PANEL DISCUSSION:
How to Conduct a Succesful Research from Scratch to The End

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Abstract
This panel discussion was one of the sessions in The International Multidisciplinary Perspective Research in Education and Social Sciences (IMPRESS21) conference that took place on 7-9 September 2021. This discussion aimed at giving an idea for the beginning level researcher on how to start from scratch to end and how to go through the stages of social science research. First, panelists emphasized the importance of choosing a new and original topic, then considering and feasibility of the research, then how to conduct an effective literature search and how to choose an appropriate statistical method. It is important to be in touch with reality when designing and conduction research in the sense that you may encounter some unpredictable results and problems. Therefore, it is always better to consider and plan ahead of time where, how, and with whom you will choose your subjects and conclude your research studies. Novice researchers are afraid of interoperating the results. Panelists encourage them to be open-minded and take the liberty of interoperating their results. The panel members were Professor Sefa Bulut (Ibn Haldun University, Başakşehir, Istanbul, Turkey) whose work focuses on the trauma and school violence relationship, and Assistant Prof. Thseen Nazir (Ibn Haldun University, Başakşehir, Istanbul, Turkey), whose specialization focus on school bullying and prevention studies, and Professor Ahmed Alay (University Of Preston, Peshawer Campus), and now an Emeritus Professor.

Keywords: Choosing research topic; statistical methods; research methods

1. Introduction

In order to improve the human life and having sustainable growth research is becoming important need and trend in the 21st century. The demand for research and researchers is growing day by day globally and it is not limited to scientific fields alone but in modern times, it is the need of every branch of the field. In order to grow in sustainability and understand our environment, research is the important process which current generation must understand its importance and need of the hour. Majority of students carrying an unnecessary research either phobia or feel it boring field, which is connected with numbers also. However, research is much more then this and is a vital part of any individual who want to grow and achieve things. Conducting research, research orientation, and rational capacity to understand any phenomena is one of the important parts of a student's academic carrier, and without it, one's academic life is incomplete. Understanding the research process and each step is important for every academician and

every research need to follow these steps in research. Generally, the new beginners such as undergraduate students as well as masters and Ph.D. students are excited about being part of a research team or initiating their research projects. However, they do not know how to start and how to progress from then on. Every curriculum around the globe is having some compulsory courses, which are completely research oriented and impart the basic knowledge need in understanding research and research processes. However, unfortunately the Phobia students carry towards these courses hinder their learnings during the course.

A student must have a scientific intellect and must be open to research and counter the fears generally students are having towards research. Whenever students come through word research, they start assuming that it is only all about statistics, huge data, and numbers. Many students are having phobia towards such a field and they trying their best to choose shortcuts and trying to avoid such encounters.

Such kind of research fear makes them escapers and they do not learn much from the process itself as they choose the narrow escapes and often you will see such students running here and there to ask others for advice and even they are unable to choose the research topic for their thesis. Even such students before deciding or choosing the topic they quickly jump to the methodology without completely understanding the phenomenon. So here, what we want to bring into focus is that students must avoid research phobia and must understand the research process first. In this paper, we would like to discuss How to Conduct a Successful Research from Scratch to the End and will share some of our personal experiences and encounters, which can help students to understand research and research process.

2. What is Research?

The process of research begins with a question and understand about that question. Because before starting to find the solution or answers for your research question one must have knowledge and understanding of what had been done by other researchers about this question and how it had been done so one can pick up from that point.

One of the most important components is the researcher's personality that is his attitude, imagination, tolerance, promotion of science, curiosity, and to solve problems and develop the latest methods to achieve terminal goals. The framework is the basis of new ideas. One may conclude that the main objectives may be achieved through a scientific approach. Conceptually, exploratory behavior is the main pillar of research. It means to search and research. Find out something novel, then again search: research, search then repeat that research. Why one is involved in this process of search, and research. The main objective is to solve the problem, to recommend effective ways to settle down the issues.

Probably the best thing for beginning research is to keep a diary and take notes. As you continue to your daily routine, make sure to keep jotting down your research ideas. Another good way of finding a research topic is action research, you have to observe your surroundings, classes, school gardens, hallways, buses, market place or even TV to identify some problem areas that you or your family or friends are faced with. Therefore, we suggest that your research can help people to solve a problem or address an issue. The pragmatic approach is very important that some of the students, teachers, or related parties can benefit from your results. You must provide a "rationale" for your research. Like, why you are doing this, why it is needed? Is it needed? What for you are doing this piece of research? Who would benefit from it? You have to set the foundation for this particular research. You have to explain the possible relationships among your variable, you have to have a possible prediction or a possible explanation for your study. This explanation should be feasible, logical,

and doable. This will give you a clear idea of your intention and you will be able to explain the importance and potential generalizability of the study.

