

BOOK REVIEW

Shiva Raj Adhikari (PhD), (2016). **Research Methods in Health Economics**, 1st ed. Bhotahity Kathmandu: Vidhyarthi Pustak Bhandar. ISBN: 978-99946-1-987-0 P xii+178; Price: NRPs 350.00

The motivation for writing the book comes out of two problems that the Author observed after years of working with highly motivated students and researchers. The first was the difficulty experienced in identifying and coming up with a research topic, objectives, and questions. The other problem was how they could implement their research using real world data. This presented a gap that the Author was able to fill by demystify this process and providing a practical guide that can be used for Health Economics Research.

The book covers all the important aspects of coming up with a research idea all the way to the finalisation of the research. The book is broken into 3 parts: Introduction to and early phases of Health Economics Research; Formulating a research study and lastly research methodology and report writing. Within each part the Author uses real world examples which show how the theories, methods and models are applied to research. Health Economics as a discipline covers a wide area. It becomes difficult to for a researcher to be highly proficient in all aspects of the discipline, hence the creation of this practical user friendly guide. The Author focuses modern research designs and approaches and methodologies that are being used in research. They are fully expounded and explained bring out the differences and uniqueness of each design, approach, model and method. This is becomes extremely useful to the Research and the Post Graduate Student who are the audience that the Author is addressing in this book.

Chapter 1 introduces the basic concepts of Health Economics, the way that Economic principals and methodologies are applied to Health and Health Care and how together they are used by the three main actors in this field. The Author stresses the critical importance of a paradigm shift that is required for those who want to pursue Health Economics so that the begin to thinking like a Health Economist. The basic preparation required is also introduced at this stage and further explained in-depth later chapters. Chapter 2 takes a look at Research approaches: (i) Quantitative; (ii) Qualitative; (iii) Q Squared; and (iv) Case Study. Each approach is taken in turn and examined in great detail. Their strengths and weaknesses and applicability are also highlighted. Relevant real world examples are given for Quantitative and Qualitative

approaches. The second part of the chapter takes a look at 7 types of Research that can be carried out: (i) Exploratory; (ii) Conclusive; (iii) Descriptive; (iv) Explanatory; (v) Causal research; (vi) Experimental ; and (vii) Economic evaluation. An explanation of what each design is used for, what it identifies or examines and how it does that are explained in a concise and easy to follow manner.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 fully address one of the critical problems students and researchers face when initiating and formulating the research. They are (i) the process of formulating a research proposal; (ii) selection of a research topic; and (iii) statement of problem, objectives and hypothesis. All three chapters have done a good job in addressing the problem and the providing of examples in Chapter 3 and 5 using the Author's own work. Literature Review in Chapter 6 provides critical information required to conduct a review. It is presented in a logical format and supported with examples from the Author's own work. Four models appropriate to the topic are included in this example. An addition to a future edition of the book would be the inclusion of referencing software like End Note. Chapter 7 looks at Research Methodology which answers the how what and why of research. It is explained in greater detail. An explanation of measures, variables, scales, reliability and validity which are crucial part of research methodology are explained with examples and the type of data that is used in answering the research question.

Chapters 8 through 11 focus on the different methods of data collection and analysis for Quantitative, Qualitative, Q Squared and Case Studies. A chapter is dedicated to each study and there is an in-depth discussion on what each entails, different models applicable to the analysis. In the analysis sections inclusion of Software for analysis is highly recommended. This could be a list of different software used in the statistical analysis in Health Economics. The use of illustrations from one software could be used in examples throughout the book. The title of Chapter 12 Interpretation of Results suggests that it will focus on interpreting results. The opening paragraph lightly talks about this without going into much detail. The ability for a researcher to interpret the results and understand the assumptions of the different types of analysis is not presented. Instead the chapter includes following sections: steps to writing results section; Rules for Economic Writing; Some Rules for Editing; and last but not least Finalization Research. Perhaps Interpretation of Results could be included as a subheading of the of Data Collection and Analysis in Chapters 8 through 11, and Chapter 12 could focus on the writing, editing and finalisation aspects of the research.

The major strength of the book is the way the Author used real life data and examples from his own work to give life to the concepts, ideas and methodologies he presents

in the book. The information presented is in easy to follow and not intimidating for students new to the subject but at the same time a refresher to researchers in Health Economics.

In conclusion, the Author achieved the motivation and objectives of the book. The reader can immediately start working on research following the outline and information presented. This book could also pave the way to creating post graduate degree program for Health Economics in Nepal as there are no Universities in Nepal offering this program. This book would also benefit professionals in the Health Industry in understanding how economics and research has a significant impact in services they provide to their clients, their clients wellbeing and the policy formulation process of Government and Development Institutions.

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Date: 13 November 2017