

Dearth of Research Materials on the Quality of Research in the Social Sciences in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *The paper examines the effects of dearth of research materials on the quality of research in the social sciences in Nigeria. Dearth of research materials in Nigeria's social sciences can have far-reaching implications for the quality of research conducted and the usefulness of research outputs. The paper also covers the importance of research materials in the social sciences, effects of dearth of research materials on the quality of research in the social sciences, quality research and quality of a good research. The findings show that the dearth of research materials can limit the scope of research, forcing researchers to focus on narrow topics or rely on outdated data. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize the development of reliable data sources to improve the quality of research in the social sciences. Stakeholders in research must advocate for more financial support to build research infrastructures and create complete and updated databases to support research data. It is only with adequate fund back up that the social sciences can contribute meaningfully towards the investigation and resolution of social problems.*

KEYWORDS: Social sciences, research, dearth, operationalism, empirical evidence,

INTRODUCTION

Research is an essential component of the social sciences, as it provides evidence-based insights into various social phenomena and informs policy and practice. The importance of research materials cannot be overemphasized in the social sciences. They are essential for the advancement of knowledge, the development of theories and the formulation of policies. The social sciences have played a significant role in shaping public policy and addressing social issues. In Nigeria, however, the dearth of research materials is a major challenge that researchers in the social sciences face. The dearth of research materials can have significant consequences for the quality of research conducted in Nigeria. The lack of access to up-to-date research materials such as journals, books, and research reports can limit the ability of researchers to conduct rigorous and comprehensive studies, resulting in a limited understanding of social issues and problems. Conducting research in the social sciences can be challenging due to the lack of adequate research materials and resources. This shortage of research materials affects the quality of research in the social sciences and, by extension, the development of the country.

Ogunyemi and Idowu (2021) note that the lack of access to current research materials in social sciences in Nigeria has contributed to a gap in knowledge, resulting in limited or outdated information used in research. This, in turn, limits the validity and reliability of research findings, affecting the usefulness of research outputs for informing policy and decision-making processes. Furthermore, the scarcity of research materials in Nigeria leads to academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism, because researchers may resort to using outdated or irrelevant sources to fill the gap in their literature review. This undermines the credibility of research outputs, resulting in the loss of trust in research as a source of knowledge (Owoyemi & Adewoye, 2021).

The dearth of research materials in social sciences in Nigeria has far-reaching implications for the quality of research conducted and the usefulness of research outputs. Therefore, efforts should be made to improve access to current and relevant research materials to support rigorous and comprehensive research in the social sciences in Nigeria.

Quality Research

According to Boaz and Ashby (2019), "quality research" is most frequently characterized as the logical interaction that incorporates all parts of study plan. Specifically, it connects with the appraisal of the fit between the methods and the research questions, subject choice, outcome estimation, and assurance against orderly predisposition, non systematic inclination, and inferential blunder. Texts, papers, expositions, advisers for research plan and procedure, and different distributions often give the standards and norms to high-quality research plans.

In the research community, high-quality research likewise serves various huge obligations. It advises significant decisions about the financing regarding drives, gatherings, and whole associations, the methods utilized in research, recruiting and advancing researchers, what is distributed or appropriated and what different researchers and individuals decide to peruse. It encourages confidence in crafted by the research community.

Some of the qualities of a good research are:

1. *Operationalism:* Operationalism simply means labelling variables. The researcher must be able to label the independent, dependent and secondary variables appropriately. Not only that, the research procedure must be made clear. Also, every term used in the research must be explained. Precision, related to operational definition of terms is used in research. The meaning of operationalism will get the job done to commute home the point. Stanovich's (2019) characterizes it hence: "operationalism is basically the possibility that ideas in logical hypothesis must here and there be grounded in, or connected to, detectable occasions that can be estimated. Connecting the idea to a discernible occasion is a functional meaning of the idea and discloses the idea. The functional definition eliminates the idea from the sentiments and instincts of a specific individual and permits it to be tried by anybody who can do the quantifiable tasks."

2. *Empirical Observation and Evidence:* This is one of the most important qualities of a good research. This is because one of the basic characteristics of science is that that of relying on empirical observation but this must be done systematically. Mere observation as it were cannot get anything in science. But as scientists, observation if structured should be able to reveal something about the underlying nature of the object under study and empirical observation leads to testability. Hence, one of the characteristics of research is that it must be based on empirical observation and evidence.

