

S. S. Jain Subodh Management Institute

MBA IInd Semester, (Model Paper & Suggested Answers)

Subject: Research Methods in Management

Paper Code: M-206

Time: 1 Hour

Max Marks: 10

****Attempt any two out of three.**

Q1. What is the purpose of Research in Management & why is it important to study Business Research? What makes the Research Scientific discuss the principles which characterize a scientific perspective?

Q2. Explain the main elements that have an impact upon the research process. Out line and explain the main steps in the research process.

Q3. What is a Research Design? What are the types of Research Designs? Explain and illustrate using examples.

Model Answer Sheet:

Q1. The purpose of research in management is,

1. To find answers to questions.
2. Explore and understand behavior and social life.
3. Increase the accuracy of results.

Thus it is clear that using research is adopting a scientific way of doing work. For this purpose, logic and reason is used to fulfill the main objectives of research.

These objectives are:

1. To find out new facts.
2. To test the existing facts.
3. Identifying cause-effect relationships.
4. Developing new scientific tools, techniques and concepts.

Why is it important to study business research?

Today, business operates in a fast-paced decision-making environment. The use of business research helps us to deal with the problems or opportunities that need a management decision. Managers constantly require information in increased quantity and enhanced quality. Yet, this information has to be sorted out otherwise we shall face the modern malady of information

overload. Managers need improved techniques and tools to deal with their unique informational needs.

Importance of studying business research

Better tools & techniques for Data collection. Collection of relevant information, Improved methods of analyzing information and avoiding information overload will result in better and more information for the manager who takes better decisions resulting in Competitive Advantage , improved problem solving and better use of opportunities.

Importance of Business Research

Research is important to any business organization:

- To stay competitive in the market
- To accurately identify or understand its customers
- To scrutinize its rivals in the industry
- To analyze and emulate key strategies
- To keep abreast on all aspects of the business

4-4

The Scientific Perspective

A ‘perspective’ is a set of related concepts and symbols that we can use to select from all the potential aspects of an object or event which can be observed.

Thus, a perspective helps us to select and organize our views of an object or event and guide our actions e.g. your perspective on ‘BEAUY’ may be very different from that of your friends.

What makes for a Scientific Perspective in Management Research?

Let us examine some of the principles which are characteristic of the scientific perspective:

1. **Certainty:** Very often we question something by saying, “we need proof.” Thus, certainty is based upon evidence. This evidence can be collected through field studies, experiments, etc.
2. **Accuracy:** Human beings have many beliefs. These may or may not be correct or accurate. Measurement leads to accuracy. In other words, the use of statistics leads to accuracy.
3. **Abstract Universality:** The concept of universality is very important since the objective of the scientific method is to create laws which are universality true. Thus, we may resort to abstraction in order to create laws which transcend the barriers of time, place and person. E.g. We may form a law showing the relationship between two variables assuming other factors being constant. Keeping all other factors constant is an abstraction as it does not hold true in real life and yet it is the only way we can closely examine the relationship between the two variables.
4. **System:** Science is based upon the system view. Thus, its view phenomenon as a system, consisting of a series of inter-dependent, inter-related elements that work together in a pattern to achieve a collective goal.
5. **Empiricism:** This principle requires that the scientist develop and tests theories and hypothesis by relying as much as possible on data collected through primary and secondary studies.
6. **Objectivity:** The scientist makes a conscious effort to ensure that the conclusions he reaches are based upon objective facts and not upon his personal likes and dislikes.
7. **Relativism:** The scientist must not consider his conclusions to be permanent or the absolute truth. No solution is infact permanent and further research may disprove the findings.
8. **Skepticism;** This implies a scientist’s willingness to question everything. Nothing should be accepted at face value. The scientist must maintain a healthy sense of curiosity.
9. **Ethical Neutrality:** In his role as a scientist, the researcher does not take sides on issues of moral or ethical significance. A scientist is not concerned with right, wrong, good or evil. He is only concerned with true and false.
10. **Parsimony:** The scientist should attempt to reduce numerous explanations to the smallest possible number.
11. **Reliability:** If we repeat the same experiment in the same controlled situation and if we get the same results every time, we can say that the results are reliable. Truly scientific methods should produce the same results even when used by different individuals.
12. **Validity:** If the results of research measure what they set out to measure we can say that the information is valid. For example, to measure television viewing audiences, a mechanical device may be attached to a TV set to find out when they are turned on. The method that should have measured audiences only measures if the sets were turned on and not how many people were actually watching it. Thus the data collected is not valid for the purpose for which it was collected.

Q2.

The research process provides us with a systematic and planned framework to carry out the scientific inquiry. It ensures that all the aspects of research are aligned in such a manner that they are able to create a focus and give direction to the research project.”

