Typology of Research Studies Used in Political Science

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Abstract

The present paper is an endeavour to define research as a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information for advancing knowledge in any branch of study and find answers to questions and solutions to problems and in the process determine the economic, social and political development of a nation. Secondly, it examines the main objectives of research to find out the truth, which is hidden, and which has not yet discovered. Thirdly, research being a fact-finding inquiry, the paper underscores certain characteristics of its own. Fourth, the paper categorizes research into natural and human sciences. And finally, the study deliberates in its presentation the typology of research studies used in the discipline of Political Science based on their intended aims and anticipated results.

Keywords: *Observation, Prediction, Explanation, Qualitative, Quantitative Research*

Introduction

A logical and methodical quest for fresh and practical information on a certain subject is called research. A pursuit for knowledge is also commonly referred to as research. Research can also be described as a methodical, scientific search for relevant data on a certain subject. Research is actually an art form of scientific inquiry. "Research is defined by the dictionary as a thorough investigation or inquiry, particularly via the pursuit of novel information in any

field of knowledge" (Kothari & Garg, 2019, p. 1). Research is viewed by some as a progression from the known to the unknown. It is, in fact, a voyage of discovery. The essential instinct of curiosity is present in all of us. Our curiosity forces us to delve deeper and gain better knowledge of the unfamiliar when it confronts us. This curiosity is the source of all knowledge, and the process one uses to learn about anything unknown is referred to as study (Kothari & Garg, 2019, p. 1). In the popular nursery rhyme

"Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

How I Wonder What You Are"

The terms "how" and "what" are used in this rhyme to basically sum up what research is. It is an inquiry into using unbiased, methodical analysis to find answers to social and scientific issues. Finding hidden facts is the result of a quest for knowledge. Knowledge in this context refers to information about things. The data may be gathered from a variety of sources, including human experience, literature, journals, nature, and other sources. Research can result in fresh insights into the body of knowledge. Progress in a field can only be achieved via research. In fact, research is civilization and shapes a country's political, social, and economic growth. The findings of scientific study frequently compel a shift in the philosophical perspective on issues that go well beyond the narrow purview of science.

Science and technology are not the only fields that conduct research. Other fields of study include languages, literature, history, political science, sociology, and many more. Research must be an active, thorough, and methodical process of inquiry regardless of the topic in order to find, analyse, or modify facts, events, behaviours, and hypotheses. Research and development also includes the use of research findings to improve human life quality or to advance knowledge in other fields.

Studies, experiments, observations, analysis, comparisons, and reasoning are all used in research. In actuality, research is everywhere. We know, for instance, that smoking cigarettes is bad for health, that heroin is addictive, that cow dung is a good source of biogas, that the virus protozoan plasmodium causes malaria, and that the virus HIV (Human Immuno Deficiency Virus) causes AIDS (Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome). How did we find out about all of

these? Only via investigation were all of these facts learnt. More specifically, it looks for hypotheses, correlations, explanations, and predictions about events (Pani, 2015, p. VI).

In reality, research is the process of coming up with a reliable answer to an issue by carefully and methodically gathering, analysing, and interpreting data. The most crucial method for expanding knowledge, fostering advancement, and helping people better relate to their surroundings in order to fulfill their goals and resolve problems is research. It is among the best methods for resolving issues, but it is not the only one. Thus, research is a process in which an individual repeatedly observes a phenomenon, gathers data, and then makes certain conclusions based on the findings. Finding answers to unexplained occurrences is the goal of research in order to dispel skepticism and rectify misinformation. Put simply, it refers to the pursuit of information, answers, and solutions to issues.

As a result, research adds something new to the body of knowledge, which advances it further. It is enough to say that research is an effort to find the truth by using techniques like experimentation, comparison, study, and observation. In summary, research is the pursuit of knowledge through methodical, objective approaches to problem-solving (Pani, 2015, p. 4).

Understanding the Concept of Research

The term 'research' is frequently used in academic contexts. Depending on the context, it can signify different things to different people. An examination of these various nuances of the word 'research' would be quite instructive. Nowadays, individuals look up information and data about whatever they are interested in on the internet. This activity is occasionally called research (Kevin, 2021, p. 3).

