Question 1.
Explain the importance of research in counselling and family therapy

Ans: There are four primary reasons for this impetus. First, by prioritizing counseling research, we move forward as a discipline to our next developmental step — from the conceptual to the empirical. Second, there is a need for more empirical articles that reflect our pedagogical perspective. Third, as many counseling students have lamented, our discipline still lacks a sufficient number of research studies to provide a foundation for research projects. Finally, counseling research gives voice to our lived experiences as counselors and serves as a buffer against marginalization within the mental health research community.

For example, most beginning counselors today have a clear understanding and appreciation for the complex issues presented when working with diverse clients. Moreover, the majority of our training programs have emphasized the relationship between counselor bias and clinical efficacy. Yet, it is time for us to provide evidence not only that the difference exists, but where and how it exists within the therapeutic relationship. More important, we need to know what interventions have been proved to effectively resolve or diminish obstacles to well-being. We should substantially increase the number of research articles in counseling journals to further our development as a profession and to ensure our place within mental health research.

In addition to increasing the number of empirical articles in counseling journals, we can become more intentional about focusing our studies in the basic tenets of our profession. Research that reflects humanistic values such as empowerment, resilience, prevention and holism are sorely needed. Far too often, clinical research is deficit-oriented, marginalizing, hegemonic and limited by an emphasis on the intrapsychic experience. We need to serve as advocates for our clients by fostering more mindful research that reflects our unique disciplinary perspective.

In addition to being more intentional about how we frame our research, we need to increase the volume of research in counseling. I, for one, am tired of receiving papers from students (regardless of the given clinical area or topic) that cite every discipline except counseling. When I ask students why they failed to sufficiently cite counseling journals, they often reply there were few if any counseling citations for the chosen (or assigned) topic. Leaders in the counseling profession need to develop initiatives that encourage researchers to conduct and disseminate more research that informs those within and outside of our community about the value and utility of counseling.

Lastly, counselors must believe that by increasing research in counseling, we self-advocate and take social action against marginalization. Although there are those outside of our discipline who believe that counselors are not capable of ging the profession with sufficient analytical prowess and rigor, I disagree. With sufficient, sustained and concerted effort, we can collectively sponsor a campaign to improve and enhance the quality and quantity of counseling research.

Question 2.
Describe characteristics of good research.

Ans: Whatever may be the types of research works and studies, one thing that is important is that they all meet on the common ground of scientific method employed by them. One expects scientific research to satisfy the following criteria:

1. The purpose of the research should be clearly defined and common concepts be used.
2. The research procedure used should be described in sufficient detail to permit another researcher to repeat the research for further advancement, keeping the continuity of what has already been attained.
3. The procedural design of the research should be carefully planned to yield results that are as objectives as possible.
4. The researcher should report with complete frankness, flaws in procedural design and estimate their effects upon the findings.
5. The analysis of data should be sufficiently adequate to reveal its significance and the methods of analysis used should be appropriate. The validity and reliability of the data should be checked carefully.
6. Conclusions should be confined to those justified by the data of the research and limited to those for which the data provide an adequate basis.
7. Greater confidence in research is warranted if the researcher is experienced, has a good reputation in research and is a person of integrity.

In other words, we can state the qualities of a good research as under:

1. Good Research is Systematic: It means that research is structured with specified steps to be taken in a specified sequence in accordance with the well defined set of rules. Systematic characteristic of the research does not rule out creative thinking but it certainly does reject the use of guessing and intuition arriving at conclusions.
2. Good Research is Logical: This implies that research is guided by the rules of logical reasoning and the logical process of induction and deduction are of great value in carrying out research. Induction is the process of reasoning from a part to the whole whereas deduction is the process of reasoning from the premise. In fact, logical reasoning makes research more meaningful in the context of decision making.