

Arosha ADIKARAM, Tharusha GOONERATNE, and Maduka UDUNUWARA. *Crafting Your Research: A Guide to Management Students. Understanding Research Philosophy and Design*. Sri Lanka: Stamford Lake (Pvt) Ltd., 2021, 171 pp. ISBN: 978-624-55544-10-3.

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The book titled *Crafting Your Research: A Guide to Management Students. Understanding Research Philosophy and Design* by Arosha Adikaram, Tharusha Gooneratne, and Maduka Udunuwara consists of six chapters that captivate the reader's comprehension concerning research philosophy and design. Chapter One elaborates on key concepts of research philosophy, e.g., ontology, epistemology, methodology, and paradigm, and their linkages to research study.<sup>1</sup> Chapter Two explains the main features of research approaches – quantitative and qualitative – and how these approaches should be executed according to each strategic potential. Chapter Three identifies the key features of mixed methods research. The intent of Chapter Four and Five is to describe different strategies of inquiry under qualitative and quantitative research, respectively. Finally, Chapter Six focuses on some key terms and thoughts to clarify the jargon related to misunderstandings in research philosophy.

Chapter One presents the famed aspects of research philosophy and widely accepted concepts that researchers should know, namely, ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Then, the Chapter explains the commonly employed research methodology to provide the proper knowledge to the researcher, so that he/she can proceed with data collection, analysis, and presentation. The researcher should decide how to find the answer to the research problem and questions without compromise. This criterion highly depends on the research philosophy underlying their problem and questions. Further, as the authors of the book noted,

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<sup>1</sup> Jayadeva UYANGODA, *Social Research: Philosophical and Methodological Foundations* (Colombo: Social Scientists' Association, 2015).

“Your research method, statement of question, methodologies, analysis, and write-up are all governed by your research philosophy.”

Research paradigms are also another crucial feature of research because they cover a method, model, or pattern for conducting research; as such, they present how a researcher looks at and responds to the research problem concerning ontological and epistemological assumptions. For instance, Chapter Three mentions that theory and methodology can directly impact writing tone, indicating whether it is reflexive, active, confessional, or illustrates data presentation. This then allows for a better understanding and explanation of empirical inquiries and the verification of assumptions about the research measures, an essential aspect of research activity. It is recommended that researchers maintain autonomy in selecting research paradigms, as the nature of the inquiry should guide the choice. No single paradigm can be deemed unanimously correct or incorrect. This implies that the inquiry can be based on subjective or objective matter due to its nature; for instance, if the research is based on facts that balance the observation, it may not highly depend on assumptions. If, however, it is based on personal opinions without verifiable facts or figures, then the inquiry or the answers can be concluded according to the assumptions. These clarifications provide a clear view, primarily for undergraduate and graduate students conducting their initial research projects.

Chapter Two discusses the differentiation between qualitative and quantitative research as well as their characteristics. Then, it highlights the importance of selecting the methodology, guides readers in determining the appropriate research methodology – whether qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods – and provides an overview of the general research process. The Chapter thoroughly explores qualitative and quantitative research understanding to cover the necessary knowledge for a researcher to determine his/her strategy. Selected researchers explained the structures that may be employed while drafting research reports in both positivistic and non-positivistic approaches.<sup>2</sup> The Chapter describes the characteristics of qualitative and quantitative research aspects, e.g., that qualitative research can explain in detail the phenomenon that relates to the study, giving an edge to understanding the criteria beyond the simplistic view. Comprehending the qualitative research methodology and its relatedness to the research process is also significant for a researcher; hence, Chapter Two presents their critical distinct sides. For the same aspect, the Chapter describes the important factors related to quantitative research: understanding, characteristics, selecting

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<sup>2</sup> Anuradha IDDAGODA, rev.: Mangala Fonseka and Athula Manawaduge, “*A Guide to Academic Writing and Research Reports*,” *Roczniki Kulturoznawcze* 13, no. 2 (2022): 113–15, <https://doi.org/10.18290/rkult22132.7>.

