Adopting secondary Data is Boon for Accounting Research- Conceptual study

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Abstract

Secondary data is collected by someone other than the present researcher for current research and originally collected for other purposes. Generally secondary data is publicly available for researchers such as census information, academic publications, statistical agencies etc. Accounting related researches are facing challenge of obtaining valid and reliable primary data. But the availability of secondary data for accounting research is abundant. Many Accounting researches are conducted based on secondary data is called 'secondary data based accounting research'. Most of the accounting research is related to accounting practices and professions. The objective of this conceptual paper is to describe concepts, advantages, factors and sources of secondary data based accounting research. There is a wide scope of opportunity for conducting research in accounting, based on secondary data.

Keywords: Research, accounting research, secondary data, and secondary data based accounting research.

1. Introduction

Accounting research is a wide term, generally it is difficult to define because it has varied scope. There are few definitions are available to explain the concept accounting research. According to Oler, Derek K., Mitchell J. Oler, and Christopher J. Skousen (2010) accounting research is investigates how accounting information is gathered, measured, organized and disclosed. It deals with various issues related stakeholders, regulatory government, professional bodies, standard setting bodies and other business stakeholders. Most commonly accounting research is conducted on the effect of economic events on the process of accounting and reporting economic information. Accounting researches are important and are more practical. It is a research that

can make significant contribution to accounting practices and accounting professions (Gordon, Teresa P., and Jason C. Porter. 2009).

Secondary data based research is pre-dominants in the research field especially in accounting studies. Accounting related researches are facing various challenges especially it has been facing the difficulty of obtaining valid and reliable primary data. But for observing the availability of secondary data in this field, a remarkable government and other authenticated secondary data sources are available for access.

There are opportunity to conduct accounting research based on primary data and secondary data. If the accounting research is conducted based on secondary data is called secondary data based accounting research. One of the research methodologies in accounting research is archival research is the best example for secondary data based accounting research. The archival research methodology examines data collected from repositories including data collected by other researchers.

Most of the research scholars are showing their interest on secondary data based research. Murphy, John W and Schlaerth, Christian A (2010) conducts mostly community based researches, in their study mentioned that the new graduate students and faculty members from their department are asked similar type of question viz., what data set do you plan to use for you research? Many students socialized in to have confidence in secondary data instead of primary data.

Many researchers collected vast amounts of data and achieved all over the world, practically of using existing data for research becoming more prevalent (Andrews, L., Higgins, A., Andrews, M. W., & Lalor, J. G., 2012). The authors Hofferth, Sandra L (2005) had analyzed in their article under the

heading of 'Secondary Data Analysis in Family Research'. According to their view secondary data analysis plays in the field of family studies in the early 21st century. Andrea Erickson (1999) conducted a research titled on 'Secondary data bases and their use in outcomes research: A Review of the area resource file and the Healthcare cost and utilization project' mentioned that the use of secondary data source is an efficient and economic means by which analyze data on outcome measures.

For understanding of secondary data based accounting research must know the classification of accounting research. According to Miller (1977) the accounting research is classified in to three forms are basic, applied and usable research. A basic accounting research otherwise called pure research is an empirical or non-empirical model carried without any specific practice. This research is not to start with any solution for the problem, but it focused to discover new problem or to develop a new theoretical approach for solve previously known problems. An applied accounting research is conducted to eventually solving practical problems and though the impact is not happened immediate, it generates theory from the current practice. Third category of accounting research is usable or practical research, it incorporate the knowledge derived from the basic and applied research in to immediate value to accounting practice. All the three types of accounting research can conduct secondary data basis.

1.1 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to understand the advantages of secondary data based research for accounting studies. The other objectives of the study are
1. To understand the concept of secondary data based accounting research
2. To study the factors involved in secondary data based accounting research
3. To identify the advantages of secondary data based accounting research and
4. To comprehend the sources of secondary data for accounting related studies.

2. Secondary Data Based Research – Meaning

Secondary data is data which is collected by individuals or agencies for the purpose of their research or for the purpose of data base or for the purpose other than our particular research. Any research conducted on the basis of secondary data is called secondary data based research. For example, 'Ministry of Finance', India has conducted a survey and provided 'Indian Public Finance statistics' over there a table 'combined revenue and capital expenditure' provides information about revenue and capital expenditure of different industries in India, then accounting researcher might use the data for their research. Common sources of secondary data for accounting research include organizational record, annual reports of organizations, data collected through qualitative research. The most common method of data collection of research is secondary data collection specifically called secondary research. The secondary research involves collecting data from either the originator or a distributor of primary research, in nutshell accessing the information already available. Specifically the accounting research has an opportunity to conduct based on secondary research.

Penna Sparrow (2012) mentioned in the online article, the secondary data is collected by someone other than the researcher by himself. This data can be gathered from various sources like government records, books, trade associations' national and international statistical institutes etc. Research done using readily available secondary data for any accounting related research is called secondary data based accounting research. Andrew Prescott (2008) posted an article titled as 'Marketing Research' mentioned that the secondary research is most widely used method for data collection. Further the author stated that the secondary research includes collecting information from third party sources and also from the previous primary research. Russell M. Church (2001) pointed out in the research that secondary data analysis is based on published data or it may be based on original data.