Essentially five determinants shall have an impact upon the research which will be carried out. These are:

1. The research problem – what is the problem?
2. The research purpose – why does it have to be solved?
3. The researcher – who will conduct the research?
4. The respondent – what is the area for which we require information? Who can provide us the required information?
5. The research process - how this research will be carried out ? when and in what sequence will research be carried out?

Research is a continuous activity, yet for understanding the complete process it can be said to pass through certain distinct phases or stages, in a certain order. These steps are basically interlinked and are followed in a logical sequence. Yet, it must be kept in mind that there is no hard and fast rule that each and every step has to be followed.

Usually, the research process is seen as a series of several well-defined steps. There is of course no rule that each and every step must be followed before going on to the next. We may miss some steps which are not required for our specific research purpose or repeat some of them if the need arises. Essentially, developing an idea of a sequential research process helps us to work in a systemic manner. In spite of the variations we may make, it helps to keep our research on an orderly track.

1. Situation Analysis: The first step in the Research Process involves exploration of the area of interest. This may be done by review of literature and talking to the experts academics or practitioners in the field.

An analysis of the situation leads to an understanding of the entire scenario and consequently the understanding of the symptoms that cause management concern or the environmental variables that raise the interest of the management.

2. Formulation of the Research Problem:

- a. Problem Identification and Hypothesis Building: An exploration of the situation, its analysis and understanding will lead to the formulation of hypothesis. A hypothesis is an unproved supposition, which are researchers intends to resolve. In the course of the research the hypothesis may be proved or disproved. The most important purpose that a hypothesis serves is that it gives a direction to the research. We may develop one or more related hypothesis.
- b. Identifying the Research purpose and highlighting the significance of the problem: We must at this point of the research process clearly state the reason as

to why the proposed research should be carried out. In other words, what is the need of the study. The research process thus needs justification as to how the research will benefit the management or the organization.

- c. Outlining the Scope of the Research: At this point in the research process the scope of the research must be clearly outlined on the basis of three dimensions-
 - c.i. Concepts used in the research
 - c.ii. Period, during which research data will be collected.
 - c.iii. Geographical area to be covered.
 - c.iv. The concepts used in the hypothesis must be clearly defined e.g. if we have used the concept of employee motivation we must be able to state what factors are being used to define employee motivation and therefore what all is to be included in that study.
 - c.v. Period: this refers to the time period for which the study is being conducted e.g. we want to study sales trends for the past 5 years.
 - c.vi. Geographical area refers to the location of the research which is to be undertaken.
3. Developing the Research Design: keeping the nature of the research problem and the availability of existing knowledge as well as the knowledge of techniques for collecting relevant data we can identify the appropriate 'Research Design'. The main Research designs which are available are –
 - a.i. Exploratory or Formulate
 - a.ii. Descriptive
 - a.iii. For studying causal hypothesis
4. Data Collection: this step involves the researcher deciding and selecting the techniques that shall be used to collect relevant information which can be used to solve the research problem. There are many data collection techniques that may be used. We can collect data through secondary sources or we may use primary sources for data collection. Secondary data involves information which has already been collected and studied. Primary data on the other hand is the first hand information that can be collected using techniques like-
 - (i) Observation
 - (ii) Questionnaires
 - (iii) Interviews

Closely related to the process of Data Collection are the questions involved in Sampling and Scaling.

Sampling will be used to identify the sample which will provide the most relevant data for our research purpose. The researcher will concentrate on three things while designing the sample:

- i) Sample frame
- ii) Sampling Method

iii) Sample Size

5. Data Processing: After the actual data collection is carried out , the results have to be processed in such a way that they yield the most suitable information for the research problem to be solved.

6. Data Analysis & Interpretation

Once the decision has been taken on the type of data to be gathered , the researcher must also select the analytical technique to be used.

