

POLITICAL INQUIRY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

LOGIC, DESIGNS, PROCESSES, METHODS
AND APPROACHES



EDITED BY

**Bonn Obiekwe Nwanolue, PhD
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DEDICATION

To the memory of Professor Ken Ifesinachi: a colleague,
teacher and mentor.

PREFACE

Political Methodology was enriched by two remarkable events that have combined to change the trajectory of research and knowledge-production in the 20th Century. The behavioural revolution and post-behavioural counter revolution have since then continued to shape the Logic and Method of Political Inquiry. Consequently, researches in political science have been structured to reflect the methodological approaches or paradigms in Political Science. Despite the multiplicity of research text on research, most detailed political research texts are authored by American, Asian and Europeans. It is therefore rare to find political research texts written for Nigerian pre-degree, undergraduate and postgraduate students. Dominance of Western research literature has led to information transfer rather than an exchange, which fundamentally adumbrates the significance and usefulness of most brilliant research works from the developing world. Critical efforts at resolving this setback are still minimal and fragmented in Africa. While more and more universities in developing countries, including Nigeria, are building institutional repositories, they appear to encounter the same technical, cultural, and resource struggles that are common in other parts of the developing world, regarding research funding. This constrains the extent to which African research could become or remain meaningful and comparatively relevant in present-day research world.

This challenge is yet magnified if one considers how inadequacy of "know-how" on methodological precepts that could drive thought-provoking, inspiring and innovative research has prevented and disallowed critical opportunities for global research partnerships and opportunities for students and scholars from the developing world. The argument purporting that research from the Western world are more sophisticated, superior and methodologically rooted than those from developing world has become widespread, with

unnecessary magnification and ideologisation of Western research. This is rather implicated in many rankings (e.g., journal impact factors) found within the precincts of global research order; including Thomson Reuters (Web of Science) or other Western-based entities that accommodate only a fraction of African research of the total corpus of their published works. This is often combined with the said 'editorial bias' against article submissions from the developing world. Whether this 'bias' confers a negative impact or not on the advancement of research in and about the developing world is a matter of serious concern and further argument. Meantime, the critical task and focus of developing countries' scholars should be directed at proving to the Western world that mere "access" to scholarly information from the developed global North does not necessarily provide relevant knowledge pertaining to context-specific issues in Africa. This positive challenge can only be vehement if a strong methodological front is forged by African scholars. This makes our research highly in-depth, meaningful and useful in global research order, regardless if they are qualitative, quantitative or both. In fact, the establishment of a sustainable, global knowledge society can be achieved only when knowledge is effectively shared globally. We can identify and pursue the most valuable content. Not only would the producers of methodologically proven African research benefit from greater exposure worldwide, their research strides are globally discovered and used for teaching and further research in Western world. This is the kind of intellectual uproar this text is fashioned along.

The motivation for a new text on research methodology in political science came from the persistent claim by students that research is too abstract and technically specialised in nature for their liking and understanding. This book is also an outcome of recent developments in the research world since the period preceding the 21st Century and after. Ever since, research has become a serious business, in a newfound global research order, especially when they are well-cooked with

proper 'ingredients' and 'methods' to the extent of engineering, influencing and directing or leading a global debate. This book was technically presented to evoke a newfound paradigmatic orientation in both research process and research report. The text aims primarily at eliminating the phobia for research courses among students of political science at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This text defies the conventional grounds of research phobia among students.

