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Usman Muhammed Song Mr

Federal University Dutse, u.muhammad@fud.edu.ng

Medina Mohammed Mrs

Federal University Dutse, medina.m@fud.edu.ng

Zainab Mukhtar Yusuf Mrs

Federal University Dutse, zainabmameemukhtar@gmail.com

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Research Process and the Value of Publishing in High Impact Scholarly Journals: Prospect for Authors

By

Usman Muhammed Song,

u.muhammad@fud.edu.ng

Dept. of Library and Information Sciences, Faculty of Education, Federal University Dutse

&

Medina Mohammed,

medina.m@fud.edu.ng

J. D Amin Library, Federal University Dutse

&

Zainab Mukhtar Yusuf,

zainabmameemukhtar@gmail.com

Dept. of Library and Information Sciences, Faculty of Education, Federal University Dutse

ABSTRACT

Scholarly journals are still the most important media for disseminating product of research information concerned with transmission of correct results on right time and to right audience. Nowadays, researchers are faced with variety of challenges due to not observing ethics and rules of publication in high impact journals. Communicating research findings is an essential step in the research process. This article employed the philosophical assumptions of the Constructivism with focus on complexity, richness, multiple interpretations and meaning-making inductively through an Integrative Literature Review which was used to develop this conceptual paper. The aim of the article is to explore the different stages in research process using the Onion Model, to help researchers create a better organised methodology and avoid plagiarism and to extensively describe the basic structure of a research article, identifying the common pitfalls and recommend strategies to avoid them. Importance of literature review and its types such as Narrative, Systematic, Argumentative, Integrative and Theoretical literature review and choice of methodology are also discussed. Further, the article describes the review process for publishing scientific research and ways of identifying predatory publishers and journals. The article concludes that peer-reviewed journals are the forum for communicating research findings, and recommend that researchers should give more concern to principles and ethics of how to write a publishable paper in indexed journals and avoid plagiarism and predatory.

Keywords: Onion Model, Research Process, Research Paradigm, Plagiarism, Literature Review

Introduction

The familiar paradigm in the academia “publish or perish” adds a recognizable stick to the inducement of professional development. But even without these obvious professional motivations, almost all human beings crave recognition for their efforts (Mack, 2018). Publishing is a requirement for any professional who craves to be in tune with the world of academic advancement. It is important for every researcher to publish articles in high impact journals in order to get recognition, high visibility of research findings, earn academic promotion, attract new funds for new research, and maximize impacts on present and future

research. The acceptance rate of scholarly journals is an important selection criterion for authors choosing where to submit their manuscripts. Unfortunately, information about the ethics of individual journals and following the accepted research process is seldom available.

One of the functions performed by a journal is often called ‘gate-keeping’; the selection of research which is deemed worthy of publication (Herbert, 2019). High-impact publications are, of course, the ones that receive the most work because every prestigious researcher wants to disseminate their work in a journal with the highest visibility, diffusion and impact in the scientific community and which are therefore the most recognized by the research accreditation agencies in all countries (Delgado-Ponce, 2017). Writing articles for publication is a systematic process involving skills to express complex ideas in an uncomplicated and succinct form while publishing involves selecting an appropriate journal based on content and readers specificity. Accepting articles for possible publication must meet some specifications among which include project planning as the most relevant motive. Therefore, authors need to think through the conceptual dimensions of an article before writing to clarify the logic of how to proceed and present it, because manuscript badly conceptualized are unlikely to be published. This indication alerts the significance of style and contents of the presentation and recognizing the right of authorship (i.e. who is the Lead Author, Co-Author, or Corresponding Author), based on cooperation and participation in the research project. Journal Editors consider articles susceptible to current citations and which can positively influence their journal’s impact factor and can convince their readers that what is written is logical, reasonable, well-justified and coherent with the research theme or problem (Kirchhof and Lacerda, 2012; Wollin and Fairweather, 2007).

It is fundamental for authors to share knowledge and experiences through empirical and scientific studies in order to improve literature and recognition. It is a conventional wisdom in writing scholarly publications that if the author did not capture the attention of readers in the first sentence, they will move on to another article. Thus, the lead paragraph must begin with a mind catching caption that contains the main point of the write up, because it is not enough for publication to produce ideas that are not novel with the reality of knowledge production. Adopting effective research process will address this issue and pay considerable attention to this aspect. Björk (2019) submitted that most journals reject manuscripts in early stage by the editor or the editorial office, without even being sent out to peer-reviewers for evaluation. Such manuscripts lacks philosophical basis which leads to faulty technique and method for data collection not explaining the research questions and not supporting the conclusions clearly and rigorously. Such studies could be out of the subject scope for high impact journals, of substandard language and presentation, or have no scientific significance to theory and practice.

The article will be beneficial to not only researchers and authors for developing sound publishable studies, but teachers of research methodology in equipping their students with the philosophical understanding of adopting research paradigms and developing a comprehensive research process. The article utilizes expert judgment and opinion to come up with this opinion paper through the Constructivist Philosophical assumptions with focus on complexity, richness, multiple interpretations and meaning-making through an integrative literature review. Crucial to the constructivist philosophy is that the researcher has to adopt an empathetic stance.