The terms "re" and "search," which stand for "to search again" or "a rigorous examination to re-understand or re-examine the facts, or to search for new facts or change previous ones in any discipline of study, are the two words that make up the word 'research'" (Verma & Verma, 1989, p. 1). Simply said, research is any intellectual examination conducted in an effort to find facts, truths, or certainties. Research is also a systematic endeavour to learn new things. Research begins whenever conventional theory is deemed insufficient to account for the facts that are currently occurring. Old theories are either

refuted, modified, or new hypotheses are proposed by research. As a result, it implies an ongoing quest for information and comprehension (Pani, 2015, p. 1).

Research, then, is a methodical, scientific, and analytical approach to the systematic search for new knowledge in any field of study. The guiding elements of research that aid in the discovery of new facts are ongoing search and investigation. The pursuit of new information also aids in the acceptance, rejection, and modification of information already found in the literature. To the average person, the term "research" connotes a thorough examination of a topic, particularly with the goal of finding (new) information. Few others see it as a search for something fresh (Sarangi, 2010, p. 8).

While social research focusses on societal issues, physical sciences deal with things or objects that may be tested in a lab setting under controlled circumstances. While the social sciences do not deal with physical events that are entirely under human control, the physical sciences do. Social science research is skewed towards human conduct, which is impacted by a wide range of factors, including social, psychological, economic, physical, and temperamental. Testing such human beings in a lab is something we can never hope to do. Even if that were done, their reactions would be influenced by the unnatural circumstances and would not be natural (Verma & Verma, 1989, p. 3).

In its broadest sense, 'Research' refers to a determined and thorough effort to learn about and comprehend social and physical processes. It is an endeavour to establish facts or principles in a manner that is scientific. It is an approach to the scientific finding of true values. One way to define it would be the use of the scientific approach to analyse difficulties (Pani, 2015, p. 31).

Defining the Concept of Research

Numerous definitions of research can be found in relevant literature on research. Here are some quotes from renowned academics who have defined research in ways that are widely accepted:

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines the research as "a careful investigation or inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge" (Sarangi, 2010, p. 8). In the words of Clifford Woody, "research is a careful inquiry or examination in seeking facts or principles, a diligent investigation to ascertain something" (Sarangi, 2010, p. 8). Webster's Twentieth

Century Dictionary defines the term "'Research' as a careful, patient, systematic, diligent inquiry or examination in some field of knowledge undertaken to establish facts or principles" (Pani, 2015, p. 31). The Chambers Universal Learners' Dictionary defines it is "a close and careful (usually scientific) study to (try to) find out (new) facts or information" (Kevin, 2021, p. 3). Nicholas Walliman states "research is a term used liberally for any kind of investigation that is intended to uncover interesting or new facts" (Kevin, 2021, p. 3). C.R. Kothari states that "the search for knowledge through objective and systematic method of finding solution to a problem is research" (p. 1).

It is clear from the previous definition of research that it is essentially a search for knowledge. However, in scholarly discourse, the term 'research' does not relate to a straightforward search; rather, it denotes a scientific search employing methodical procedures, methods, and techniques with the overarching goals of characterizing, elucidating, forecasting, and managing the study's subject matter. Therefore, it is a methodical process of determining a problem or question, then formulating a plan of action to address the issue or provide an answer by carefully gathering, evaluating, and interpreting evidence for the goal. An expansion of current knowledge involving a shift from the known to the unknown as uncovered by the inquiry is the result of this scientific search.

Objectives of Research

The goal of research is to use scientific methods to find answers to questions. The primary goal of research is to uncover the hidden truth that hasn't been found yet. Thus, research also has certain fundamental goals. The following are some significant research goals:

1. Helps to explore and understand human behaviour

Every human being behaves differently. The hardest thing in society to forecast is human psychology. In their behaviour, there are always variations. Therefore, an understanding of human behaviour is necessary to maintain stability and equilibrium. Thus, research aids in the investigation and comprehension of social life and human behaviour.

