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Title of the book: *Writing Research Proposals in the Social Sciences and Humanities: A theoretical and Practical Guide* by Jayadeva Uyangoda

Published by: Social Scientists' Association, No.12, Sulaiman Terrace, Colombo 5, Sri Lanka, 2015, ISBN: 978-955-0762-35-4, pp. 138

This book was written by a Sri Lankan Professor, Jayadeva Uyangoda, and carries ten chapters. The book has shed light on the wide gamut of research methodology, research method, research philosophy, research proposal and writing a literature review while maintaining a very high level of readability. The book, without doubt, will help both the novice and the professional alike to enhance their knowledge.

Research is a systematic and scientific endeavor to find a solution for an identified problem. Chapter one describes what a research is, and the reader can gain insight into the difference between a research proposal and a thesis. Professor Uyangoda, through his classroom lecturing experience, has not only

identified the confusions that may arise in the mind of the novice to the research field when formulating the research problem, but also has provided a solution to the same through the second chapter, "Formulating a Research Problem". Metaphor of presenting a puzzle, an anomaly, a contradiction or a puzzle with reference to theory and practice, was the solution proposed by him. The third chapter is all about Research questions. There again he has clearly addressed distinguished the research problem from the research question. Through his own concept, "Unpacking a research problem", he has elaborated the key issues that constitute the problem by articulating by its distinct but interrelated components. In addition, the author has made an attempt to differentiate substantive research questions from subsidiary questions in the research proposal based on theoretical and empirical significance.

Chapter four is about Hypothesis Building. Hypothesis is there to be tested, not to be proved. Sekaran in 2003 also has the similar view. According to him a hypothesis can be defined as a logically conjectured relationship between two or more variables expressed in the form of a testable statement. Sekaran (2003) states that relationships are conjectured on the basis of the network of associations established in the theoretical framework formulated for the research study. Sekaran (2003) further states that by testing the hypotheses and confirming the conjectured relationships, it is expected that solutions can be found to correct the problem encountered. This chapter provides a sturdy explanation on directional and non-directional hypotheses. The reader may obtain a clear idea about hypothesis building by referring the examples given. The Chapter five, 'Relevance, Significance and Objectives' discusses about another essential component that is the Relevance of a research proposal. This is an area that most of the novice researchers get confused with. The author has explained that the "Relevance" could be identified in

three ways namely, disciplinary relevance, policy relevance and social relevance. The “Significance” of the study has been categorized into theoretical significance, interpretative significance and empirical significance. The research “Objective” has also been satisfactorily addressed under the same chapter.

Chapter six titled as the Literature Review where the reader can get a clear idea about the very purpose of the literature review through this chapter. As per the author, there are three stages in the literature review. Firstly, an extensive bibliography of the relevant literature, while the Second stage can again be split into three phases namely “summarizing the key arguments and analysis in the work under review”, “pointing out the strengths, weaknesses and shortcomings in the analysis, arguments and conclusions of the work under review”, and “highlighting what insights the work under review provides to his/her own work”. Thirdly, the researcher gets an opportunity to focus on the identified research gaps. Miles (2017) identified about several research gaps including evidence gap, knowledge gap, practical knowledge gap, empirical gap, theoretical gap and population gap. However, had the author gone an extra mile and addressed on such research gaps, he could have offered even more insights to the readers, especially by discussing about the research gaps while showing its connection with the significance of the study.

Theoretical Approach is the seventh chapter where the author has clearly explained about the theories based on two approaches namely, deductive and inductive. This chapter highlights the fact that while good theories lead to a quality research, ultimately theoretical framework leads to the sound conceptual framework. The examples of the theoretical approaches provide sounds insight to the reader. Under this chapter the author addressed an interesting argument that some practitioners state. That is ‘I am a practical man’. Therefore some practitioners do not find that the theories are all necessary. Here

the author highlight the fact that in almost all the thesis there are unstated or hidden theoretical assumptions. According to Saunders (2007) methodology is the theory of how research should be undertaken, including the theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which research is based and the implications of these for the method or methods adopted. Method is the techniques and procedures used to obtain and analyze research data, including for example questionnaires, observation, interviews and statistical and non-statistical techniques is the view of Saunders in 2007. Chapter eight is about the Method and the chapter nine is about Methodology which are the areas that most of the novice researchers often get puzzled. By referring these two chapters the researcher can clearly make a distinction on the two concepts. Referring chapter nine reader can get understand the post-positivist epistemologies and the methods covering phenomenology, ethnomethodology and postmodernist perspective and also positivist epistemology and its methods.

Writing the research proposal is the tenth and the last chapter where some tips are provided to write a research proposal in a constructive manner. Further, the author has also given some examples related to the disciplines of social sciences. The Bibliography section provides some important references to the reader as a self-learning and the Glossary of key terms adds a quick reference for meaning of some common key terms used in the social science world.

While simple and clear language has augmented the readability, this book can be hailed as one of the best Sri books that has immensely contributed the Sri Lankan research community by filling the long-standing void in the social science research especially from the Sri Lankan context.

References

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