

A Comprehensive Study of the Process of Social Science Research

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Abstract

Social science research refers to the researches associated with the various social sciences, such as, History, Political Science, Social Anthropology, Public Administration, Economics etc. The passion of man is to know the unknown and to explore the unexplored. It has led him to understand the phenomenon, the problems and their various causes. Every social science has its specific problems to be understood by the concerning social scientists and scholars. However, the problems cannot be understood overnight, and it takes a lot of time to study and understand them. The process under which the problems of various social sciences are studied scientifically with the specific purpose to interpret the cause and effect relationship of a problem is called the process of social science research.

Research requires objectivity on the part of the scholar. Until and unless there is objectivity on the part of the scholar, no legitimate research can be made. Observation is another determinant of social science research, and it is only through observation that the researcher can feel the real causes and effects of the problem.

There are certain specific steps of social science research that needs to be observed strictly while carrying out research in a social science. The steps that make the scientific study of a social possible include- selection of the problem, study of the related literature, content analysis of the related literature, formulation of hypothesis which includes both the alternative and the null hypothesis, determination of the study area, number of the units of information, type of sample, tools and techniques and pre-testing of the too, collection, classification, analysis, interpretation and tabulation of data, and generalization focusing the causes and effects of a certain problem.

The paper is based on the secondary data, and hence a theoretical study. The findings reveal that social science research plays a dominant role in the study and understanding of a problem, and that it is only through the social science research that the problems relating to various social sciences can be understood.

Keywords: Social Science Research.

Introduction

"12 Steps of Research"

1. Identify the research question
2. Initial review of literature
3. Distilling the question to a researchable problem
4. Continued review of literature
5. Formulation of hypothesis
6. Determining the basic research approach
7. Identifying the population and sample
8. Designing the data collection plan
9. Selecting or developing data collection instruments
10. Choosing the method of data analysis
11. Implementing the research plan
12. Interpreting the results

Widely speaking, research is of two types, namely, the physical science research and the social science research. The physical research studies the physical phenomena, while the social research studies the

society at large including all the social problems and events that occur in society. Scientific method is the soul of both of the types of research, and it helps the researchers study and understand the physical and social phenomena. Social science research relates to the understanding of the social problems for the sake of a control over them. Every hour millions of events keep occurring around the world. Some of them are positive, while some others are negative. Both the types of events need to be studied for the sake of their understanding. Both the types of research approve the observation method so that the real nature, causes and effects of the problems to be studied can be understood properly.

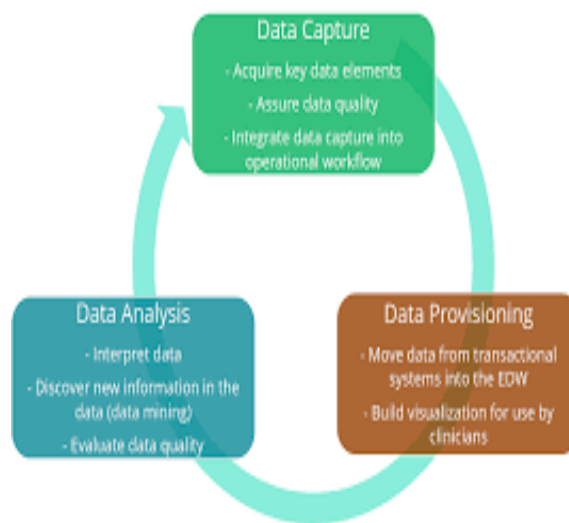
The social science research relies in observation, objectivity and data based studies. A social scientist begins with the selection of the theme on which the study is to be made. After much consideration, he selects some title having explored the research gap. In order to get a sufficient feedback of the problem, he needs secondary data available in the related literature which he finds through various sources of the secondary data. The researcher makes a content analysis of the studies selected for the purpose. The review writing is made under a process which suggests 7 steps-



The study of the related literature widens his knowledge of the subject and allows him to have an idea about the various aspects of the problem. Not only this, it also helps him formulate a hypothesis about the study area where the study is to be carried, number of units of information, population, sampling and sample size to be taken into consideration, and tools and techniques that help him collect the primary data from the units of information belonging to the study area.

Then keeping in view the specific objectives set for the study, he moves on to the collection of

primary data which he collects by using schedule, questionnaire, interview, case study techniques etc. as the case may be.



