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Module: Research Methodology

Level: Master 1

Lecture: 01

Types of Research

1/Pure Research, known as fundamental or Basic research: Tavakoli (2013) argues that fundamental research aims to acquire knowledge for its own sake, producing abstract theories with no practical application. It investigates issues relevant to theoretical or empirical positions, driven by curiosity, interest, and intuition.

Eg: Understanding language acquisition

2/Applied or Action research: Action research addresses real-world problems using empirical knowledge and methods, focusing on people and organizations, rather than generalizations and theories in basic research.

Eg: Improving teaching tools and methods

The difference between Applied and Fundamental Research: In applied research; the researcher has an explicit goal that is linked to a real-world problem in mind. This distinction between the two approaches does not mean they are completely separated. The main goal of pure research is to advance new knowledge by identifying new theories and ideas without which applied research will have no solid theoretical undergound. In terms of the usability of the findings, results from pure research have no immediate use and often can be generalized, while there is always a clear current use of conclusions attained by applied research.

3/Descriptive Research: Descriptive studies aim to provide accurate profiles, classifications, and descriptions of phenomena by answering questions like who, when, where, and how. They are objective, and highly systematic, it is the reason why most of the articles found in scientific journals are descriptive in nature.

Eg: Analyzing population in educational setting, factors like age, ethnicity, socioeconomic background

4/Correlation Research: Tavakoli (2013) defines correlation research as non-experimental research that investigates the relationship between two or more variables. It aims to quantify the relationship between variables through quantitative statistical analysis, rather than focusing on causality, thereby enhancing understanding of the interdependence between variables.

Eg: Exploring educational level of students.

5/Explanatory Research: Explanatory research investigates observed phenomena, problems, or behaviors to clarify causality and predict future findings, but its prediction-based nature makes it unfavorable in many scientific domains.

Eg: The impact of a new teaching method on student's learning engagement

6/Exploratory Research: Understanding a problem is half the solution, and recognizing it is often the hardest part. Here comes the importance of exploratory research which is crucial where the subject is very new with little or no previous knowledge, or simply no one has yet explored it.

Eg: Understanding teachers' attitudes toward technology integration

Literature Review:

A literature review is described as a written summary of books, journal articles, and different documents all of which account for the current state of knowledge about a certain topic (Creswell, 2012). However, such kind of definitions to literature review takes a narrow perspective considering it as a mere recount and duplication of an existing body of knowledge. Compounding the matter, many university students and novice researchers commit the same mistake by reducing the section of literature review to a simple restatement of facts, making their work repetitive. Kumar (2011, p.32) indicates that “ The literature review is an integral part of the research process and makes a valuable contribution to almost every operational step. It has value even before the first step; that is, when you are merely thinking about a research question that you may want”. Kumar’s view aligns with the idea that a literature review should not be considered a mere step in research but an activity that has to be undertaken from the very onset of research.

Functions of Literature Review

Conceptualization: It is crucial in research as it involves developing clear, rigorous, and systematic definitions for abstract ideas. This process requires extensive reading and consulting experts to refine abstract constructs into theoretical definitions. During conceptualization, researchers should not write formal literature reviews but rather engage in deep, thoughtful, and reflective reading to consider various perspectives and make decisions about the research process.

Feasibility of a Research: A feasibility study is a research piece that aims to determine if a study can be done. It involves conducting a literature review to determine if a research problem has been addressed before. This review helps identify potential complexities and resources available. Experienced researchers prioritize this stage to ensure effective and efficient research, as it helps them make informed decisions about the feasibility of their study.

Broadening / Limiting Research: Research often involves addressing important sub-questions or problems, involving a literature review to outline studies and set boundaries. Decisions to define a study can limit or expand the researcher's original idea.

Understanding the Current State of Literature: Literature reviews are essential in research, as they provide a comprehensive understanding of a topic through a state-of-the-art review, highlighting research gaps, and critically evaluating and synthesizing the literature. They are typically found at the beginning of research papers, such as

journal articles, dissertations, or doctoral theses. However, they are often underestimated by students and novice researchers, who view them as mere summaries of sources. The goal is to find a research gap, a problem or question not addressed by existing studies. This process involves searching and summarizing relevant sources, comparing and contrasting them, critically evaluating each source's contribution to the literature, and integrating all information before providing sound arguments that reflect the current state of the topic.

Refining Research Methodology: A study's practical part is crucial for producing new reliable knowledge. A literature review is necessary to make decisions about methodology and previous works. The goal is to achieve effectiveness and efficiency while avoiding potential issues. Questions include previous research, reasons for choosing approaches, sample, sampling techniques, and data analysis procedures.

Establishing Conceptual Framework: Research in academia is a complex task that requires a long-term, comprehensive plan. Researchers must make decisions throughout the research process, ensuring they are logical, consistent, and unified. A conceptual framework is a system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs the study. It ensures that all parts of research work together to achieve the desired goal, ensuring that the research is well-informed and logically sound.