This thought provoking text equips students and researchers for many prestigious national and global scholarships. The combination of advanced research methodological skills, an interest in interpreting the complex and shifting relationships among diverse groups of researchers, and a sense of responsibility as "citizens of the world" makes many scholarships particularly relevant to Nigerian-based scholars. This could go a long way in fulfilling one's intellectual and professional needs by providing an unparalleled opportunity to study and carry out research across the globe. A research treatise of this kind with an integrated instructional approach, appears so much as a reservoir of knowledge, a sort of mobile research clinic in which political clinicians and political scientists could repose confidence for learning and teaching. The book is steeped in scientific and methodological rigour and divided into twenty two chapters which adequately cover the scope and various subjects and critical issues in Political Inquiry and Research Methodology such as logic, research designs, sampling, measurement, scaling, qualitative research, quantitative research, research report, documentation etc. Therefore, this book will be useful to pre-degree, undergraduate and postgraduate students writing their project, seminar, proposal, synopsis, book review, dissertation and thesis.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

DESIGNING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Moses M. Duruji

Introduction

Research is the process of systematic inquiry that aims at increasing our knowledge of how things are, why things are the way they are and how they might be changed (Asika, 1991). But the fact that the world is large and diverse implies that for researchers who engage in the creation of knowledge to be successful in that exercise, they must concentrate in an aspect of the world. To do that, they are required to articulate a topic in that field of knowledge of which their research effort would now focus so as to enable us get more understanding of the phenomenon that they intend to research about. An important decision to be taken by such researcher is to align the process of undertaking this effort to that already accepted by a community of academics (Kuhn, 1996). In other words, for the research outcome to be accepted, the research must be conducted in line with the prevalent paradigm. A paradigm is an entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques etc. shared by a given (scientific) community in which universally recognised scientific achievement for a time provide model problem and solutions to a community of practitioners (Kuhn, 1996). The researcher of necessity defines the method of undertaking the research; as such research design is important in any research effort.

There are basically two main ways of going about this that is the quantitative and qualitative research designs. Qualitative method uses unstructured forms of data collection, both interviewing and observation. It employs more of verbal description and explanation rather than measurement and statistical analysis (Bassegy and Ndyo, 2016). In this chapter, we shall examine the preliminary steps in the design of qualitative research including topic selection, research

questions, writing literature review, theory and theory building. At the end of the chapter, questions for exercises were provided to help the readers gauge comprehension.

Designing Qualitative Research: Preliminary Steps

Conducting a research is vital as a means of creating and expanding the frontiers of knowledge. In the course of this exercise, individuals' considering utilising qualitative methods must understand that it is a method that diverges from scientific explanation models in terms of the need for hypothesis testing. A scientific hypothesis is based on a background theory that typically assumes the form of a proposition whose validity depends on empirical confirmation (Bireenu-Nnabugwu, 2016).

By contrast, qualitative researchers contend that their work does not consist of proposing and testing hypotheses. Their primary interest is to achieve understanding of a particular situation, or individuals, or groups of individuals, or (sub) cultures, etc. rather than to explain and predict future behaviours as in the so-called hard sciences, with their arsenal of laws, theories, and hypotheses employed or rejected on the basis of their predictive value (Mallet, 2004). In summary, qualitative methods are primarily inductive, in contrast to the deductive methods of experimental science.

So it is important to understand the nature of a qualitative method which Hammersely (1989), describes as the range of research techniques using unstructured forms of data collection, both interviewing and observation and employing verbal description and explanation rather than quantitative measurement and statistical analysis. On another hand, Erinisho et al (2002) opines that qualitative methodology is sufficiently equipped to study the process of social life at the local and small-scale levels. They further argued that it is useful in the examination and analysis of various types of groups' interaction where there is need to understand the diverse strands of social participation.

With this understanding, the preliminary step in qualitative research design that must be undertaken includes the

formulation of key concepts. This will inform the researcher on the direction of the study in terms of research objectives. Another important preliminary step, is mapping out research strategy. A good first step here is the formulation of research questions. Once the researcher has thought through the key elements of the research questions, hypotheses, specific aims, and research design, then the ingredients for a concept paper has emerged. This is an important tool to help the researcher to organize thoughts, as well as to promote, disseminate, or get feedback on ideas. A concept paper is a succinct description of the research plan and can be particularly useful when a researcher is trying to recruit collaborators or solicit letters of support.