3. *Testability*: This means that every research must be testable for it to be regarded as a good research.
4. *Parsimony*: Parsimony and precision are two things that guide scientific research and make researches robust. Parsimony simply implies that ideas are not to be organized loosely. Not clear, please rephrase. Hence, the researcher should not make the research too wordy so that people will not miss the point.
5. *Scientific Basis*. Every research must have a scientific basis for it to be good. This suggests that a good research is a study of both the natural and physical world through the support of theoretical models and data that derive from observation or experiments.
6. *Systematic*: Every good research is systematic. This means that it follows a particular procedure to get to the conclusion and enables another researcher to apply the same system of knowledge and get the same results.
7. *Falsifiability*: According to Karl (2016), “what distinguishes a scientific theory from an unscientific one is the principle of refutability.” This simply means that no research is set on concrete. One researcher might come up with a discovery which another researcher refutes or falsifies years later. This has been the tradition in scientific advancement.
8. *Ethical Principles*: A good research must follow the ethical principles outlined by the discipline or by anybody or agency that sees to the conduct of researches. This implies that the researcher, before he engages in any research, must try as much as possible to protect the participants from harm, obtain the consent of the participants, debrief the participants, ensure confidentiality and that the participants are not deceived.

Importance of Research Materials in the Social Sciences

Social science research is an essential aspect of social development and contributes to the knowledge economy of any nation. In Nigeria, the social sciences have played a significant role in shaping public policy and addressing social issues. They provide essential theoretical and conceptual frameworks, data and statistics for analysis, and a reference point for validation and comparison. Research materials are essential for the success of social science research, as they provide the necessary information needed to conduct a study. They provide valuable information for policy makers and practitioners, which can have a significant impact on the lives of individuals and communities.

Research materials are crucial in the social sciences in Nigeria. They help researchers to gather relevant and accurate data on various social phenomena such as human behaviour and interactions, culture, society, politics, and economics. This enables researchers to gain a better understanding of these phenomena and to identify patterns, trends, and relationships.

According to Savage (2019) research materials are important in the social sciences because they provide researchers with the necessary tools and methods to design and conduct research studies. This includes access to various research methods like surveys, focus groups, interviews, and observation, as well as access to appropriate statistical software for data analysis. The tools and methods in turn help researchers in the social sciences to better study various social occurrences.

Research materials are essential for advancing knowledge in the social sciences in Nigeria. Through research, new theories, concepts, and hypotheses are formed, tested, and refined, leading to a broader

understanding of social phenomena. This knowledge is critical in shaping policies, programs, and interventions aimed at addressing social problems and challenges.

Research materials are crucial for enhancing the credibility and validity of social science research in Nigeria. By using reliable and valid research materials, researchers can produce high-quality research that is accepted by other researchers and policy makers. This helps to build the reputation of social science research in Nigeria and supports the development of evidence-based policies and interventions that can improve people's lives.

Research materials play a crucial role in the advancement of social science research in Nigeria. These materials provide relevant information, data, and statistics for researchers to analyze and interpret in order to make informed conclusions and recommendations. Adeyemi and Olugbenga (2017) assert that research materials provide the conceptual and theoretical foundation of a study, and are essential for identifying research gaps, formulating research questions, and designing research methods. Furthermore, research materials help researchers to situate their work within the broader context of past and current research. This allows them to build upon existing knowledge and theories, identify trends and patterns, and contribute new insights to the field. Ogunlade (2018) argues that research materials also serve as a point of reference for comparing and validating research findings, and are critical for ensuring the credibility and reliability of research outcomes.

In addition, research materials provide a valuable resource for policy makers, practitioners, and other stakeholders who rely on social science research to inform decisions and actions. The insights and recommendations produced by social science research can have a significant impact on the lives of individuals and communities, particularly in areas such as education, healthcare, and social welfare. Adeyemi and Olugbenga (2017) note that access to research materials is crucial for ensuring evidence-based policy and practice.

