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BOOK REVIEW

BIERRENU-NNABUGWU, M. (2019). *A Handbook on Critical Issues in Research: A Guide to Formulation of Research Problems and Hypothetical Propositions in Political Inquiry*. Enugu: Quintagon Publishers Pages: 138

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The book threw insight into some critical issues, interrelated and germane in research. The twelve chapter book dwelt on introductory overview focusing on issues like: Background to the study, research problems, statements of research problem, research questions, concept and use of research hypothesis, and statistical hypothesis in political inquiry and some other related disciplines.

To start with, the book discussed extensively on some **exordial** narrations on how to solve specific problems or add to the quantum of knowledge relevant in research, stating the beginning and what to hold on to as a beginner in research and political inquiry. This involved the take-off challenges in research, all of which constitute some of the most questions raised to include: What is background to the study? What is research problem? What role or functions do hypothesis really perform? ...how can we argue research hypothesis and test statistical hypothesis?

In sum, the chapter was essentially bifocal. First in that it addresses what a research problem is and how to formulate one; secondly, it discusses the principles and how to make use of hypothesis in the conduct of research. Principally, the book emphasizes on two types of hypothesis but was not discussed.

Consequently, the book discussed in details what constitutes background to the study in problem definition. That was clinically explored nothing that it entails the critical initial part of a research process which identified the incident, event, observations or conditions that ignited or necessitated the research at hand. It is conceived as a precursor or logical prelude to the statement of the research problem. As such, five valid examples were given with the necessary steps on what constitute the major paragraphs indicated. They include: (a) Identification of incident, observation, trends or condition that necessitated the researchers interest in the topic; (b) What connotes a narration about the area of concern; (c) Identification of difficulty, puzzle or troubling question that exists in scholarly literature; (d) Provide room for meaningful understanding and systematic investigation and (e) Finally, underlines ways chosen to solve the problem at hand.

Furthermore, the book sequentially explores what constitute research problem and statement of research problem which were identified in the background to the study. To him, a research problem is a puzzling situation, an uncertainty or an indented difficulty in knowledge which needs to be addressed or tackled or investigated, but has not been adequately addressed or tackled through research. It tells when a problem is tackled or not (b) state why it should be tackled and proffer how it should be tackled. It went on to state the possible sources of research problem to include: researcher's course of study, personal interest of the researcher, media reports, personal observations, textbooks, journals, internet browsing, and current events, contemporary issues.

The book thus, notes that the major task on the statement of research problem is to identify the key elements or variables in the specific research topic, when the problem is well stated; it becomes easier to generate the basic research questions based on the stated statement of the research problem. In some statement of research problems focus on: (a) The flow of logic from background to the study (b) Show step by step description of issues to be addressed. (c) Transforms generalized problems or broad problem into a well deigned problem and finally (d) Targets on what needs to be research.

To Biereenu-Nnabugwu, statement of the research problem is the precursor to research question. Thus, chapter four further discussed the logic "from research question to hypothesis. This is the turning point in every research having an interrelated stunned with the hypothesis. The unique thing about a research question is that it turns the relevant aspects and concerns of a statement of research problem into a question. A research question is simply an interrogative statement that proceeds from the statement of research problem. This looks at the nexus between a research question and a hypothesis which is an assertion that stand to be subjected to empirical test. It is germane to note that it is based on establishing an alignment among the topic, statement of research problem, research question and hypothesis. Both research question and hypothesis constitute indispensable or internal tools in a research. As such, to show the importance of hypothesis, the following were noted conclusively: (a) Sharpens the focus of the study (b) Provide the researcher with essential framework (c) Guides the orderly organization of data (d) Enables the research to appreciate the magnitude of the task at hand. (e)Plays critical roles in the advancement of knowledge

On a very important note, the nature of hypothesis of which chapter 5 capture is to explain reality or why things happen using a tentative statement. By and large, a hypothesis is an indispensable component in the contemporary study of political pheromone. It furnishes us with organizational theme and needed direction for research. Thus, given the nature and complexity of political phenomena, it is germane to understand the place of hypothesis in every research and their various types.

On the forms and types of hypothesis, it is important to note that the nature of research produces the type of hypothesis needed for test and analysis. He identified four major forms to include, descriptive, exploratory, causative and comparative hypothesis. Descriptive is essentially a fact-statement or statement of fact that merely states the

hypothetical proposition. An exploratory tries to look at the relationship or frequency of occurrence of a specific variable or group of variable. Causative is inclined to identifying a cause and effect situation. It states that a particular variable or characteristics causes the other to change the comparative; compare two or more variables such as events, organizations, individuals, groups, concepts, methods or techniques.