Objectives

The main goal of this article is to explore the research process in order to provide avenue for researcher to publish in high impact journals. Specifically the article aimed:

1. To describe research philosophy as the foundation for the development of knowledge;
2. To explain the different stages of writing an article using the Research Onion Model for creating a better and an organised methodology;
3. To describe the peer-review process to address the challenges of authors in order to gain a clearer picture of publishing in high impact journals;

Research Philosophy and Paradigm

Misconception and interchangeable use of the concepts of research philosophy and research paradigm exist in literature. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) the American philosopher Thomas Kuhn (1962) was the first to use the word paradigm to mean a philosophical way of thinking. Research paradigms are ‘the entire constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques, and so on shared by members of a given community’ (Kuhn, 1970), the three most common paradigms are positivism, constructivism or interpretivism and pragmatism. In educational research the term paradigm is used to describe a researcher’s ‘worldview’ (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). Guba and Lincoln (1994) believed to be the assumed leaders in the field define a paradigm as a basic set of beliefs or worldview that guides research action or an investigation comprises four elements, namely, epistemology, ontology, methodology and axiology. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), the scientific research paradigm can be defined as a wide structure encompassing perception, beliefs, and awareness of different theories and practices used to carry out scientific research.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) defined the term research philosophy as a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge. The assumptions created by a research philosophy provide the justification for how the research will be undertaken (Flick, 2011) through adopting the required paradigm in terms of ontology, axiology and epistemology. In the same vein, TerreBlanche and Durrheim (1999) assumed that the research process has three major dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology. According to them a research paradigm is an all-encompassing system of interrelated practice and thinking that define the nature of enquiry along these three dimensions. In addition, Khatri (2020) opined that research paradigm is a basic and comprehensive belief system to view the research phenomena as the researcher’s worldview perspective, or thinking, or school of thought, or set of shared beliefs that inform about the meaning or interpretation of research data. This is done through establishing a philosophical assumption in line with the research problem.

As the reviewed literature suggest, such perspectives and assumptions through which reality, knowledge, methodological approaches and values are derived simply present the components of the research paradigm (Khatri, 2020). Therefore, to be specific, ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology are research philosophies serving as the components of research paradigm consisting of the positivism research, interpretivism research, pragmatism research, and/or realistic research. Thus, it is imperative to have comprehensive knowledge on these elements because they comprise the basic assumptions, beliefs, norms and values that each paradigm holds. Therefore, in developing research proposal, theses, or articles, the understanding of the research philosophies will uphold, and be guided by the assumptions, beliefs, norms and values of the chosen paradigm.

The research at every stage of the process whether consciously or unconsciously will be making a number of assumptions in guiding the conduct of the study. Philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality in research are crucial to the understanding of how the research make

meaning of the data gathered. Therefore, the research paradigm predicts the researcher's philosophical orientation on decision made on their choice of methodology and presentation of findings. The philosophical assumptions in relation to research process include the following: -

- a. **Ontology:** - Ontology is a branch of philosophy concerned with the assumptions we make in order to believe that something makes sense or is real, or the very nature or essence of the social phenomenon we are investigating (Scotland, 2012). Assumptions about realities encountered in research process (Ontological Assumptions) refer to assumptions about the nature of reality. Although this may seem abstract but it shapes the way the study views the research objects and variables.
- b. **Epistemology:** - According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) Epistemology is concerned with the very bases of knowledge and its nature, forms and how it can be acquired, and how it can be communicated to other human beings. Assumptions about human knowledge (Epistemological Assumptions) concerns assumptions about knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge, and the procedure of its communication. Whereas ontology may initially seem rather abstract, the relevance of epistemology is more obvious. Meanings are attached to every reality whether objectively or subjectively, depending on philosophical assumption the researcher is coming from.
- c. **Axiology:** - Assumptions on ways values influence the research process (Axiological Assumptions) refers to the role of values and ethics within the research process. This incorporates questions about how researchers, deal with both values and research participants being able to articulate their values as a basis for making judgments about the research process.
- d. **Methodology:** Is the broad term used to refer to the research design, methods, approaches, populations, sampling techniques and procedures used in an investigation. As a philosophical assumption, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) sees methodology as articulates of the logic and flow of the systematic processes followed in conducting a research project, so as to gain knowledge about a research problem.

These assumptions inevitably shape the understanding of the research questions, the methods used and techniques for interpreting the findings of any study. A well constructed and consistent set of assumptions will constitute a credible research paradigm, which will underpin the methodological choice, research strategy and data collection techniques and analysis procedures.

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) submitted that large number of paradigms has been proposed by researchers grouping them into three main taxonomies, namely Positivist, Interpretivist, or Critical paradigms. However, other researchers such as Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003a; 2003b) propose a fourth that borrows elements from these three and is known as the Pragmatic paradigm. This article focuses on three paradigms; positivist, constructivism and the pragmatics.

Positivism

Positivism relates to the philosophical stance of the natural scientist and entails working with an observable social reality to produce law-like generalizations. From an objectivist viewpoint, social and physical phenomena exist independently of individuals' views of them and tend to be universal and enduring in character (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). It promises unambiguous and accurate objective knowledge and sees organizations and other social entities as real in the same way as physical objects and natural phenomena are real ontologically. Epistemologically the research focus on discovering observable and measurable facts and

regularities that can give meaning to data, while axiological, the study establishes a phenomena that you can observe and measure credible and meaningful data on a value freer premises.