Topic Selection

Framing of topic is one of the most important things any researcher undertaking a study must consider. Of course before this can be done, the individual must be convinced that he/she has sufficient research interest in that area of study. Developing interest would encourage the researcher to undertake a study of the available literature so as to be sufficiently equipped with the state of knowledge in that area of study, including getting acquaintance with concepts and variables, as well as ideas of possible areas that are unclear. Consequently, the topic selected would thus be topical and generally accepted wherever it is presented.

The ability to develop a good topic for research is an important skill that students or researchers must possess. However in the process of deciding a topic, there are vital steps that the researcher is expected to undertake. They include the following;

Brainstorming for ideas: Here you must ensure that the topic you finally settle with must be of interest to you. In going about this, the following questions would be of help;

- Do you have a strong opinion on a social or political controversy? For instance 'resources control'.

- Did you read or see a news story recently that has irked your interest or made you angry or anxious for instance 'political corruption'
- Do you have a personal issue, problem or interest that you would like to know more about? For instance 'leadership crisis in Africa'
- Do you have a research paper that is due for submission soon?
- Is there an aspect of a class that you are interested in learning more about?

Use search engines such as Google, Bing or any other to research of sites that will provide more information that would enable you to settle on the subject matter of your research interest.

Choosing a topic that will enable the researcher to read and understand the literature: The researcher should engage in reading articles on the top two or three topics he/she is considering. Reading a broad summary enables the researcher to get an overview of the topic and see how his/her idea relates to broader, narrower and related issues. It also provides a great source for finding words commonly used to describe the topic. These keywords may be very useful in later research. Use of broader terms must be employed to expand the dragnet of search and the researcher must feel free to ask help from Librarians. The researcher should browse encyclopaedia for information on their topic. Beside this, the use of periodical indexes to scan current magazine, journal or newspaper articles on their topic will be helpful. Use of web search engines like Google and Bing can also be of help in bringing hits related to the topic of interest.

Ensuring that the topic is manageable and that material are available: It is important to note that a topic may be too difficult to research if it is too locally confined. Such topics are specific and may only be covered in local newspaper, if at all. Example: What are the causes of insurgency in Chibok? If a

topic is quite recent, books or journal articles may not be available but newspaper or magazine articles may. Also web sites related to the topic may not be available. Broadly interdisciplinary - here it is in the sense where the researcher may be overwhelmed with superficial information. Example: How has insurgency in the Northeast contributed to politics and business in Nigeria? Popular - here there are popular articles and topics about political figures and high-profile celebrities and politicians. If there are difficulties or questions on your topic, discuss the topic with an instructor or with a librarian.

Making list of keywords: Here researchers are to keep track of the words that are used to describe their topic. Look for words that best describe your topic. Look for them in when reading encyclopaedia articles and background and general information. Find broader and narrower terms, synonyms, and key concepts for key words to widen your search capabilities. Make note of these words and use them later when searching databases and catalogues

Being flexible: this is necessary because you can never be sure of what you may find in the process of searching for information on your topic. So it is common to modify your topic. In that process of search, the researcher may find too much and need to narrow his/her focus, or too little and need to broaden the focus which is a normal part of the research. When researching, you may not wish to change your topic, but you may decide that some other aspect of the topic is more interesting or manageable. The researcher must keep in mind the assigned length of the proposed study, the depth of coverage needed and the due date. The decision on how much and when to modify chosen topic is determined by the factors mentioned above.