Heaton (1998) research article cited in Anne Grinyer (2009) research article mentioned that secondary analysis is use of existing data collected for prior study, further the secondary research most commonly quantitative research.

3. Factors to consider for secondary data based accounting research

While conducting accounting research based on secondary data, researcher must consider few important factors. The considerable factors are accessibility, applicability, accurateness and adequacy.

3.1 Accessibility of Data

Accessibility is the prime work of secondary data based research must check the availability of secondary data. If there is no scope of availability of secondary data, at the beginning of the research, researcher can plan or go for primary data based research or to stop particular research.

3.2 Applicability of Data

Applicability is the second important point, here the researcher to check the suitability of the available data for current research purpose. The secondary data meet the requirement of current research problem. Here two criterions are considerable; the available data units' measurement should be the same and concepts used in the secondary data must be same and currency of data should not be outdated.

3.3 Accurateness of Data

The third factor is accurateness, the secondary data must be assessed; the accuracy can be assessed while consider specification and methodology used, margin of error examined and dependability of the source.

3.4 Adequacy of Data

Last consideration is to check the adequate data available for research. Initially the data sufficient for identifying the research problem and hypotheses later, it is a problem to conduct the research due to insufficiency of data.

4. Strategies of Secondary Data Based accounting Research

The strategy of acquiring secondary data from the source is not uniform. Depends upon the source researcher has applied different strategies. The studies conducted by Hart et al., (2005) and Golden, (1976) [13] mentioned three different secondary research strategies are content analysis, secondary analysis and systematic review.

4.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is the method of acquiring any form of content by counting various aspects of the source/content. The original source can be printed publications, internet, broadcasting, live situation etc. in general the content analysis presented in numbers and percentage. The principal methodology in accounting research is content analysis. For example annual report of a specified bank is a secondary source, here the researcher conduct the content analysis by way of identifying the number of directors in the bank, the total value of deposits, advances etc.

4.2 Secondary Analysis

Secondary analysis is the practice using quantitative data that have been already gathered by someone for a different purpose. The secondary analysis is differing very little from those used for primary data source. For example Annual report of specified bank can use for interpreting the data slightly different from the previous analysis.

4.3 Systematic Review

The systematic review is otherwise called meta-analysis. It combines and investigates the output of other research concerned to the same phenomenon. In the health related research the principal method of secondary data based research is systematic review. For example, a systematic review is an investigation to the relationship between profitability and liquidity of bank.

5. Advantages of secondary data based accounting research

Secondary data based research is called desk research encompasses the summary, conclusion and/or synthesis of existing research rather than primary research (Sunny Crouch; Matthew Housden, 2003). Secondary data based research is not only providing advantage of cost and time, it also provides valuable information about research methods (Cowton, Christopher J, 1998). The advantages of having a secondary data based research are many, follows.

5.1 Economical

The secondary data based research is far cheaper than primary data based research. If the researcher allocates the same level of budget for data collection, secondary sources can yield a great deal more information than primary data based research.

5.2 Time saving

The time taking for secondary based research is lesser than the primary data based research. The entire period of study is always shorter than primary data based research. Ghauri, P. N. (2005) [15] pointed out the first and foremost advantage of secondary data based research is time savings.

5.3 Accuracy

Secondary based research collects data from the secondary sources, these information can yield more accurate data than that obtained through primary research. This concept is not applicable in all cases, most of the time it is reliable. For example the government and international agency conduct large scale survey is more accurate than the custom designed survey with small number of samples.

5.4 Easy to construct research problem

Constructing research problem and generate hypotheses are easy in secondary data based research. Here the researchers' understanding of phenomenon is comparatively improves.

5.5 Define the study population

The secondary based research help define the population. This is extremely helpful to define the population and structuring of sample taken.

5.6 Filling up research data collection gap

The secondary data based research can easily identify the requirement of data or additional information needs to be collected.

5.7 No personal responsibility

The research is based on the data collected some other for other purposes. Therefore the researcher of the current research is not responsible for quality of data.

6. The Sources of Secondary Data Based Research

The sources of secondary data based research is important, most authors have produced a variety of information through their first hand research output. There are a range of resources available for secondary research. Secondary research source is a document that is written about the primary sources. The secondary researches sources are mainly classified in to two are internal sources and external sources.

6.1 Internal Source

Internal secondary data is inexpensive because it generated from the organization. This type of research starts from the existing operation. Internally generated documents are the source for secondary research. The internal sources are sub classified in to

thee are organization's marketing report, accounting and financial records and other supportive reports.

6.2 External source

External sources are acquired from outside the organization. Some examples for external sources are reports published by Federal government, state government, statistical agencies, trade associations, annual reports, library sources academic publications etc.

7. Conclusions

This paper elaborately explains the information related to secondary data based research in accounting field. Secondary data based research is boon for accounting research in many respects, the detailed advantages of secondary data based accounting research is narrated in this paper. Further this paper contributes the sources of secondary data based research in the field of accounting. If accounting oriented researchers may utilize the secondary sources, then they have plenty of an opportunity for accounting research.

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