Constructivism

Constructivism emphasizes that humans are different from physical phenomena because they create meanings. In the education and social science research, it is argues that human beings and their social interactions cannot be studied in the same way as physical or natural science phenomena. As different people and organizations comprise complex cultural backgrounds. Philosophically, it should focus on narratives and perceptions with interpretations of meaning under different circumstances to create experiences from different social realities. Constructivism are critical of the positivist attempts to discover definite, universal ‘laws’ that apply to everybody, but rather they create new, richer understandings and interpretations of social contexts. In this philosophy, one can never presume that what is observed is interpreted in the same way between participants and the key approach, but it examines differences and nuances in the respondents understanding.

Pragmatism

The pragmatic assumptions believe that research starts with a problem, and aims to contribute practical solutions to the identified problem that inform future practice. Pragmatism asserts that concepts are only relevant where they support action. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) submitted that this paradigm arose among philosophers who argued that it was not possible to access the ‘truth’ about the real world solely by virtue of a single scientific method as advocated by the positivist, nor was it possible to determine social reality as constructed under the constructivism paradigm.

Table 1: Comparison of the three Research Philosophies and the Paradigms

Paradigm’s Assumptions	Ontology (Nature of Reality)	Epistemology (Acceptable Knowledge)	Axiology (Role of values)
Positivism What is reality? What is library organization and what relation it has with the library’s leader? Methodology: Quantitative & Deductive	Real, external, independent One true independent reality (universalism of organization and leaders are viewed based on qualities not values)	Scientific method following an observable and measurable facts are used to measure causal explanation and prediction of a leader	Value-free research Findings are independent and Objective Data is taken from large samples. The researcher is not part of the study
Constructivism How do we relate with the library organization? Why does staff perform less satisfactory? Methodology: Qualitative and Inductive	Complex, rich and Socially constructed Culture of the organization is ever-changing and the Interpretations of realities, is largely subjective	Focus on narratives and perceptions with Interpretations of meaning Knowledge is decided by dominant ideologies, practice and experience	Value-laden constitute the research The Researcher is part of what is researched with subjective interpretations Data is taken from small samples
Pragmatism What is the influence of Relativity on productivity? How is organization recruiting staff? Methodology: Mixed Methods	Reality is Complex, external and is always practically measures. The consequences of ideas, processes is with emphasis on experiences/practices	Practical meaning of knowledge in specific contexts Focus on problems solving and practice contribution	Value-driven research Research initiated and sustained by researcher’s doubts and beliefs. Data is taken from both small and large samples

In order to understand which paradigm’s assumption your research will follow, the research problem should be able to answer the following research philosophical dimensions.



Fig. 1: Sampled Research Philosophies Questions

From the philosophical dimensions, the research will be able to define the right paradigm's assumptions to guide the development of the research process.

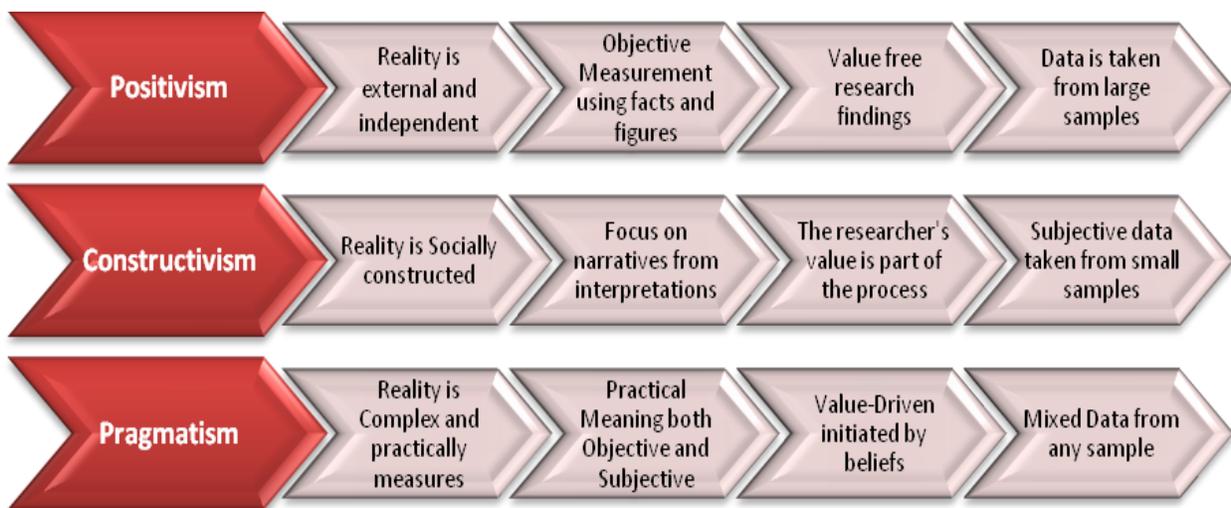


Fig. 2: Choice of Research Paradigm

The Research Onion Model

The research onion model developed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill in 2007 illustrates the stages that must be covered when developing a research strategy. The model aims to arrive at a better organized methodology symbolically illustrates elements involved in the research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

