

Communicating Research Outputs

Research, from an academic view point, is "systematic, critical and self-critical enquiry which aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and wisdom." (Bassey, 1999).

Basically what we are saying is that research is a critical search for answers and solutions to a felt difficulty, or a felt need. The purpose of research therefore is to add new knowledge, perceptions or alternative explanations to naughty existential situations. Research outputs cannot therefore be stored away or confined to "home" or personal libraries or archives. Human beings need to share the experience of their endeavours to improve livelihoods.

If the quantitative research methodology had been used (theory testing) a hypothesis would have been developed and would require testing in order to confirm or reject it on the strength of conventional wisdom. If the qualitative or mixed methods research had been used, an issue to be explored would have been identified or a problem to be tackled would have emerged. This would suggest that new knowledge or wisdom would have emerged and there would be need to share this with relevant stakeholders.

In qualitative research, where the focus of inquiry is in answering naughty questions (i.e. theory seeking inquiry) communication of research outputs will take the form of identifying themes around **emic** perspectives that the researcher would use – to construct new insights (etic perspectives or new "theory").

Vehicles of communicating research outputs

- Institutional repositories and open access channels – these would include journal articles, books, occasional papers, dissertations, theses, etc.
- High impact journals – these will have a wider audience and readers, who would subject one's contribution to knowledge to critical interrogation and therefore assist the authors to refine their "new" perceptions or hypotheses or theories.
- Seminars, workshops, symposia and conferences (national, international) – in ZOU, there are annual Vice Chancellor's Seminars that provide researchers with the platforms/opportunities to test their research outputs.

International conferences

- Action research projects – e.g. in education, these can improve implementation or design of the curriculum and educational practice – promoting reflective practice – e.g. the quality Education project
- Patenting knowledge and licensing its use.

Communicating Outputs – Cont.

Communicating Research Outputs can be at 3 levels as follows:

- At the level of the SUMMARY of the research endeavor
- At the level of the CONCLUSION of one's research
- At the level of the SOLUTIONS/ THE WAYFORWARD one comes up with.

• (This is mainly for an academic paper – eg journal article; occasional paper; research project/extended essay; dissertation and thesis; the audience in this case are the “ knowledge community” – ie the tertiary learners and seasoned researchers; language is mainly technical and research-oriented – focusing on academic solutions).

- Research Outputs can also be at 3 levels as follows:
 - >> Executive Summary
 - >> Conclusions
 - >> Recommendations

Communicating Research Outputs Continued

- This is mainly for commissioned research eg research assigned by NGO, government department or a private company – language is user – friendly and non- technical.
- > It can also be at 2 levels – i.e. Summary and Conclusions – Audience, mainly laboratory researchers – language is technical.