RE-ALIGNING RESEARCH FOR CONTEMPORARY TIMES

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Abstract: Just like any other field of interest and specialization, research should be evolving and pacing at a manner that copes and adjust to the changing times. However, not all researchers and so-called experts are aware of this imperative such that they remain traditional, conventional and worst, teaching the same methods, over and over again.

This study debunks the conventions and presents how research these days should be conducted based on the current theories and experience and trends analysis of the proponents.

Keywords: Research, Study Frameworks. Environment-Focused

PROBLEM RATIONALE

Research has drastically evolved in recent years. The fact, part and parcels of what is needed to be done in order to achieve relevance and timeliness in every field of study is the ability to adapt to the ever-evolving trends and environmental necessities. The willingness of the researcher to learn without any reservations and constantly have the appetite to acquire knowledge is highly imperative in order to teach the next generation better and more suitably.

This paper intends to present how contemporary research should be conducted as it also concurrently breaks and debunks all the traditional and older approaches that are no longer applicable.

THE VARYING AND "EVER-CHANGING" FORMAT

Traditionally, every research made by an academe or institution has always evolved within this cycle:

- Part 1: Introduction Statement of the Problem / Research Objectives or Inquiries Hypothesis Significance of the Study Scope and Limitations Definition of Terms.
- Part 2 Review of Related Literature with Synthesis
- Part 3 Research Methods (including Data Analysis)
- Part 4 Results and Discussions
- Part 5 Conclusion, Recommendations and Directions for Future Research

In some "newer" formats, the Statement of the Problem, Objectives and Definition of Terms are found on Part 2. There are even those who include Review of Related studies in Part 1, then moving the Research Methods up in Part 2, thus making the "latest" format consisting of only four (4) parts (Sala, Burton and Knies, 2010).

All of the above variants are not anymore applicable.

The generally accepted publishable format right now, even within the academic libraries is the Introduction – Method – Result and Discussion (IMRAD) format. There will always be some addends and sub-topics / sub titles

(e.g. "Brief Review of Related Literature at the Intro and Recommendations at the "RAD" part), but the essence of simplicity will always remain. Who would want to read a publishable study that is 100-page long? More so, who would spend hundreds of publication copies for such?

The reason for such is that at the Introduction stage, it is already expected that the Theoretical backbone and bearing of the research is already established and is made as an integral part of the rationale and Problem Statement.

After all, what is the purpose of all these References if it separated from the main predicament?

THE COLLECTION OF "BROKEN RECORDS"

The following are the clichés that need to be addressed in the New Normal. Recommendations and Interventions are suggested within the context of each description.

1. Assessment, Motivation, Evaluation and In-Depth Study Research Titles

These title headings are primarily obsolete and won't cut it given the new normal. The reasons are as follows:

- a. The new academic normal lacks the element of physical and interactive vernaculars. One cannot just simply take a look, jive and connive with a definitive conclusion based on mere internet footages, even such are in Ultra High Definition (UHD).
- b. Assessment and evaluation are very trivial. These merely see then render mediocre judgement sans any use of probing and validation measures (i.e. Thorough FGD and Empirical Studies). This is due to the fact that the lack of gestures and vernaculars as aforementioned drastically affects the outcome of the study, especially if it entirely dependent on sampling sizes and primary data.
- c. Motivation is not needed if the governing agency (e.g. DepEd) gives a memo for everyone to follow. This study terminology does not apply to most skill attributes such as performance and leadership. Reason the lack of motivation will reflect on the IPCR and evaluation of the respondents, ergo will then eventually put them in "hot waters." It is just a matter of complying or leaving the walls of the organization.
- d. In-Depth studies thru individual interviews and thorough analysis of data used to be a good validating technique. But the nature of online interactions will prove it to be difficult since, once more, the credence and veracity of primary data will always be in question given that it is thru a monitor, not physical interaction.

Ergo, it is highly recommended that Empirical Studies be conducted in these trying times so that the proponents can observe more of the character, gesture and language of the respondents using sufficient time to observe for a good validation. Not even phenomenological approaches will be useful but limited, given that it needs physical immersion. It will serve as mere attesting opinions, but not sufficient enough, unlike before, to warrant a "stand-alone" concept.

2. Always the same Output from the Proposal Stages to the Final Research (as seen from the Conceptual Framework)

It is a mortal sin that the Output from the research proposal stage remains the same even after the research is finalized. How sure is the proponent that what was written for his / her expected output during the proposal stage will consistently hold true?

A good and competent researcher must present every angle, not just one. Otherwise, that proponent is biased. Having multiple expected Outputs at the Proposal Stages is called research. Having only one is called propaganda.

What if the expected output turned out otherwise? How will the researcher then interpret it? Will he / she say that it was wrong? It is quite doubtful given the grants and funding; either the researcher will tweak it or redo it.

Either way, it will be a wasted time with lots of resources along with it down the drain. To illustrate:

Instead of doing this for the Proposal Framework (which is characterized by just having one Output):



Fig. 2. Typical and Erroneuous Conceptual Framework

Do this (with multiple Expected Outcomes):



Fig. 3. Accurate Research Proposal Framework

The logic above is simple: A good researcher presents all angles of study to find the idea which has the most veracity and credence.