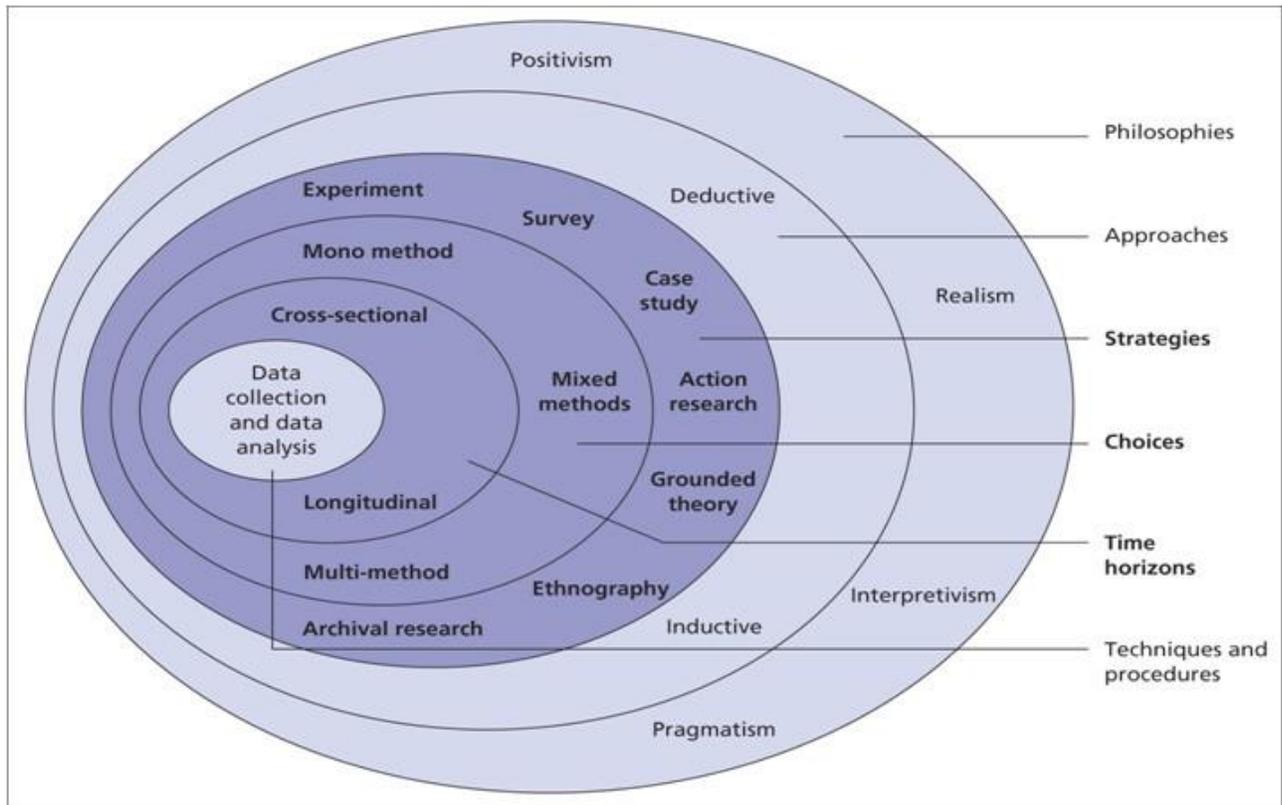


Fig. 3: The Research Onion Model (Adapted from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019)

The onion layers give a more detailed description of the stages of a research process and provide an effective progression through which a research methodology can be designed; viewing from the outside, each layer of the onion describes a more detailed stage of the research process. According to this model, the research process is similar to unwrapping of an onion layer by layer, for one to see the inner layer; the outer layer must be unwrapped first. For researchers to achieve the goal of conducting an acceptable research, the right steps must be taken accordingly. Its usefulness lies in its adaptability for almost any type of research methodology and can be used in a variety of contexts (Bryman, 2012). Saunders et al (2012) noted that while using research onion one has to go from the outer layer to the inner layer.

The research onion provides an effective progression through which a research methodology can be designed. Its usefulness lies in its adaptability for almost any type of research methodology and can be used in a variety of contexts (Bryman, 2012). This essay will examine and describe the different stages of the research onion, and explain the concepts at each stage.

Stages of the Research Onion

The stages of the research onion are designed to help the researcher in formulating an effective methodology. The outermost layer is the research philosophy serving as the foundation which sets the stage for the research process and defines the method for adopting the research approach in the second stage. In the third stage, the research strategy is adopted, and the fourth layer identifies the time horizon. The fifth stage represents the stage at which the data collection methodology is identified for the research process. The Saunders research onion stages include:

Stage One: Research Philosophy

A research philosophy refers to the set of beliefs concerning the nature of the reality being investigated (Bryman, 2012). It is the underlying definition of the nature of knowledge. The assumptions created by a research philosophy provide the justification for how the research will be undertaken (Flick, 2011) in terms of ontology, axiology and epistemology. Research philosophies can differ on the goals of research and on the best way that might be used to achieve these goals (Goddard and Melville, 2004). Therefore, understanding the research philosophy being used can help explain the assumptions inherent in the research process and how this fits the methodology being used.

