Book Description

Research provides human beings with the solutions they need to solve every day problems, including diseases; hunger; ignorance; human and natural calamities; etc. It is research that has driven technology to the current levels. Unfortunately, many people, especially students, find it painfully difficult to conceptualize and implement research projects. The concepts and ideas involved in developing a research project can be particularly confusing. The' tasks of identifying and stating the research problem; developing research tools; piloting and validating the tools; collecting data; analyzing and interpreting the data; and writing the research report often prove frustrating even to the experienced researcher. The process is also prone to errors, especially if the researcher has limited skills and experience in the conduct of research and inadequate depth in knowledge on the subject matter. The writing of this dictionary was motivated by the need to demystify research terms, concepts and ideas, especially for the novice researcher and other professionals who embark on research with limited skills, experience and training. A clear understanding of the concepts used in research in all areas of human endeavor is a prerequisite to understanding the research process and gaining the necessary skills and knowledge. More critically, the dictionary will help students, scholars, programme officers, professionals and research and evaluation consultants develop a sound vocabulary, lingo and the confidence required in both the conduct of research and writing of research reports, masters thesis, doctoral dissertations, technical reports, refereed journal papers or other research materials. The dictionary is arranged in a simple alphabetical order with cross referencing of related words and concepts. The definitions are presented in brief paragraphs and we have purposely avoided using many complicated statistical formulae, technical jargon and complex figures and diagrams. This format should help readers find the definitions they need quickly and easily. The concepts defined in the dictionary include many universally accepted indicators across many areas of knowledge. We have tried to give local examples as much as possible in explaining the concepts. We hope that this approach will help researchers, especially students and scholars, identify, conceptualize and state their research problems with more clarity of thought and focus of the subject area and choose the appropriate investigational methodology and tools. The authors' experience is that this has perhaps been the most challenging phase of the research process for many people.