Definition of the topic as a focused research question: Here researchers start with a word and then develop a more focused

interest in an aspect of something relating to that word, then begin to have questions about the topic. For example: ideas = Obasanjo's administration or democratisation in Nigeria. Research Question = How did Obasanjo's administration affect democratisation in Nigeria. Focused Research Question = what policies of Obasanjo's administration deepened democracy in Nigeria

Researching and reading more about the topic: The researchers must apply the use of key words to research in the catalogue, article databases and internet search engine, so as to find more information to help answer the research questions. The researcher need to do some research and reading before selecting a final topic. Is there enough information to answer research question bearing in mind that selecting a topic is an important and complex part of the research process

Formulation of a thesis statement: the researcher should write their topic as a thesis statement as it may be the answer to their research question or way to clearly state the purpose of the research. The thesis statement will usually be one or two sentences that states precisely what is to be answered, proven or what the researcher would inform his/her audience about the topic. For example, a thesis statement could be: Obasanjo's administration political reform conference and strict adherence to rule of law depended democracy in Nigeria. His style of administration has opened the space for democracy such that many political parties were formed and registered during his tenure. The title of the paper may not be exactly the same as the research question or thesis statement, but the title should clearly convey the focus, purpose and meaning of the research. For example, a title could be: Obasanjo's Administration and Democratisation in Nigeria.

One important point that must not be glossed over is the fact that selection of a topic may not be easy. It must be narrow and focused enough to be interesting, yet broad enough to find adequate information. It is important to keep the topic

manageable because it will be very difficult to research if it is too broad or narrow. One way to narrow a broad topic such as 'insurgency' is to limit the topic. Some common ways to limit a topic are:

- By geographical area. Example: What kind of insurgency is raging in Nigeria?
- By culture. Example: How does insurgency fit into the Islamic world view?
- By time frame. Example: What are the prominent issues of insurgency since 2009?
- By discipline. Example: How does issue of insurgency affect the politics of Nigeria?
- By population group. Example: what are the impacts of insurgency on the people of northeast Nigeria?

Research Questions

According to Bierrenu-Nnabugwu (2006), the research question is an anchor statement that guides the researcher in his quest for answers to the problem that is being investigated. It is a reduced specific researchable breakdown of the statement of problem (Obasi, 1999). It is often a logical follow up to the formulation of a topic and the review of relevant literature (Bierrenu-Nnabugwu, 2006). Collaborating this view point, McQueen and Knussen (2002), had argued that research question provides a statement of the overall aims of a piece of research and at the same time indicates in broad terms, what the researcher is trying to do.

A research question is a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studied. For example, "What resources are helpful to researchers engaging in insurgency or terrorism?" To develop a strong research question from your ideas, you should ask yourself the following:

- Do I know the field and its literature well?
- What are the important research questions in my field?
- What areas need further exploration?
- Could my study fill a gap? Could my study lead to

greater understanding?

- Has a great deal of research already been conducted in this topic area?
- Has this study been done before? If so, is there room for improvement?
- Is the timing right for this question to be answered? Is it a hot topic, or is it becoming obsolete?
- Would funding sources be interested?
- Most importantly, will my study have a significant impact on the field?

The research questions that would be formulated to achieve the objectives, give the research an idea of the kind of techniques to collect relevant data and analyse the data accordingly so as to fulfil the goal of the research. A good research question helps to:

- Guide the research process,
- Construct a logical argument,
- Write a literature review,
- Plan chapters of your project, dissertation or thesis,
- Devise efficient search strategies.

There are six properties that can be used to write a notional research question. This activity will help in writing a good research question, or help in reflecting on a research question the researcher already have. The end result does not necessarily need to be the exact question the researcher will use for the work. The question might be revised and refined throughout the research as the researcher comes to a more sophisticated understanding of the topic and target a more specific area of scholarship. The end result would be a research question relevant to the discipline where the following six properties apply.

A well-defined research question:

1. Identifies the theoretical construct you want to learn more about
2. Displays recognisability and assists you to code literature according to a logical structure

3. Transcends the data used to conduct the research
4. Draws attention to the significance of the research
5. Has the capacity to surprise the researcher as they research
6. Encourages a complex answer (i.e. not a 'yes' or 'no' response).

The summary of the matter is that a good research question identifies the theoretical construct, transcends the data and has recognisability, significance, robustness and the capacity to surprise.

