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BOOK REVIEW

RESEARCH AND WRITING ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES, BY P. RAMADASS AND A. WILSON ARUNI. MJP PUBLISHERS, MUTHU KALATHY STREET, TRIPPLICANE, CHENNAI-600005, 2014, ISBN 978-81-8094-068-2. 262PP

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ABSTRACT

Research is all about facts finding. Hence to discover the new facts there is a need for a well conducted research, thus, there is a need to generate awareness on how to do research properly so as to come up with vivid facts aiming at generating new knowledge. In contributing to this field, Ramadass and Aruni wrote a book titled "Research and Writing Across the Disciplines". The book provides a strong reference for teaching and studying research in all disciplines. The book is mainly organised into two parts planned in such a way that it builds the readers knowledge stepwise towards understanding the research undertakings. The main weakness of this book is the failure to discuss the literature searching techniques. Otherwise, it is a valuable resource for researchers, university lecturers and students from all disciplines. Searching literatures online is not an easy task hence, profiling of the techniques would have added value. Searching is a challenging process due to information explosion, presence of different ways in which information is stored, lack of web content organization as well as volatility nature of web resources. Failure in literature review results into many problems including making the same mistakes as others towards reinventing the wheel.

Key words: Research, Writings, Disciplines, Literature, Review, Searching

Paper type: Book Review

Type of Review: Peer Review

1. SUMMARY OF THE BOOK

The development of any unit or nation depends on sufficient and successful implementations of the discovered facts towards the needs for their development. To discover the new facts, well conducted researches are needed in order to come up with new knowledge. Due to this importance, researchers are required to be aware on how to do research properly basing on the accepted scientific principles so as to come out with the expected facts. In contributing to the field of research, Ramadass and Aruni wrote a book titled "Research and Writing Across the Disciplines". The book was written as a reference and designed for researchers and students from all disciplines. The book comprises of into parts named Part one and Part two.

The first part of the book focus on equipping readers with essentials of research. Since it is the first part of the book, authors started by putting clear the concepts which are normally confusing the readers. Research Methods and Methodology are among the explained concepts. They explained that "Research Methodology has many dimensions and research methods do constitute a part of the Research Methodology. Thus, research methodology takes into consideration the logic behind the methods used in the context of research study and explain why other methods are not used" while "Research Methods are all methods which are used by the researcher during the course of studying their research problem (p.4)". Moreover, Research Methods can be grouped into three groups

which are “methods which are concerned with the data collection, statistical techniques which are used for establishing relationship between the data and unknown and the methods which are used to evaluate the accuracy of the results obtained (p.1)”. The explanations on different concepts and terms which are used in research are very important as it equips readers with basic knowledge on research.

After putting clear concepts, authors explained how to do research by explaining steps which are involved during doing research, roles of research, types of research, differences between quantitative and qualitative research, conceptual and empirical research as well as types of sampling (p.5-22). As research involves representatives, the authors discussed the concept of sampling, scientific methods, common mistakes in applying the scientific methods and the circumstances in which the scientific methods are not applicable. Moreover, authors presented characteristics of a good research problem and how to formulate and clarify the research problem (p.31). They clearly explained to readers all research methods, types of research studies and ethical issues in research. Based on the existing technology, authors warned the researchers on consideration of ethical issues. Authors claimed that “when the people are being observed, whether they are aware of it or not, ethical issues arise that must be considered by researcher (p.49)”. They added that “with advances in technology, cameras and microphones have made it possible to gather a significant amount of information about verbal and non-verbal behaviour of customers as well as employees that might easily be considered to be an invasion of privacy or abuse, particularly if the subject is unaware of being observed (p.51)”. These explanations on how to do research are very crucial to readers since researchers are expected to come out with intense findings which will results into solving the existing problems or equipping the society with new knowledge. In order for the research to come out with these findings, researchers are supposed to be aware on how to do research and to follow all required procedures.