3. Choosing Topic

While choose or deciding the topic a student must have a very broader vision in terms of the variables which S/he is going to study in his research. We had come through with such wide experience where students have almost zero understanding of their thesis topics. Once they choose the topic either, a friend suggested it or it looks fancy and attractive but they themselves have no idea about it. Many students after going through a thorough literature review realize the complications and then with struggles and frustrations they want to change the research topic. Changing the topic is not an issue but changing it after months and because of complications is a wastage of time and resources. Instead of deciding a topic without understanding research, variables, and their complications one must have a thorough literature review early and discuss it with the supervisor in detail before finalizing the topic.

Once you have identified some possible research topics then you should proceed to read on that topic and on that concept, what has been done so far. We especially suggest students to read a couple of classical textbooks, and then read the most recent articles published in the last 5 years. While students are reading the research publications, they are becoming familiar with the concepts, authors, methodology, instruments, and style of the research. This is important for mental preparation and development of some expertise about the chosen topic. Literature reading can be a challenging job, you would realize that researcher has done everything possible could be done. Nevertheless, if you continue to read and search carefully, you will come up with some literature gaps or you may introduce new concepts, new instruments, or cultural aspects to your own research. This is the "Ahaa moment". When you find a topic to stick to it, then you can save a lot of mental energy and get the stress out of your shoulder.

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literature review early and discuss it with the supervisor in detail before finalizing the topic.

4. Considering Realistic Constrains

There also some constrains which a student must take in consideration while choosing the research topic in terms of time, resources, sample availability, demographic constraints, etc. Many students want to decide a topic, which in terms of the above-mentioned aspects are not feasible for them. Usually, sometimes students realize after months that my research will take much longer time than early expected. For example, conducting research in the health sector or in schools where we need proper permission from concerned authorities and ethical committee approvals. Such a process even can take months and without those permissions and approvals, research work cannot proceed. One may have a great idea to conduct research regarding nursing homes, orphanage, rape victims, prison populations, children, adolescents, pregnant women and students with disabilities, for those population has special characteristics, those are different than mainstream population or they live in institutional care, and student may not be able to find them, reach them and meet them. Therefore, one must do a "reality check ", sometimes obtaining research permission from a governmental entity, or institutions can be very difficult, if not impossible, but time-consuming. Therefore, action planning is very important to do before ahead of time. Thus, it is always good to have a contact person, a person that one knows from your previous experience or a friend or an acquaintance.

Therefore, such frustrations may seem coming unexpectedly and many students lose their interest in such situations. However, if such situations had been planned much earlier can be beneficial and can help to save time and resources. In addition to this sample and access to the sample must be planned well as sometimes reaching the sample for collection of data can give challenges and later many students regret because of such challenge. Another important aspect related with time is the "convenience"; particularly if a student is masters or Ph.D. student and time is limited or the scholarship or other such supports are time bound, and a student want to get the research done as soon as possible. Therefore, research timing, beginning, and research place, the population that you want to reach, the institutions, the number of people you want to choose as a sample and most importantly your financial resources could be feasible to get through this. Timing is also important because if you are planning to conduct your research in schools or universities, they have a certain time plan to follow. Student cannot get good results at the beginning of the semester or and of the semester. One has to consider vocation times, exam periods, etc.

5. Methodology Related Decisions

Methodology is one of the pivotal parts of any research, which means a system of methods, which any research follows to achieve its results. These scientific methods guide the direction of our research and each type of research topic need specific types of methods in order to be researched. These specific techniques guide researcher and help him to identify, process and analyses the information's about his research topic. The methodology is determined by the nature of the problem and it is decided according to the need of the topic in order to get proper results. Usually there are different types of methodology and which one to select is completely determined by the nature of the research topic. However, due to the misunderstanding, inconvenience or finding easy way to out many students go for qualitative research and keeping sample size too low. This misconception among students make them believe that qualitative research is easy, a few interviews or semi-structural interviews will serve the purpose of their research, and unfortunately, this is a myth. Qualitative research can be appropriate for certain populations and certain topics. This type of research is aimed at generating information and understanding the phenomenon, or the meaning of particular action. Thus, it is not very applicable to ordinary research. On the other hand, we use qualitative research to understand the marginal people, disadvantaged people, people who have a special experience such as trauma, rape, etc., people who are culturally different from us, and people who have an extraordinary life. In addition, qualitative research is "not only qualitative research", there are different types of research approaches; each approach has its underlying dimensions and its power to generate new information. Students who are going to use qualitative research have to take research design classes as well as at least one "qualitative research" course. Thus, is very important to decide your methodology while you are doing reading.