Writing a Literature Review

The Literature review plants the seeds that will grow your study from those that came before it. A Literature review is a discussion of your knowledge about the topic under study. We can also describe it as a discussion of your knowledge that is supported by the research literature. It is a foundation for the study (Okolie, 2016). It is an analysis and synthesis of primary source materials, written in a specific style which flows from broad to narrow, and takes into account both the theoretical and empirical issues of the problem without over citing any source or sources. A literature review is an examination of the research that has been conducted in a particular field of study. Note that it is not an information dump. According to Hart (1998), a literature review is the selection of available documents on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence. This selection is written from a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated. It is also the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed

Literature review serves as an overview of significant literature published on a subject matter under investigation. According to (Lyon, nd), a typical literature review is not an annotation as most students tend to confuse in their project, long essays and dissertations but must of necessity include the following:

- An overview of the subject, issue or theory under

consideration, along with the objectives of the literature review

- Division of works under review into categories (e.g. those in support of a particular position, those against, and those offering alternative theses entirely)
- Explanation of how each work is similar to and how it varies from the others
- Conclusions as to which pieces are best considered in their argument, are most convincing of their opinions, and make the greatest contribution to the understanding and development of their area of research

Embarking on literature review should entail some level of preparation. This is very essential to ensure that the literature review is properly done, so as to set the stages for the research. There are four main stages in the preparation of literature review:

1. Define your topic: you must define your topic and components of your topic
2. Search for materials: use search tools (such as the library catalogue, databases, bibliographies) to find materials about your topic
3. Evaluate what you have found: read and evaluate what you have found in order to determine which material makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the topic
4. Analysis and interpretation: provide a discussion of the findings and conclusions of the pertinent literature
5. The researcher must actually do a thorough job to ensure that all the relevant literatures are gathered. In assessing each piece, consideration should be given to:
6. Provenance: What are the author's credentials? Are the author's arguments supported by evidence (e.g. primary historical material, case studies, narratives, statistics, and recent scientific findings)?
7. Objectivity: Is the author's perspective even-handed or prejudicial? Is contrary data considered or is certain pertinent information ignored to prove the author's

point?

8. Persuasiveness: Which of the author's theses are most/least convincing?
9. Value: Are the author's arguments and conclusions convincing? Does the work ultimately contribute in any significant way to an understanding of the subject?

The literature review itself, however, does not present new primary scholarship. But it may constitute an essential chapter of an undergraduate project, dissertation, or thesis or may be a self-contained review of writings on a subject (such as a journal article). Whatever the case maybe, its purpose is to:

- Place each work in the context of its contribution to the understanding of the subject under review
- Describe the relationship of each work to the others under consideration
- Identify new ways to interpret, and shed light on any gaps in, previous research
- Resolve conflicts amongst seemingly contradictory previous studies
- Identify areas of prior scholarship to prevent duplication of effort
- Point the way forward for further research
- Place one's original work (in the case of theses or dissertations) in the context of existing literature

It is important to note that a Literature Review is not;

- A study-by-study, or article-by-article, description of studies previously done
- A re-statement of the studies previously done
- A brief overview of articles
- A Review of Literature is not a summary or an abstract of articles.
- It is not an Op-Ed.
- It is not an annotated bibliography.
- It is not a rehashing of another authors work

Working with literature is an essential part of the research process that generates ideas, helps form significant questions and instrumental in the process of research design. To

undertake a literature review, the researcher will probably collect information from journal papers, conference papers, books, media releases, websites, official publications, archives, etc.

It is important to consider the following when assessing the information.

- Who wrote it and why did they write it (what info did they leave out, how did they 'spin' the results, etc.)? Where was it published and how was it reviewed/edited (i.e. journal paper or mad magazine)?
- When was it published (and what info has come out since)? Are the conclusions valid based on the results? How rigorous were the tests performed/data analysed?

You will need an opinion on the literature you review as to how good, bad or useful it is – this needs to come out in your review. Begin with a search of the available literature and then critically analyse each article you select, organise the review with an outline, write the review, summarise the review and using the literature, present a rationale for your study.

