

## RESEARCH: THE FULCRUM THAT DRIVES THE ACADEMIC DOMAIN

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### ABSTRACT

*Research is a sinequanon for academic progress. It is at the base of any academic institution. No progress would be made in academic world without effective research. In fact, without research, there would be stagnancy in the intellectual community. The thrust of this paper is to examine the necessity of research in the intellectual endeavor, and to lay claims with unambiguous evidence to proof that research is indeed the fulcrum that drives the academia. Taking cognizance of its unique methodology (philosophical methods) and writing styles, the researchers adopt critical and analytic methods in discussing the issues raised in this study. It is obvious that lack of in-depth knowledge about one's areas of research work and also the inability of researchers to follow meticulously the guidelines of different citation styles led many researchers to commit academic crime known as plagiarism. Since the purpose of any research work is to add something new to the body of knowledge, it therefore follows that originality of one's work becomes inevitable in any research work. This study recommends that all researchers should strive as a matter of necessity to carefully study the subject matter of every research work in order to develop an in-debt knowledge about the research topic under consideration so as to present one's original knowledge about the subject matter under study. More so, the study advocates that Government, agencies, corporate organizations and other international bodies should provide financial, personnel and technical assistance to various research institutions and universities to assist them in establishing facilities for research studies.*

**Keywords:** Research, Intellectual Community, Academic, Knowledge, Originality

## INTRODUCTION

To experience progress in any area of specialization in life, an effective research work is required. Research must be given a special consideration in various life projects if one must witness a rapid progressive change in those life projects. No business in life can progress without effective research, for any business man or woman to succeed in life he / she must pay attention to research. This is because research will x-ray and make him/ her to understand the dynamics of his business operations knowing when to invest, how to invest, where to invest and what to invest his money with for profit maximization. It is on this account that Pandey and Mishra Pandey opined that, “Research is an essential and powerful tool in leading man towards progress. Without systematic research there would have been very little progress”<sup>1</sup>. Not even a nation can progress without a serious attention on research. In academics, research is the fulcrum that drives the academic empire. It is at the very heart of both the undergraduates and postgraduate studies. Rasika attests to this when she opined that:

Research in an academic institution is important for its growth and development, benefiting the students, the society, and the nation. Centers of Higher education are established to help in the economic, social, and cultural development of the nation. The key function of universities is to inspire students to do research in areas of interest, which would be beneficial for all. The role of the university is to facilitate the pursuit of knowledge leading to research.<sup>2</sup>

The world is a global village and the impact of technology on the various institutions of learning is unquantifiable and that is why the necessity of research is premium in every academic institution since it brings about a perennial development and viability in education thereby encouraging and facilitating innovative knowledge which is the essential ingredients in the development of any academic institutions and nation at large. According to Meera, there is a connection between research and the learning processes in the class rooms because, the quality of research work has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, which benefits students, society, and the nation as a whole.<sup>3</sup> This is obviously true in a country like Nigeria where research has contributed immensely in the development of the country's educational sector and will definitely make Nigeria to become a reservoir of knowledge in the international arena if she decides to direct her attention, efforts and resources to a qualitative research. John W. Best just as Pandey and Mishra Pandey has rightly said,

The secret of our cultural development has been research, pushing back the areas of ignorance by discovering new truths, which, in turn, lead to better ways of doing things and better products.” Scientific research leads to progress in some field of life. New products, new facts, new concepts and new ways of doing things are being found due to ever-increasing significant research in the physical, the biological, the social and the psychological fields. Research today is no longer confined to the science laboratory.<sup>4</sup>

Above is obviously true when one compares life in this twenty-first century and life in the ancient era, one cannot but appreciate the necessity of research in our life endeavours.

### CONCEPTUALIZATION OF RESEARCH

The concept "Research" originates from two English Words: "Re" and "Search" which means to search again. That is to say that "to research" has to do with looking out for something that 'is' insofar as it 'is'. It is on this note that Pandey and Mishra Pandey defined research as a systematic investigation or activity to gain new knowledge of the already existing facts.<sup>5</sup> The word "research" according to Offor originated from the old French word *recherchier*, which means to search and search again. It literally means repeating an experiment or a search for something and implicitly assumes that the earlier experiment or search was not exhaustive and complete in the sense that there is still room for improvement.<sup>6</sup> Research is a conscious, rational and a willful effort geared towards investigating things that 'is' insofar as it 'is'. Research is a conscious activity because, he who engages in it, is aware of the fact that he is researching. And that is why Goode and Hatt attesting to this fact observed that: Research is considered as a combination of those activities which are removed from day to day life and are pursued by those persons who are gifted in intellect and sincere in pursuit of knowledge.<sup>7</sup> This is not say that academic research is solely limited to such kinds of people, however, it is more appropriate to say that major contribution of research to the world development mostly come from such kind of people. People who are of course highly gifted and committed to their various areas of specialization. Buttressing it further Pandey & Mishra Pandey argued that: Academics are united on the fact that there is the need to reference borrowed information properly rather than dishonestly take information, knowledge and ideas from sources without acknowledgement.<sup>8</sup>