3. The Importance of Intervening Variables

Intervening Variables are the proposed action plans that the proponent intends to inoculate to make the research workable and valid. This facet paves way to the innumerable possibilities of expected outputs during the proposal stages. This can be written, described, elaborated and found at the Research Methods, under the Data Analysis Part.

Yes, the Data Analysis Part. No mistakes.

It is not only used for describing what kind of Statistics (if ever needed) will be utilized to answer the quantitative parts of the study. More important that that is the analysis of interventions that will translate the data into useful information (Durmus, 2016).

That is why it called Analysis.

RE-ALIGNINGTHE TRADITIONS

This part will elaborate the common fallacies and will debunk each.

1. Researches always need a hypothesis

Not all the time. Empirical Analysis, which is imperative in the new normal research, will be sufficient to validate any study with a predication towards primary data, provided that:

- 1.1. The parameters are clear
- 1.2. The study is more on the vernaculars, attributes and observable altruistic characteristics
- 1.3. The study has more grip on the annotation methods
- 2. Mixed method is always defined as the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches

It used to be verbatim, as above, as long as the both these methods were used. But the discrepancy of qualitative respondents used as validations vis-à-vis to those who were "surveyed" has since become just a mere "escape goat" to somehow justify that the proponent used a Mixed Method approach.

For instance, if there were respondents who answered a Likert Scale (whose answers will definitely undergo Statistical tools such as AnoVa, et al), and their frequency went to a total of 200, but those who were interviewed qualitatively only had a number of 10 or even lower, then this is not a mixed method. This is just a forceful approach to called as such.

If the nature of the study itself has a wide discrepancy on its respondents (e.g. survey for teachers and FGD for Head Teachers and The Principal), then this is still not mixed method. This will only be a "Quantitative Study validated by a small portion of a qualitative method by default due to the respondents' profile."

The correct mixed method entails a closer ratio between the two (2) approaches. It may not always be 50-50 as there is no template for such, but at least not 90-10 or 80 - 20. At least a 70 - 30 from either method can already be accepted.

3. The respondents' profile is always the first number that appears in the Statement of the Problem / Research Objectives

Why do researchers always make a fuss of this? Can they control it? Can they tell the respondent: "Don't get married so that I can make a good stat treatment out of it?"

The respondents are part of the research methods. They are a part of the Dependent Variables that will need to react to the influence of the Independent facets – which is attributed to the impact brought about by certain environmental factors that are influenced by politics, economics, society, technology and ecology (Porter, 1980).

Ergo, their individual characteristics are not problems, nor will ever be a part of it. These are facts that need to be addressed in relation to the environment.

4. Pedagogy, although sometimes repetitive is not always absolute

Studying effective methods in these trying times is really imperative. Before, this was the cliché – the cheapest of all research outputs. But the new academic normal entails newer approaches to address the limitations of non-contact learning.

Simple as that.

5. The "Latest" trend in Likert Scales are only 1 - 4.

Neutrality is essential; this is where the action plans, applications and interventions will come into play. It is alright and acceptable for the respondent to say that he / she cannot fully comprehend the insight brought about by the study. And if that person decides to just remain at the middle for an answer -a 3 / 5, per se -it should be respected, in fact should be appreciated because that respondent still have the potential to be swayed towards a more favourable scenario for the intent of the research once the interventions are implemented.

6. Information Literacy is Key

Information Literacy is defined as the lifelong ability to recognize the need for, to locate, evaluate and effectively use information (Mercado, Panganiban and Ramos, 2019). Digital information literacy is one aspect of this and very relevant for the 21st Century. Another term used in this context is fluency and this is where the following definition sits:

"Digital Information Fluency (DIF) is the ability to find, evaluate and use digital information effectively, efficiently and ethically. DIF involves knowing how digital information is different from print information; having the skills to use specialized tools for finding digital information; and developing the dispositions needed in the digital information environment." 21st Century Digital Information Fluency (DIF) project and model

The ability to access, interpret and create digital information has increased its level of importance in the continuum of literacy in recent years. This is because the use of computers, the Internet and the World Wide Web has become integral to many forms of information access, communication, and knowledge generally. This change is having an impact on common understandings about information, communication and knowledge.

With the advent of technologies, awareness in information is acquiring crucial importance. Media literacy, information literacy and digital literacy are the three most prevailing concepts that focus on a critical approach towards media messages. In the present-day society we witness the emergence of post-typographic forms of text production, distribution, and reception that use digital electronic media (Kilinc, 2016).

Information is available in unimaginably large amounts and variety. In addition to quantity, it is available through multiple media and is of uncertain quality. The only way to deal with these issues is to employ more digital tools. The virtual world that produces this information does not sit 'out there', but invades the 'real' world. What is digital, nonetheless, is subject to human agency and to human understanding. Technology is just a tool, which does not determine how we must act. Among these circumstances we have to acquire an understanding and adopt meaningful courses of action by employing different literacies

(Martin and Madigan, 2016). There is a high rate of media consumption and society is saturated by media. The media deeply influences perceptions, beliefs and attitudes.

Information literacy is important for today's learners, it promotes problem solving approaches and thinking skills – asking questions and seeking answers, finding information, forming opinions, evaluating sources and making decisions fostering successful learners, effective contributors, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

Research is highly progressive and ever-changing. This lecture, who knows, might already become obsolete in a few months. Nonetheless, it is quite important that at least for this period, the readers and participants of this event will have a concise yet meaningful overview of what happens right now in the global research community.

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