Stage Two: Research Approaches

There are two types of approaches as depicted in this model: the deductive and the inductive approach. The deductive approach develops the hypothesis or hypotheses upon a pre-existing theory and then formulates the research approach to test it (Silverman, 2013). This approach is best suited the quantitative/positivist assumptions to contexts where the research project is concerned with examining whether the observed phenomena fit with expectation based upon previous research (Wiles et al., 2011). The inductive approach commonly used in qualitative research characterized as a move from the specific to the general (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In this approach, the observations are the starting point for the researcher, and patterns are looked for in the data, there is no framework that initially informs the data collection and the research focus can thus be formed after the data has been collected (Flick, 2011).

Stage Three: Research strategies

The research strategy is how the researcher intends to carry out the work (Saunders et al., 2007). The strategy can include a number of different approaches, such as grounded theory or ethnography, experimental research, action research, case study research, or a systematic literature review or archival research strategy.

Stage Four: Research Choice

The choices outlined in the research onion include the mono method involves using one research approach for a particular study; the mixed method required the use of two or more methods of qualitative or quantitative research; and the multi-method involves a wider selection of methods. The main difference between the mixed and the multi-method is that the mixed-method involves a combined methodology that creates a single dataset (Flick, 2011) while the multi-method approach is where the research is divided into separate segments, with each producing a specific dataset; each is then analyzed using techniques derived from quantitative or qualitative method.

Stage Five: Research Time Horizon

The Time Horizon is the time framework within which the project is intended for completion (Saunders et al., 2007). Two types of time horizons are specified within the research onion: the cross sectional and the longitudinal (Bryman, 2012). The cross sectional is one, whereby the data for the study is collected at one point in time while the longitudinal time horizon for data collection refers to the collection of data repeatedly over an extended period of time.

Stage Six: Techniques and Procedures

Techniques and procedures in the research onion process include the data collection and analysis, research design techniques, sampling and sampling techniques. Regardless of the approach used in a particular research, the type of data collected can be separated into two types: primary

derived from first-hand sources and secondary derived from the work or opinions of other researchers. The research design describes how the research process will be completed descriptively, explanatorily, and/or explanatorily. A sample is a representative segment of a larger population determined by the choice of adopting quantitative or qualitative research.

Writing an Article for Publication

Writing an article for publication in peer-review journals is considered a staggering task to authors, as a result of the different stages the article must follow in the research process.

The Research Problem

The first and most important step in the research process is the formulation of a research problem. Once the research problem is clearly stated, it helps in narrowing the topic down to a reasonable and clearer format for conducting the study. Bryman (2007) defined a problem as a statement about an area of concern, a condition to be improved upon, a difficulty to be eliminated, or a troubling question that exists in theory or in practice that points to the need for meaningful understanding and deliberate investigation. Research problems are usually stated at the end of the introduction or the literature review section of a study while other studies create a different section for the statement of the research problem. A research problem is a statement about an area of concern to improve a condition or eliminate a difficulty in scholarly literature, theory, or practice through deliberate investigation. The research problem should not be stated using the direct absence of what is being investigated or else it will fail to reveal the relevance or significance of the investigation.

Selecting a “Target Journal”

In the research process, selecting a “Target Journal” is imperative in order to establish the format to be adopted by the researcher. The target journal is the journal to which the article is going to be submitted. Each journal has sets of guidelines and core readers and the article should tailor to this readership and guidelines from planning stages. Before developing the article, at the planning stages, the author should be able to address the following questions:

1. **Background Information:** What are the issues that led to undergoing the investigation and why the environment or setting makes the work imperative?
2. **Aims and objectives:** What is the central idea behind the research problem leading to the knowledge gaps identified and how is the research planning to achieve or fill these gaps?
3. **Method/Approach:** Which philosophical assumptions are more appropriate in solving the research problem (e.g., positivist, pragmatic, theoretical or experimental approach)?
4. **Findings:** What will constitute the main results of the study and how is it going to contribute to the body of knowledge?
5. **General Conclusions:** How is the result going to bridge the knowledge gaps identified?

Selecting a “Research Title”

Answering the above questions will provide the basis for constructing a novel title for the study. The title of the article should be informative and interesting and able to invite readers to continue reading beyond the first page. It should consider describing the independent and dependent variables, the population and setting. Effective article titles should be able to:

- i. Identify the article’s central idea which should be unambiguous
- ii. Be accurate and specific in selecting dependent and independent variables

iii. Be as short as possible and enticing and interesting

The title of an article should not use acronyms unless the subject is almost exclusively widely known and does not commonly have more than one expression for example MS-Word; MS represent Microsoft and are commonly used.

An Abstract

An article for publication should contain an abstract that stand the chance to describe your research in a limited number of words; summarizing the problem or objective of your research, and its method, results, and conclusions. A well written abstract will help readers understand what your article is all about and whether it's interesting or useful for them to continue reading the article and the article should be able to improve visibility through abstracting and indexing. Mack (2018) submitted that the abstract should be a concise, stand-alone summary of the paper that covers a) Background/motivation/context, b) Aim/objective(s)/problem statement, c) Approach/method(s)/procedure(s)/materials, d) Results, and e) Conclusion(s)/implications.

