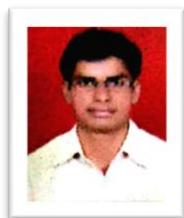**Shrinkhla Ek Shodhparak Vaicharik Patrika**

Importance of Secondary Data in Research

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Abstract

Data is the core aspect of research without which no research in the world is possible. Data means the information or knowledge on the theme or subject being studied by the researcher. Generally, primary data is discussed chiefly and the secondary data is ignored. The truth is that both the primary and the secondary data are important for research, and neither of the two types of data can be ignored.

Secondary data refers to data which is collected by someone who is someone other than the user. Common sources of secondary data for social science include censuses, information collected by government departments, organizational records and data that was originally collected for other research purposes. Primary data, by contrast, are collected by the investigator conducting the research.

It is true that primary data has something new to reveal about the studied subject, and the authenticity of research depends on the primary data as primary data are absolutely new data on the subject, but the secondary data should not be under estimated because it is the secondary data that prepare a platform of research for the researcher and pave the path of research by providing a sufficient feedback on the subject to be studied. It is only through the secondary data that the researcher becomes familiar with the various aspects of the subject to be studied and develops understanding of the subject. It obviously helps him conduct his research in a right direction.

Designed on the secondary data available in the various research papers, the paper is a theoretical study, and encompasses the various noticeable aspects of the secondary data. The paper aims at reflecting the significance and importance of secondary data in research

Keywords: Data, Primary Data, Secondary Data, Research, Methodology, Analysis.

Introduction

There is a saying- the more skilled use of data, the more legitimate a research is. Data is the core of research but for which no research is possible. In all the types of research two types of data are used by the investigators, namely, primary data and the secondary data. Primary data is the data which is collected by the researcher himself for his work; which is absolutely new and which is not previously available in any form in any book or journal. Primary data is obviously the soul of research as it is this primary data which reveals the authenticity of research work. On the contrary, secondary data is the data which has already been collected and used at least once by any other researcher for his research work, and which is already available. Indeed, the primary and the secondary data should not be taken contrarily but as complementary to each other. Both go side by side in research. Research begins with the collection of secondary data; advances through the collection of the primary data, and ends with the findings based on both the primary and the secondary data.

Let us discuss the secondary data and its significance and relevance in research in particular.

Secondary data is the already collected and readily available data from other sources. A researcher begins his research work with the collection and study of the secondary data which prepares a ground and platform of research for him. Secondary data is advantageous in several ways, as it is economical and saves efforts and expenses; it saves time of the researcher; it helps the researcher make primary data collection specific; it helps in tracing the research gap and in arriving at the point from which the research is to be started and conducted; it enables the researcher to make out the deficiencies and to add in particular the additional information that needs to be collected; it enables the researcher

to develop understanding of the problem to be studied; it provides a basis for comparison for the data that is collected by the researcher.

Indeed, secondary data is not to be underestimated in any way. If primary data is the new information and report on the subject, the secondary data is the base that prepares the researcher to carry out his research in a desired direction. The feedback, research gap, deficiencies that he learns through the study of the secondary data allow him to proceed further in the field of research. The research gap prevents him from choosing the aspect of the subject that has already been studied while the deficiencies help him collect additional information that needs to be collected essentially.

As everything has two aspects, the secondary data too has two aspects, i.e. positive aspect and the negative aspect. It will not be fair if only positive aspect of the secondary data is discussed, and the negative aspect is left out. The negative aspect of the secondary data lies in its several disadvantages that cannot be overlooked. The negativity of the secondary data lies in the fact that secondary data seldom fits in the framework of several research factors. In many researches, the data collected earlier is of no use to the researcher; the accuracy of secondary data is not confirmed; data may be outdated, and the secondary data is likely to deviate the researcher from his goal in many cases by developing a prejudiced attitude in him.

Review of Literature

Moore N. (2006) in The contexts of context: Broadening perspectives in the (re)use of qualitative data observes that while 'secondary data' is typically associated with quantitative databases, analysis focused on verbal or visual materials created for another purpose, is a legitimate avenue for the qualitative researcher. Actually one could go as far as claim that qualitative secondary data analysis "can be understood, not so much as the analysis of pre-existing data; rather as involving a process of re-contextualizing, and re-constructing, data.

