Innovation The Research Concept

Sources of Secondary Data for the Research in English Literature

Abstract

In every research data plays a pivot role. Generally research gets an identity on the basis of the primary data as something new is explored through the primary data. However, it cannot be denied that the secondary data too has an important role in research. It is true that in the researches relating to the physical sciences and social sciences, the primary data is given the priority, and the secondary data is almost ignored. However, in the study of languages and of the literatures in particular, it is the secondary data available in the journals, theses, books, magazines, biographies, autobiographies etc., that helps the researcher arrive at some meaningful and fruitful conclusion. The researches in the field of the English literature too fall in this category. Especially in India, the research scholars of the English literature depend mainly on the secondary data relating to the authors selected for the purpose. The primary data becomes secondary and the secondary data becomes primary.

The research paper is theoretical, and it emphasizes the role of the secondary data in the researches in the English Literature. The paper covers all the aspects of research, and deals in particular with the sources of the secondary data.

Keywords: Primary Data, Secondary Data, Generalization, Research Methodology, Biographies.

Anita Sharma
Principal & Head,
Deptt.of English,
Vivekanand Girls' College,
Dholpur, Rajasthan

Introduction

Research can be defined as the search for knowledge, or as any systematic investigation, with an open mind, to establish facts, usually using a scientific method. The primary purpose for applied research (as opposed to basic research) is discovering, interpreting, and the development of methods and systems for the advancement of human knowledge on a wide variety of scientific matters of our world and the universe. Scientific research relies on the application of the scientific method, a harnessing of curiosity. This research provides scientific information and theories for the explanation of the nature and the properties of the world around us. It makes practical applications possible. Scientific research can be subdivided into different classifications according to their academic and application disciplines.

Artistic research, also seen as 'practice-based research', can take form when creative works are considered both the research and the object of research itself. It is the debatable body of thought which offers an alternative to purely scientific methods in research in its search for knowledge and truth. Historical research is embodied in the scientific method.

Rajesh Kumar Sharma
Head,
Deptt.of Sociology,
Govt. Girls' College,
Dholpur, Rajasthan

Types of Research

The goal of the research process is to produce new knowledge. This process takes three main forms –

1. Exploratory research, which structures and identifies new problems
2. Constructive research, which develops solutions to a problem
3. Empirical research, which tests the feasibility of a solution using empirical evidence

Research can also fall into two distinct types:

1. Primary research (collection of data that does not yet exist)
2. Secondary research (summary, collation and/or synthesis of existing research)

In social sciences and later in other disciplines, the following two research methods are applied, depending on the properties of the subject matter and on the objective of the research:

Qualitative Research

Understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior.

Quantitative Research

Systematic empirical investigation of quantitative properties and phenomena and their relationships.

The research in social sciences generally falls into the category of both the qualitative and the quantitative research, as through them the researcher tries his best to understand the behaviour of the selected units of information that vary in accordance with the nature of the research and also tries to explore and study those reasons that govern such behaviour of the units.

Research is often conducted using the hourglass model Structure of Research. The hourglass model starts with a broad spectrum for research, focusing in on the required information through the methodology of the project), then expands the research in the form of discussion and results. There are several important aspects to research methodology. Steps of the scientific method are shaped like an hourglass - starting from general questions, narrowing down to focus on one specific aspect, and designing research where we can observe and analyze this aspect. At last, we conclude and generalize to the real world.

In a legitimate scientific study of any problem in social sciences, all the steps of scientific method are strictly observed. The chief concern of the researcher is to find out the causes and results of the problem and then to analyse the cause and effect relationship of the problem in a way that he can arrive at some generalization.

Classification of Data

Data can be classified as primary data and secondary data. In a scientific study the researcher uses both the primary data and the secondary data.

Primary Data

Primary data is the data explored and collected for the first time by the researcher. It is all original, authentic and unpublished. The primary data is the soul of a research. It has a pivot role to play in research, as it is only through the primary data that the researcher explores something new about the problem to be studied.

Secondary Data

Secondary data is the data taken by the researcher from secondary sources, internal or external. The researcher must thoroughly search secondary data sources before commissioning any efforts for collecting primary data. There are many advantages in searching for and analyzing data before attempting the collection of primary data. In some cases, the secondary data itself may be sufficient to solve the problem.

The sources of the primary data used by the researcher are the schedule and questionnaire covering all the major aspects associated with the problem and interviews of the concerning people associated with the research problem and the study area,

For the secondary data, the books, journals, research projects, theses, and obviously the concerning sites of the internet are used. Hence, both the primary and the secondary data are used in the

study. The observation method is adopted for the sake of the scientific spirit of the work.

Research Process

Generally, research is understood to follow a certain structural process. Though step order may vary depending on the subject matter and researcher, the following steps are usually part of most formal research, both basic and applied:

1. Observations and Formation of the topic
2. Hypothesis
3. Conceptual definitions
4. Operational definition
5. Gathering of data
6. Analysis of data
7. Test, revising of hypothesis
8. Generalization.

Right from the first step, that is, observation and formation of the topic, to the last one, that is, generalization, all the steps of scientific method are observed by the researcher.