Effects of Dearth of Research Materials on the Quality of Research in the Social Sciences

The social sciences are built on empirical evidence, and the quality of research in these fields heavily depends on the availability and accessibility of research materials. According to Maier et al. (2018), a lack of research materials in the social sciences can limit the quality and validity of research findings. A dearth of research materials and lack of reliable data can lead to flawed conclusions and findings and can significantly impact the quality of research in the social sciences in several ways.

The unavailability of research materials can limit the scope of research projects. Researchers may have to rely on a small sample size or incomplete data, which may not be representative of the entire population. Without access to relevant data and literature, researchers may be forced to use less reliable sources, potentially leading to incomplete or biased results. Additionally, a lack of research materials can limit the scope of research, leading to narrow or superficial studies (Grindle & Parker, 2017). This, in turn, affects the generalizability and accuracy of the research findings.

In cases where limited research materials are available, researchers may be forced to use data that is outdated or incomplete, leading to inaccurate or biased reporting. This may result in a reduction of the overall credibility of the research, which has the potential to undermine the integrity of the research findings and make its conclusions unreliable. Without proper sources, researchers may not be able to generate accurate and trustworthy data and, in turn, could struggle to convince readers of the veracity of their findings (Maier et al., 2018).

Dearth of research materials may limit the knowledge development and scope of research in social sciences. Researchers may have to rely on incomplete or outdated theories, research designs and methodologies and focus on narrow topics which may limit the potential for new discoveries and the applicability of their findings. In a study on the impact of social media on political participation in developing countries, Mutsvairo (2018) notes that the lack of data on social media use in many African countries limited the scope of the study.

A lack of research materials and new data can lead to stagnation in the social sciences. The lack of access to updated research materials may also influence the researcher's capacity for critical thinking and innovation, thus inhibiting the development of insightful and ground-breaking research ideas (Savage, 2019). The absence of new research findings, theories, and discoveries can lead to a slowdown in the growth and development of the field and poor quality research in the social sciences, as access to relevant literature and resources is crucial to the production of insightful and innovative studies.

Literature under review characterized quality of research utilizing basically the rules serious areas of strength for of, a sound hypothetical foundation, creativity, objectivity, great earlier preparation and commitment to rehearse. Procedure, presumably, is the foundation of a review and having areas of strength for the main basis that makes a review logical. Being liberated from strategic shortcomings and blunders is the first and the main condition that any review needs to meet to be viewed as logical prior to being excellent. That interviewees stressed procedure as the main model of quality more frequently than others shows that they think there are difficult issues about approach. Interviewees alluded to issues, for example, unfortunate preparation of researchers, adjusting system of good sciences to social sciences, researchers' restricting their research exercises with a couple of strategies that they feel certain at and that associations distributing scholastic work need successful instruments of checking the strategic parts of the research they distribute as the main issues connected with research philosophy. Limiting issues connected with procedure is of basic significance for a solid research creation, and in this way for research quality. Besides, social sciences exemplify many research strategies and procedures to handle different confounded social issues. Researcher instructional classes at postgraduate level ought to show reasoning of science, system and research strategies all the more with a burning intensity.

Other than methodology, the interviewees referred to theoretical background and originality as other major components of research quality and related these two criteria with contribution to science. Cheetham (2017) opines that the main problems hindering originality in research, is the pressure to publish caused by academic promotion criteria and researchers' weaknesses at research methods and literature study. Besides these shortcomings, it should not be overseen that doing original research requires academic and monetary resources and maybe more importantly, an atmosphere supporting research production, signalling an established research culture. In the interviews with academics, one common problem referred to in the discussion of all problems was lack of a long-established research culture. Academics stated that the biggest problem was that there was no supportive research culture in which doing research was considered valuable. Some of the problems mainly caused by this lack of research culture mentioned were that research process at university is bureaucratized, university is perceived as an institution mainly for teaching, that universities cannot produce quality research, high rate of ethics violations and very limited allocation of resources to research, and failing to benefit from research in practice.

According to Feuer, Towne, and Shavelson (2020), fostering and enforcing a scientific culture of educational research is essential for encouraging better research. Scientific culture is a set of norms and practices, including the criteria used to evaluate research quality. According to Cheetham (2017), research is the intellectual lifeblood of university staff, a who also adds that research culture is the framework that gives research behaviour significance and enables researchers to comprehend and assess the research activity. As a result, the absence of a research culture, as perceived by academics, might be seen as a significant issue eroding research quality.

