

On Problem Definition and Research Designing in the Logic and Methods of Political Inquiry

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Abstract

This study interrogates the place of problem definition and research designing on one hand, and their interface with the logic and methods of political inquiry. Though broadly speaking, problem definition involves most of the activities that take place in the first three chapters of a research project, the focus of the paper is essentially limited to issues of Background to the Study, Statement of the Problem and Research Design option relevant in political inquiry. In a four interrelated parts, the paper among others problematized the study at hand, identified the focus and place of problem definition in a research process. The paper also dwelt on the essence and typology of research designing in political inquiry. In line with this, the primary logic inherent in this study is that political inquiry and related researches lend itself to two broad groups: exploratory research design, descriptive research designs and causal research designs for quantitative researches; and explanatory research design, interpretive research designs and critical research designs for qualitative researches

Keywords: Logic and methods, political inquiry, problem definition, quantitative and qualitative research designs.

Introduction

As you are perhaps already aware, building capacity in Research Methodology points to the need to underline or emphasize a clear cut focus on constant and continuing re-tolling and interaction with regards to salient issues and techniques in the logic and methods of political inquiry. Permit me, however, to begin by underlining the idea of *Politology*. My study and interaction with others in the episteme of logic and methods of political inquiry over the years has given me a number of insights: one of which is the idea of *politology*. The idea of Politology centres most profoundly on the perspective and realization that as political scientists, we are, by and large, all *involved in the employment of qualitative and quantitative tools in the study of politics*. Methinks this has some obvious implications. We shall come back to this later.

The first major task that really faces a researcher is how to identify, formulate or define a research problem, otherwise called problem definition. Broadly speaking, this involves most of the activities that take place in the first three chapters of a research project. Problem definition is also a challenge and evident in the initial sections of every good research write-up. In a more restricted and definite sense, problem definition takes place in Topic Formulation, Background to the Study, Statement of the Problem and Research Question. For obvious reasons, our treatment of Problem Definition in this interaction will be limited to Background to the Study and Statement of the

Problem Another very important aspect of every research process is research design or method of research, which focuses on how the research is organized.

Taking cognizance of the foregoing, this paper is divided into four interrelated parts. The first is this introduction which in addition to problematizing also identifies the focus of this paper. The second part focuses on the place of problem definition or identification in a research process. The third is concerned with essence and types of research designing in political inquiry. The fourth and final part is essentially a recap.

Problem Definition in Political Inquiry

Our discussion here is on two of the four basic issues in problem definition. They issues are Background to the Study and Statement of the Problem.

Background to the Study Background to the Study is the first part of the first chapter or section of a research write-up. Background to the Study connotes a curiosity and consciousness arising from, and in response to literature survey. It is essentially a narration about the area of concern, situation or condition to be interrogated, attended to or improved upon. Simply stated, Background to the Study: (a) Identifies the fact, data, incident, observation, trends or conditions that ignited the researcher's interest on the topic. (b) Identifies a problematic, difficulty, puzzle or troubling doubt that exists in scholarly literature - established through literature survey - that need to be addressed or eliminated (c) Points to, or underlines the problematic the researcher intends to or has chosen to solve or address, through the study at hand. (d) May also entail a perspective in theory or practice, that points to, or indicates the need for meaningful understanding and systematic investigation

To briefly illustrate, let us now consider the topic "Democratic Practice and the 2011 General Elections in Nigeria". Looking closely at this topic, it would be seen that the topic lends itself to at least three options in the focus of its Background to the Study. This is such that, the first possible Background to the Study based on the topic is how explosives, arms and ammunitions were freely used (or not used), and the fact that thousands of people were killed in different places during the 2011 general elections in Nigeria.

Secondly, the Background to the Study based on the topic "Democratic Practice and the 2011 General Elections in Nigeria" is the fact that hijacking of ballot boxes, sharing of money on the Election Day at the election ground, broadcast of false result by some media houses. Thirdly, given the topic, the Background to the Study could focus on the data, observations and comments by informed individual and concerned institutions that participated or that have some useful information and views on the said 2011 elections.

