

## Research Methods Foresight 2050

**BADAR SULTAN MINHAS**

International Islamic University Islamabad

Email: [badar.minhas@gmail.com](mailto:badar.minhas@gmail.com)

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### *Abstract*

*Change is permanent feature of universe. The paper is qualitative analysis of changes foreseen by the experts from private sector and academia in the research methods paradigm of future. The study is based on the interviews with the experts from private sector and academia; moreover, it answers questions like: What sort of changes they see in near and far future of 39 years for the research methods paradigm? What can be the drivers of change in research methods? Can we overcome the imprecision in testing management theories? What necessary actions are needed to integrate the different worldviews and overcome barriers between groups of theorists? When the researchers will be able to tell the timing of cause and effect with precision? It talks about the future that may happen in the research paradigm. It attempts to streamline the activities for the decision makers for a future of research which will enhance the outcomes of the researches undertaken in near future.*

**Key Word:** *Future, Paradigm Shift, Industry, Academia, Research, Foresight Methodology.*

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### **Introduction**

Research is one the basic instinct of mankind. Humans start researching when they are not even independently part of this world. Medical science believes that learning starts from womb. A baby after being born start researching using the five basic senses to realize what does it mean to be what we feel through our senses. Research informs us of possible pros and cons related to an action, plan, idea, technique, technology etc. We learn using our five senses till a specific time period until we start reasoning and experimenting.

In the school research takes a different form. We research through assistance from teachers, friends, books, labs etc. We establish different facts and get familiar to social norms about right and wrong, best practices, satisfactory performances but its all with the passage of time. Students conduct research by playing and participating in activities designed by the teachers to learn through research. This research is usually in the form of reading books (literature reviews), watching TV, discussing with parents, asking questions and getting answers from different sources, telephone, computers and all. Research continues to make up a mind which is always different from all others. Child grows up into a boy with very particular and special experiences thus data has been mined into his mind resulting in a mind frame of a completely different style. This new resource of knowledge has different interpretation of facts and figures, views the world from a different angle, has many dimensions of personality, perceives the happenings in a different ways and codifies data in a completely different way for others to decode it at some later stage. Research has now taken the form of a completely new paradigm. It is loaded with new technology. Many online journals are present with billions of articles and papers for new researchers to access and get information they seek about a particular field. This era has another dimension of piracy or copy rights which is innovation in its own regard. Yet another paradigm is presence of statistics which has been incorporated through IT very efficiently and effectively. Research is all commercial these days due to strong economic and financial values in the developed economies. Research is also linked with aesthetic sense, quantum oriented, and is non frugal in nature. It tends to be the area of a wealthy and money making entities of the societies. It is due to huge expenses incurred in its conduction and validation. Marketing of research plays vital role in its acceptance officially by the general public and governments. Often researches face difficulty in acceptance if not backed by the governments.

After search, research assists rational mankind to draw some more inferences from what has been searched already. It can be due to the missing links not identified previously. This inability leads us to a result which is never complete and a research which may not be performed considering all the variables of significance. We do research by using our senses. We also sense our future by assessing our previous data in our minds or computers. We try to extrapolate the future, predict the outcomes of a policy, design the future scenarios etc.

Research and publications are supposed to be amongst top indicators of being developed and being a knowledge economy. They are believed to be the leaders in this era of information technology, innovation and globalization. We have thousands of journals online these days. Many publications are being made every day. Millions of information articles and scholarly papers are accessed and analyzed. Many new ideas are being faster rates as compared to their development in the past. Knowledge sharing is very easy these days.

Due to growing importance of research in our economy, society and education; it is deemed necessary to conduct Research Methodology Foresight. It was in the beginning a trial and error sort of thing. It developed into separate field with tools, science and methodologies. Now, what is going to be the future in next 30 to 40 years?

### **Literature Review**

Some researchers talk about the story (Cresswell & Clark, 2007) . Marriage of qualitative and quantitative resulted in mixed methods. Query rises why not new born is going to marry and produce something out of this world. A research methodology which is innovative, creative, precise, accurate, solution oriented, socially accepted.

Crowd sourcing is one new method to conduct research. It invites all sorts of persons and asks them the questions and their views about the subject or problem. Then after analysis solution is sought. Foresight research is another baby of research which is focusing on creating the future. This is more like a participatory research which intends to make everyone say about the future they like and dislike. It tries to come up with a future which is having consensus of all. It relies on the data of the past but talks about perfecting the future.

Now, official R & D organizations in the world are focusing on research from a perspective of doing research through collaborations. One of the topics in French INRA research paper awards is: Will the future of research organizations depend on the alliances?

Techniques, ideas and technologies are the ultimate outcome of research methods in different sciences. Science and technology (which in medicine, transportation, energy etc. needs to serve society and poor people of Egypt, India, China, Brazil where cheap is valued more than swift, glamorous etc.) for the west was and is superlative, curiosity driven (Whitesides, 2012) and driven by innovative ideas for doing business which ultimately generates the idea of corporations.

In TF, the experts are invited several times to do foresight about the subject under consideration. In this way, incorporation of the interactive and formal aspects of the interaction within the frame of analysis is induced (Thomson & Holland, 2003).