Research is a rational activity because it involves the application of reason in order to discover something new. For in any qualitative research, something new is always discovered and adds to the body of knowledge. And to this effect Pandey & Mishra Pandey claimed that: Research is an intellectual activity that is responsible for bringing to light new knowledge. It is also responsible for correcting the present mistakes, removing existing misconceptions and adding new learning to the existing fund of knowledge.<sup>9</sup> Research is also seen as a willful activity because it must not be done under compulsion. In every research work, there is a goal targeted to achieve and for one to have a good quality research work in order to achieve a desirable goal, a non-cohesive and a tensionless environment is a *sine qua non*. Rasika defines Academic research as the basic research carried out to increase the understanding of fundamental principles in areas of core interest.<sup>10</sup> The main objective of academic research is the creation of knowledge. When one engages on a research work, one of these three things always result: first is the creation of new knowledge, or, the refinement of the old and existing knowledge, or, the building up of the refined old existing knowledge. The most essential ingredients in any good research work include: organizability, order-ness and scientificity. In fact, research

is the organized, ordered, and scientific way of inquiries into things that are out there. And that is why Pandey & Mishra Pandey considered research as the application of scientific method in solving the problems of humanity. It is a systematic, formal and intensive process of carrying on the scientific method of analysis.<sup>11</sup> There are many ways of obtaining knowledge. They are intuition, revelation, and authority, logical manipulation of basic assumptions, informed guesses, observation, and reasoning by analogy. One of the branches of research known as empirical research is highly goal-oriented technique.<sup>12</sup>

Research in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge, and since knowledge is always about something, research, therefore, is always a search about knowledge of something. According to Syed & Kabir, research may be defined as “a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic or area”.<sup>13</sup> The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English lays down the meaning of research as “a careful investigation or inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge”. It is also described as, a movement from known to unknown. Shanti, has this to say about research:

The term Research is related to seeking out the information and knowledge on a particular topic or subject. In other words, research is an art of systematic investigation. Someone says that necessity is mother of all the inventions and the person engaged in this scientific investigation can be termed as researcher. Research is a pedagogic action the term should be used in a technical sense. According to Clifford Woody research comprises defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organizing and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and at last carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis.<sup>14</sup>

### **THE WHY-NESS OF RESEARCH**

The efficacy of research in our daily life activities cannot be underestimated, for research is necessary not only within the educational circle but also in all life endeavours. As already stated, no progress can be made in business if the manager of the said business enterprise did not take time to think about the products that can give his customers the highest satisfaction at any given moment. That very act of thinking is researching. Any company that does not engage in research work in order to discover new things and make necessary updates will crumble within a short space of time. With the help of research, the root causes of our problems in life are uncovered and once the cause of a problem is discovered, the solutions to them become easy. In the medical field, research has led to the discovering and the manufacturing of many drugs that are potent to the curing of the most of the chronic diseases that have bedeviled mankind. In the educational sector, research has contributed greatly in the development of a sound educational system all over the world especially in our country Nigeria. Meera laid credence to this claim when

he opined that “The quality of research work has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, which benefits students, society, and the country as a whole”.<sup>15</sup> The implication is that research work determines the quality of educational system of any country which in turn determine the quality of students being graduated yearly, and the quality of students graduated in turns determine the quality of services such students would render to their respective host communities. There is a direct impact research has on a community service and that is why research forms the basis for both undergraduate and postgraduate studies. It is because of this link and connection research has with virtually everything that we do in life that made Meera to argued thus,

Academic research has made a significant contribution to the discovery of solutions to many of the problems that our society and industry face. There have been numerous instances where businesses have looked to academics for help with critical concerns. The necessity for knowledge sharing between research organizations and industry is becoming more apparent. Institutional alliances that allow knowledge to be pooled together have sprung up in response to the growing importance of multidisciplinary subjects. Frequently, it is an industry that reaps the benefits. Basic inputs for planning and policy decision-making can be found in research. Academic research, of course, is an important aspect of global development, and academicians are key players in that progress.<sup>16</sup>

Research is the foundation, the bedrock of all the technological breakthroughs in science which we are all enjoying today. Without research, life itself would be meaningless, valueless and in fact very chaotic; there would be no progress of any kind, no development, life would be so stagnant and boring. To develop qualitative research is task demanding. It requires a lot of financial muscles, human capital and time and that is why most of the underdeveloped nation like Nigeria is still far from development because of their lack of human and financial commitment to research. To this effect, Rasika maintained that “Research is intrinsic to everything that we do and translates into insights that change the way we live. It has a scientific base and a definite formula that helps to resolve complex issues, reduces the possibility of false conclusions, and is based on data that can be more convincing”.<sup>17</sup> Research is the hallmark of nation's development. For a nation to experience a progressive change in all the sectors of her economy, there must be a conscious and a deliberate effort of that nation towards building quality research and research personnel.

