

Business Research Methods



Chapter 2:

Literature Searching and Theoretical Framework

Research Problems

Meaning

A research problem is simply a question or issue that a researcher wants to understand or solve through a systematic investigation. Similarly, it is any situation where a gap exists between the actual and the desired ideal state. Hence, a research problem is often defined as heat of the research process.

The research problem is necessary because:

1. It provides direction and focus for the research study by clarifying the purpose and goals of the investigation.
2. It helps to determine the relevance and significance of the research study by establishing a connection between the gap in existing knowledge and the proposed study.
3. It guides the selection of research methods, data collection techniques, and data analysis methods that are appropriate for answering the research question.
4. It allows for a systematic and structured approach to conducting the research, leading to more reliable and valid results.

In summary, the research problem serves as a roadmap for the research

study and is crucial for ensuring the success and impact of the investigation.

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Criteria of a Good Research Problem

A good research problem should have the following criteria:

1. **Relevance:** The research problem should be relevant to the field of study and address an important issue or question.
2. **Originality:** The research problem should contribute new knowledge or information to the field and not duplicate existing studies.
3. **Feasibility:** The research problem should be feasible to investigate using available resources and within a reasonable timeframe.
4. **Specificity:** The research problem should be well defined and clearly stated, with a specific purpose and objectives.
5. **Measurable:** The research problem should have specific and measurable outcomes that can be assessed.
6. **Appropriateness:** The research problem should be appropriate to the level of expertise and experience of the researcher and the

resources available.

7. **Clarity:** The research problem should be clear and unambiguous, with a defined scope and boundaries.
8. **Ethical Soundness:** The research problem selected should be met ethical consideration. It means a very important topic of research cannot be considered feasible unless it is accordance with the ethical guidelines.

These criteria help ensure that the research problem is well-defined, important, and can be successfully addressed through a research study.

Example of research problems

Examples of research problems include:

1. What is the impact of social media on adolescent mental health?
2. What is the relationship between climate change and species extinction?
3. How effective are current education policies in improving student achievement in underprivileged schools?
4. What is the impact of technology on communication patterns in the workplace?
5. What is the relationship between physical activity and heart disease?
6. How do economic and political factors impact the development of renewable energy sources?
7. What is the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions in reducing stress and anxiety in college students?
8. Can we get the gap in the market that we can exploit?
9. Finding out the ways to increase efficiency.

These are just a few examples of the many research problems that can

be explored in various fields of study. It is important to note that a research problem should be well defined and specific, and it should address a gap in existing knowledge or understanding.

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What is Literature review?

A literature review is a comprehensive survey and critical evaluation of existing research studies and scholarly writing on a particular topic. Similarly, A literature review is a summary and analysis of current knowledge about a particular topic or areas of inquiry.

It provides a summary, classification, comparison, and evaluation of previous research, with the purpose of identifying gaps and suggesting future directions for research. The literature review serves as a background for a new research project, helping to establish its significance, context, and relationship to previous work in the field.

In summary, a literature review is a crucial component of any research project, providing the foundation for the new study and helping to establish its context and significance within the field.

Essentials or Importance of Literature Review

The importance of a literature review lies in its ability to provide context, background, and significance to a new research project. It serves several key purposes:

1. Identifying gaps in the research: A literature review helps to identify gaps in existing knowledge and to determine areas where further research is needed.
2. Establishing the significance of the research: By reviewing previous research on the topic, a literature review helps to establish the significance and relevance of the new study.
3. Informing research design and methodology: A comprehensive literature review provides the basis for informed decision-making in the design and methodology of a new study.
4. Building on previous research: A literature review allows a researcher to build on the work of others, avoiding duplication of effort and contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the field.
5. Demonstrating the breadth and depth of knowledge: A well-conducted literature review demonstrates the researcher's familiarity with the relevant literature and their ability to critically evaluate the available information.