Introduction

The introduction section should not be lengthy but comprehensive (see fig 1). Begin with a general ideal situation, narrowing to the specific focus of the paper. The article should add enough background information to enable readers to understand the study. The introduction should be able to state the relationship among the variables of the study through identifying knowledge gap, stating why the research is important and what are known about the topic or what is not yet known. The philosophical assumptions adopted by the study as well as the broad research aim that the paper tries to achieve should be clearly articulated in the background.

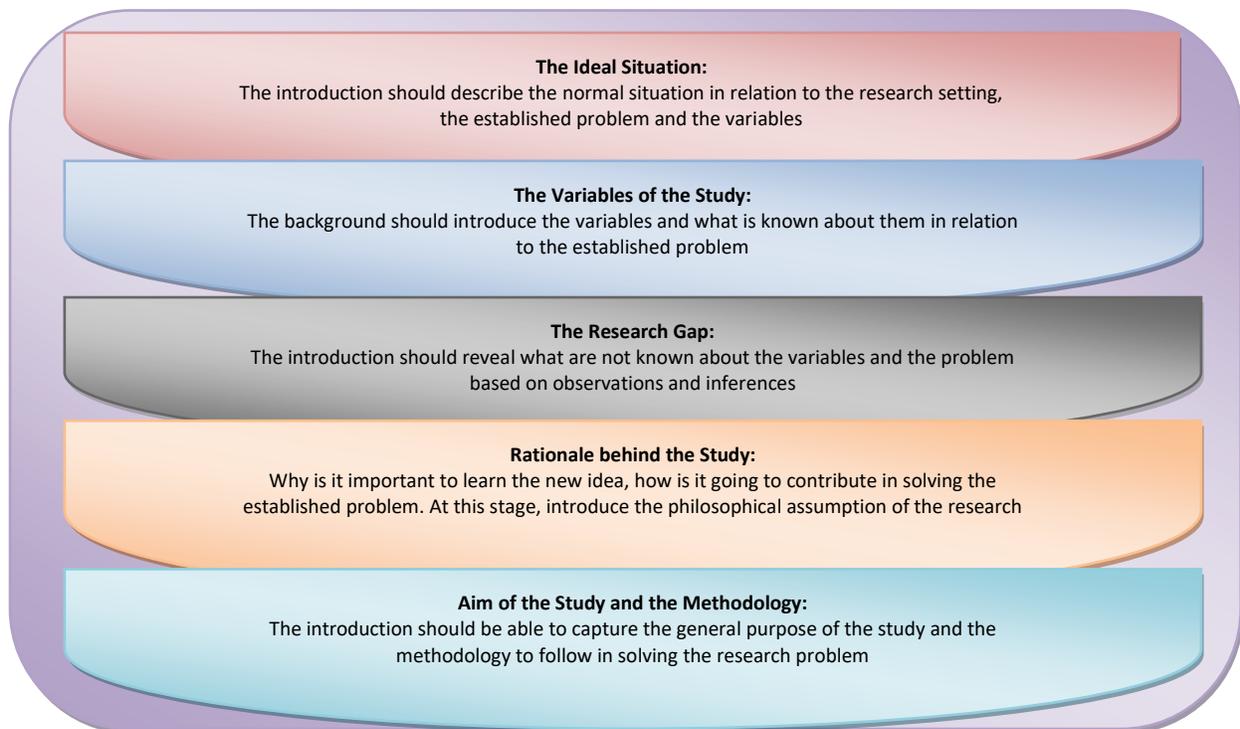


Fig. 4: Main Elements of the Introduction

Literature Review

A Literature Review surveys scholarly source materials that are relevant to a person's research thesis/problem and/or a particular issue or theory. The goal of the search is to evaluate the state of our communal knowledge on a topic before embarking on a quest of adding to that knowledge (Mack, 2018). It also provides a critical analysis that summarizes and synthesizes the source materials while also demonstrating how a person's research pertains to or fits within the larger discipline of study. The aim is to summarize and synthesize the arguments and ideas of existing knowledge in a particular field. Literature reviews typically provide: an overview, synthesis and a critical assessment of previous research; existing approaches and challenges, theories and findings; and identify or construct novel research problems and promising research questions (Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014; Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011).

