

TOPIC ONE: Research Overview

1. Introduction

In this topic, a researcher is expected to provide a general overview of what research is. The aim here is to make the learners appreciate existence of research; both as a course unit as well as a relevant aspect of business management.

2. Definition

A systematic process of collecting and analysing information (data) in order to increase our understanding of a phenomenon we are concerned about or are interested in.

Business Research is about a systematic and objective process of gathering, recording and analysing data to aid decision making in business.

Research is both a science and an art at the same time.

- *It's an art because it is based on the general nature of events, human experience, and behavior. It can be improved through practice.*
- *It's a science because it applies systematic techniques or principles that involve, among others, collection, analysis, presentation and interpretation of data.*

3. Aims of doing research

There are many aims of doing research. A few of these are explained below;

- i) **Source of knowledge:** Doing research helps to generate new knowledge. A lot of new knowledge today can be traced back to research. For instance, the knowledge that the earth is round is a result of research activities. The knowledge of how the heart works and how it can be operated upon is all a result of research activities.
- ii) **Helps to know how to apply the new knowledge to solve human problems:** Discovery of new knowledge is in itself not enough. Application of this knowledge through application research makes the discovered knowledge even more useful and practical. For instance, the application of the pulley system in the operations of the cranes; application of the knowledge of radio waves, magnetic waves and infra-red towards the manufacture of remote control of TVs and even mobile phones and even application of automatic gear concept to simplify the driving of vehicles which gave rise to the current automatic vehicles quickly replacing the manual vehicles for their simplicity.
- iii) **Research is an agent of change and transformation:** Whenever research is conducted, change is likely to follow unless the change is negative to the people involved. The change is mainly a result of the new knowledge discovered and the need to apply the new knowledge for the better of the people. At this point, change inevitable takes place. This transformation can take place in different areas ranging from political administration to even the way vehicles are made such as the way the JIT and TQM principles of management transformed the operations of Japanese companies.
- iv) **Guarantees organizational competitiveness:** Competitiveness arises as a result wanting to be better than a rival. This need pushes organization to search for new ways of doing things which are better than the rivals or where

possible, the best in the market. This need calls for research which will help to answer these needs. In Uganda for instance, there has been a strong competition amongst the telecom giants for a long time. For instance, Orange telecom introduced international calls at local rates, WARID introduced pakalast and UTL reacted by introducing mango jazz and endoobo whereas MTN focused on bringing new products on board while maintaining the MTN Zone. All these are done by these companies in a bid of attracting more customers to themselves and completely out competing their rivals. These are results of market research conducted by these companies.

- v) **Guarantees national security:** This could not very evident in Uganda though it is evident in developed countries like USA and JAPAN. In these countries, a team of researchers is always present to research on how to come up with better treatment, better road network and even how to protect the nationals from intruders. New medicine and new ways of administering treatment have been discovered in these countries for a long time now. All this ensures security of people against human problems and ensures availability of people to serve a nation.
- vi) **Source of employment:** This is more individualistic in nature. When a person is employed as a researcher, he or she makes a living out of it.

4. Types (Typologies of research)

- i.) **Descriptive Research:** This refers to the surveys and fact finding enquiries of different kinds aiming at making a description of the state of affairs as it appears.
- ii.) **Analytical Research:** This is that type of research that uses facts and knowledge already available for analysis to analyse them and come up with a critical evaluation of the material.
- iii.) **Applied Research:** This is that type of research that aims at finding a solution for an immediate problem existing at hand facing the society or community.
- iv.) **Fundamental Research:** This is a type of research that aims at formulating theories. It is useful when one needs to come up with generalization of issues relating to coming up with theories for general purpose use. Coming up with mathematical formulas is an example of this.
- v.) **Quantitative Research:** It is that type of research that is based on measurement of quantity or amount. It deals with that type of data which can be expressed in quantitative forms i.e numerical data.
- vi.) **Qualitative Research:** This is that type of research that is involved qualitative items. The data dealt with under this type of research is that which involves quality or kind.
- vii.) **Desk Research:** This is that type of research that is conducted by reviewing the existing literature material in order to establish new theories, new relationships and to establish whether the old documented theories still hold in the current situation.
- viii.) **Field Research:** This is that type of research that involves going to the field to look for data (mainly primary data) to establish a new pool of knowledge

brought about by the research being carried in the field (most likely for the first time).

5. Research qualities/principles

- i) **Honesty:** Strive for honesty in all scientific communications. Honestly report data, results, methods and procedures, and publication status. Do not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent data. Do not deceive colleagues, granting agencies, or the public.
- ii) **Objectivity:** Strive to avoid bias in experimental design, data analysis, data interpretation, peer review, personnel decisions, grant writing, expert testimony, and other aspects of research where objectivity is expected or required. Avoid or minimize bias or self-deception. Disclose personal or financial interests that may affect research.
- iii) **Integrity:** Keep your promises and agreements; act with sincerity; strive for consistency of thought and action.
- iv) **Carefulness:** Avoid careless errors and negligence; carefully and critically examine your own work and the work of your peers. Keep good records of research activities, such as data collection, research design, and correspondence with agencies or journals.
- v) **Openness:** Share data, results, ideas, tools, resources. Be open to criticism and new ideas.
- vi) **Respect for Intellectual Property:** Honor patents, copyrights, and other forms of intellectual property. Do not use unpublished data, methods, or results without permission. Give credit where credit is due. Give proper acknowledgement or credit for all contributions to research. Never plagiarize.
- vii) **Confidentiality:** Protect confidential communications, such as papers or grants submitted for publication, personnel records, trade or military secrets, and patient records.
- viii) **Responsible Publication:** Publish in order to advance research and scholarship, not to advance just your own career. Avoid wasteful and duplicative publication.
- ix) **Responsible Mentoring:** Help to educate, mentor, and advise students. Promote their welfare and allow them to make their own decisions.
- x) **Respect for colleagues:** Respect your colleagues and treat them fairly.
- xi) **Social Responsibility:** Strive to promote social good and prevent or mitigate social harms through research, public education, and advocacy.
- xii) **Non-Discrimination:** Avoid discrimination against colleagues or students on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, or other factors that are not related to their scientific competence and integrity.
- xiii) **Competence:** Maintain and improve your own professional competence and expertise through lifelong education and learning; take steps to promote competence in science as a whole.
- xiv) **Legality:** Know and obey relevant laws and institutional and governmental policies.

- xv) **Animal Care:** Show proper respect and care for animals when using them in research. Do not conduct unnecessary or poorly designed animal experiments.
- xvi) **Human Subjects Protection**
When conducting research on human subjects, minimize harms and risks and maximize benefits; respect human dignity, privacy, and autonomy; take special precautions with vulnerable populations; and strive to distribute the benefits and burdens of research fairly.