The plan for Data Analysis would include-

i) The main variables to be studied

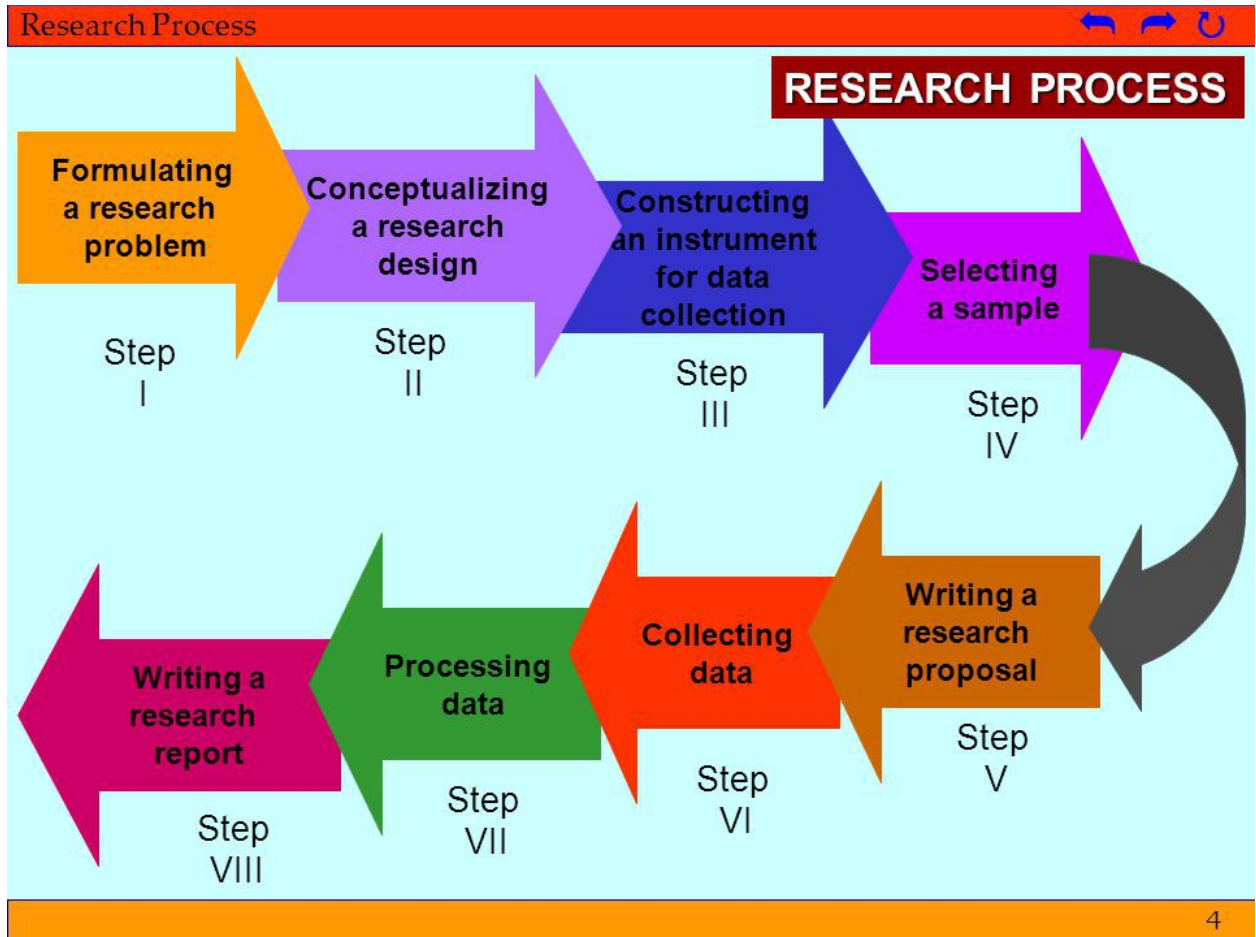
ii) The methods used for collecting data on these variables

iii) The specific methods used to analyse the results

Once the data collected has been processed and statistically treated we need to form judgement or opinion on the basis of the results derived.

7. Report Writing

Once inferences have been drawn and the research process has led to finding a solution to the problem it is imperative that these findings, conclusions and recommendations should be appropriately presented in a report.



Answer 3)

The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables you to effectively address the research problem logically and as unambiguously as possible. In social sciences research, obtaining information relevant to the research problem generally entails specifying the type of evidence needed to test a theory, to evaluate a program, or to accurately describe and assess meaning related to an observable phenomenon.