Solutions to the dearth of research materials on the quality of research in the social sciences

Nigeria has persistent challenges concerning the scarcity of research materials. These have significantly impeded the progress and quality of research across various disciplines. Recognizing the critical role of robust research in fostering societal advancement and development, has become increasingly imperative to devise comprehensive solutions to address the dearth of research materials in the Nigerian academic landscape.

These proposed solutions aim to empower researchers, scholars, and academic institutions to overcome the constraints posed by inadequate access to research materials, thereby fostering a more conducive environment for the generation and dissemination of knowledge in the Nigerian context. The following may offer some form of support to the process of resolving the challenges posed by dearth of research materials in social sciences research in Nigeria:

1. Increased funding for libraries and research centers in Nigeria: In today's world, well-developed knowledge infrastructure is essential. Libraries and research centers provide access to information, preserve cultural heritage, and promote academic research. They serve as hubs for academic pursuits, enabling the dissemination of knowledge and fostering intellectual growth (Okello, 2018). Moreover, research centers act as catalysts for scientific discoveries, technological advancements, and evidence-based policy formulation, thereby contributing to sustainable development (Adedibu, 2019). Enhanced funding for libraries and research centers in Nigeria will yield immense benefits. Adequate financial support would enable the acquisition of current academic resources, boost infrastructure development, and facilitate capacity-building initiatives (Uzuegbu, 2020). Additionally, more funding would allow libraries and research centers to support more collaborative research projects, which would lead to more knowledge sharing and interdisciplinary studies. This would all contribute to a stronger knowledge economy, which is an economy that is based on the production, distribution, and use of knowledge.

2. Encourage collaboration between Nigerian researchers and foreign researchers: Collaborative research initiatives can significantly improve the quality and impact of research outcomes. By leveraging the diverse expertise, resources, and perspectives of both Nigerian and foreign researchers, collaborative endeavors can lead to the development of innovative solutions to complex societal challenges (Adegoke, 2019). Additionally, such partnerships can promote the exchange of best practices, technologies, and methodologies, thereby fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement within the Nigerian research landscape (Ogundele, 2018). It can facilitate access to cutting-edge technologies, promote interdisciplinary research, and enhance the visibility and global recognition of Nigerian research contributions (Adewale, 2020). When researchers from different disciplines and backgrounds work together, they can come up with more creative and innovative solutions to complex problems. And when these solutions are tailored to the specific needs of Nigeria, they are more likely to be successful and sustainable.

3. *Improve access to the internet and electronic databases:* Access to the internet and electronic databases is pivotal for enabling researchers to access a wealth of scholarly resources, academic journals, and data repositories crucial for conducting comprehensive and rigorous social sciences research (Okeke, 2017). These resources help researchers to review the existing literature, analyze data, and share their findings with the academic community. This promotes knowledge sharing and intellectual discussion within academia. Enhancing access to the internet and electronic databases can yield transformative benefits for social sciences research. Improved connectivity can foster interdisciplinary collaborations, facilitate real-time data collection, and promote the integration of diverse research methodologies (Okoro, 2020). Additionally, expanded access can enhance the visibility of Nigerian research contributions on the global stage, thereby amplifying the impact and recognition of social sciences research from the region.

4. **Promote open access to research publications:** The accessibility of research publications is pivotal in advancing the frontiers of knowledge and fostering collaborative research endeavors. Open access initiatives play a crucial role in ensuring that scholarly research remains accessible to a broad audience, transcending geographical and financial barriers. Open access to research publications facilitates widespread dissemination of knowledge, enabling researchers, policymakers, and the general public to access scholarly insights without financial constraints (Adeleke, 2018). It promotes interdisciplinary research collaborations, stimulates innovation, and contributes to the acceleration of scientific discoveries and technological advancements (Okafor, 2019). Moreover, open access enhances the visibility and impact of research outputs, amplifying the global recognition and influence of academic contributions within the scholarly community.