methodologies, and research process. For instance, for different viewpoints or perspectives, understanding the variables, hypotheses, and conceptual framework is crucial for quantitative research. The types of variables, the developing hypotheses, the conceptual framework, and the relationship between research questions, objectives, and hypotheses are thus explained with help of tables and diagrams in a simple manner. This gives an appropriate base for a candidate willing to overcome jargon in quantitative studies regarding measurements and testing. However, some illustrations for the examples are not clear enough to identify the objective of the description due to its low explicitness.

Chapter Three also provides the same information concerning the mixed method research aspects. For this reason, Table 3.1 brings a seamless illustration for understanding the purpose of the design as well as the choice, critical decisions (timing, weightage, integration/mixing), and notations for the model. Then, Table 3.2 describes the types of methods for mixed research and relates to the purpose of the study, research questions (objectives), and the rationale for using mixed method design and methods (interviews, online surveys, reports analysis, etc.). This indicates that the authors of the book made a tremendous attempt to provide ample knowledge on understanding the research philosophy and its design aspects. As noted in Chapter One, “When undertaking research, researchers do make ontological claims, even if they are unaware that they are ontological claims,” hence, it is crucial to understand the philosophy of research and its design.

Chapter Four and Five investigate the methodologies and techniques used to gather and analyze data in qualitative and quantitative research. These Chapters deliver a valuable understanding of the different methods researchers can employ to discover their research questions and extensively comprehend the phenomena under inquiry. A well-defined plan with the course of action is indeed aimed at achieving a specific goal or objective; so is a strategy of inquiry. This is noted under “The world is thus demarcated through bounded ways of how to study and frame its dynamics, and these are reinforced by texts on method and approaches to inquiry.”<sup>3</sup> Hence, Chapter Four and Chapter Five attempted to fulfil the details to obtain insightful strategies for the selected criteria of the research approach. For instance, for qualitative research, there are many strategies to be utilized: case study, grounded, ethnography, narrative, ethnomethodology, discourse analysis, etc., but Chapter Four indicates why and when to employ these approaches in a qualitative study without bringing jargon. The case study analysis offers more detailed explanations compared to other strategies discussed

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<sup>3</sup> Tim MAY, and Beth PERRY, *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process*, 5th ed. (London: Open University Press, 2022), 60.

in the book. According to Chapter Five, there are only two strategies for the quantitative research approach: experimental design and non-experimental design. Table 5.1 clarifies the key terminologies of experimental design, and then its examples (classical, quasi, and within-subject) are given with appropriate explanations. For the non-experimental study, a survey has been identified as a critical strategy under quantitative research, such as the steps in conducting survey research, the advantages of the strategy, and the challenges associated with it. Further, the Chapter highlights that secondary and archival data are presumed to be used when the research problem can be answered more effectively using available data instead of primary data. This highlights that this book comprehensively covers the crucial material that is required to conduct research.

The authors claim that the book effectively achieves its main objectives. It provides related subject matters for a research candidate who pursues dominant information to be thorough on research philosophy and research design. Despite being selective in its coverage, this book can serve as a valuable resource for an individual to manage the research proposal while selecting the proper research problem, since guides are formed to assist researchers in enhancing their research designs and implementation. The book does not provide a glossary that covers most essential concepts and notions; the reference material is also inclusive, current, and impartial.

The terms and concepts pertaining to study design are covered in detail in Chapter Six, encompassing the entirety of Chapters One through Five. Additionally, Chapter Six emphasizes that an author (the researcher) should be open-minded because, in essence, there is no one perfect approach that can be used for all research projects. A typical study can be conducted using a variety of methods because the entire study depends on the chosen approach to get the desired results in accordance with the objectives and purpose of the study. Furthermore, Chapter Six ensures that the research study should align with the research problem and questions.

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