interests.
- More formal set of procedures to undertake investigation (disciplined).

WHY WE NEED TO DO RESEARCH?

- To reveal the truth, to find evidence to support a theory or assertions
- To sort out research claim
- To train people in this field
- To make informed decisions
- To note trends and changes relating to a phenomenon

MOTIVATION IN RESEARCH

Possible motives for doing research may be either one or more of the following:

- Desire to get a research degree along with its consequential benefits
- Desire to face the challenge in solving the unsolved problems
- Desire to get intellectual joy of doing some creative work
- Desire to be of service to society
- Desire to get respectability
- Directive/s of government
- Employment condition
- Curiosity about new things
- Describe a social phenomenon or explain why something occurs'?

WHY CONDUCT SOCIAL RESEARCH?

Social research is a process for creating/producing new knowledge about the social world (the subject matter being human social life) that uses a scientific approach.

It requires personal integrity, tolerance for ambiguity, interaction with others and pride in doing quality work.

Social research is for, about and conducted by people.

Many reasons for conducting social research like,

- To answer practical questions (e.g. will reduction in average class size from 30 to 15 increase student writing skills?)
- To make informed decisions (e.g. should University introduce flexibility in time for administrative staff to enhance efficiency?)
- To build basic knowledge about society (e.g. why is the pass rate higher in foreigners than local students in a primary school?)