K. Srinivasa Reddy and Rajat Agrawal (2012) in their joint study entitled Designing case studies from secondary sources – A conceptual framework observe that a good case study supposes to fulfill the learning objectives and feed the practical applications, or managerial decisions through theories, concepts, models and principles. Further, the case should be flexible to teach or insert a theme in different areas of study. A case encloses multiple faces would guide faculty and students in effective manner. Teaching theory through case learning is an interesting task, and it gives a meek confidence and opportunity to insight the issues more in depth rather than broad coverage. The changing business scenario and environment is a remarkable, and requires both soft and hard pedagogy to achieve objectives by the student peer groups. This conceptual framework suggest that how to design case studies from the secondary sources, which may facilitate faculty, instructors, senior researchers, authors and young scholars in their publications. Additionally, they shall not require waiting for case permissions to write Type II case studies. We believe that the study would inspire budding researchers and fresh faculty while applying case learning method in a lecture theater.

Jaya Prasad Tripathy (2013) in the study Secondary Data Analysis: Ethical Issues and Challenges observes that research does not always involve collection of data from the participants. There is huge amount of data that is being collected through the routine management information system and other surveys or research activities. The existing data can be analyzed to generate new hypothesis or answer critical research questions. This saves lots of time, money and other resources. Also data from large sample surveys may be of higher quality and representative of the population. It avoids repetition of research & wastage of resources by detailed exploration of existing research data and also ensures that sensitive topics or hard to reach populations are not over researched.

Melissa P. Johnston, PhD (2014) in the thesis entitled Secondary Data Analysis: A Method of which the Time Has Come observes that technological advances have led to vast amounts of data that has been collected, compiled, and archived, and that is now easily accessible for research. As a result, utilizing existing data for research is becoming more prevalent, and therefore secondary data analysis. While secondary analysis is flexible and can be utilized in several ways, it is also an empirical exercise and a systematic method with procedural and evaluative steps, just as in collecting and evaluating primary data.

Alison Wolf (2016) in *Primary Data vs. Secondary Data: Market Research Methods* writes that there are more data sources than ever. Just googling a search term may not be sufficient, as the googled data may be inaccurate and/or biased. The people should avoid making important business decisions based on unreliable data.

Anju Grewal, Hanish Kataria, and Ira Dhawan (2016) in their paper on Literature search for research planning and identification of research problem assert that literature search is a key step in performing good authentic research. It helps in formulating a research question and planning the study. The available published data are enormous; therefore, choosing the appropriate articles relevant to a study in question is an art. It can be time-consuming, tiring and can lead to disinterest or even abandonment of search in between if not carried out in a step-wise manner. Various databases are available for performing literature search.

Horn N (June 2018) in the paper entitled The Immense Value Behind Data Enrichment with Secondary Data states that a clear benefit of using secondary data is that much of the background work needed has already been carried out, such as literature reviews or case studies. The data may have been used in published texts and statistics elsewhere, and the data could already be promoted in the media or bring in useful personal contacts. Secondary data generally have a pre-established degree of validity and reliability which

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need not be re-examined by the researcher who is re-using such data. Secondary data is key in the concept of data enrichment, which is where datasets from secondary sources are connected to a research dataset to improve its precision by adding key attributes and values.

Leighton. Chan, Patrick. McGarey (2012) in Principles and Practice of Clinical Research hold that secondary data are very useful in assessing changes over time. Since the data are usually pre-existing, researchers can address questions that are cost prohibitive using prospective studies. Secondary data are very useful in the analysis of health care costs. For instance, pharmacy data allow identification of overall prescribing trends and comparison of patterns among different subgroups of health care providers.

M. Brent Donnellan and Richard E. Lucas (2013) in Secondary Data Analysis hold that secondary data analysis refers to the analysis of existing data collected by others. Secondary analysis affords researchers the opportunity to investigate research questions using large-scale data sets that are often inclusive of under-represented groups, while saving time and resources. Despite the immense potential for secondary analysis as a tool for researchers in the social sciences, it is not widely used by psychologists and is sometimes met with sharp criticism among those who favor primary research.