On the part of topologies of hypothesis, only two were identified. They are Research hypothesis and Statistical hypothesis Just as their names implies, research hypothesis are characteristically qualitative and align with immense research designs in political inquiry while address the major concern of a qualitative study using null and alternate hypothesis. Both draw their strength from the design generated.

From the principles for formulating, arguing and testing hypothesis, seven were identified to include (a) Pertinence principle (b) Principle of single contention (c) Principle of parsimony and unambiguous wording (d) Principle of being logical (e) Principle of being declarative (f) Principles of awarding careless contradictions (h) Principles of verifiability

The above are the basic principles that guide the formation of hypothesis in a research. It form the basis upon which a research anchors. In the study, two to three hypothesis are expected to be generated in a research to guide the study. It is always formulated in line with the research questions. Thus, a text is predicted on confirming the acceptance or falsehood that a statement in a research is associated to a research. They seek to address major issues in a research.

On how to argue a research hypothesis, it should be recalled that they are concomitants of qualitative research techniques and are associated with explanatory, interpretative and critical research design in political inquiry. To achieve how to argue research hypothesis, an acronym HEDDER was involved. (H) Holistic and Multi-dimensional (E)Essentially descriptive and in depth (D) Deals with the real world (D) Does not aim at statistical test of hypothesis (E) Essentially dialectical and interactive (R) Reaches out to and uses descriptive statistics. The writer emphasizes the difference between quantitative and qualitative methodology. The emphasis was detailed in a tabular form. To concrete the above, one needs to verify and argue the research hypothesis qualitatively through creative verification and presentation of logical data and analytical argument.

Chapter 9, 10 and 11 dwell so much on statistical hypothesis with headings like basic principal option in the test of statistical hypothesis, and how to test a statistical hypothesis using correlation analysis. The statistical application of hypothesis ranges from the generation of null and alternate using tables and line graphs. It also required analysis using advanced statistical instrument like chi-square, anova, ancova, coefficient correlation etc. it makes and place research in proper context and content for evaluations.

Finally, the writer presented the summary of the study which was the primary task of the study. They include: background to the study, research problem and how it is formulated, statement of research problem, hypothesis, forms, types and its formulation distinguishes the difference between research hypothesis and statistical hypothesis, how

to argue research hypothesis and test of statistical instruments. In all, it is of essence to note that it is in the option of the researcher to either rely on research hypothesis or statistical to argue and test trends, variation and relationships.

Appraisal of the book

No work is ever perfect in content and context. As such, it possesses both strengths and weaknesses. This section will do justice to the demands to the study. In other words, we will first look at the strength of the book and later we will turn to the weaknesses of the book. On *the strengths*: the book having seen the summarised section shows that it presented a holistic view on what research is all about. It revealed the various partitions in a research from the introductory section through the statement of the problem, research question, objectives of the study and hypotheses which forms the basis of every research. It gave detailed perspectives on what research should be especially in this contemporary time.

One of the beauties of the book is the linkage among research questions, objectives of the study and the hypotheses. Once the background to the study is established and the statement of the problem is identified with gap in literature, issues are raised based on that. The book noted in strong terms that hypothesis is very essential in every research. The reason is that the hypothesis presents what should be investigated after the research question has been posed. Furthermore, the writer through the book simplified what research should look like by integrating the whole demands of a research. To him, once such line of reasoning is toed, it makes it easier for the researcher to achieve his or her goal.

Finally, the language of the book is very friendly in the sense that it did not suffer from any ambiguity that will leave the reader confused. The language of the study was capture in simple and logical terms bringing to the fore what research is made up of. As such, it stands out as one of the referral materials for a beginner in research studies.

The Weaknesses On the contrarily, no study or research is devoid of limitations. The book has some flaws arising from the composition of the content. The writer devoted so much chapters discussing hypotheses and its form. It made it look as if the writer is out to discuss hypothesis or that the title of the book has more to do with hypothesis. Though hypothesis is very germane in every research but, issues on theoretical frameworks and theories still remain part of the major challenges facing most upcoming researchers. In that case, it would be fine to address such in the later edition.

Again, the writer erred in his statistical application. Statistically, Likert scale and chi-square are on different plain of analysis. In any statistical analysis, the use of analytical tool is dependent on the scale the research requires. The use of Chi-square to analyse research/ hypothetical data is best used under nominal scale involving agree, no response and disagree. Furthermore, the write was a bit bias in the application of statistical instrument; some were given clear application while others were left with just the name or formula. This may likely make the learner confused in choosing the right statistical tool to apply at the appropriate time.

Conclusively, the writer did justice to the study to the extent that learners in the field will not find it difficult coping with the rigors of research. Nevertheless, effort should be made to strengthen the aspects that require the proper application of statistical instrument.

Biographical Note

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