6. Supporting the validity of the research: By establishing the context and background of the research, a literature review helps to support the validity of the study and its conclusions.
7. Developing new theories and hypotheses: By identifying gaps in existing knowledge, a literature review can lead to the development of new theories and hypotheses, providing the basis for future research.

8. Providing a basis for comparison: A literature review allows researchers to compare their findings with those of previous studies, to determine similarities and differences and to identify areas for future research.
9. Improving research methods: A literature review can highlight the strengths and weaknesses of previous research methods and inform the development of improved methods for future research.
10. Supporting interdisciplinary research: A literature review can provide a comprehensive understanding of research from different disciplines, supporting interdisciplinary collaboration and the integration of findings from different fields.
11. Improving the quality of research: A comprehensive and well-conducted literature review helps to improve the quality of research by providing a sound foundation for the design, methodology, and analysis of the study.
12. Facilitating knowledge transfer: By synthesizing the existing knowledge on a topic, a literature review can facilitate the transfer of knowledge from one generation of researchers to the next, contributing to the cumulative advancement of knowledge in the field.
13. To develop theoretical framework: One of the most important parts of literature review is that it provides base for developing a detailed theoretical framework. It further helps in

formulation of hypothesis.

14. To update on current issues: A literature review is instrumental in findings out the empirical or theoretical issues of a particular area of research. These issues are constantly changing due to the dynamism in environment. These current issues come into the sight of researcher through literature review.

In conclusion, the literature review is a crucial aspect of the research process that provides the foundation for the new study, informs the design and methodology, and contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the field.

Steps in the Literature Review

Literature review is a systematic process of identifying published and unpublished work from secondary data source on the topic of research. The major steps in literature review process are given below:

Identification of source:

One must be extremely cautious in selecting and reading work related to the research topic. In this regard, the first step of literature review involves selecting its sources. Quality of literature review depends upon the source of information you choose. Some of the major source of data are textbook, journals, thesis, reports, internet, etc.

Searching for literature:

Spending time on the defined sources such as library or online resources is the next step in literature review. Electronic Journals, Full text

database, abstract data base helps to broaden your knowledge in regard to research topic.

Reading and evaluating the literature:

The selected literatures are now read and evaluated. The title of the articles, abstract and introduction, etc. should be studied to identify the right resources. Sometimes. Literatures must be critically analyzed.

Documenting the literature review:

The next step is about compiling the relevant literature. It is important because:

- The theoretical framework will be structured in the work already done and will add to the solid foundation of existing knowledge.
- It will convince the reader that researcher has in depth knowledge about the topic.

Types of Literature

The major types of literature are:

a. Primary Literature.

Primary Literature refers to a set of unpublished research, private correspondence and conference proceedings.

b. Secondary Literature.

Secondary Literature refers to the set of published books, articles, journals, magazine, etc.

c. Tertiary Literature.

Tertiary Literature is basically is a gateway to secondary source. It

includes encyclopedias, dictionaries, citation indexes, catalogues, web-based portals and databases.

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What is research hypothesis?

A research hypothesis is a statement that proposes a possible explanation or prediction for a research question or phenomenon. It is a tentative assumption that is tested through research to determine its validity.

A research hypothesis typically consists of two parts: the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis. The null hypothesis is a statement that there is no significant difference or relationship between the variables being studied. The alternative hypothesis is a statement that there is a significant difference or relationship between the variables being studied.

Formulations of Research Hypothesis

A number of approaches are adopted for formulating hypothesis. A few of them are discussed briefly:

Discussion:

Discussing with experts about about a particular problem and their objectives helps to formulate hypothesis.

Through Internal Data:

Going in-depth through the internal data can be one key way to

formulate hypothesis.

Literature review:

Conduct a review of the relevant literature to identify what is already known about the research question and to identify any gaps in knowledge.

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Interview:

Conducting interview with the concerned person in the subject matter can help to formulate research hypothesis.