2. Helps in portraying accuracy

Research aids in accurately illustrating the traits of a specific person, circumstance, or group within a community or organization and helps create

growth strategies.

3. Helps to extend, correct or verify knowledge

The human test for a given good is constantly evolving. As a result, human nature is to constantly seek for new things. Therefore, research aids in the extension, correction, or verification of knowledge that is either unknown or hidden.

4. Provides explanations

A variety of answers for social phenomena were discovered that could not be described through the investigation.

5. Predicts frequency

It aids in forecasting how frequently a given event will occur or how it will be connected to another event.

6. Provides new insights

New understandings of organised society and its social systems are brought about via research.

7. Tests existing theories

Additionally, studies evaluate or refute preexisting theories and update them in light of new data. Thus, new hypotheses are created, changed, or tested in addition to the current theories.

8. Understands the organizational and social contexts

Research also aims to comprehend social life, the environment, decision-making process, organisational culture, etc., in order to better manage human conduct in social and organisational situations (Sarangi, 2010, p. 10).

Purposes of Research

Research in whatever field of inquiry has four purposes, i.e., describing, explaining and predicting phenomena and ultimately controlling events as follows:

Describing and Explaining

This is an effort to comprehend the world in which we live. Acquiring knowledge, establishing facts, and creating new techniques are the goals of research. This

understanding is demonstrated by the ideas that have been produced and how well they describe the world we live in.

Prediction

In the context of research, predictions are typically expressed as hypotheses, which are precise, unambiguous claims that are open to scientific confirmation or denial. Depending on whether the hypotheses are accepted or rejected, we might formulate theories or generalisations about different scenarios. Given these circumstances, we can say that this is likely to occur.

Control

This comes from what we know and the fact that theories have been successfully verified. Control is an example of how research may be used to address actual issues and circumstances, enabling us to influence our surroundings. Understanding how variables relate to one another allows us to manipulate our surroundings to our advantage. Research on effective strategies to address indiscipline in schools can serve as an example of this. Once the best tactics have been found, they can be used to lower the rate of indiscipline in schools and raise student accomplishment (Majhi & Khatua, 2013, p. 3).

Characteristics of Research

As a fact-finding investigation, research has unique qualities. Crucial aspects of research are given below:

1. A scientific program is research. It explains the cause-and-effect relationship. The goal of research is to find a solution to an issue or provide an answer to a query.

2. The development of generalization of ideas or principles that aid in prediction is the focus of research.

3. Empirical data or observable experiences serve as the foundation for research.

4. Research necessitates precise description and study.

5. New information is gathered from primary or secondary sources as part of research. If at all possible, research aims to collect original quantitative data and translate it into numerical measures.

6. Research necessitates in-depth understanding of the topic.

7. Research should be rational and objective, using all available tests to confirm the information gathered and the methods used.

8. Research is meticulously documented and shared.

9. Research is an activity that requires patience and is not rushed. Personal sentiments and preferences are consistently avoided by researchers.

10. When research yields controversial findings that face social criticism, it might occasionally take guts.

11. Research has accelerated the rate of progress and is a means of achieving it.

12. The man's problems led to the creation of research. Therefore, helping people is the goal of the research (Verma & Verma, 1989, p. 2).

Classification of Research

Two major categories can be used to classify research:

1. Research in Physical or Natural Sciences.

2. Research in Social or Human Sciences.

While social research focuses on societal issues, physical sciences involve private objects or things that may be tested in a lab setting under controlled conditions. The physical sciences study things that are entirely under human control, whereas the social sciences don't.

Social scientists tend to focus on human behaviour which is impacted by a wide range of elements including economic, psychological, social, physical, and temperamental. It is impossible to test such human beings in a lab. Their reactions would not be natural even if it were done; instead, they would be aware of the contrived circumstances (Verma & Verma, 1989, p. 3).