A common misunderstanding is that by this method a hypothesis could be proven or tested. Generally a hypothesis is used to make predictions that can be tested by observing the outcome of an experiment. If the outcome is inconsistent with the hypothesis, then the hypothesis is rejected. However, if the outcome is consistent with the hypothesis, the experiment is said to support the hypothesis. This careful language is used because researchers recognize that alternative hypotheses may also be consistent with the observations. In this sense, a hypothesis can never be proven, but rather only supported by surviving rounds of scientific testing and, eventually, becoming widely thought of as true. A useful hypothesis allows prediction and within the accuracy of observation of the time, the prediction will be verified. As the accuracy of observation improves with time, the hypothesis may no longer provide an accurate prediction. In this case a new hypothesis will arise to challenge the old, and to the extent that the new hypothesis makes more accurate predictions than the old, the new will supplant it.

Sources of Data for the Research in English Literature

Texts Written by the authors themselves

The first source of data that provides help to the researchers of English Literature in India are the texts, that is, the books and other writings written by the authors themselves. The English literature texts are available in the form of prose, poetry, drama, fiction and literary critism. All the texts written by the author or in which the selected author is referred to, serve as the secondary data.

Thesis

The theses written by the other scholars previously let the researchers of the English literature peep into the life and the making of the authors with a view to learning a great deal about them for the purpose of research.

Dissertations

The dissertations equally help the researchers of the Engllish literature to have an idea of the author selected for the purpose. One can find

glimpses of the work and life of the author selected for the research.

Research Journals

Research journals provide the latest subject stuff to the researchers who pursue research in the field of the English Literature. Research journals provide reviews that serve as a feed back to the scholars.

Biographies

Biographies are the life histories of the literary personages. They help the researchers peep sufficiently into their life and learn a great deal about their contribution to the various trends in the English Literature.

Autobiographies

Autobiographies are the life history and the description of the major events of the life of the authors written by the authors themselves. They are the most authentic source, as it is believed that what the author says of himself is correct.

Manuscripts

Manuscripts are the hand-written compositions made by the author himself or by some other person or persons on behalf of the authors. Manuscripts too are considered to be authentic.

Interviews

The interviews of some of the literary figures preserved help the research scholars of the English literature see the authors face to face through the means of media. It also helps them understand the literary personality of the authors.

Objectives of the Study

1. To have an idea about the various types of research
2. To compare the researches in the field of physical sciences, social sciences and literatures
3. To understand about the nature of the researches in the literature
4. To focus on the various trends in the field of the researches in English Litereature
5. To explore the various sources used to collect the primary data
6. To explore the various sources used to collect the secondary data
7. To study the importance of the secondary data in the research in English literature

Hypothesis

1. There are various types of research with different types of trends about them
2. The research methodology of the physical sciences is different from that of the social sciences and literature
3. In the researches of the physical sciences, primary data plays a pivot role
4. In the researches of the social sciences, primary data is considered important
5. In the researches of literature, secondary data is considered authentic
6. The secondary data for the researches in the English Literature is available in books, magazines, journals, biographies, autobiographies, manuscripts and on the various internet sites.

Research Methodology

The study is purely theoretical based on the literature available in books, journals and other sources. For the purpose of the study, reviews were interpreted, and the sources of the secondary data were kept into consideration. On the basis of the reviews, the conclusion was made. However, for the sake of the scientific spirit, all the steps were observed. The various books written on the research methodology provided help to the scholar understand the difference between the research in the physical and social sciences and in literatures. The material surveyed directly in this review was gathered and selected between June 2005 and February 2007, through a combination of means, including Internet searches on key words, suggestions from colleagues, bibliographical trails, and personal knowledge and experience. I with a number of overview studies of adult learning, including Edwards et al. (1998), Cullen et al. (2002), and in particular found Tusting and Barton (2003) and Zachry and Comings (2006) very useful.

Review of Literature

There should be a much greater emphasis on formative assessment than is found in the school sector" (Skager, 1978).

Apart from this isolated recommendation, the earliest explicit reference found to formative assessment in relation to lifelong or adult learning was in Boud (2000), though relevant work published since then is much more likely to use the term.

A relatively unsystematic approach is supported by Black and Wiliam (2003) who acknowledge the complexity of research reviews in social science and the difficulties of producing „objective syntheses" of research findings, and the dangers of the accidental but systematic exclusion of relevant material, particularly in fields which are under-theorised and not well-defined.

Recent research on teaching and learning in schools has raised powerful objections to these narrowly-focussed political goals for education and the current methodologies for assuring the quality of provision in schools, on the grounds that they do not work as well as viable alternative approaches to both pedagogy and to performance measurement and accountability to the taxpayer (Black and Wiliam, 1998, Black et al., 2002).

Learning as attaining objectives depicts knowledge as fixed and externally-defined while learning as the construction of knowledge conveys knowledge as fluid, open to reconstruction to aid understanding and in need of „reworking" by students so that it makes sense to them (Hargreaves, 2005).

Conclusion

The research in any literature and especially in the English literature is not a child's play. It requires much pains, sense of understanding and interpretation and imagination on the part of the researcher in the English literature. The research in English literature in India brings certain problems to the researchers as they are almost ignorant of the real life world of the authors. They get the feedback just from the books they read in their courses. Moreover,

most of the scholars fail to reach the core of the writings written by the English authors because of their unfamiliarity with the language of the author actually used by him.

For the researches in the English literature, secondary data is generally used by the scholars, and that some of the critics consider the self-written texts of the authors primary sources. In addition to the texts, the autobiographies, biographies, thesis, dissertations, newspapers, magazines etc. provide sufficient stuff of research to the researchers of the English literature. In India in particular, the researches in the English literature are based on the secondary data, and not on the primary data. However, the researchers of the Indo-anglian literature are sometimes successful in collecting primary data provided the author is alive or his or her family members are ready to supply the required data.

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