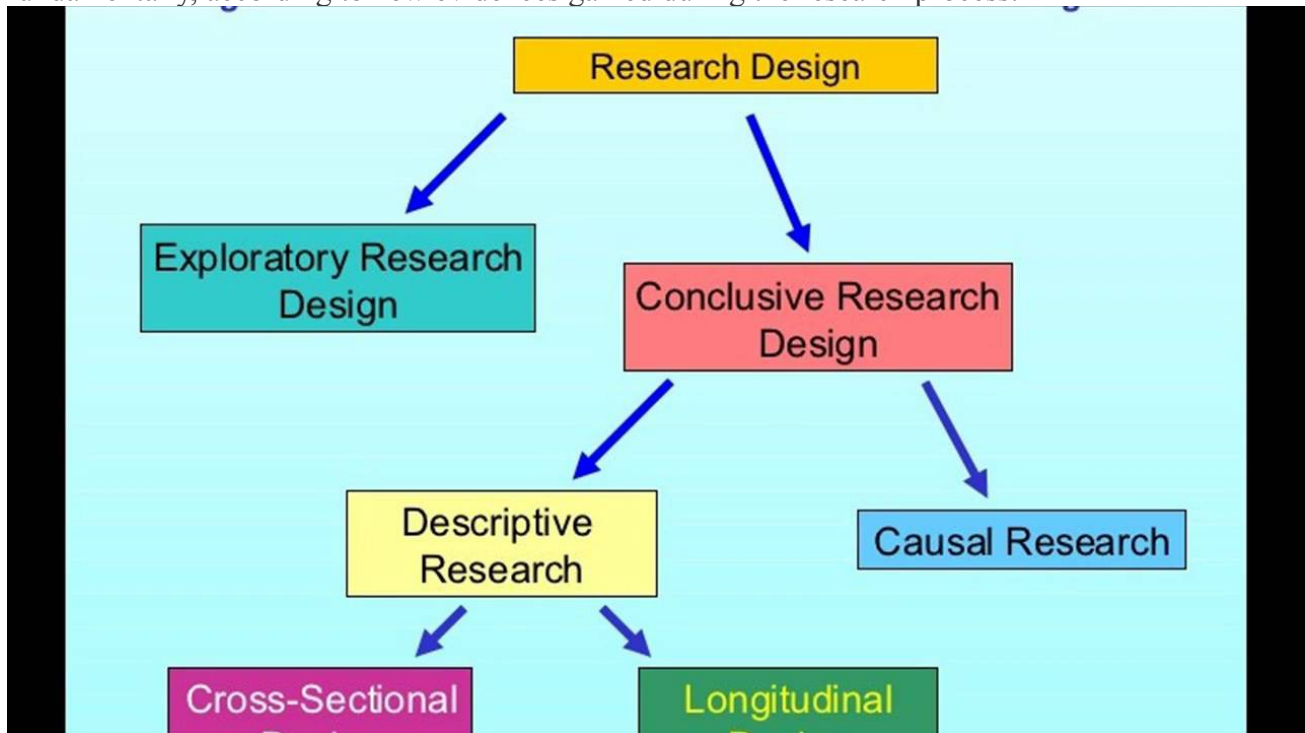
With this in mind, a common mistake made by researchers is that they begin their investigations far too early, before they have thought critically about what information is required to address the research problem. Without attending to these design issues beforehand, the overall research problem will not be adequately addressed and any conclusions drawn will run the risk of being weak and unconvincing. As a consequence, the overall validity of the study will be undermined.

Any well-developed design will achieve the following:

1. Identify the research problem clearly and justify its selection, particularly in relation to any valid alternative designs that could have been used,
2. Review and synthesize previously published literature associated with the research problem,
3. Clearly and explicitly specify hypotheses [i.e., research questions] central to the problem,
4. Effectively describe the data which will be necessary for an adequate testing of the hypotheses and explain how such data will be obtained, and
5. Describe the methods of analysis to be applied to the data in determining whether or not the hypotheses are true or false.

Research design may be seen as the choice between qualitative and quantitative research methods. Research design may also refer to the choice of specific methods of data collection and analysis. In essence research design is a general plan about what you will do to answer the research question. Important elements of research design include research strategies and methods related to data collection and analysis.

Research design can be divided into two groups: exploratory and conclusive. Exploratory research, according to its name merely aims to explore specific aspects of the research area. Exploratory research does not aim to provide final and conclusive answers to research questions. The researcher may even change the direction of the study to a certain extent, however not fundamentally, according to new evidences gained during the research process.



Exploratory research

Exploratory research is research conducted for a problem that has not been studied more clearly, intended to establish priorities, develop operational definitions and improve the final research design. Exploratory research helps determine the best research design, data-collection method and selection of subjects. The following can be mentioned as examples with exploratory design:

- A critical analysis of argument of mandatory CSR for Indian private sector organisations
- A study into contradictions between CSR program and initiatives and business practices: a case study of Philip Morris USA
- An investigation into the ways of customer relationship management in mobile marketing environment

Studies listed above do not aim to generate final and conclusive evidences to research questions. These studies merely aim to explore their respective research areas.

Conclusive research can be divided into two categories: descriptive and causal.

Descriptive research design, as the name suggests, describes specific elements, causes, or phenomena in the research area. Descriptive research is a study designed to depict the participants in an accurate way. The three main ways to collect this information are: Observational, defined as a method of viewing and recording the participants. Case study, defined as an in-depth study of an individual or group of individuals.

Causal research design, on the other hand, is conducted to study cause-and-effect relationships. Causal Research. Causal research, tries to determine the cause underlying a given behaviour. It finds the cause and effect relationship between variables. It seeks to determine how the dependent variable changes with variations in the independent variable. The table below illustrates various types of causal research design.

