

### **Book Review**

## ***The Research's Handbook: Techniques and Insights (Part 1)***

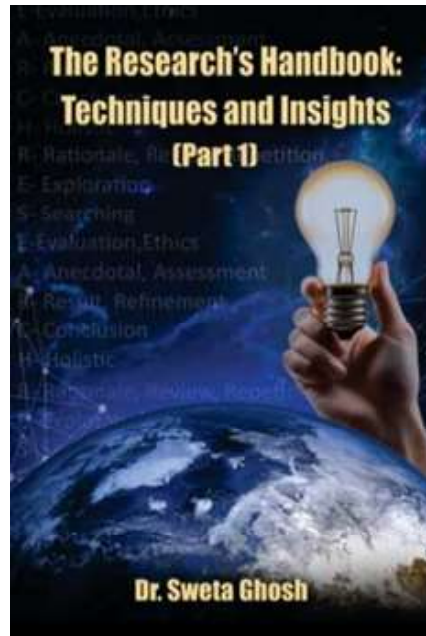
Mass media research involves a thorough investigation of the production, content, and effects of information shared through different mass communication channels. The world has undergone significant transformations since the mid-1990s due to the rapid expansion of Satmass Media (a term introduced by Dr Suman Kumar Kasturi). Internet-driven social media has profoundly influenced societies. Palpably, research techniques and insights cannot be explained by one simple theory. There are various approaches to media research, each aiming to understand all aspects of communication research.

Part I of the book, *The Research Handbook: Techniques and Insights*, is authored by Dr Sweta Ghosh, who is a distinguished academician and researcher within the field of Mass Communication and Journalism, having numerous scholarly publications to her credit. She is presently serving as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Mass Communication & Videography at Rabindra Bharati University.

I read the book, 'The Researcher's Handbook: Techniques and Insights (Part 1),' with great interest, as the topic is both relevant and close to my own exploratory interests. This book covers a vast canvas of research techniques and insights. It is divided into six chapters: Chapter One-An Introduction to Research; Chapter Two-Research Elements and Designs; Chapter Three-Literature Review; Chapter Four-Research Objective, Purpose, Proposal, and Problem; Chapter Five-Research Question, Hypothesis, and Variable; and Chapter Six-Methods of Communication Research.

In this setting, it is very pertinent to relate the definition of communication given by Berger & Chaffee (1987). According to them:

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*Communication is a process of expression, interaction, and influence, in which the behaviour of humans or other complex organisms expresses psychological mechanisms, states, and traits and, through interaction with the similar expressions of other individuals, produces a range of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural effects (Robert T. Craig & Heidi L. Muller, 2007: 82).*

Also, according to Robert T. Craig, Communication Theory is a field comprising seven traditions: rhetoric, semiotics, phenomenology, cybernetics, socio-psychology, sociocultural theory, and the critical approach (Ibid), while according to Dr Sweta Ghosh, research is a scientific process which collects new ideas, facts, information and theories to establish a new theory of knowledge along with the existing one. Further, with the growing need for a scientific approach in the research process, words like 'new conclusion' have been replaced with 'valid conclusion.'

This volume provides an overview of research techniques and insights considered in part one under this title. It presents theoretical coverage of the broad scope of communication research and

integrates existing theory with research. To support this integration, the author has reviewed a wide range of literature from established authors in various specialised communication research areas. The book clearly demonstrates how theory and research come together in specialised fields.

There is no second thought that this book is a complete book on techniques and insights of communication research, having a comprehensive discussion on various allied subtopics. Particularly, this volume focuses mainly on research elements and designs, literature review, and methods of communication review. One of the most interesting discussions of this book is that it examines the types of research in a comprehensive manner under twenty-one subheadings. Besides, this book discusses research elements and design. Of the many topics that the book has covered, different categories of hypotheses have a special entreaty. One appealing aspect of this book is that, throughout the book, the author discusses the sophistication of research methodologies and the challenges that future scholars may face surrounding measurement in a world of virtual reality and interactive media.

This volume interestingly presents methods of communication research. Also, as a special focus on it, clinical studies are taken for a comprehensive discussion. In this all-inclusive volume, issues surrounding privacy, credibility, and developing interpersonal relationships are given due importance for the new developments in media studies are challenging our silos and push us toward a more integrated approach of understanding. Among various significant chapters such as Research Question, Hypothesis and Variable; and Literature Review, at the heart of this book, Research Objectives, Purpose, Proposal, and Problem, a vast topic in its brief version is offered in a separate chapter.

It is tough to envisage which domains within communication research will attract greater attention from researchers, which ones will be de-emphasised, and what new research topics will emerge. It depends merely on such aspects as technological development in future, economic trends, world events, and funding trends in education. It is a matter of fact that addressing practical problems effectively will require more powerful theories than currently available to address practical communication-related problems. For this,

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theories that accurately account for the ways in which people construct, use, and respond to messages are very much required. Without a doubt, this volume set alight conversation about these issues, within the topics chosen for this part one.

This volume, unquestionably, includes various aspects of media research in detail. Nonetheless, though I understand that it is always very easy to critique books for what they leave out, I personally felt, in this case, the inclusion of the remaining chapters proposed to be the constituents of part two would have made this book thorough in all respects, for this book comprises only 224 pages.

Communication theory and research mutually influence each other and are reciprocally interwoven. The author has definitely achieved the objective that was set when compiling the volume in the first place. Overall, the purpose of the author in bringing out this volume is achieved - to provide both seasoned scholars and beginning students unfamiliar with the state of theory and research in various areas of communication study with a taste of current theory and research in communication. This book will definitely appeal to graduate/postgraduate students and faculty members who want to have a concise yet comprehensive overview of research stemming from its various component parts.

To this end, this excellent publication, by all means, paves a way for framing a truly grounded approach to Communication Research, making it a more serious academic discipline in the future. This book, for sure, will serve as a comprehensive textbook/reference book in the field of communication research.

**Review by:** Dr. Suman Kumar Kasturi\*

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