Statement of Problem Statement of Problem, actually Statement of Research Problem, is all about some interrelated statements on the problem the researcher has chosen to investigate or interrogate. Major fallout of this, is that Statement of Problem is directly related to the research problem. What then, is a problem in research?

What is a Research Problem? Essentially, a research problem refers to a puzzling situation, an uncertainty, or an identified difficulty or gap in knowledge which needs to be addressed, tackled or investigated, but has not been addressed, attended to or treated through research. Literature survey, that is, the exploration or investigation of the existing literature in search of research problems enables a researcher to establish

or find out whether a research problem has or has not been adequately addressed, investigated or tackled.

A diligent researcher in isolating a research problem should have the capacity to identify 'disorder' even when there is obvious order. He or she needs to be equipped with relevant skills on how to: (a) Identify or know when a research problem is tackled or not tackled. (b) Demonstrate or show that a research problem has not been adequately tackled (c) Say why it should be satisfactorily tackled. (d) Proffer how it should be tackled

Research problems are sourced from a wide range of possible sources. We have identified ten below. They are: (a) Course of study (b) Personal interest (c) Media reports (d) Personal observations (e) Textbooks (f) Journals (g) Lectures and Lecturers (h) Internet Browsing (i) Access to particular group (j) Current events of contemporary issues. As can be seen, good knowledge of what constitutes a research problem is important and useful in the formulation of a Statement of Research Problem. This is because Statement of Research Problem is rooted in, or is clearly a manifestation of identified or identifiable research problem

Statement of Research Problem Essentially, a Statement of Research Problem or simply Statement of Problem refers to a concise statement of description about an issue, puzzle or difficulty to be addressed or investigated. It elaborates information provided in the title of the study and acts as a go-between between the Background to the Study and the Research Questions. Accordingly, Statements of Research Problem are logical follow-ups to Background to the Study, and comes before the Research Questions. In addition, Statements of Research Problem are dedicated to pinpointing or specifying the specific problems which the particular research has chosen to investigate. Ideally, a set of about three paragraphs, each paragraph focusing on an important aspect of the given study constitute a standard Statement of Research Problem. This is such that, each paragraph provides logical treatment that narrows down to an aspect or sub-area of the research problem at hand

By and large, the profile of Statement of Research Problem centres on the fact that, it: (a) flows logically from the Background to the Study, the sequence therein. (b) Is a concise, step by step description of the issues to be addressed or conditions to be improved upon. (c) Has as its major task the transformation of a generalized problem or broad problematic into a well-defined specific problem (d) Targets at what is / are to be addressed or interrogated by the researcher in the study at hand.

For many researches, three yardsticks or benchmarks do help a researcher to address identified stress areas or specific concerns. They are: (a) Insight into the trends, specificities or character of the phenomena being studied. (b) One or two factors that has been isolated for deeper and detailed insight (c) The implication of the observed phenomena

Research Designing in Political Inquiry

Meaning and Typology (Classification) In Kerlinger's (1973) view research design is essentially a research plan that provides necessary detail about the structure and strategy of the research at hand. It is perhaps in realization of this that Nwana (1981) sees research design as a term for referring to the number of decisions that needed to be taken concerning the collection of data before ever data is collected. In this respect the major concerns of research design are who or what constitutes the population? Will

every member or sample be studied? Will the study be in the natural setting (such as associated with survey research) or will it be under controlled condition, often associated with experimental research? The major setback in the foregoing delineation of major concerns of research design is that some valid issues of research design are glossed over. Some research writers have also underlined the fact that research design is important or useful in some other ways.