Preconditions of Research Hypothesis Formulation

The primary preconditions of research hypothesis formulation are listed as follows:

1. Hypothesis must develop relationship between variables. The relationship should involve at least one independent variable and one dependent variable.
2. Hypothesis should be capable of empirical verification.
3. Hypothesis must be conceptually clear, definite, and certain.
4. Hypothesis must be specific, and prediction indicated should be spelled out.
5. The hypothesis should be related to a body of theory and should possess theoretical relevance.

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Types of Research Hypothesis

There are different types of research hypotheses that can be formulated depending on the nature of the research question and the type of study being conducted. Some common types of research hypotheses include:

1. **Directional hypotheses:** These hypotheses predict the direction of the relationship between the variables being studied. For example, "Increased exercise will result in decreased body weight."
2. **Non-directional hypotheses:** These hypotheses do not predict the direction of the relationship between the variables being studied. For example, "There is a significant relationship between exercise and body weight."
3. **Null hypotheses:** These hypotheses state that there is no significant relationship between the variables being studied. For example, "There is no significant relationship between exercise and body weight."
4. **Alternative hypotheses:** These hypotheses propose that there is a significant relationship between the variables being studied. For example, "There is a significant relationship between exercise and body weight."
5. **Descriptive hypothesis:** It is a type of research hypothesis that aims to describe a phenomenon or a population. It is a statement that proposes to describe the characteristics,

behaviors, or relationships of variables without making any predictions or judgments. Descriptive hypotheses are often used in exploratory or observational studies that seek to understand a particular phenomenon in greater detail.

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Difference between research question and Hypothesis

Research Question	Hypothesis
Focuses on a problem or issue that needs to be addressed	Proposes a tentative explanation for the relationship between two or more variables
Describes the broad topic of the research study	Makes a clear prediction about the relationship between the variables being studied
Often exploratory in nature	Testable and can be supported or refuted by empirical evidence
Aims to gather information and generate new knowledge	Aims to explain or predict a phenomenon based on existing knowledge or theory
Provides the basis for developing the research study	Provides the framework for testing the research question
Can be open-ended or closed-ended	Typically stated in a declarative sentence

“A problem well defined is a problem half solved” Explain.

A problem well defined is a problem half solved" is a popular saying that highlights the importance of defining a problem clearly in order to find a solution. This saying suggests that if you can clearly and precisely define a problem, then you have already made significant progress towards solving it.

Defining a problem well involves identifying the underlying causes of the problem, defining the scope of the problem, and specifying the desired outcomes or goals. When a problem is well defined, it is easier to identify potential solutions, prioritize them, and develop a plan of action to implement them.

On the other hand, if a problem is not well defined, it can be difficult to know where to start, what information is needed, or what actions to take. A poorly defined problem can lead to wasted time and resources, ineffective solutions, and frustration for all involved.

Therefore, taking the time to define a problem well is an important first step in any problem-solving process. By doing so, you can increase the likelihood of finding a successful solution and reduce the risk of making costly mistakes.

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What is Theoretical Framework?

A theoretical framework is a set of concepts, ideas, and assumptions that provide a structure and guide for research studies. It is a systematic and comprehensive explanation of how different variables and factors are related to each other and how they influence the research problem. A theoretical framework helps to provide a theoretical perspective for the research, helps to clarify the research problem, and guides the selection of research methods and data analysis techniques.

A theoretical framework is typically developed based on a review of existing literature and research studies related to the research problem. It may also include theories from related fields that are applicable to the research problem. Theoretical frameworks can be used to test hypotheses or to provide a conceptual framework for exploring the research problem.

Necessity of framework in research studies

- A theoretical framework is an essential component of research studies.
- It provides a theoretical perspective for the research and helps to clarify the research problem.
- It guides the selection of research methods and data analysis techniques.
- It provides a structure for organizing and analyzing data,

particularly for complex research studies.

- It builds on existing knowledge and theories related to the research problem.
- It ensures that the research study contributes to the broader knowledge base in the field.
- A well-developed theoretical framework is necessary for researchers to conduct effective and meaningful research studies



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