Quantitative research has many limitations in conflict oriented research areas where emphasis on face to face interviews is highlighted (Haer & Becher, 2012). But conflicts are common part of human life. In the beginning a conflict is just difference of opinion which is not resolved to take the shape of armed conflict. Researchers have highlighted issues in quantitative research methodologies e.g. bias, errors in filling the data form etc. Quantitative research is just one time which may not be able to incorporate all the variables. Even in the areas of peace, this methodology has limitations which are being highlighted by the researchers.

Usually, it is observed that conflicts are resolved by table talks due to questionnaire may not be the right kind of solution to get the data. To resolve conflicts all the stakeholders are invited to participate in a meeting to resolve matters of concern. Thus Foresight methodology highlights and gives more weight to the involvement of all stakeholders. This ensures openness and sincerity to resolve the problems and even conflicts which have been worsened by the usage of arms.

Foresight Studies or futures studies focus on the past in addition to critical analysis of the present for the betterment of the future of the regions, cultures, countries, languages through international degree programs, joint ventures with heterogeneous groups, symbolic, intellectual and physical effective presence etc (Ramos, 2005). All these efforts are going to increase the value of this new research field which of forward looking, consensus oriented, stakeholders indulged and communicative with all in a society.

Capitalism worked because it gave humanity a choice for what works best. What would work best now for capitalism must be unearthed before we lose grips over the human struggle within it (Christopher Manfredi). The world has suffered capitalism because of the undermining or ignoring the basic needs of the society. OWS is gaining popularity because research in our education system was oriented to earn capital which was accumulated with 1% of the population in the world. Focus on capital rather than real demands of the future societies for real socializing instead of virtual ones, transformed the research into quantum research or luxury oriented which put the 99% of the world dwellers in jeopardy.

Foresight as a methodology even discussed poverty, women, water conflicts, food crisis, social issues, values etc. This guarantees the validity, acceptability, and utility of this methodology for all which will reduce the issues and challenges faced by the nature, humans, species and our values right now. Sustainable development demands Foresight methodology to prevail rather flourish as a new research paradigm in 2050. Experts highlighted this positivity of TF and vision of the experts validated its positive implications for the society as a whole in the world. TF in not capital oriented rather better future oriented. It dictates the actions that need to be taken not only for but against technology as well. One example is Germany shutting down nuclear power reactors. This argument is also supported by the change in its terminology from TF to just Foresight i.e. Futures Studies which is not oriented towards the idea capitalized rather innovation frugal enough to guarantee social wellbeing.

All these may be regarded as research or its methodologies but the question remains. What would be the research like in 2050? How different knowledge sources will be used to find solutions to problem? Where from, the queries will rise to be answered? What will drive the research of the futrue? Will it be industry, academia, religion, belief or something else?

## **Methodology**

Research incorporates one of the methods used in TF. It in uses the sample of mixed experts from industry, academia, society, government organizations for queries about the future of Research Methods in next 15 years or more. It was all interviews based and focused on the changes in the methods of research in far future. Telephone was used mostly for interviews from experts of all the four categories however, some of the experts were interviewed live for this purpose. Ethnography equipped with the literature review was also used to foresee the future of research methodology.

## **Analysis**

Experts mostly highlighted one aspect of future research i.e. forward thinking. They highlighted that from experiences in the past and observations of current affairs dictates some sort of future which will be accepted by all rather than dictated by the governments. Participatory action oriented research was deemed as the future of research paradigm. It is partially due to the popular construct of the present day research i.e. sustainable development for the society of humans.

Market oriented research is the norm these days and this highlights capitalism oriented or commercial research. This is also highlighted by actions taken in Turkey to link the research funding in universities with corporations and industry oriented research. Now, considerations of such actions are being observed in many other countries so that industry can flourish and consumers can be motivated to purchase for safeguarding the economics thus undermining the society and its core values to a greater extent.

We see research projects to innovate an invention for the purpose of satisfying the aesthetic sense of mankind where as poverty is producing more terrorists in the world. This is partially due to injustice in the research which is focusing on the industries to survive rather than human beings and their societies as primary entities in a country or region. Commonly, constructs of product innovation, value addition, efficiency and quality are used by the researchers and these are said to be the selling constructs in research journals online which contributes to impact factor system thus increasing the economical value of the researcher no social values.

Experts highlighted that research in future will be all through ICT which will be equipped with AI for research projects. Little intervention of mankind and dependency on machines will increase. This will enhance the Foresight exercises as many experts will rely on ICT for data availability through Information Systems of particular nature. TF will gain popularity due to availability of data and researches will be more valid, accurate, sustainable, solution oriented, unbroken etc. TF methodology is expected to be significant methodology due to its forward looking approach, wider consultation being integral part of it, consensus being the core if its activities etc. It will be the methodology of the future.

## **Conclusion**

Future of RM will be society oriented involving all the stakeholders so that innovations, inventions and products of technology and science can be diffused through consensus so that harms can be minimized. Focus of researchers was the TF methodologies which tries to engage maximum number of the participants and is interactive in nature, discusses policies for the long term period in addition to analysis of the implications of the decisions taken in the short term, which was Foresight before 1600s. (Saritas, 2011)

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