In his work, *Essentials of Research Methodology*, for instance, Ndagi (1984) points out that research design is simply a statement on the research procedure. Thus, it is useful to note that research design is a procedural matter and that it is important or useful in two broad ways. The first is that a research design makes provision on how the hypothesis is to be tested, probed or argued. In order to reach valid conclusion, hypothesis is tested about the presumed relationships between the variables that create or are responsible for a particular state of affair. Secondly, the practical problems of the research that can be handled by research design. They include (a) Selection of objects for experimental control, (b) How observations are to be made, (c) The types of statistical instruments to be used for data analyses, (d) How variables are to be manipulated, (e) How extraneous variables are to be controlled. It is perhaps already obvious that research design encompasses more issues with practical relevance. It however appears to have centred mostly on experimental research design that necessarily involves quantitative or statistical analysis. Every research in political science and in deed the length and breadth of the social sciences need not be quantitative or statistically inclined.

On their part, McQueen and Knussen (2002) emphasize in their work *Research Methods for Social Science* that research design is “the formal plan of a research study in which all the elements necessary to test hypothesis are identified and detailed.” They also see research design as a formal statement of intent, schematic map, or diagram of a study expressed in general terms. A striking feature therefore is that design is quite different from procedure.

As McQueen and Knussen points out, the point of difference is that while *research design* is a study plan of a campaign formulated before the study proper is implemented, *research procedure* describes exactly what was done. In other words, procedure puts design into practice, providing for the reader sufficient details to, if need be, repeat the study. Thus for McQueen and Knussen (2002), in specific terms, a research design must necessarily (a) Specify the kind of investigation that is being carried out. (b) Define the variables that are being measured, manipulated or dominant in the study. (c) Distinguish between independent (predicators) and dependent variables (outcome measures) (d) State whether repeated measures are being used. (e) Describe the factor level that combined to form the experimental conditions

Research design is a plan that in the main, emphasizes the nature of the study and how the study is to be carried out. It also underlines the structure of the design, dependent and independent variables as well as extraneous variables, indeed how a researcher intends to fulfil the goal of a proposed study. In line with this, we note that research design has been usefully defined as a plan that:

guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting observations. It is a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relations among the variables under

investigation. The research design also defines the domain of generalizability, that is, whether obtained interpretations can be generalized to a larger population or to different situations (Bailey, 1978: 111).

Research design can be classified based on generalized or dominant methods of data collection contained in such a design. Using this yardstick, in *Fundamental Political Inquiry* Biereenu-Nnabugwu (2011) identified seven types of research designs. They are (a) Historical research design (b) Descriptive research design (c) Survey research design (d) Experimental research design (e) Case study research design (f) Causal research design (g) Evaluative research design. Though this satisfies some level of classification, it does not seem to take into consideration the fact of broad paradigms in political inquiry – qualitative (positivist) and qualitative (Interpretivist-constructivist) paradigms.

An essential import of the above is that *research design recognizes, aligns or specifies the appropriate paradigm of the study and at the same time is geared towards stating how the research is going to be carried out. It provides early in the research process, the plan of how to do it, or indeed 'how it is going to be done'. It specifies the plan of the study, choice – pattern or scheme for attacking or solving research problem systematically. Simply stated, this initial formal study plan or research blueprint, choice pattern or scheme for attacking or solving research problem systematically is what is often referred to as research design.*

On the *classification of research designs*, it is important to note that given the nature and focus of political science, it now makes greater sense to align research designing in the discipline based on the broad prism of whether it is quantitative, qualitative or combined (McNabb, 2009 and Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2014). Accordingly, we subscribe to the fact that, for obvious reasons, it is now increasingly more fashionable to think and align research designing in the discipline from the broad prism of whether it is quantitative or qualitative. Accordingly, contemporary and plausible research designs are broadly outlined or classified as: (a) Qualitative research designs and

(b) Quantitative research designs.

Having noted that we subscribe and that it is now increasingly more fashionable to think and align research designing in the discipline based on the broad prism of whether it is quantitative or qualitative; it logically follows that we also characterize the difference between qualitative and quantitative research designs. Before doing this however, let us consider and take due cognitive steps towards understanding the nature and differences between qualitative and quantitative researches or studies.

