DESIGN IN URDU RESEARCH: AN ANALYSIS OF URDU THESES OF PAKISTANI UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

The article deals with the research design used in the universities of Pakistan for the discipline of Urdu language and literature. Urdu research design is different from that of other social sciences. Its style of chapterization, presentation, reporting and citation does not match any of the other disciplines. Formulation of hypothesis, research objectives and research questions are not made a part of the reports. Some of the theses even do not have any findings or conclusion. That is why these researches do not address the problems. The theses and dissertations do are not clear about achieving of the objectives and goals. For this study, fifty theses of Pakistani universities were randomly selected and analyzed to find out the strengths and flaws of their research design. Based on the findings, recommendations and suggestions for the improvement of the design have also been presented.

Keywords: Research design; Urdu research; social sciences; problem; conclusion; objectivity.

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Introduction

Research is the process of finding truth and reality. It leads to find out answers and solutions of the questions and problems. It follows systematic procedure of scientific method and avoids randomness and rough guesses. Research is the scientific investigation of problems which leads to authentic and practicable results. Kothari (2004) defines research as systematic method consisting of enunciating the problem, formulating a hypothesis, collecting data, analyzing the facts and reaching certain conclusion either in the form of solutions(s) towards the concerned problem or in certain generalizations for some theoretical formulation. Research is the key to advancement. Man started his journey from unsafe caves and reached the age of space technology. The primitive man was worried about his feeding, clothing and sheltering on earth while the modern man fixes his aims in heaven and skies. All this became possible due to reason and research. According to Dr. Aslam Adeeb (2007)

"All knowledge is based on research. Without it, addition to knowledge or solution to problems is not possible. It causes progress to social and cultural life".

Social advancement is based on social research. Social research has two main objectives: 1. Purifying and unifying basic knowledge and 2. Achieving the practical and applied targets. (Abidi, 2018)

In the today's world, universities have been established to expedite the journey of advancement and progress. Universities are the centres of learning and research. The main liability of university is research. University connects society and knowledge together and paves the way towards rapid and speedy progress. In the words of Pervez Hoodbhoy (2009)

"Universities have become engines of progress for knowledge-driven economies in the age of rapid globalization. They are the fountainheads of modern science, and of technologies that have changed the world more in the past fifty years than the previous ten thousand years".

Research inculcates scientific and inductive thinking and it promotes the development of logical habits of thinking and organization. (Kothari, 2004) Research may be divided into two main categories i.e. technological sciences and social sciences. Pure or technological sciences deal with inventions and discoveries and facilitate the life on earth. While social sciences concern with solving problems of humanity, humaneness and leadership. These sciences deal with the peaceful and mutual survival of creatures. If the results enhance understanding of the social world then this justifies spending time and resources on the conduct of social research. (A.P.Kelly, 2016) Both types of researches go side by side to flourish life on earth. The mindset building

institutions i.e. universities are made responsible to groom these two faculties. Universities are coping with the given responsibility and are bringing about the required changes.

Universities in Pakistan are also playing their role in building of the research and knowledge-based society. Researches in the fields of sciences and social sciences are carried out here, too. But researches conducted here are not being proved to be effective as it does not follow the required standards. In this paper a critical analysis of the research design followed by researchers of Urdu literature is being presented.

The research design followed in social sciences consists of introduction, literature review, data collection, data analysis and conclusion. The research report starts with introduction and significance of the topic which is followed by description of the problem, objectives of the study, statement of hypothesis and raising research questions. This section delimits the canvas of study and leads researcher in a specific direction. Objectives, hypothesis and research questions direct the whole study towards specific conclusion which ends in the answers to the questions raised in the preliminary section.

As research is the major responsibility of the university, Pakistani universities are also coping with this challenge. Research in Urdu literature has been carried out in most of these universities. A huge number i.e. 4374 dissertations were written till 2008 and this work is still in progress. (Hashmi, 2008)

The research design followed in Urdu research seems different from that of other social sciences. We analyzed and compared research design of a sample consisting of 50 randomly selected theses. Selection of sample was done through systematic random sampling. The sample covers all areas of Pakistan. The theses were accessed on Pakistan Research Repository. We mainly focused on the following areas:
1. Format of research report i.e. abstract, chapterization, formulation of hypothesis, raising research questions
2. Method of analysis of data
3. Presentation of findings, conclusion and recommendations

The paper under study will answer the questions:
1. Whether the thesis format is the same as other social sciences or not?
2. Whether the format followed by the Urdu researchers leads towards scientific and objective results?
3. Whether the design is in accordance with the scientific approach? Whether the whole practice is systematic, pointed and targeted or not?

Background

Urdu researchers are following the design which is based on the detailed discussion on the topic. In most of the cases so much of the irrelevant data is

put that the real topic and problem seem overlooked. Urdu literary research is mostly based on the addition of new knowledge or discovering new aspects, instead of solving a problem. Presentation of details is more than the other social sciences, yet the presentation of findings and conclusion is poorer. According to Atsh Durrani (2009), literary research is being tried to be raised to the standards of scientific research so that its shortcomings may be removed. In his opinion the literary researcher seems weaker due to lack of peer review and analyzing data subjectively. Nisar Quraishi (2003) also complained of Urdu researches which are not very strong in presenting the findings, drawing conclusions and adding more to the bulk of knowledge. Dr. Javed Iqbal (2009) pointed out the same flaw by saying,

"We prepare a dissertation of 400 pages with so much of hard work, but when we go to draw findings and conclusion, we miss a lot because we don't know how to draw results".

