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Approaching Research

Importance of Social Science Research in Higher Education



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The purpose of doing research in any field is mainly to create new knowledge. In the process of creating new knowledge, taking into consideration of the existing knowledge available in that field is the concern of every researcher. This is usually done in the name of review of literature. Research conducted in the areas of pure science and technology will be having immediate application. This is because, in scientific research cause – effect relationship is well established. Experimentation is the main focus here. That is how we can see so much of advancement in science and technology, and the findings are having universal application.

Whereas researches conducted in the areas of social sciences have got certain limitations. Because, these sciences change with time and circumstances. They offer theories to explain only phenomena that may or may not be true. Hence, it is very difficult to generalise the findings. That is why; it is the general observation that the quality of researches in social sciences is not very much satisfying. This can be attributed to many aspects such as; difficulty in the collection of the required sample size, no confidence with respect to the construction of tools which fits in to the expectations of the respondents, not good in selecting the appropriate research design/methodology, limitations with respect to the analysis of the data using the

appropriate statistical techniques, difficulty in interpreting the findings within the frame work of objectivity which leads to overcome the issues in the existing problem or to improve the present situations for the better.

In this context, the researcher of social science should be more responsible in selecting the appropriate research topic. All topics/areas in social science are not suitable for worthy research. According to Dr. Susann V. Getsch, a psychologist, “Your research topic is the foundation on which everything else rests, so it’s crucial to choose carefully. You can’t do anything else until you figure out the basic focus of your topic”. In my opinion, the robustness of the research in social science depends mainly on the research methodology followed in the study. Dr. Linda Crawford, a faculty in Walden’s PhD programme suggested several tips to get into research methodology; “the methodology that’s used comes from the research question, not from your personal preferences for one design or another.” She recommends refraining from choosing between a qualitative or quantitative methodology until the researcher formulates the research questions”. The researcher should determine what kind of research design and the methodology that can best fit into the research questions. “If your questions include words such as “explore,” “understand,” and “generate,” it’s an indication that your study is qualitative. Whereas words such as “compare,” “relate,” or “correlate” indicate a quantitative study. The design comes out of the study, rather than being imposed on the study”.

Thus, the researchers of social science should have better mind set to select the suitable, challenging and need based topic and possess the technical knowledge about the research methodology followed by the suggestions from experts in the field to carry on the research. By referring to good books on research methodology, good research articles published in refereed journals and interaction with the subject experts will make them confident to produce quality research.