Qualitative Research Designs

The term qualitative research refers to “a set of non-statistical inquiry techniques and processes used to gather data about social phenomena” (McNabb, 2009: 341). Strictly stated, qualitative research is the use of predominantly non-numeric tools and instruments in the generation and analysis of data. Data is deemed qualitative when collection of words, symbols, pictures or other non-numerical records, materials or artefacts involved are collected by, or relied upon by the researcher. Qualitative research typically involves studies in inductive, theory-generating, subjective and non-positivist processes (Lee, 1999). In doing this, it relies more on careful observation, logical reasoning, intuition and sequential evidence. As is often the case, collected data

are not easily measurable. Accordingly, they are generally amenable to textual descriptions, as well as nominal (classificatory) and ordinal (ranking) levels of measurement.

Table 1: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN OPTIONS AND THEIR CHARACTERIZATIONS

S/N	Qualitative Research Design Options	Characterizations
1	Explanatory research design	*A qualitative design option that is geared towards explaining why things or phenomena occur, and is conducted to build theories and predict future similar behaviour or events as they occur *Goes beyond the traditional descriptive designs of the positivist paradigm.
2	Interpretive research design	*A context-laden social science research technique that enables a researcher to develop meaning and provide understanding for human actions and social events. *Is characterised by a strong sense of connection between the researcher and the subjects who are part of an interpretive study
3	Critical research design	*Associated with studies that are geared towards <i>the how</i> in the isolation and elimination of the vices that cause alienating social conditions *An analytical tool in overcoming oppressive regimes and governments, and assumes that people can misunderstand themselves and situations. *The objective is to change people’s beliefs and actions in the ways the investigator believes will better satisfy their needs and wants.

Source: Compiled by the author from various sources

Whatever is the case, the guiding principle is that in qualitative research, the data in question, and the method used in gathering and analysing it, must have relevance to the phenomenon or social group being studied. Qualitative research designs are grouped into three strategic classes or identifiable types. They are: (a) Explanatory research design,

(b) Interpretive research design and (c) Critical research design.

Explanatory research design Explanatory research design is popular in most mainstream qualitative researches. An outstanding objective of explanatory research design is to explain why some phenomena occur and is conducted to build theories and predict future similar behaviour or events as they occur. Explanatory research design’s main goal is often to go beyond the traditional descriptive designs of the positivist paradigm. It is used as a means of gathering fundamental information about a topic, its contributory factors and the influence a phenomenon might have on various outcomes. Thus, explanatory research is useful in gaining insight and ideas, about a study problem, and often requires follow-up researches. It is perhaps also necessary to point out that the purpose of explanatory research design is broader than that of descriptive research, and that this is largely because explanatory design provides meaning and description.

To generate requisite data, explanatory research design relies heavily two methods: case study and historical methods. As pointed out by Yin (1984), as a research

strategy, the distinguishing characteristic of a case study method is that it attempts to examine a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Case studies are often intensive studies that focus on one or a few exemplary individuals, families, events, time periods, decisions, processes, programmes, institutions, organizations, groups or communities (Lang and Heiss, 1990; McNabb 2009).

Historical method in research is essentially an attempt to understand a phenomenon or determine its process of growth and dynamics of internal change. It is hinged on the realization that modern political explanations and theories can be applied in the historical context to shed light on what otherwise might have remained hidden. Historical method is important when the problematic is or borders on the evolution of organised social control and the elucidation of the nature of state, government and its agencies. Sources of data in historical method are primary and secondary. Primary sources are eye witness accounts, observation of historical objects, interview and questionnaire. Secondary sources are newspapers and magazines, books, journals and archival records. For Hocker (1958) historical research method takes in three steps. The first is the gathering of data. This is followed by the critical evaluation of the said data, and then the presentation of the facts, interpretation and conclusion from the facts.

Besides logical reasoning and sequential evidence, numerical description and simple statistical analysis are also popular in the analysis of generated data in explanatory research design. This includes descriptive tools of data presentation and analysis such as discussions and logical statements, tables, graphs, pictorials and so on.