On the other hand, quantitative methodology, there are many types of statistical analysis. It depends on the aim that what we are going to do in research, planning of a design, or search and survey, prevalence study, epidemiological study, comparing two or more groups, or factor analysis, or looking at the relationships between two or more variable, etc. Students have to decide what we are going to do, what is the main intention for doing research. One may use a couple of statistical methodologies together; there is no problem with that. Accordingly, we have to decide the number of subjects, based on our chosen methodology, which is called "power analysis", how many subjects you need for that particular statistics.

6. Approvals and Consents

After deciding topic, methodology, and statistical analysis, a student should do a short literature review and come up with some research problems or hypotheses. Then write to an institutional research

board (IRB) permission and ethical committee approval. This is somewhat new, and every researcher need to do that especially when we are doing research with humans. Researcher have to obtain this official permission in written format and have to attach it at the end of printed thesis, even sometimes the journals might ask it. Besides that, researcher have to receive a consent form from all of the participants who are part of the research. If research involved minor, meaning under the age of 18, then researcher have to obtain a consent on consent form from parents as well as from the minors.

7. Instruments and Confidentiality

One of the important aspects of the research is the instruments, surveys or questionnaire. It is important that whatever instruments you have chosen be supposed to be age appropriate. The instrument must be developed for that age group, norm and standardization studies are done and psychometric properties have been conducted in that specific culture or country. This is fundamentally important. Again, researcher need to check the items if they are all positively worded, easily understandable, the reader can easily understand, the font of writing is good enough, etc. A researcher must do his own pilot study himself, watch the subjects how long does it takes, are they comfortable answering the questions, can they easily understand and answer them and answer any possible questions.

These instruments must give clear and motivational instructions and must be written clearly at the top of the instrument. Moreover, before administering the instrument or collection of any kind of data a researcher must provide a good and convincing explanation about why he or she is doing this research, who would benefit from it, and they are helping other people by filling out the instrument. Sometimes it can be appropriate to give some bonus, or some monetary help, or gift cards or college credits to subjects to increase their motivation level but it is not necessary and depends on the research funding of the researcher.

Another important issue is confidentiality of the data, personal information's of the participants and the purpose of the results. If researchers are asking people their experience of smoking, drug usage, sexual experience, or anything related to political attitudes, etc., a subject may get uncomfortable with that. Thus, explain that you do not ask names or you do assign numbers to them as a code and this way it will be impossible to identify them as person. Say that, your answers are not taken into account but we will use the total answers. None else can see the survey forms and results, except researcher, and researcher will not share the information with anyone else. After entering the date, researcher will destroy the hard copies, data will be fed in computer with a password to enter, and no one else would have access to it. Once researcher

explained the issue of anonymity and confidentially, the comfort level would be increased, and subjects will fill out the survey and answer wholeheartedly.

These days in technological advancements there is a new fashion of online surveys, electronic forms of surveys etc. When they first appeared, it was fun to fill out and try them, a lot of people and students were willing to take part in the research projects, but unfortunately nowadays, especially after the pandemics students and ordinary people are receiving a couple of surveys every day and it no more remained fun and people lost interest. Generally, people are fed up with this kind of online surveys, they do not intend to fill out or simply mark and pass without even reading and consideration or they do not answer it. The survey receivers will only answer the questions if it is related with them or have any meaning for them. The response rate is extremely rare, so researcher must consider these issues in collecting online data and must be careful. Again, if you can find a contact person or a person from this school, university or NGO that would ease your effort.

8. Conclusion

In the nutshell we want to conclude that, chose a topic that has special meaning for a researcher himself. Chose a topic that will explore some new and trending issues, and can help people with new findings, and people can benefit from it, or at least the policymakers can utilize these results. Chose a sample population that researcher knows, or have some degree of familiarity with that. Do not forget that as a psychologist, counselor or educator our job is primarily to increase the quality of life, quality of education and be mindful of those who have disadvantaged positions because of poverty, disability, or location. Therefore, the purpose of the research should be geared toward helping people, understanding, and increase their living standards and learning opportunities. Therefore, we cannot just collect the data, write our report, and say goodbye to these people. We have a responsibility to address their problems, find solutions or find agencies or institutions that they can benefit from. On a psychological level, it is our primary responsibility to empower and enlighten those people who have shared their innermost feelings thoughts, and answers. Moreover, maybe the best thing is to make it a part of the study, as making is a follow-up session or another follow-up study. In that sense, we can also drove more personal satisfaction and that research can be more meaningful for all of us.

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Citation

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