### **METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH VERSUS RESEARCH METHODS**

In every profession in life, there is a method, a guide, and a formula you must follow to obtain a desirable result in that field of life. Life itself has a method and a formula too and one must abide to its methodic principles in order to succeed in life. Method makes one to

be principled, and focus in one's area of research. According to Ndubisi, Method simply means “a way of doing something. It has to do with the ways, manners, or approaches employed by one in order to achieve a set of goal”<sup>18</sup>. Explaining further he said a method has to be systematic, and to be systematic, a method has to be well-ordered and logical. This is in line with Mish's view of method as cited by Ndubisi, as a systematic procedure, technique or method of inquiry employed by or proper to a particular discipline,<sup>19</sup> Speaking on research method, :Lisa, argued that;

Different research methods have different purposes and different levels of validity. This is one measure that helps determine how accurate the results of a research method are. Validity is a term that refers to whether or not a study measures what it's supposed to measure. The results of a study provide stronger evidence if the research has a higher measure of validity.<sup>20</sup>

Shanti conceives research methods differently from research methodology. According to him, Research methods include all the techniques and methods which have been taken for conducting

research whereas research methodology is the approach in which research troubles are solved thoroughly.<sup>21</sup> He further explained that research methods is a science of studying how research is conducted systematically. In this field the researcher explains himself with the different steps generally taken to study a research problem. Hence, the scientific approach which is adopted for conducting research is called methodology.<sup>22</sup>

Research work is not a child's play. Embarking on a research work is not like telling moon light stories. A serious research work is an activity of the civil, and serious-minded individuals who want to turn things around for the benefit of himself and the society at large. There is always a problem that informed every research work in form of a goal and the degree at which a particular research work addresses that particular problem in the form of a goal set, determines the validity of that research. That is why transparency and originality of one's work matters a lot in every research work. Stressing more on this, Harun, admonished:

Research methodology seeks to inform: Why a research study has been undertaken, how the research problem has been defined, in what way and why the hypothesis has been formulated, what data have been collected and what particular method has been adopted, why particular technique of analyzing data has been used and a host of similar other questions are usually answered when we talk of research methodology concerning a research problem or study.<sup>23</sup>

In simple terms, research methodology is used to give a clear-cut idea of what the researcher is carrying out in his or her research.<sup>24</sup> In order to plan at the right point of time and to advance the research work, research methodology makes the right platform for the researcher to map out the research work in relevance to make solid plans. Moreover,

research methodology guides the researcher to involve and be active in his or her particular field of inquiry.<sup>25</sup> Most of the time, the aim of the research and the research topic won't be the same at all times it varies from the objectives and flow of the research, but by adopting a suitable methodology this can be achieved.<sup>26</sup> Research method has the capacity to affect the status quo of a particular subject. With the help of scientific method it uses, the objectivity is maintained at all times. Research is crucial for everybody who enjoys learning, regardless of whether they are affiliated or not affiliated with a research organization. Academic research expands a person's knowledge and competencies of the subject and career horizons. A research-based approach certainly, will create a monumental change in the teaching and learning process.<sup>27</sup> According to Ndubisi,

Method is an essential part of human activity because, its relevance or importance to knowledge acquisition cannot be overemphasized. It is method that helps the human person not to lose focus of his/ her goal set in life. Fundamentally, method helps us to actualize our goals with ease. Without method, life itself will be very difficult since method helps us to solve life problems with ease. It helps us to take certain decisions in life and it is crucial in making certain predictions and analysis of issues in life.<sup>28</sup>

There are different methods of writing a research work. Every academic discipline has a way, procedure or rather a systematic way of approaching it. Each discipline has its own unique method. Just as we have methods in philosophy, so also, we have methods in chemistry, methods in microbiology, methods in physics and so on. According to The University of Newcastle, there are different types of research methods which use different tools for data collection. And they are: **Qualitative Research, Quantitative Research, and Mixed Methods Research.**<sup>29</sup>

## CONCLUSION

From the above analysis, one cannot but agree with the researchers that research is indeed the fulcrum that does not just drive only the academia but also the fulcrum that fosters nation's development. In fact, research is as old as human history itself. God himself new the importance of research when he said "let us make man in our own image and likeness" Genesis, 1, vs. 26. The implication of this statement is that, the creation of man by God was not a mere coincidence. It was not accidental. It was well thought of, planed and meditated upon by God before finally deciding to make man out of his own image and likeness. This act of thinking, planning and of course meditating by God with regard to the creation of man is without exaggeration, a research. It becomes an eyeopener on the necessity of research on human development. Research is very essential in our life so much that we cannot exist as human being without research. One cannot do anything meaningful in life without thorough research, because, research is at the very foundation

of our progress in life. Although, there are lots of factors militating against successful research work in Nigerian leading to poor development in all her sectors, it is however believed that they can be surmounted over time. There is a need for a collaborative effort from the government, corporate organizations, and international organizations to aid researchers' work through regular training and financial assistance, thereby improving the relative status of researchers, making the availability of research material easier and strengthening the nation's infrastructure. In sum, we want to reiterate that even though challenges confronting research and researchers in Nigeria are enormous, they can be surmounted if the Nigerian Government, corporate organizations and other international bodies provide financial, personnel and technical assistance to various research institutions and universities to assist them in establishing facilities for research studies.

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