Interpretive research design Many human events and actions are better explained through interpretation of a phenomenon by developing meanings of social events and actions. Sometimes used as synonym of hermeneutics and phenomenology, interpretative researches help us to achieve understanding of actions of people in social circumstance and situations (White in McNabb, 2009). In addition, it is characterised by a strong sense of connection between the researcher and the subjects who are part of an interpretive study. The goal in this design is to build understanding between the participants and the observer. It focuses on standards, worries, rules and values held in common and how they influence human interaction; and as Schwandt (1997) points out requires that the researcher goes beyond simply describing or explaining what a phenomenon is to also interpret the phenomenon to the reader. Interpretative research design's aim is to enhance people's understanding of symbols, artefacts, beliefs, meanings, feeling or attitudes of the people in the situation.

There are basically two methods of research used in interpretive research: grounded theory and ethnographic methods. While the objective of grounded theory method is to develop a theory out of the information gathered, the hallmark of ethnographic method is the generation of research notes that exhibit great depth and detailed complexity. The snag here is that ethnographic method – very popular in anthropology and sociology - requires more time than many political scientists are able or willing to devote to research and research exigencies.

Critical research design Critical research design is the most radical of all qualitative research designs. The objective is usually to change people's beliefs and actions in the ways the investigator believes will better satisfy their needs and wants. A study is considered critical in nature if (a) it is a social critique that exposes harmful or

alienating social conditions. (b) its purpose targets to emancipate members of the society from the harmful conditions, thus eliminating the cause of the alienation. Critical research design evolved from two broad approaches, namely: (a) the Marxian critical sociology and (b) the Freudian psychotherapy. Critical research design calls to question the basic assumptions and asks to evaluate them as basis for action. It is rooted in the criticism of the social structure and capitalist economic system that emerged in reaction to the excesses of the Industrial Revolution. An analytical tool in overcoming oppressive regimes and governments, critical research design assumes that people can misunderstand themselves and situations.

Critical research design relies on action research method. The method focuses on researching the way the group functions and the problems affecting the group. The method also helps members of the group to bring about the needed change that they perceive as right for them. Incidentally, critical research design, no doubt a very useful design, is the least used design in political science.

Quantitative Research Designs

Quantitative research refers to a set of statistical and largely numeric techniques and processes used to gather and analyse data about social phenomena. This type of research that relies heavily on numeric figures, samples and statistical instruments involving statistical calculations and processes. In political science inquiry, quantitative research design has as its fundamental focus either of three concerns. The concerns are (a) The exploration or illumination of concepts and theories (b) The description of events or phenomena (c) The determination of casual effects that the manipulation of one or more factors may have on variables of interest. The three concerns enable quantitative research designs to explore the character, describe trends and determine relationships. Accordingly, there are three types of quantitative research designs, namely: Exploratory research design, Descriptive research designs and Causal research designs.

Exploratory research design Exploratory research designs are associated with research designs used primarily for gaining insights and ideas about research problems as well as variables and issues associated with those problems. Often employed in studies as a first step in a multipart or extensive research project, exploratory research design helps the researcher to gain greater understanding and to identify variables and how related they are. This explains why they are sometimes seen as pilot studies

Exploratory research design may involve quantitative, qualitative or combinational strategies in data gathering. Both primary and secondary sources of data have similar validity in exploratory research. As a matter of fact, reported findings of other researches, often referred to as *review of related literature*, RRL, is a very important research technique in exploratory research designs. This is because researchers use RRL to gain knowledge of what they should be looking out for in their data gathering effort as well as weigh the applicability of their proposed research method. As a technique in exploratory research designs, RRL is also important because, it enables the researcher to locate or identify major themes for possible incorporation into the research questions in the research at hand.