5. *Training of librarians and research center staff in the latest technologies and research methods:* The role of librarians and research center staff is indispensable in facilitating efficient knowledge management and research support. With the dynamic landscape of technological advancements and research methodologies, it is imperative to prioritize continuous training and skill development among these professionals. Comprehensive training programmes play a crucial role in equipping librarians and research center staff with the requisite skills and expertise to navigate the complexities of contemporary research environments. These programmes encompass a diverse array of topics, including data analysis techniques, metadata management, digital archiving, and scholarly communication (Johnson, 2019). By fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional development, training initiatives enable library and research personnel to provide tailored support, foster interdisciplinary collaborations, and promote efficient dissemination of research findings. Proficient utilization of digital tools, data visualization techniques, and scholarly communication platforms enables professionals to cater to the diverse research needs of the academic community (Brown, 2021). Moreover, enhanced skill sets facilitate the integration of innovative approaches to information management, thereby fostering a dynamic research ecosystem conducive to fostering knowledge dissemination and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Conclusion

The dearth of research materials and lack of access to relevant research resources in the social sciences poses a serious threat that negatively affect the quality of research. Social scientists depend on empirical evidence to support their theories and hypotheses. Denying researchers access to credible sources of data and literature makes it almost impossible for them to produce complete, well-grounded, and innovative research studies. This lack of reliable data leads to flawed conclusions and inaccurate findings. Furthermore, the dearth of research materials limit the scope of research, forcing researchers

to focus on narrow topics or rely on outdated data. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize the development of reliable data sources to improve the quality of research in the social sciences. Stakeholders in research must advocate for more financial support to build research infrastructures and create complete and updated databases to support access to research data. It is only with adequate funding that the social sciences can contribute meaningfully towards the investigation and resolution of social problems.

Addressing the issue of limited research materials is crucial in ensuring a comprehensive and significant advancement of the social sciences research. By doing so, social scientists can better understand the issues they study, develop effective interventions and policies, and make informed recommendations to policy makers.

Recommendations

As Nigeria strives for advancement and development in the social sciences, the need to address the challenges stemming from the dearth of research materials that significantly impact the quality of research in the country cannot be overstated. Recognizing the fundamental role that robust research plays in fostering societal progress and development, the following recommendations are proposed to mitigate the adverse effects of the scarcity of research materials in the social sciences in Nigeria:

1. *Investment in Research Infrastructure:* A significant portion of the national budget should be allocated to enhance research infrastructure, including the establishment of well-equipped research libraries, digital archives, and online repositories. Collaborations with international institutions and organizations can also facilitate access to a wider array of research materials.
2. *Promotion of Open Access Initiatives:* Open access initiative should be encouraged to promote the adoption of open access policies and support the creation of open-access repositories where Nigerian social science researchers can publish and access research materials freely. This would foster knowledge sharing, reduce the constraints associated with accessing costly subscription-based journals, and amplify the visibility and impact of Nigeria research.
3. *Support for Research Grants and Scholarships:* Funding opportunities for social science researchers should be introduced and expanded through research grants and scholarships. These initiatives would enable researchers to conduct fieldwork, access specialized databases, and acquire relevant materials critical for producing high-quality research outputs.
4. *Strengthening Academic Partnerships:* Collaborations between Nigerian academic institutions and renowned international universities and research centers should be encouraged. Facilitating faculty exchange programmes, joint research projects, and resource-sharing agreements would provide Nigerian researchers with access to a broader range of research materials and diverse perspectives, thereby enhancing the quality and depth of their research endeavors.
5. *Encouraging Digital Literacy and Research Training:* Comprehensive programmes aimed at enhancing digital literacy and research methodologies among social science researchers should be implemented. Training workshops and seminars on effective utilization of available resources, database searching techniques and critical evaluation of research materials can significantly enhance the capacity of researchers to navigate the limitations posed by the dearth of research materials.

6. *Supporting Indigenous Research Initiatives:* The development and documentation of indigenous knowledge and research materials should be encouraged. Encouraging the documentation of local research findings, historical data, and cultural resources can enrich the pool of available research materials within the country, providing a unique perspective on societal issues and fostering a deeper understanding of Nigeria's social dynamics.

Implementing these recommendations would not only alleviate the challenges posed by the scarcity of research materials but also elevate the quality and impact of social science research in Nigeria, ultimately contributing to the advancement and well-being of the nation.

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