Rift Valley University
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Business Research Methods

Chapter One

We will see in this chapter

- Concepts of research
- Characteristics of research
- What motivates us to do research
- Types of research/classification
- Significance of research
- Ethics in Research

Section 1. Concepts of Research

What is Research?

Just close your eyes for a minute and complete the word *research to yourself. What kinds of images does this word conjure up for you?*

Think of the two hats you wear. What are these hats you think?

Concepts Cont'd…

1. Academic Hat-as a student who wishes to pass the exam, may be to continue to a higher level, in which you must take account of published literature.
2. Manager/consultant/practitioner/accoutant Hat-where you need to answer questions in real time, carry out research to answer vital questions for the business you are in.

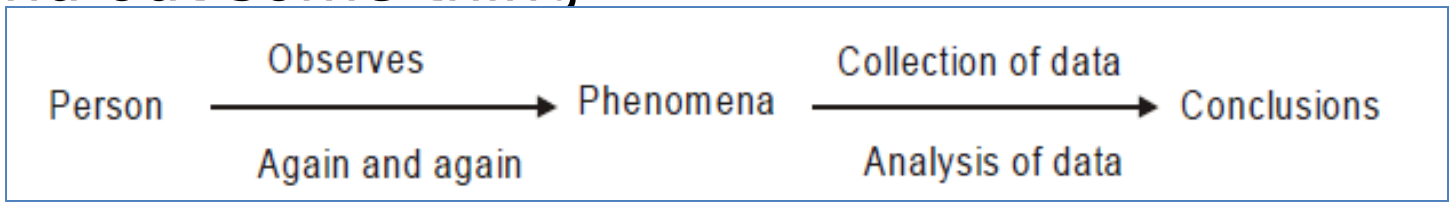
Concepts of Research- continued

What is Research?

The term **'Research'** consists of two wards:

Research = Re + Search

'Re' means again and again and **'Search'** means to find out some thing.



Therefore **research** is a process by which a person observes the phenomena again and again and collects the data and on the basis of data he draws some conclusions.

Concepts of Research - continued

- Curiosity/inquisitiveness (the desire to know about something) is the mother of all knowledge and the method, which man employs for obtaining the knowledge of whatever the unknown is research.
- We are curious to know about ourselves, our institutions, our environment, our planet, other planets and the universe.
- Questions go on arising in our mind.
  - How do such problems arise?
  - Why there is object poverty in our country?
  - Why does the performance of similar organizations vary?
  - What are causes of various business problems like recession?

Cont’d...

- Whenever questions arise, we seek answer to them.
- Whenever we encounter problems, we try to find solutions to them.
- Such seeking answers and solutions is as old as human civilization.

Some Definitions of Research

1. A systematic search for an answer to a question or a solution to a problem is called **research**

- Research simply means a search for facts- answers to questions and solutions to problems.

  - It is a purposive investigation.

  - It is an organized inquiry.

Definition of Research cont--

2. Research is the process of finding solutions to a problem after a thorough study and analysis of the situational factors.

3. Research is a structured inquiry that utilizes acceptable scientific methodology to solve problems and creates new knowledge that is generally applicable.

- Systematic and orderly (following a series of steps)
- Purpose is new knowledge, which must be reliable

- This is a general definition which applies to all disciplines.

Definition Cont'd...

When we say structured inquiry and acceptable scientific methodology : It

i. Is undertaken within the framework of a set of approaches (qualitative, quantitative--)
ii. Uses procedures, methods, and techniques that have been tested for their validity and reliability
iii. Is designed to be unbiased and objective.

Definition cont'd…

4. Research comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organizing and analyzing data; making interpretations and reaching conclusions; and last carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis.
5. Research is also defined as search for knowledge through objective and systematic method of finding solution to a problem or developing fundamental theories.

What is the Objectives/Purpose to do 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. Hence, it is actually a voyage of discovery; i.e. it is a movement from the known to the unknown.**
- **Though each research study has its own specific purpose, research objectives fall into the 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);*

Cont’d…

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).*

Section 2. Characteristics of Research

- From the above discussions, it is clear that research is a process for collecting, analyzing and interpreting information to answer questions.
- But to qualify as a research, a process must have certain characteristics as listed below:

- **Controlled:** the study must be set in way that minimizes the effects of other factors affecting relationship.
- **Rigorous:** O`ne must be very careful in ensuring that the procedures followed to find answers to questions are relevant, appropriate and justified.
- **Systematic:** the procedure adopted to undertake the investigation follow certain logical sequence. Different steps can not be undertaken in a haphazard way.