After the collection of the data, the process of data analysis begins. For the analysis of the data, first the data are classified into various categories in accordance with their nature and the responses of the units. Later, they are analyzed using the various mathematical and statistical tools like the measures of central tendency (Mean, Median, Mode), Quartile Deviation, Mean Deviation, Standard Deviation, Index, Correlation, Range, Skewness, Regression etc. For the analysis of the data from different angles, there are various statistical tools, and it depends on the researcher what tools he adopts for the purpose of the analysis. After the data analysis process, they are imparted a presentable form through the use of tables and graphs which are interpreted accordingly for the sake of understanding them keeping in view the conveyance of the readers. The researcher ends his study with the findings and conclusions making a generalization on the theme selected for the study.

Objectives of The Study

1. To discuss the necessity and relevance of research
2. To distinguish between the physical and social science research
3. To focus on the social science research
4. To be familiar with the various aspects of social science research
5. To discuss the process of social science research
6. To discuss in detail how to select the title for research after finding a study gap
7. To interpret the importance of the review of literature for research in social sciences
8. To study the significance of the objectives in social science research
9. To discuss the importance of hypothesis in social science research
10. To brood over the importance of observation
11. To discuss the various methods of research
12. To interpret the population, sample and sample size in social science research

13. To interpret the various techniques of data collection
14. To discuss the relevance of classification, analysis and interpretation of data
15. To suggest how to arrive at findings and conclusion making generalization

Review of Literature

Shalini Prasad, Ajith Rao and Eeshoo Rehani (2001) in *Developing Hypothesis and Research Techniques* gives special consideration to the null hypothesis... It is probably because the null hypothesis relates to the statement to be tested, whereas the alternative hypothesis relates to the statement to be accepted if the null hypothesis is rejected. The final conclusion, once the test has been carried out, is always given in terms of the null hypothesis.

Amitav Banerjee and Suprakash Chaudhury (2010) in *Statistics without tears: Populations and samples* finds that drawing a random sample from the target population is the most challenging aspect of fieldwork. The reason is that some sampling bias occurs in almost all studies and it spoils the spirit of research. The ultimate decision on whether the results of a particular study can be generalized to a larger population depends on it.

Barbara Kawulich (2012) in *Collecting Data Through Observation* asserts that observation, particularly participant observation, has been the hallmark of much of the research conducted in anthropological and sociological studies and is a typical methodological approach of ethnography. The teacher researchers, social workers and psychologists generally collect data using observation.

Umar Farooq (2013) in *Social Research Methodology Meaning, Definition & Objectives* specifies the objectives of social science research as academic objectives and utilitarian objectives. Academic objectives of Research are-to find new propositions, to discover new facts, and to propose and intimate knowledge for academicians, while the Utilitarian Objectives are to find the various causes for problem, to provide principles of problem solution, and to give remedies for a social problem.

Haiying Long (2014) in *An Empirical Review of Research Methodologies and Methods in Creativity Studies (2003–2012)* finds that (a) Creativity research is predominantly quantitative and psychometrics and experiment are the most frequently utilized quantitative methodologies, (b) judges are employed frequently to assess creativity and correlational techniques are utilized most widely to analyze quantitative data, (c) case study is the most frequently used qualitative methodology, (d) most mixed-methods studies are rooted in quantitative methodology, and (e) both creativity and gifted education research are dominated by quantitative methodologies.

V. S Binu, Shreemathi S. Mayya, and Murali Dhar (2014) in *Some basic aspects of statistical methods and sample size determination in health science research* observe that statistical methods are in studies with much of planning, designing, collecting data, analyzing and drawing meaningful interpretation and report the findings. Hence, it is important on the part of a researcher to know the concepts of all basic statistical methods. This helps the researcher in the conduct of an appropriately well-designed study leading to valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the population.

Sandeep B Bavdekar (2016) in the paper *Formulating the Right Title for a Research Article* asserts that title is the gateway to the contents of a scientific article. The editors and reviewers begin with the reading of the first part of a manuscript. It is the title that brings the readers closer to the article, and that makes them deduce its relevance. The title of the article plays a vital role and decides its success and failure. It is the appropriateness of the title that prepares the readers to go through the contents thoroughly. Therefore, it is suggested that the authors should take efforts to choose an informative, appropriate and catchy title for their research article.

Hamed Taherdoost (2017) in *Determining Sample Size; How to Calculate Survey Sample Size* observes that the sample size is a significant feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample. In order to generalize from a random sample and avoid sampling errors or biases, a random sample needs to be of adequate size.