Moreover, authors strived to make their book more useful to researchers as they explained several methods which can be used for data collection. The explained methods include how to conduct interview, survey as well as how to determine the sample size by using census, imitating a sample size of similar studies, published tables and applying formula (p.35-45). Moreover, authors explained to readers the techniques and tools which are used in data collections, importance of combining data collection techniques, possible sources of bias during data collection and ethical consideration during preparing data collection techniques so as to avoid physical and emotional harm. Authors completed part one by explaining how to do analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

The second part of the book focused on equipping the readers with a wide range of knowledge on writings. In this part, authors explained how to look for research topics, how to select a research topic, criteria for selecting research topics as well as hints for reviewing literatures (p.93-98). To ensure that readers get enough knowledge on how to write research, authors explained some sources of research problems. Authors pointed out that, “sources of a research problems are one’s experiences, literature review and review of theories and ideas from others (p.93)”. Also, the part discussed on how to use library for research purposes, types of catalogues and types of library classification. Authors went far by insisting the clarity in writing research. Here the argument was “the clarity should be a characteristic of any type of communication (p.115)”. Moreover, authors explained to readers on thesis writing, how to prepare title, abstract, introduction and literature review (p.120-141). As this part aimed at giving the reader skills and knowledge on writings, authors give explanations on how to formulate research hypothesis, write materials, methods used, present the findings and writing discussion. Components of the discussion part, how to cite the references, how to use footnotes and quotations are among the parts which are presented by authors. Moreover, authors clarified on how to list authors and addresses, uses of punctuations, writing research proposal and report (p.196-222). At the end, the book provides a clear summary of what was covered in part one and part two. This provides a quick review to readers.

2. CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE BOOK

The book provides a good reference for teaching and studying research in all disciplines and levels. It is designed in such a way that it enables the readers to get the concepts of research stepwise. Despite the fact that this book is organised into two parts (Part one and Part two), the parts are planned coherently in such a way that it builds the

readers knowledge sequentially towards understanding research undertaking and report writing. The book is a valuable resource for researchers, lecturers and students from all disciplines.

On page 98, the book explains how to make literature review and the possible consequences of not doing it correctly. Authors argue that "...it is of crucial importance to undertake literature review in relation to the problem to be investigated in order to take stock of what is already known or what is available in terms of knowledge...". "Academic journals, conference proceedings, government reports, books and internet may be useful sources of information". Authors added that "good literature review helps the researcher to identify gaps in the topic, avoid reinventing the wheel and thus, carry on from where others have already reached as well as preventing duplicating work that has been done before" (p.99). Authors highlighted that, "a good literature review helps the researcher to avoid making the same mistakes as others, to identify other people working in the fields, to increase the breadth of knowledge of the topic, to identify key issues in the field, to integrate what previous researchers have found and to identify important issues which are still unresolved (p.100)". All these show that literature review is a part of the research which needs more attention than others due to their consequences when it is not done correctly. Authors ought to explain to students and researchers on several strategies which could help them to get literatures easily and in short time. Searching literatures online is not an easy task. Searching is often a challenging process due to information explosion, different ways in which information is stored (Fanghui *et al*, 2016), presence of varieties of search tools, lack of organization of the web content as well as volatility nature of web resources (Lefuma, 2017 and Kibbee, 2018). Here authors could have introduced to the researcher a conception that during searching literatures, he/she must think of synonyms, phrases, acronyms, related terms, scientific and common names (Chris, 2018). Moreover, they could have also introduced to the readers that during searching they can query by using phrase, Boolean operators and truncation so as to get the expected literature easily and in short time (Muhammad,2017). Equipping researchers with these techniques could result into quick accessing literatures and simplify the research process in general.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the contents of this book, the book is of great interest to researchers, lecturers and students from all disciplines. The book was designed in such a way that it enables the readers to get the concepts of research stepwise. Their parts are planned coherently to builds the readers sequentially towards understanding research undertaking and report writing. Due to presence of internet which answer all most all questions in this digital era, this review recommends the inclusion of literature searching techniques to this book. Inclusion of these techniques will strength it and make it more valuable in this digital era.

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