Typology of Research Studies Used in Political Science

Research is a general phrase for a scientific investigation of an issue. Based on their intended aim and anticipated results, research studies are divided into various types. Research studies in political science are often categorized as follows:

a. Descriptive vs. Analytical Studies,

b. Applied vs. Fundamental Studies,

c. Quantitative vs. Qualitative Studies,

d. Conceptual vs. Empirical Studies.

Descriptive vs. Analytical Studies

The researcher's goal in descriptive studies is to measure, observe, and comprehend social events as they actually occur. To get the necessary data, descriptive studies employ surveys and fact-finding investigations. Such research results in a description of social reality as it is now or was in the past. Examples of descriptive research include examinations of a group's demographics or socioeconomic circumstances, consumer preferences and purchasing patterns for particular goods, etc. The results of descriptive studies serve as valuable starting points for additional research or initiatives (Kevin, 2021, p. 11). In political science, a descriptive study might be a survey that gathers information on people's attitudes and beliefs through questionnaires in order to determine the current public opinion on a proposed policy change, such as calculating the proportion of citizens who support or oppose a new environmental regulation. Analysing voting trends in a given area, such as looking at the demographics of voters in a state to find trends in voting behaviour based on variables like age, income, and party affiliation, is another example of a descriptive study in political science.

The scope of analytical research extends beyond the simple description of various phenomena. Analysing the connections between the variables in the study is its main goal. It also explores and attempts to explain the causes that underlie the occurrences being studied. It is not just descriptive of the things under study; it is explanatory in character. Using statistical analysis to determine which factors most significantly influence voter participation, an example of an analytical study in political science research methods would be analysing the effects of various campaign strategies on voter turnout in a particular election. This study would entail deconstructing complex data in order to comprehend the causal relationships between campaign strategies and voter behaviour.

Applied vs. Fundamental Studies

Applied research is a type of study that looks for a solution or response to a real-world issue or query. A non-systematic approach to addressing particular

research challenges or difficulties is called applied research. These concerns may pertain to individuals, groups, or society as a whole. The reason it is referred to as "non-systematic" is that it jumps right into solving problems. Because it employs the existing scientific instruments to uncover solutions, it is frequently referred to as a "scientific process." The researcher identifies the issue, formulates a hypothesis, and then conducts experiments to test it, much like in conventional research. It delves further into the results of genuine or fundamental research. The researcher employs both qualitative and quantitative techniques including questionnaires, interviews, and observation techniques, to gather data for the applicable study. Applied research techniques help solve particular issues or provide answers to specific queries. It is based on solutions. An illustration of this would be low employee motivation within a company or sector. This is a real-world issue that a researcher can examine and ultimately resolve. Practical solutions to current issues are necessary for applied research. Action research is another name for this type of study (Kevin, 2021, p. 11).

Deriving generalisations from the study to support theory formulation is the main goal of fundamental research, often known as "pure" or "basic" research. The main tenets of theories in the subject are typically the findings of basic research studies, which have a wider range of applications. An example of fundamental research is the study of human behaviour to determine the reasons underlying particular behaviours. Fundamental research, as contrast to applied research, attempts to provide knowledge that will broaden scientific understanding without any particular or focused goals. This kind of study is carried out by researchers in an effort to advance our understanding of fundamental scientific concepts. Forming an idea or phenomena in scientific theory is the goal of fundamental study, which is more akin to pure curiosity. An examination of how various voting systems (such as proportional representation versus first-past-the-post) affect the degree of political participation in different nations could be a foundational study in political science research methods. The goal would be to comprehend the underlying mechanisms and causal relationships between electoral systems and citizen engagement without focusing specifically on the policy implications in a given context. The main objective is not always to address a particular policy issue in a certain nation, but rather to advance a more comprehensive understanding of the connection between voting systems and political involvement. In order to find trends and evaluate theoretical

claims, this study would probably compare data from several nations with various voting systems. To test theories regarding the effects of voting systems, the researcher may employ statistical analysis of survey data on political engagement and voter turnout in various nations.