Ritu Agrawal (October 3, 2017) in *Meaning and Significance of Social Science Research* observes that social science deals with the study of society and the relationship among individuals within society. It includes business, sociology, commerce, demography, etc. Social science research provides authentic information to the people. Social science research is the master key over all the problems, as it focuses on the fact that if we are able to find the root cause of any problem, we can find the more effective solution to it.

Marie Stenseke & Anne Larigauderie (2018) in their article entitled *The role, importance and challenges of social sciences and humanities in the work of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES)* observe that building integrative approaches has long been acknowledged as a scientific challenge. The study suggests that new paths should be forged, including revisiting basic ontological and epistemological considerations..

Hypothesis

1. Research is the natural instinct of man
2. Man is curious to know the unknown and to explore the unexplored
3. Both physical science research and social science research are important to understand the physical and the social phenomena
4. For both of the types of research, there is a prescribed research process

5. Physical science research and social science research have different approaches
6. The methodology adopted by the social scientists is different from the methodology adopted by the physical scientists
7. The tools and techniques in social science researches are different from the tools and techniques used in physical science research

Research Methodology

The paper is secondary data based study. For the purpose of the study, first the theme was selected; secondly, a serious search was made for the various sources of the secondary data that could allow the authors to grasp the spirit of research and particularly of the social science research; thirdly, a few studies relating to the title and theme were selected for the thorough study to move forward; fourthly, content analysis was made keeping in view the nativity of the authors, objectives, hypothesis, tools and techniques, findings and conclusions; fifthly, views and ideas of the various eminent social scientists were considered; sixthly, a draft was prepared using the previous knowledge of things relating to the theme; seventhly, the contents were shaped up accordingly in order to impart it a legitimate form.

Major Findings, Conclusion & Suggestions

1. Curiosity to know the unknown, discover the undiscovered and explore the unexplored has ever since been there
2. Social science research which is different from the physical science research, studies the social phenomena
3. Social science research has a specific research design based on the scientific method
4. The process of social science research includes the steps, such as, selection of the title, study of the related literature, setting of objectives, formulation of hypothesis, determination of the study area where the research is to be carried out, determination of the number of units of information through sampling, determination of techniques of data collection, adoption of method, collection, classification, analysis and interpretation of data and generalization
5. The title of the study should be appropriate enough to reflect the contents and spirit of the work
6. The objectives of the study should be specific enough to reveal the dimensions of the study
7. Both the alternative and the null hypothesis are important.
8. It is the null hypothesis on which the research is made
9. Population refers to the total units at a place where the study is carried out; sample refers to the selection of the representative units encompassed for the study; sample size refers to the percentage of the representative units
10. Sample size should be moderate so that the results may be fairly applied to the whole
11. Observation being the spirit of research needs to be adopted by the social science researchers for the sake of understanding the problem

12. Schedule, questionnaire and interview are some of the common techniques of social science research
13. Schedule is used for the researches covering a limited accessible geographical area, while questionnaire is used for the researches relating to the wide area
14. Interview allows the researcher to understand the social problems and to find their solutions on the basis of face-to-face interaction with the units of information
15. Classification of the data helps the researcher to categorize the data in accordance with the nature of data
16. Analysis of the data needs to be made using the statistical tools like the measures of central tendency, regression, correlation etc.
17. Conclusion should be drawn keeping in mind the objectives with which the study is carried out

In a word, social research has an approved process through which it is carried. The steps of social research includes- selection of the problem, study of the related literature, content analysis of the secondary data, review writing, setting of aims and objectives, formulation of hypothesis, adoption of research design and methodology, determination of study area, units of information, sampling method and size, and tools and techniques.

Data play a dominant role in the social science research. Both the primary data and the secondary data are used for the purpose. The secondary data helps the researchers get a feedback of the problem to be studied, while the primary data collected through certain research techniques impart authenticity to the research work. The aim of social science research is to interpret the cause and effect relationship. Keeping the purpose of research, the researcher focuses throughout on exploring causes of the problem being studied, and their effects on the society at large. On the basis of the study of the focused group belonging to a certain study area, the researcher finally arrives at fruitful findings and conclusions. Interpreting the cause and effect relationship, he finally generalizes the issue.

Thus, there is a specific process for the study of the problems falling into the category of social sciences. It is only through this process that the scientific study of the various issues and problems is possible. For the sake of keeping up and maintaining the scientific spirit of research, the rigid inclination to the steps prescribed and approved for research, is essential.

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