Table 2: QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN OPTIONS AND THEIR CHARACTERIZATIONS

S/N	Quantitative Research Design Options	Characterizations
1	Exploratory research design	*Used primarily for gaining insights and ideas about research problems as well as variables and issues associated with those problems. *Employed in studies as a first step in multipart / extensive research project, and helps the researcher to gain greater understanding and to identify variables and how related they are. *Sometimes seen as pilot studies
2	Descriptive research design	*Used when there is need to develop a snap short / quick photo of a phenomenon of interest. *Involves large sample, describes events, helps define attitude, opinions, behaviour observed or measured at a given time and environment. *Focuses on careful mapping out of a situation, circumstance or set of events to describe what is happening or has happened
3	Causal research design	*Refers to a quantitative research blue print or plan that is hinged on causality. *Focuses how to investigate and establish relationship between causes and effects. *Employs tools akin to the natural sciences to establish relationship between variables. *Observes existing or prevailing conditions and searches back in time for probable causal factors

Source: Compiled by the author from various sources

According to Knight (2002) some major themes in RRL are identifiable. They are (b) What is the point of concern with topic at hand? (b) Why is it important, and to whom is it important? (c) On what point do other researchers agree, and on what and why do they disagree? (d) Out of all the literature, what research question has been treated too lightly? (e) what research question or questions, should the research at hand focus on? (f) What research methodology and methods have been used to study the problem of interest.

Exploratory research designs also take advantage of both in-depth interviews (IDI), pilot survey, case studies and focused group discussion (FGD) as well as administrative records, literature review and documentary evidence in the generation of data. In analysing generated data, exploratory research design relies either on quantitative or qualitative forms or a combination of both.

Descriptive research design Descriptive research design is used when there is need to develop a snap short or quick photo of a given phenomenon of interest. It involves large sample, describes events, helps define attitude, opinions, behaviour that are observed or measured at a given time and environment. The focus of descriptive research design is on careful mapping out of a situation, circumstance or set of events to describe what is happening or has happened. Descriptive researches are of two types: cross-sectional or longitudinal.

Cross-sectional study is a one-short assessment of a sample of respondents in the context of a given or specific frame time. Note that the assessment in a cross-sectional

study may change after or on a later date or if conducted with another sample even if of the same population. The purpose of cross-sectional research design is to determine to what extent different classes in a sample differ on some outcome variable, that is, independent variable. Categories in cross-sectional research design could be gender, different age groups, income, social classes, ethnic groups, etc. Cross-sectional research designs have four basic elements, which according to de Vaus (2001) are (a) Variations are measured in response to independent variables in the sample. Example: Attitude of men and women in relation to a particular candidate. (b) Use at least one independent variable with a minimum of two categories. Example: as in the case of (a) above, the dichotomy could be two, approve / disapprove or it could be five-point scale. (c) the third element of cross-sectional research design is the fact that data collected is time specific. On account of this, the result is concerned with a particular moment. (d) For a known population, it is necessary to select sample randomly.

A longitudinal research studies same sample repeatedly, over two or more time intervals so as to measure change in respondent's responses. The purpose of longitudinal study is usually to identify and measure the change in subjects' or respondents' responses. It is important to note that the same basic elements that apply in cross-sectional research design also apply in longitudinal research design, except that there is a follow-on measurement taken after a period, or periods of time. When longitudinal research designs, follow a sample overtime so as to evaluate attitudes and behaviours they are called *cohort studies*. Reflecting on this, McNabb (2009) points to the fact that cohort researches are popular largely because they measure changes in voter attitudes as campaign progresses or as an administration serves its tenure or elected period in office.

Field surveys involving the use of questionnaire on large samples of individuals, groups or institutions is by far the most appropriate and popular technique in gathering data in descriptive research design. Oftentimes, respondents in questionnaire for descriptive research are asked open-ended or closed questions. The idea is to let them respond as appropriate. In line with quantitative tradition, descriptive research design relies on statistical techniques and instruments for the analysis of generated data. The target at this point is often to describe, compare, classify or analyse entities and events so as to achieve some levels of numerical accuracy.