Larry Chukwuemeka Unachukwu & others (July 2018) in their jointly written research paper entitled Accessing Secondary Data: A Literature Review observe that the technique of acquiring secondary data sources is not unique to the statistics field. It evidently has multidisciplinary appeal, with extremely diverse academic fields drawing on the information included in secondary sources. Secondary data involves using pre-existing data for a purpose different from that for which they were originally collected. Secondary data are the data collected by a party not related to the research study but collected these data for some other purpose and at different time in the past. Secondary data can be used for domestic and international business research purposes.

Objectives of the Study

The paper was prepared with the following specific objectives in addition to the generic objectives-

1. To study the nature and significance of data
2. To associate the data with the scientific spirit of research
3. To make a difference between the primary and the secondary data
4. To emphasize the role of secondary data in research
5. To interpret the various sources of secondary data
6. To discuss the various causes why the researchers go for the secondary data
7. To discuss the validity of secondary data in research

8. To study the significance of secondary data in research
9. To discuss the current trends of using secondary data in the researches
10. To suggest how and to what extent the secondary data need to be used for legitimate research

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses covering the various aspects of the secondary data and its significance in research formed the basis of the present study-

1. Data is the core of research but for which no legitimate research is possible
2. Use of data maintains the scientific spirit of research
3. Primary data is the data which is absolutely new, and has not been collected or used before in any other research
4. Secondary data is the data which has already been collected and used in research
5. For research, both the primary and the secondary data are necessary
6. Secondary data prepares a platform for the researchers to move actively in the field of research
7. Various sources provide the secondary data to the researchers
8. Internet sites are the choicest sources of finding secondary data at present
9. Several other sources of secondary data are ignored by the researchers
10. Most of the researches are done on the basis of secondary data

Method Adopted

Prepared and designed on the secondary data available on the theme, the paper is a theoretical study which encompasses the various aspects associated with the secondary data. For the purpose, reviews of both the Indian and the foreign studies were made, and then following all the steps of research, findings were made and conclusion was drawn. Throughout the focus was made on the secondary data. After the selection of the topic, the authors first set the objectives of the study to be pursued. Then, after a study of literature on the theme through the various sources, some of the papers were selected for the review making. The authors selected ten studies for review making. The review was made with a serious concern to the titles of the study, authors and co-authors, objectives of the study, hypothesis adopted for the concerning studies, tools for the study, population which the studies concerned and the sample of population on which the studies were made. The review making helped the authors taste the depth of the theme. It helped them formulate the hypothesis which allowed them finally to arrive at findings and conclusions.

Findings & Conclusion

1. Data makes the research possible, and no research is possible without the use of data
2. Data includes both the absolutely new and old information on any subject selected for the research

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3. Both the primary and the secondary data are used in research
4. Primary and secondary data are used in accordance with the nature of research
5. In experimental researches, the focus is made on the primary data and secondary data is used only in a little degree
6. In theoretical researches, in addition to the primary data the secondary data is used, but the use of the secondary data is in higher degree
7. Schedule, questionnaire, experiments and interview etc. are some of the major and most popular sources of primary data
8. Books, journals, diaries, theses and dissertations, newspapers and magazines, manuscripts, research papers and internet sites etc. are the sources of the secondary data
9. The modern researchers rely more in the modern sources like internet than in the traditional sources of the secondary data
10. The modern researchers prefer the study in libraries that are full of books and journals to the internet sites that enable them to study the required things all at once handy
11. Secondary data not only provide a feedback of the subject and theme, but also paves a smooth path of research for the scholars
12. Secondary data enables the scholars to understand the problem to be studied properly
13. Secondary data facilitates the understanding of the various aspects of the subject and theme to be worked on
14. Secondary data plays a vital role in the process of research, and its significance cannot be ignored.

To conclude: the primary data and the secondary data are complementary to each other. Both have their own importance and place in research. Primary data leads one to arrive at specific findings for the targeted subject, while the secondary data with a sufficient feedback on the subject is always there to guide the researcher. It is only through the study of the secondary data that the researcher sets his specific objectives in a way that the repetition is not made and deficiencies found in the studied researches may be got over; it is the secondary data that helps the researcher formulate hypothesis on the basis of his studies etc., and it is only through the secondary data that the researcher finds himself on a smooth path of research. In a word, secondary data has its own significance in research which can neither be denied nor overlooked. Both the types of data are essentially required for research and are complementary to each other. No research can be claimed on either of the two. Even in the researches relating to natural sciences and in experimental researches, secondary data is used as a support. Hence, the significance of secondary data cannot be denied.

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