Quantitative vs. Qualitative Studies

Studies that employ quantitative data gathered from secondary sources or primary data gathered and represented numerically are known as quantitative studies. Quantitative studies use statistical tools for data analysis since they deal with numerical data (Kevin, 2021, p. 11). In political science, a quantitative study might be a study that examines the relationship between demographic characteristics such as age, income, and educational attainment and election turnout by using a large-scale survey with closed-ended questions that enables statistical analysis of the numerical data gathered

Qualitative research focuses on qualitative occurrences that are not quantified but rather described through written language. For qualitative research, traditional statistical data analysis tools are useless. New analytical techniques that are appropriate for qualitative research are being developed and tested. In-depth interviews with activists from a particular political movement to learn about their motivations, experiences, and viewpoints on the movement's objectives would be a good example of a qualitative study in political science research. This would provide rich, detailed insights into their political behaviour and the underlying causes of their actions. Analyzing the political dynamics and decision-making procedures inside a single nation or region in order to comprehend a particular political phenomenon is another example of a qualitative study in political science.

Conceptual vs. Empirical Studies

Important ideas that explain the connections between various concepts are part of scientific knowledge about a subject. Based on the information pertinent to the theories, conceptual studies focus on defining and improving the concepts included in such theories. Without necessarily gathering empirical data on particular cases, a political science conceptual study could analyse various theoretical definitions, historical interpretations, and modern applications of the concept of "democracy" in different nations. This would essentially explore

the concept's complexities and nuances while focusing on how the idea is understood and applied in various political contexts.

Research studies that concentrate on experience, observation, and experiments pertaining to social issues are known as empirical studies. When conducting such investigations, the researcher begins by formulating a working hypothesis regarding the study's potential conclusion. To evaluate the validity of the hypothesis, facts or data pertaining to the research problem are gathered through surveys, experiments, or observation. Empirical research is used to draw broad findings that attempt to explain the current state of social reality. Conducting a survey of voters in a particular area to examine the relationship between their educational attainment and their preference for a particular political party is an example of an empirical study in political science research methods; this entails gathering quantitative data via surveys to test a hypothesis regarding the relationship between these variables (Kevin, 2021, p. 12).

Apart from these typical research study categories, there are other kinds of studies that are periodically employed depending on particular needs, like historical studies, case studies, simulation studies, etc. (Kevin, 2021, p. 12).

Conclusion

From the above analysis we can conclude that social sciences constitute a distinct academic discipline which deals with different aspects of human behavior. It is an important academic discipline which has evolved a research methodology suitable for the specific features of social sciences including political science. Research is a scientific study about a specific problem which has economic, social and political relevance. The diverse methods used in the research study are collectively called research methods, while the prescription of the suitable method of conducting scientific research is known as research methodology. The purpose of research and the materials to be used in the study determine the type of study to be followed. Research studies which is being used in political science have been classified into different categories as descriptive vs. analytical, applied vs. fundamental, quantitative vs. qualitative and conceptual vs. empirical. Different research studies used in political science are significant because they provide a systematic way to understand political phenomena, analyze political behavior, institutions, and policies through empirical evidence, allowing researchers to develop theories that explain how political systems

operate, ultimately informing public policy, enhancing democratic governance, and fostering civic engagement.

We can infer from the aforementioned analysis that the social sciences are a separate academic field that examine various facets of human behaviour. It is a significant academic field that has developed a research approach appropriate for the unique characteristics of social sciences, such as political science. A scientific investigation of a particular issue with economic, social, and political implications is called research. Research methodology is the recommendation of the best way to carry out scientific research, whereas research methods are the various approaches employed in the study taken together. The type of study to be conducted depends on the goal of the research and the materials to be employed. Political science research studies are divided into several kinds, including conceptual versus empirical, applied versus basic, quantitative versus qualitative, and descriptive versus analytical. Different political science research studies are important because they offer a methodical approach to comprehend political phenomena, analyse political behaviour, institutions, and policies using empirical data, and enable researchers to formulate theories that explain the workings of political systems. These theories then inform public policy, strengthen democratic governance, and promote civic engagement.

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