Make sure the structure is logical – a good literature review will ensure that the reader does not need to think while they read it. Make sure your research question is obvious and its importance clearly highlighted by the end of the review. Be mindful of the recommended reference style and stick to it. Ensure that all the in-text references are put into the reference section. Keep and file copies of relevant books, articles, etc. because it helps you to be organised. Avoid lending out your 'only copies' (Umflint, nd).

Always begin with an introduction to the review and end with a summary or a section known as “gap in the literature”. This allows you to properly summarize the key thrusts and divides in the reviewed works/opinions of scholars, from which you identify the gap in knowledge. This is the strength of your study from which you build upon, thus, filling the identified gap in the course of your research. Make the connection for the reader between the subtopics and the topic. Use direct quotations

infrequently and remember to always cite your sources.

Present *your* knowledge on the topics and subtopics, summarise each subtopic and include a transition paragraph from one subtopic to the next. Have your work proofread before submitting and follow all format guidelines. There must be a thorough review, reflected by the depth of the discussion. Should begin prior to the implementation of the study.

Writing a good review requires you to read a few good reviews, write critical annotations, develop a structure, write purposefully, use the literature to back up your arguments and review and write throughout the research process. Ensure you get feedback and be prepared to redraft. Writing a good literature review requires the researcher to engage, learn, debate, argue, contribute, and evolve his/her own ideas, without being hypercritical or sycophantic.

Theory and Theory Building

A theory is a hypothetical deductive system which describes the inter-relationship between variables as means of explaining a given phenomenon. Theories are constructed in order to explain, predict and master phenomena for example relationships, events, or the behaviour. In political science, two broad strands of theories have been identified, empirical and normative theories (Varma, 1975; Buchanan, 1980). Empirical theories deal with facts, quantities and relationships (Buchanan, 1980). These theories are amenable to empirical measurement and verification and subject to hypothetical testing (Asika, 1991; Tsuwa et al, 2015). The second strand, normative theories, is theories that incorporate value judgment: "good and bad" and "should and should not". Although not amenable to hypothetical testing, normative theories are referred to as norms regarding right, good and beautiful, which differ from person to person and culture to culture (Asika, 1991).

The positivist orientation in social sciences, however, lays emphasis on empirical theories which perform unique functions in political research. Theory in this regard is the hub

of scientific work.

Goods and Hart (1952) identify the functions performed by theory to include:; definition of the major orientation of sciences, like the kind of data to be abstracted; offering of conceptual scheme by which the relevant phenomena are systematised, classified and interrelated; summarising facts into empirical generalisations; predicting facts; and pointing to gaps in knowledge. In another hand, Selltiz et al (1974) observe that theory summarises existing knowledge; provides an explanation for observed events and relationships helps to predict the occurrence of unobserved events and relationship on the basis of explanatory principles embodied in the theory; increases the fruitfulness of research by providing significant leads for inquiry and by directing research and contributes directly to the development and organisation of knowledge. A theory makes generalisations about observations and consists of a set of interrelated and coherent models which applies to all studies science disciplines including political studies. In a methodological view of political theory, Rodee et al (1983) argue that it is a branch of political science which attempts to arrive at generalisations and draws inferences from the data gathered by various specialists relating to political phenomena. In other words, political theory reflects sustained attempt to arrive at generalisations in political science (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2006). This way, theory explains, organizes, systematises and coordinates existing knowledge in a particular area (Isaak, 1969). It also plays an important heuristic role in the generalization of hypothesis. Theory guides practice and research; practice enables testing of theory and generates questions for research; research contributes to theory-building and selecting practice guidelines. So, what is learned through practice, theory and research interweaves to create the knowledge fabric of a discipline (Liehr and Smith 1999; Mamdani, 2011).