Types of Literature Review

Literature reviews are pervasive, and thus various approaches to effectively organize and write literature review are adopted by researchers. While literature reviews are designed to provide an overview and synthesis of pertinent sources explored, there are several approaches to how they can be done, depending upon the type of analysis underpinning the study. The following types of literature review are the most popular in educational and social science research:

1. **Narrative literature review:** - critiques and summarizes the body of a literature, draws conclusions about the topic and identifies gaps or inconsistencies in a body of knowledge.
2. **Systematic literature review:** - requires more rigorous and well-defined approach compared to most other types of literature review. Systematic literature review is comprehensive and details, it focuses on a very specific empirical question.
3. **Argumentative literature review:** - as the name implies, examines literature selectively in order to support or refute an argument, deeply imbedded assumption, or philosophical problem already established in the literature. It should be noted that a potential for bias is a major shortcoming associated with argumentative literature review.
4. **Integrative literature review reviews:** - critiques, and synthesizes secondary data about research topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks on the topic are generated.
5. **Theoretical literature review:** - focuses on a pool of theory that has accumulated in regard to an issue, concept, theory, phenomena. It play an instrumental role in establishing what theories already exist, the relationships between them, to what degree the existing theories have been investigated, and to develop new hypotheses to be tested.
6. **Historical Review:** - Few things rest in isolation from historical precedent. Historical reviews are focused on examining research throughout a period of time; often starting with the first time an issue, concept, theory, phenomena emerged in the literature, then tracing its evolution within the scholarship of a discipline.
7. **Methodological Review** A review does not always focus on what someone said (content), but how they said it (method of analysis). This approach provides a framework of understanding at different levels (i.e. research approaches and data collection and analysis techniques), enables researchers to draw on a wide variety of knowledge ranging from the conceptual level to practical documents for use in fieldwork in the areas of sampling and data analysis, and helps highlight many ethical issues.

At the earlier parts of the literature review chapter, you need to specify the type of your literature review and provide reasons for your choice. Your choice of a specific type of literature review should be based on research area, research problem and research methods.

Importance of Literature Review in Research:

The importance of literature review provides the reader with the better understanding and adds value to the legitimacy of the research in many ways. This include: -

1. Identify areas of prior scholarship to prevent duplication and give credit to other researchers thereby rationalizes the need for conducting the particular research
2. It establishes the authors' in-depth understanding and knowledge of the interpretation of existing literature in light of establishing consistency and relevancy of existing materials
3. It enables the readers of the study to answer the following questions; What do the researchers know? What do they not know? Is the study reliable and trustworthy? What are the knowledge gaps of the researcher?
4. It gives the background of the current study through examining research result of similar studies bringing out the dialects of contradictions between various thoughts within the field to establish facts and gaps which are going to be substantiated or criticized
5. Helps to adopt a more appropriate methodology for the research by examining the strengths and weaknesses of existing research in the same field

Adopting Methodology

Methodology is an evaluation of the methods used in research, be it a project, dissertation, PhD thesis or a peer-reviewed journal article. According to Mack (2018), it should be sufficiently detailed so that an independent researcher working in the same field could reproduce the results sufficiently to allow validation of the conclusions. Often, students, researchers and authors get confused as they do not know what to include in the methodology section and how to choose the right methods, therefore, the knowledge of the research onion is very important.

Selecting an Appropriate Research Method

Selecting an appropriate research method is a critical step in any rigorous research effort. The selected research methodology impacts the data collected, the scope of inference, and the ability to draw defensible conclusions (Sillars and Hallowell, 2009). However, selecting one or more of research methods depends largely on the scope, nature, and limitations of the research study.

Discussion of Findings

Evidence does not explain itself. The purpose of the discussion of findings is to explain the obtained results and reveals how they help to address the research problem posed in the introduction. It is advisable to use the past tense and avoid using the first-person perspective (e.g. "I transform A to B"). The section should provide a mini synopsis of the whole study by stating the major objective and the method followed in achieving the objectives. This should be followed by reinstating the main findings of the study, significance and meaning through comparing results with other studies as reviewed in the literature review section. The strength of the study should be explicitly discussed as well as the limitations to the study. The discussion should be able to identify the impact and implication of the current study to theory, practice and body of knowledge, then it should followed by suggestion for further studies.

The Peer Review Process

According to Elsevier (2021), the peer review system exists to validate academic work, helps to improve the quality of published research, and increases networking possibilities within research communities. Peer review has been defined as ‘the critical and constructive evaluation of manuscripts submitted to journals by selected peers of the manuscript author. Peer review is regarded as an integral part of scientific publishing that confirms the originality and validity of the manuscripts through experts to make the work more robust, pointing out gaps and suggest for more additional experiments where necessary. Editor-in-Chief reserve the right to reject articles or document sent for peer review without initiating the review process once found not prepared in conformity with the procedure and standards of the journal. Specialists regarded as reviewers in the review process are generally not regular members of the editorial board of journals, but their work is primarily to determine manuscripts’ originality, validity and significance. There are different types of review, which include:

- a. **Single-Blind Anonymized Review:** this is done to pave way for impartial decision by the reviewer; the reviewers should not be influenced by the author(s). An article submitted for review carries the name(s) of the author(s) attached to the main article, but the author(s) may not know the reviewers unless they choose to sign their report after review.
- b. **Double-Blind Anonymized Review:** in this case all the two parties have no means of identifying each other. Articles are submitted without the details of the author(s) until after the review process is complete. This is highly encouraged type of review process because author’s gender, country of origin, previous publications or status may influence the review process.
- c. **Open Peer Review:** this type of review reveals the identity of both parties. Some journals even request author(s) to recruit a reviewer for their articles, and in some cases the reviewer’s identity or comments are published alongside the article.