Characteristics of Research con't---

- **Valid and verifiable**: This concept implies that whatever you conclude on the basis of your findings is correct and can be verified by you and others
- **Empirical:** This means that any conclusions drawn are based upon hard evidence gathered from information collected from real life experiences or observations /Evidence based/.
- **Critical** : The methods employed and procedures used should be critically scrutinized. The process of investigation must be foolproof and free from any drawbacks. The process adopted and the procedures used must be able to withstand critical scrutiny.

Research process has eight distinct characteristics

- Research originates with a question or problem
- Research requires a clear articulation of a goal
- Research requires a specific plan of procedure
- Research usually divides the principal problem into more manageable sub- problems
- Research is guided by specific research questions, problems or hypothesis
- Research accepts certain critical assumptions
- Research requires the collection and interpretation of data
- Research is cyclical or helical

What Research is Not

1. Research isn’t information gathering which has no contribution to new knowledge.
2. Research isn’t the transportation of facts from one location to another: still with no contribution to new knowledge although this might make existing knowledge more accessible. This has missed the essence of research: **the interpretation of data.**
3. Searching out published research results in libraries (or the internet)

Section 3. Motivations in Research

- What makes people to undertake research?

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.

- factors such as directives of government, employment conditions, curiosity about new things, desire to understand causal relationships, social thinking and awakening

Section 4. Types of Research

There are different bases in classifying researches; however we will see only the most common bases and these classifications which are relevant to our syllabus.

First, there **are two broad classification** of research that follows:

- **Research in physical sciences**
- **Research in social sciences**

Cont’d…

- Physical sciences deal with things, which can be put to laboratory tests under guided conditions. These researches deal with physical phenomena upon which man has complete control.
- Researches in social sciences are based on human behavior, which is influenced by so many factors, such as physical, social, temperamental, psychological and economic.

Social Research

- It is the scientific investigation conduced in the field of social sciences and also in behavioral sciences.
- Social research is part of research, which studies human behavior on a part of society. Social research is to find explanation to unexplained social phenomena, to clarify doubts and correct the misconceived facts of social life.

Business and social research

- Business research deals with business phenomenon such as price, supply of commodity, sales, market----
- Social research deals with people who lives in society, their culture and daily life.

Classification of Research

Research can also be classified from **other three** perspectives. However, these perspectives are not mutually exclusive .

1. The application of the research study;(applied and basic research)
2. The objectives in undertaking the research ;Exploratory, Discriptive, Explanatory and Coralational
3. The type of information sought.(Quantities and Qualitative

Based on application of the research study

1.Applied/Action or Policy oriented research

- aims at finding a solution for an immediate problem facing a society or an industrial/business organization.

- Focuses on a real-life problem or situation with a view to helping reach a decision how to deal with it (specific). **Concerned with the solution to particular problems.**
- Is done to solve specific, practical questions; for policy formulation, administration and understanding of a phenomenon.

Applied Research

- It is carried onto find solution to a real-life problem requiring an action or policy decision.
- It is thus problem-oriented and action-directed.
- It seeks an immediate and practical results.
- Is to solve a current problem faced by the manager in the work setting, demanding a timely solution.
- It is a research aimed at certain conclusions (say, a solution) facing a concrete social or business problem

Applied Research Examples

- Should Corporation X adopt a paperless office environment?
- Apple’s iPod sales increased by 200% from 2001 to 2008. but the sales **decreased** by 6% in 2009. What is the reason for this decrease?

The question is: what will apple do about this problem?

Basic Research

2.Basic research (fundamental, pure research)

- It is undertaken for the sake of knowledge without any intention to apply it in practice, i.e. “gathering knowledge for knowledge’s sake”.
- It is also known as pure or fundamental research.
- It is undertaken out of intellectual curiosity.
- It is not necessarily problem oriented.
- It aims at extension of knowledge.
- It may lead to either discovery of a new theory or refinement of an existing theory.
- adds to the already existing organized body of scientific knowledge

Basic Research Example

- Is executive success correlated with high need for achievement?
- How does motivation affect employee performance?
- How to improve the effectiveness of information systems?
- How to integrate technology into the overall strategic objectives of an organization?
- How to increase the productivity of the employees?
- How to increase the effectiveness of small businesses?

Cont'd...

- The main **distinction** between applied and basic business research is:
- **Applied research** is specifically aimed at solving a currently experienced problem; it is a research done with the intention of applying the results of the findings to solve specific problems currently being experienced in the organization
- **Basic research** has a broader objective of generating knowledge and understanding of phenomena and problems that occur in various organizational settings.
- **Both types of research follow the same steps of systematic inquiry to arrive at solutions to problems.**

Classification based on Objectives/purpose of the study

- **Descriptive Research**
- **Correlation Research**
- **Explanatory Research**
- **Exploratory Research**

Based on Objectives/purpose of the study

- **Descriptive Research/***Ex post facto research* : Attempts to describe systematically a situation, problem, phenomenon, service or program, or provides information about, say, living condition of community, or describes attitudes to wards an issue.
- More concerned with facts.
  - Presents a profile of a group or describes a process, mechanism or relationship or presents basic background information or a context.