Causal research design Causal research design is concerned with the investigation of possible cause-and-effect relationship. This, it does, by observing an existing or prevailing condition and by searching back in time for probable causal factors. Casual research is also known as *ex-post facto* meaning after-the-effect and are of two types: (a) Relational and (b) Experimental. We focus first on *Relational Studies*. Sometimes called correlational studies, relational studies seek to identify how one or more variables are related to one another. Examples: one relational study may be interested on how ethnicity or religion is related to voter choice in governorship or presidential elections; while the other is interested how social power, wealth or money spent on electoral campaign is related to electoral performance. See also chapter eighteen of Biereenu-Nnabugwu (2011). The unique thing here is that the researcher investigates by observing a dependent variable in retrospect that is backward reflection, in order to establish a possible relationship or effects on the independent variable.

As the name suggests, *Experimental Studies* has to with experimentation. Researchers conduct experiment when they want to determine whether a causal

relationship exists between the two or more variables. It connotes the testing of one or more hypotheses under controlled conditions. Accordingly, experimental research involves planning and conducting experiments, indeed a deliberate manipulation of relevant variables with the view to ascertain the causal relationship of one to another. The purpose of experimental study is to identify the cause or causes of change in a variable or event. It determines “what leads to what” (Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1991). In doing this, it follows a process that essentially experimental – it manipulates different treatments or interventions to examine their effects on a variable of interest. Essentially, experiments involve subjecting two or more samples or sub-samples to different treatments or interventions. One or two independent variable may be manipulated in the same treatment experiment. For example: a piece of political message may be communicated to two or more samples, say communities, to determine their attitude or response to the message.

Causal research is called experimental research because it follows an experimental design. Unlike in exploratory and descriptive designs, where the researcher is the collector of the data or information that already exists, in experimental research, the researcher is an active participant in the data generating process. This because, he manipulates different treatments to examine their effects on a variable of interest. Both parametric and non-parametric statistical tools such as t-test, ANOVA, chi square, etcetera are useful in the analysis of generated data in causal research designs.

Summary and Conclusions

Background to the Study is the first part of the first chapter or section of a research write-up. It connotes a curiosity and consciousness and is essentially a narration about the area of concern, situation or condition to be interrogated, attended to or improved upon. In addition to identifying the facts, data, incidents, observations, trends or conditions that ignited the researcher’s interest on the topic, Background to the Study also identifies the problematic, difficulty, puzzle or troubling doubt that exists in scholarly literature - established through literature survey – that need to be addressed or eliminated

Statement of Problem refers to a concise statement of description about an issue, puzzle or difficulty to be addressed or investigated. It elaborates information provided in the title of a study and acts as a go-between between the Background to the Study and the Research Questions. Accordingly, Statements of Research Problem are logical follow-ups to Background to the Study, and comes before the Research Questions. In addition, Statements of Research Problem are dedicated to pinpointing or specifying the specific problems which the particular research has chosen to investigate.

Research Design is a formal statement, blue print or plan that guides how research is conducted to arrive at a solution to identified research problem. Research design enables a researcher to take and state the vital decisions on how a research is to be conducted. It focuses on the research process and states the choice, pace and direction of the research effort. It provides early in the research process, the plan of how to do it, or indeed ‘how it is going to be done’. Specifies the plan of the study, choice – pattern or scheme for attacking or solving research problem systematically. In a nut shell, the initial formal study plan or research blueprint, choice pattern or scheme for attacking or solving research problem systematically is what is often referred to as research design.

The idea of design itself connotes existence of varied but acceptable options for tackling identifiable research problem. The existence of varieties in design is no doubt, a factor or consequence of variegated orientations and perspectives. What these imply is that a research designer must contend with choice between various ways of carrying out a specific research. In line with this, the primary logic inherent in this study is that political inquiry and related researches lend itself to two broad groups: Exploratory research design, Descriptive research designs and Causal research designs for quantitative and Explanatory research design, Interpretive research designs and Critical research designs.

Before I step down, permit me to say something again on the issue of Politicology. You may wish to note that, properly stated, I consider our discipline to be Politicology and myself a politicologist. Among other reasons, this is because we are, by and large, all *involved in the employment of qualitative and quantitative tools in the study of politics*. What do you think? Thank you.

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