Theory is important because theory development is the goal of science. Science itself deals with evidence and provable data. For instance "All politicians are corrupt". The theory stated

above can be based on evidence we observe the constraint is that this is limited only to the observable world beyond that we know nothing (we can never have all the knowledge). The term theory has technical and commonsense meaning. In commonsense terms, theory means ideas, proposition and explanations that get to the essential truth behind something that is often hidden for example 'phenomenon of male dominance in politics' can be explained as resulting from cultural restraint on the women folk. Therefore, theory and truth are equivalent in commonsense knowledge. Technical meaning of theory proffers conditional connection with explanation that is founded on empirical evidence.

This brings us to the types of theory; normative and empirical. Normative theories are sets of interrelated ideas and proposition that are embedded with an explicit value preference e.g. social contract; force theory etc. empirical theories are sets of interrelated ideas or propositions derive from facts that explain a phenomenon.

The goal of scientific research is the construction of a theory. In political science, they are of two types; middle range theories and grand theories.

Grand theories are of grand scale that seeks to encompass very general and abstract explanation of the social world as a whole. This type of theories goes beyond what can be observed and measured. Example is historical materialism; this theory in seeking understanding of social life, says it is rooted in the forces and relations of production. It projects backward to explain historical process and forward to account for the emergence of new forms of social life. Another example is Parson's theory of social system that explains how society is structured Another example is Gidden's theory of structuration that attributes that the phenomenon of globalization results from link between social structure and social action i.e. globalization.

The middle range theories refer to discrete domains of society or social action of more manageable population. They are concerned with explanation of some regularities instead of

explaining all observed uniformities in social life as in grand theories. Examples include theories of nationalism (primordialism, social constructivism, instrumentalism) and theories of integration (federalism, functionalism, neo-functionalism).

Theory building in a scientific research can be formulated in two ways, through inductive and deductive reasoning.

Deductive reasoning is based on syllogism. In its simplest form, syllogism consists of a major premise based on a priori or self-evident proposition, a minor premise providing a particular instance and a conclusion. The assumption underlying the syllogism is that through a sequence of formal steps of logic; from the general to the particular, a valid conclusion can be deduced from a valid premise. Syllogism is a specific form of argument that has three steps;

1. Every X has the characteristic of Y
2. This thing is X
3. Therefore, this thing has the characteristic of Y

The above can be represented thus;

1. All Nigerians are tribalist
2. All human beings are tribalist
3. Therefore every Nigerian is a tribalist

However, inductive reasoning is concerned with inferences from the particular to the general. An example is given below;

1. Every Nigerian public office holder has been indicted of corruption
2. Nigerian politicians are still stealing
3. All Nigerian politicians are corrupt

There are three important utilities of theory;

1. It opens up research problems by identifying what hitherto has been hidden; for instance why is the male gender dominant in Nigerian politics?
2. Theory can draw together unrelated fragments of empirical evidence of research. In other words, theories help to simplify explanation of the empirical regularities we observe in the social or real world.
3. It gives focus to research because it is theory-

dependent in the sense that it is conducted in the light of theory and data gathered is used to verify original theoretical ideas. But sometimes a theory can be intended as outcome of research especially in an exploratory research.

Review Questions

1. Highlight the factors that determine decision on how much and when to modify chosen topic for research.
2. What are the vital steps researchers are expected to undertake before deciding on a topic?
3. Conducting a research is vital as a means of creating and expanding the frontiers of knowledge. Discuss.
4. Describe the nature of a qualitative research and the preliminary steps in qualitative research design?
5. Demonstrate your understanding of how to formulate a thesis statement.
6. Using clear examples state the common ways of limiting a topic.
7. Describe the role of a research question in a research.
8. What are the effects of a good research question to the research process?
9. Discuss the properties of a well-defined research question to the research.
10. What are the stages in preparation for literature review?
11. What are the purpose of a literature review to a research work?
12. Articulate those things that typical literature reviews are not.
13. In assessing materials for a literature review, what are those things a researcher must consider?
14. What is the role of theory in a research?
15. Using clear examples show your understanding of building a theory through inductive and deductive reasoning.

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