Mutahir Shah (2015) recommended that scientific method of research should be followed to get more objective and reliable results. Dr. Shafiq Anjum (2015) considers that the literary research should keep the following objectives to achieve:
1. It should search and find facts/solutions to the problems.
2. It should extend the bulk of known facts or correct the wrongs.
3. It should follow a systematic method.
4. The method should be logical and objective.

The above mentioned characteristics are missing in the Urdu research dissertations, theses and articles. But no researcher has properly highlighted the issue so that the urdu research may get on the proper track of research. Atsh Durrani (2011) has aptly said that Urdu research has ignored the scientific method that is why it has not got the status of credibility. No research Guru can be seen in Urdu so far. This field is still waiting for some good researchers.

Analysis

The design followed in Urdu research is not a particular one, instead every scholar has his/her own design. All of the reports differ in classification, chapterization, mode of analysis and citation. Abstract is very rarely made a part of the dissertation. Relevant research works are not reviewed in the thesis, rather it is done in the preparation of synopsis/proposal.

After going through the sample, the following data came to hand:

Table-1: Statistics about Abstract, Hypothesis, Research Questions, Literature Review and figures.

No. of Theses Analyzed	Chapteriza-tion	Abstract	Hypothesis	Research Questions	Literature Review	Use of figures, tables, diagrams etc.
50	Different type of Chapterization in each of the theses. No particular pattern followed. 11 theses have no separate chapter/ section for results.	07	01	02	Specific Literature Review= 04 (General background study conducted= 46)	04
		14 %	02%	04%	08%	08%

Table-2: Statement of Objectives

No. of Theses Analyzed	Objectives presented separately	Objectives stated in preface	No objectives stated
50	06	38	06
	12%	76%	12%

Table-3: Presentation of Results

No. of Theses Analyzed	Results stated clearly in objective terms	Results stated subjectively in continuous paragraphs	No separate section/ chapter for results	Recommendations/ Suggestions
50	03	36	11	02
	06%	72%	22%	04%

From the tables, following findings are drawn:

1. Abstract is missing in most of the dissertations. Only seven researchers have included it in their reports.
2. Chapterization is different in every dissertation. Every researcher has done it by his/her own style and ease. No specific format has been followed.
3. Only one dissertation has hypothesis in it.
4. Research questions have been raised only in 02 theses. Others have ignored it.
5. Related literature has been reviewed only in four studies. These researchers have discussed the relevant research studies and justified their topics of research. While the rest of dissertations have presented only general background of the research area.
6. The research design is qualitative in all of the researches. Content analysis technique has been followed. Data collection and data analysis are going side by side in all of the dissertations.
7. Tables and diagrams are the most compact ways of presenting data, but it is not used in these reports. Only four reports have some tables which are used for showing details of a specific item. No researcher has used it to show research findings or research data.
8. Statement of the problem and justification of research topic is presented only in one dissertation. In most of the reports i.e. 36, objectives of study are stated in preface, while only six dissertations have clearly and properly expressed the objectives in dissertation.
9. Nine theses have conclusions in the last chapter. Only three theses have presented conclusion, findings and recommendations in objective terms. Eleven reports don't have a separate chapter for conclusion or findings. The conclusion is scattered all over the report and no formal conclusion or findings are presented. The rest of the 36 theses have described findings and conclusions subjectively in continuous paragraphs which does not covey a clear picture of results.
10. There is no use of figures or statistics in any of the theses.
11. All of the theses are detailed and replete with a lot of information about the topic, but analysis and presentation of results do not conform with the modern research style.
12. All these theses are based on collection/modification of information, none of these is based on finding a solution to a problem.
13. All of the theses are based on historical research and deal with the past. There is no thesis that follows descriptive research method or concerned with present or future.

Conclusion

The study denotes that there is no specific format in vogue in Urdu research. Every researcher has his/her own style and pattern. They differ in chapterization, abstraction, citation and presentation of results. On the other hand, other social sciences have a proper format of research report writing as well as style sheet. If Urdu departments and researchers form and select a specific design and style sheet, it will lead to a harmony, and will produce objective and scientific reporting. The table shows that some of the researchers have successfully followed the design and format of social sciences. It proves that Urdu researchers can make use of that style to enrich their researches and reports with objectivity, clarity and uniformity. Another point which is noteworthy is that Urdu researchers should use international citation styles which exist in the MS word by default. By this they will feel easy in reporting the research and much of their time and labour will be saved.

Urdu research design has shortcomings in it. It is based on subjective analysis which does not towards objective knowledge. It lacks proper or particular format and every researcher has its own style. The findings drawn out in these researches are often non-scientific, non-objective and unclear. The Urdu research is unfamiliar with the statement and solution of problem, it only works for addition of some more information to the existing bulk or modification to it. Quantitative tools are also out of touch in Urdu research. Precise ways of reporting like tables, graphs and diagrams are very rarely used here. Use of figures and statistics is done by none. Due to these grey areas, this design is lagging behind than other designs. It needs to be reviewed and redesigned so that it may cope with the needs of the day.

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