

Module I: Introduction to Research

1. Research: Nature, Meaning & Scope, Types

Research

Research is a systematic, scientific, and objective investigation undertaken to discover new facts, verify existing knowledge, solve problems, or establish relationships among variables.

The word "Research" is derived from the French word *Recherche*, which means "to search again" or "to investigate thoroughly."

Research is not merely collecting information. It involves careful observation, analysis, interpretation, and conclusion.

Example: A company conducting a study to determine why sales have decreased over the last six months.

Nature of Research

The following characteristics explain the nature of research:

Systematic

Follows a planned and organized procedure.

Scientific

Uses scientific methods for data collection.

Objective

Based on facts, not personal opinions.

Logical

Follows logical reasoning and analysis.

Empirical

Relies on real-world observations.

Analytical

Involves detailed examination of data.

Problem-Oriented

Conducted to solve a specific problem.

Replicable

Other researchers can repeat the study.

Example: A researcher conducting a customer satisfaction survey using structured questionnaires and statistical analysis.

Scope of Research

Research has wide applications in business and various disciplines.

Business Mgmt

Studying employee performance, leadership.

Marketing

Understanding consumer preferences.

Finance

Analyzing investment decisions.

HRM

Studying employee satisfaction.

Economics

Examining economic growth.

Technology

Developing new products.

Example: A retail company using research to identify customer buying patterns.

Types of Research

Basic (Fundamental) Research

Conducted to increase knowledge and develop theories without immediate practical application.

Example: Studying consumer psychology.

Applied Research

Research conducted to solve a practical problem.

Example: Identifying reasons for employee turnover.

Exploratory Research

Conducted when little information is available about a problem.

Example: Exploring reasons behind declining sales.

Descriptive Research

Describes characteristics of individuals, groups, or situations.

Example: Surveying customer satisfaction levels.

Analytical Research

Uses existing information and data to analyze and draw conclusions.

Example: Studying company financial statements.

Causal Research

Examines cause-and-effect relationships.

Example: Determining whether advertising increases sales.

Comparison of Major Types of Research

Type	Purpose	Example
Basic	Generate knowledge	Consumer psychology study
Applied	Solve practical problems	Reduce employee turnover
Exploratory	Explore unknown issues	Investigate declining sales
Descriptive	Describe characteristics	Customer survey
Analytical	Analyze existing data	Financial statement analysis
Causal	Identify cause-effect relationship	Advertising and sales study

2. Qualities of a Good Researcher, Steps Involved in Research Process

Qualities of a Good Researcher

A researcher plays a critical role in ensuring the quality and credibility of research.

Curiosity

Desire to learn new facts.

Objectivity

Unbiased findings.

Patience

Requires time and effort.

Integrity

Honesty and ethics.

Analytical Ability

Logical interpretation.

Critical Thinking

Evaluating facts carefully.

Communication

Presenting findings clearly.

Open-minded

Considering alternatives.

Example: A researcher reporting actual survey results even if they contradict expectations.

Steps Involved in Research Process

Research follows a systematic sequence.

Research Process Flow

Problem → Literature → Objectives → Hypothesis → Design → Data Collection → Analysis → Interpretation → Report

3. Variables in Research, Formulation and Defining of Research Problem, Writing Research Questions

Variables in Research

A variable is any characteristic, attribute, or factor that can assume different values. Variables are the basic building blocks of research.

Independent Variable

The variable that influences or causes changes in another variable.

Example: Advertising expenditure.

Dependent Variable

The variable affected by the independent variable.

Example: Sales revenue.

Control Variable

Variables kept constant during research.

Example: Product price in an advertising study.

Moderating Variable

A variable that affects the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Example: Age affecting relationship between social media ads and buying.

Variables at a Glance

Variable Type	Meaning	Example
Independent	Cause	Advertising
Dependent	Effect	Sales
Control	Held constant	Product price
Moderating	Influences relationship	Age

Formulation and Defining of Research Problem

A research problem is a difficulty, gap, or issue that requires investigation. A properly defined problem provides direction to the study.

Characteristics of a Good Problem

- Clear and Specific
- Researchable
- Relevant
- Feasible

Steps in Defining

1. Identify the broad area.
2. Review existing literature.
3. Identify research gaps.
4. Narrow the problem & define clearly.

Example: Broad Topic: Customer Satisfaction | Research Problem: "How does online service quality affect customer satisfaction in food delivery apps?"

Writing Research Questions

Research questions specify exactly what the researcher wants to answer. They must be Clear, Focused, Researchable, and Relevant.

Examples

- Does social media marketing influence consumer purchase decisions?
- How does employee training affect productivity?
- What factors influence customer loyalty?

4. Development of Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a logical structure showing relationships among variables in a study. It provides a visual representation of how concepts are connected.

Importance

- Clarifies research direction.
- Identifies variables.

- Helps formulate hypotheses.
- Guides data collection and analysis.

Steps in Developing



Example: Effect of Advertising on Sales
 Advertising → Brand Awareness → Sales

5. Sources of Literature Review, Writing Literature Review

Literature Review

A literature review is a systematic examination of previous studies and published materials related to the research topic. It helps researchers understand existing knowledge and identify research gaps.

Objectives

- Understand previous research.
- Avoid duplication.
- Identify gaps.
- Build theoretical foundation.
- Support hypothesis development.

Sources of Literature Review

Source	Purpose
Books	Theoretical and conceptual understanding
Research Journals	Current scholarly research findings
Theses & Dissertations	Detailed academic studies
Government Reports	Official information and statistics
Conference Papers	Emerging and recent research developments
Online Databases	Access to research articles

Writing Literature Review



Example: Most studies focus on urban consumers, while rural consumers remain under-researched.

6. Research Problem & Hypothesis: Operationalizing the Research Problem and Formulation of Hypothesis

Research Problem

The research problem is the central issue that the researcher seeks to investigate. It provides the foundation for the entire study.

Example: "Why are customers switching from traditional retail stores to online platforms?"

Operationalizing the Research Problem

Operationalization means converting abstract concepts into measurable variables. It allows concepts to be observed and measured.

Examples

Abstract Concept	Measurable Variable
Customer Satisfaction	Satisfaction Score
Employee Motivation	Motivation Scale
Service Quality	Customer Rating

Importance

- Facilitates measurement
- Improves accuracy
- Enables statistical analysis

Formulation of Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a tentative statement predicting the relationship between variables. It is tested through research.

Characteristics of a Good Hypothesis

- Clear and Specific
- Testable and Logical
- Based on theory

Example: "Employee training positively influences employee productivity."

7. Need and Significance of Hypothesis, Meaning and Types of Hypotheses

Meaning of Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a tentative assumption or proposition regarding the relationship between variables that can be tested through research. It serves as a guide for data collection and analysis.

Example: "There is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty."

Need and Significance of Hypothesis

Provides Direction

Guides the entire research process and limits scope.

Facilitates Data

Helps determine what data should be collected.

Supports Testing

Provides a basis for testing relationships.

Types of Hypotheses

Type	Meaning	Example
Null (H_0)	No relationship	Advertising does not affect sales
Alternative (H_1)	Relationship exists	Advertising affects sales
Simple	One IV and one DV	Training affects productivity
Complex	Multiple variables	Training and motivation affect performance
Directional	Specifies direction	Training positively affects productivity
Non-Directional	Direction not specified	Training affects productivity

Example: Study on social media marketing

- H_0 : Social media marketing does not affect purchase decisions.
- H_1 : Social media marketing affects purchase decisions.

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