The review process has end product of accepted, rejected or to be resubmitted. “Accepted Verdict” after the review process means the article is publishable with minor/few revisions, while “Rejected Verdict” means the article lack the status of publishing in the journal (lack merits, originality and substance). An article that has the “Resubmit/Revise Verdict” means the reviewers sees the document is publishable but require amendments to some sections.

Plagiarism – Academic Theft

Plagiarism is regarded as the most common problem researchers and authors face while developing an academic paper. Plagiarize is a Latin word ‘plagiarius’ meaning “**kidnapper**” so when you plagiarize you are kidnapping someone's words or ideas and is regarded as academic theft. Often, plagiarism is more a consequence of intellectual laziness than intellectual dishonesty (Mack, 2018). There are several ways that a particular article can be guilty of plagiarizing, citing sources improperly or failing to cite at all, as well as copying and pasting someone’s words and claim ownership are all considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is embedded with a lot of consequences that academic writers need to circumvent completely to avoid destroying their professional and academic reputation. Some plagiarism cases result to take legal action leading to fines, penalties or articles being rejected. Plagiarism can take many forms, such as:

- a. **Incremental Plagiarism:** - an author who copy and paste someone's work either a paragraph or sentence without appropriate acknowledgment of the original source
- b. **Duplication or Self Plagiarism:** - as the name implies, it is the situation where an author reuses his/her own already published article or any resource without attribution.
- c. **Improper or Incorrect Plagiarism:** - citations are done to only primary sources contained in a document neglecting the secondary source containing the primary source.
- d. **Paraphrasing Patchwork Plagiarism:** - when a researcher uses a paragraph or sentence from one or two different works and changes the orientation of the words and claims ownership with no appropriate acknowledgement to the original author.
- e. **Repetition of research:** where a person publishes a new study, but repeats data or text that has already been published in a similar study, and fails to give proper attribution

Predatory Publishing

The term predatory has been adopted to mean journals and conferences that employ deceptive practices used to trick researchers to publish and/or present at conferences in exchange for money. Ibrahim and Saw (2020) submitted that these predatory journals may invite an author to submit papers in a field that is totally not related to their research area or experience. Occasionally an invitation may cite an article that the author had published in a legitimate journal (Richtig, et al., 2018). Many of the predatory journals are open access; however, many trustworthy journals may also offer that option or embrace that practice.

Way Out

Predatory journals and publishers are largely characterized by false and misleading information. Such journals prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate practices (Grudniewicz, et al., 2019). There is urgent need to create awareness among authors and researchers at different fora on the dangers and academic implications of predatory publishing. It should be more frequently discussed as main topics during academic gathering on publishing creating awareness about the existence of these journals and their hosts as well as sharing information on their characteristics and common practices. According to Sewell, Firnhaber and Kolasa (2020), predatory journals masquerade as trustworthy ones, therefore the following steps should be taken:

1. **Did you receive an unsolicited email to publish?** Predatory journals aggressively solicit articles by sending blast emails to academics, spelling errors, poor grammar, and odd languages are characteristic of these solicitations.
2. **Is the journal published in a well-known database?** If you dig around and cannot find past issues of a journal, it may be a sign that it is predatory.
3. **Is this publisher affiliated with other scholarly publishers?** Check for professional affiliations of publishers before submitting.
4. **Does the journal adhere to industry standards?** Check to see if the journal is ISSN or ISBN registered and the journal articles have Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs).

5. **Does the publication demonstrate that it follows quality editorial standards?** Predatory publications do not spend the money to ensure thorough editing. Misspellings, typos, and other grammatical errors are common in the articles they publish.
6. **Is the peer review process genuine?** Predatory journals often falsely claim that they employ a full peer review process, a promise to fast track your article is often a sign that the journal is predatory.
7. **Does the website contain misleading information?** Predatory journal sites may misrepresent their editorial boards to appear more credible. Check to see if those listed include the journal on their CVs. Instead of an impact factor, they may use the abbreviation Scientific Journal Impact Factor (SJIF) or similar misleading language.
8. **Does the journal have a published code of conduct?** Good quality journals adhere to the code of conduct from publishing organizations. Make sure the journal website states that they comply with a code of conduct from publisher associations.

Conclusions and Suggestions

This article constitutes an attempt to conduct a detailed, systematic, and objective review of academic literature in the research process adopting the research onion model for developing an academically sound and publishable article. However, the stages defined by Saunders et al. (2007) have been expounded upon, and the usefulness of the stages of the onion demonstrated that the most effective model lies in its use. Despite the inherent differences on the status of reality among philosophical practices, one philosophy is not inherently better than the other, although researchers may favor one over the other (Podsakoff et al. 2012). The article has explored the principal idea behind research philosophy in the provision of justification for the research methodology informed by the nature of the phenomena and reality being observed.

The article suggested that since peer review is demonstrated as an integral part of scientific publishing, authors and researchers should confirm the validity of the process through different skills like how robust in pointing out gaps and suggestions for additional experiments where done on their submissions by reviewers. Authors should identify predatory publishers and journals as well as the need to understand the implications of misconduct and ensure they do not violate the ethical norms of publishing, even accidentally. Are the reviewers rejecting submissions that did not comply with some of their standard procedures? This will help researchers and authors identify predatory and inferior less academic publishers who prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices and lack of transparency.

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