    E.g.: General Household survey – describes demographic characteristics, economic factors and social trends.
  - surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds.

  ❖ The researcher has no control over the variables; he can only report what has happened or what is happening.

Classification based on Objectives/purpose -continued

- **Correlational Research:** attempts to discover or establish the existence of a relationship/ interdependence between two or more aspects of a situation.

Classification based on Objectives - continued

- **Explanatory Research:** attempts to clarify why and how there is a relationship between two or more aspects of a situation or phenomenon.

- Seeks explanation of observed phenomenon or behavior. Explain about theories, principles and laws
  - goes beyond simple description to model empirically the social phenomena under investigation.
  - It involves theory testing or elaboration of a theory.
  - Used mostly in basic research.

Classification based on Objectives- continued

- **Exploratory Research:** is undertaken to explore an area where little is known or to investigate the possibilities of undertaking a particular research study.
  - to generate some initial idea about the phenomenon.
  - Goal is to generate many ideas.
  - Develop tentative theories and inference.
  - Become familiar with the basic facts, people and concerns involved.
  - Formulate questions and refine issues for future research.
  - Used when little is written on an issue.
  - It is the initial research.
  - Usually qualitative research

Classification based on the type of information Sought

- **Quantitative Research**: is applicable to phenomenon that are measurable so that they can be expressed in terms of quantity.
- **Qualitative Research**: is concerned with qualitative phenomenon. Research designed to find out how people feel or what they think about a particular subject is a qualitative research. It is important in the behavioral sciences where the aim is to discover underlying motives of human behavior.

Quantitative versus Qualitative

Quantitative Research Strategy

1.Investigation aims to assess a pre-stated theory (Deductive Reasoning)

- Often involves hypothesis testing

2.Attempts to minimise the influence of the researcher on the outcome

3.Quantitative data infers statistics.

4.Data collection therefore requires ‘closed’ responses

Qualitative Research Strategy

1.Investigation aims to create a novel theory (Inductive Reasoning) (Create Theory)

2.Researcher becomes an inherent part of the study - *ethnography*

3.Qualitative data infers complex statements or opinions

4.Data collection therefore permits ‘open’ responses

Cont’d…

- It is usual for business research to mix methods of data collection. One reasons for this is **“triangulation”** methods enriches the collected data. **Triangulation** provides a check on findings from particular methods.

Section 5. Significance of Research

- Research inculcates scientific and inductive thinking and it promotes the development of logical habits of thinking and organization.
- Research becomes an important aid in solving operational problems. This is due to the increasingly complex nature of business and government. Furthermore, research is helpful aid in economic policy.
- Research provides the basis for nearly all government policies in our economic system.

Significance of Research cont---

- Research has its special significance in solving various operational and planning problems of business and industry.
- Research is equally important for social scientists in studying social relationships and in seeking answers to various social problems.
- Research may mean careerism or a way to attain a high position in the social structure particularly for those students of Masters or PhD.
- Research may mean a source of livelihood/support for those professionals in research methodology.

Significance of Research cont---

- Research may mean the outlet for new ideas and insights for philosophers and thinkers.
- Research may mean the development of new styles and creative work to literary person.
- Research may mean the generalization of new theories to analysts and intellectuals.

Section 6. Ethics in Research

- In doing any research there is an **ethical responsibility** to do the work honestly and with integrity. If you do not conduct your work in an ethical manner you will fail. This will apply to all stages of the research cycle.

Ethics in Research-continued

- Ethics in research refers to a code of conduct of behavior while conducting research.
- Ethical conduct applies to the organization and the members that sponsor the research, the researchers who undertake the research, and the respondents who provide them with the necessary data.

Ethics and Research

- The members that sponsor the research should do it in good faith, pay attention to what the results indicate, and pursue organizational rather than self-interest.
- Ethical conduct should also be reflected in the behavior of the researchers who conduct the investigation, the participants who provide the data, the analysts who provide the results, and the entire research team that presents the interpretation of the results and suggests alternative solutions.

Unethical acts

- Being selective in sampling
- Not reporting survey response/participation rate
- Deliberately biasing the data collection instruments
- Falsifying the results
- Trimming- removing data that does not fit in with your analysis
- Biased or inappropriate analysis
- Plagiarism- passing off someone else's work as your own
- Intimidating respondents and reporting what they are willing to.

Intimidate= make fearful