

Research methodologies – analysis of the definition

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Man has always been curious to know about himself and his surroundings. Every individual is keen to be able to distinguish between reality and falsehood but more than often his or her thirst for the truth is left unquenched. The reason for this is that the methods or ways he or she is using to dig out the truth are not trustworthy. This happens because unfortunately our societies and cultures do not encourage social research. Rather people prefer to sit back at home and rely on alternative sources which are not based on any scientific methods or researches.

There are different ways and means through which we acquire knowledge. This knowledge may be highly scientific or know how about routine things. The best of all the sources of knowledge is social research. Social research is defined as a collection of methods people use systematically to produce knowledge. It is more structured organized and systematic process than the knowledge based on alternative sources.

It rarely happens that we use social research in order to find the answer to our every day questions rather we use alternative sources of knowledge.

These sources could be:

- 1) the word of the authority,
- 2) traditions,
- 3) common sense,
- 4) media myth,
- 5) personal experiences.

All these sources are weaker as compared to social research. We use these sources only because we lack motivation to find out the reality. Just out of our laziness we decide to rely on these sources of knowledge.

To speak of the word of authority as a source of knowledge it is not at all a reliable one. By authority we mean parents, or government, chief executive of any firm or any body who is authoritative. The authority who ever it may be (parents, government, etc.) would mould the truth in a way which is better for itself. The authority is always biased in one of the other manner. We can find many different examples to satisfy the above argument, for instance state owned TV channels keep on giving biased statements about the government policies.

They always side with the government and appose the opposition. In Pakistan PTV Khabarnama is the final word for a layman but those who are exposed to other sources of knowledge would agree that PTV Khabarnama is full of prejudices and exaggerations. A secondary example could be that of teachers, young children are so much influenced by their teachers that even if the teacher has committed a spelling mistake they would insist in front of any other person teaching them that their teacher is right.

Another weak source of knowledge is traditions. Especially in those areas of the world where literacy rate is low and education is less people blindly follow traditions. Whenever they are facing a problem they would want to look up to the traditional solution. For instance when some one loses hair he or she never goes to a doctor rather sits at home and apply all kinds of hair oils recommended by grandmothers. In extreme cases people blindly follow

superstitions which have no scientific arguments. Traditions vary from culture to culture. Something which is considered to be right in the eastern culture might be considered wrong in the western culture therefore traditions cannot be taken as an authenticated source of knowledge.

Common sense is another way by which people tend to find answers to their questions or solutions to their problems. This is the most commonly used source of knowledge. Over time human beings learn many things which later become a part of their common sense, more than any other thing they would rely on their common sense. For example if some has launched a new product in the market and has met over whelming success, he or she would increase the production out of common sense. However it might be the case that the initial success was only a result of 'fancy sales'. Research would have helped him to reach to a conclusion that should he or she have increased the sales or not. Some times common sense proves to be right but at others it does not therefore it can not be relied upon.

Media is a great source of information and henceforth knowledge. It has to be taken into consideration that media does not only inform or entertain people it also moulds public opinion about a certain thing. Formation of ideas is one of the major jobs of media. Media might be books, newspapers, TV or anything which comes under the caption of masscommunication. Media is very powerful as it leaves an impact on the minds of the people. This way media has created many myths. A layman does not even questions that whether what media shows is truth or falsehood.

There are many things we claim to know about, but have never come across them face to face. The knowledge we have about them is through media. It could be a place, a human being, a product, or even any concept. For instance, no one has ever met a Ginny but even a child has a concept that a ginny is huge, horrible looking, with big teeth and big ears. This concept has been learnt from the media in this case story books and cartoons for the children. Another example is that CNN never shows Israel as an aggressor state as a result an average American does not even know that Israel is an aggressor state. On the other hand research and historical facts show that Israel has been unfair with Palestinians.

The weakest source of knowledge is personal experience but we as human beings believe it to be the strongest. No individual is ready to say that what he has seen with his naked eyes could be wrong or a misunderstanding. He or she would base his future decisions in that perspective. For example if one goes to a restaurant and has the chance to have a dish which he or she finds delicious, that individual would subconsciously keep believing that this particular restaurant sells tasty food. On the other hand if some individual goes to the same restaurant but does not get the chance to have a tasty dish would believe that the restaurant sells rotten food. However both the individuals might not have experienced the truth. Truth could only be experienced through research, which is going to the restaurant again and again and taking the viewpoint of the people coming there over and over again.

The above arguments prove that truth or reality can be revealed only through research. All the alternative sources of knowledge that we use are <https://assignbuster.com/research-methodologies-analysis-of-the-definition/>

weak. They can be used but they cannot be relied upon. In order to make worthwhile and professional decisions we can just not depend upon these alternative sources. We have to carry out a social research in order to find out the truth about a certain thing. the reason is that research is always based on facts and figures, it is organized and systematic so it cannot fail. Research does not condemn the alternative sources of knowledge rather it uses them in an organized manner with research process, facts and figures to dig out the truth.