

RESEARCH DESIGN IN METHODOLOGY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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Abstract

There are different definitions of research design, but many authors consider it refers to the choice of specific methods of data collection. Besides, upon different criteria, there are various classifications of research design, such as explanatory, conclusive, theoretical or empirical, etc. For example, upon the function of research design, exploratory research aims to explore specific research area without providing final answers to research problems.

Research design has to identify the research problem in order to define subject of research, hypothesis, goals, as well as research methods – qualitative or quantitative. Different goals, such as description, explanation or prediction refer to level of scientific knowledge of research design. According that, we will choose qualitative or quantitative research methods.

The role of research design is to verify or to expand scientific knowledge in political science.

Keywords: research, research design, methodology of political science.

1 INTRODUCTION

In social, and especially in political science, there is a problem of defining many phenomena and processes. How to define research design, different approaches, or research problems and methods? The Methodology of political science provides answers to these questions. Besides, Methodology of political science develops, applies and verifies methods for acquiring scientific knowledge about political processes and researches.

2 TYPES OF RESEARCH DESIGNS

There are various classifications of research design, upon different criteria. Many authors consider that research design refers to the choice of specific methods of data collection. According to John W. Creswell, research designs are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research study (Creswell, 2014, pp. 10-12). Others argue it refers to the strategy which we choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring we will effectively address the research problem; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (De Vaus, 2001).

2.1. Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research designs

Creswell argue that upon methods approaches, there are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research designs. *Quantitative research designs* are experimental and survey research designs. Experimental research design is used to determine if a specific treatment influences an outcome. There is a test and a control group. Individuals are randomly assigned to those groups. Test group gets the treatment, and control group does not. Experiments include true experiments, with the random assignment of subjects to treatment conditions, and quasi-experiments which are designed like true experimental design, except that it does not use randomized sample groups. It is also used when a typical research design is not practicable. Secondly, survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. It includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection with the intent of generalizing from a sample to a population (Creswell, 2014). *Qualitative research designs* are exploratory in nature and seek to explore the outcome and to answer the questions what and how. The most used qualitative research designs are narrative research and case study. Case studies are a design with aim to understand a single process, program, leader, individual, organization, or activity by collecting a variety of material in a specific time period. It is also used for historical studies, when collecting historical data. Secondly, narrative research is a design of inquiry from the humanities in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives (Riessman, 2008). This information is then often retold or restoried by the researcher into a narrative chronology. Often, in the end, the narrative combines views from the participant's life with those of the researcher's life in a collaborative narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). And *mixed research designs* involve combining or integration of qualitative and quantitative research and data in a research study. Qualitative data tends to be open-ended without predetermined responses while quantitative data usually includes closed-ended responses such as found on questionnaires or psychological instruments. For example, explanatory sequential mixed methods is one in which the researcher first conducts quantitative research, analyzes the results and then to explain them in more detail with qualitative research. It is considered explanatory because the initial quantitative data results are explained further with the qualitative data. It is considered sequential because the initial quantitative phase is followed by the qualitative phase.

2.2. Exploratory or conclusive design

Upon the function of research design, some authors consider design as the choice between exploratory and conclusive. Exploratory research, according to its name, aims to explore specific aspects of research area without providing final answers to research problem. Conclusive research design can be divided into descriptive and causal. Descriptive research design usually describes causes, or specific elements of the phenomena in the research area. It is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena. Second, causal research design has to find out cause-and-effect relationships, usually in the form, "If X, then Y". Also, it is used to measure what impact a specific change will have on existing theories, norms and assumptions, as well as to seek causal explanations that reflect tests of hypotheses.

3. DEVELOPING RESEARCH DESIGN

Although the length and complexity of research design may vary considerably, any well-developed design will achieve the following:

3.1. Identify the research problem

It is necessary to identify research problem clearly and justify its selection in certain research area. Also, the problem could indicate a deficiency in the literature, or to resolve differences among research studies. Besides, it has to indicate the significance of the study in political science. For example, if we have to conduct research regarding certain political party in one country, to address this problem, the significance will refer to increase scientific knowledge in that area.

3.2. Research approaches, literature and theories

First, we have to select a research approach such as quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches. Often the distinction between qualitative research and quantitative research is framed in terms of using words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative), or using closed-ended questions (quantitative hypotheses) rather than open-ended questions (qualitative interview questions). Instead of terms paradigms, epistemologies and ontologies, Creswell and other authors use the term approach or worldview to address different philosophical orientation in the research, such as postpositivism, constructivism, transformative, and

pragmatism (Creswell, 2014, pp. 36). For example, the postpositivist approach comes from 19th-century writers, such as Comte, Durkheim and Mill and more recently from writers such as Phillips and Burbules (2000). Postpositivists argue that causes determine effects or outcomes. Thus, the problems studied by postpositivists reflect the need to identify and assess the causes that influence outcomes, and the knowledge is based on careful observation and measurement of the objective reality that exists in the world. Secondly, we have to review and synthesize previously published literature associated with the research problem. It is important to extensively review the literature on your topic before you design your proposal. And, then we can use the theory regarding the three approaches. In quantitative research, it provides a proposed explanation for the relationship among variables being tested by the investigator. In qualitative research, they may often serve as a lens for the inquiry or they may be generated during the study. In mixed methods studies, researchers employ them in many ways, including those associated with quantitative and qualitative approaches. It is also called subject of research, where theoretical framework reflects to approaches and the latest knowledges regarding our research. The theoretical framework represents the conceptual foundation of our study. Therefore, our research design should include an explicit set of logically derived hypotheses, basic postulates, or assumptions that can be tested in relation to the research problem.

3.3. Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a proposition in testable form and predicts a particular relationship between two or more variables. Also, it is crucial those hypotheses are related to existing knowledge. (Termiz, Arezina, 2015, pp. 35). Hypothesis shows a clear statement. It has to enhance the objectivity and purpose of a research work, and if we formulate a hypothesis that cannot be verified, it will lead to nowhere.

3.4. Goals of research

There are several goals of research design, such as description, classification, explanation, discovery and prediction. Which goal we will use, it depends on level of scientific knowledge. If a phenomena or process has not studied entirely, we will use description or classification to describe and classify that phenomena or process. But, if we need to extent our scientific knowledge, we have to use explanation for cause-and-effect relationships, or discovery if we reach new knowledge, and even prediction to predict future trends of certain phenomena or process.

3.5. Research methods

Specific research methods involve the forms of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Regarding research design, methods may be qualitative, quantitative, and mixed. Qualitative methods (narrative research and case study) are chosen when the goal of the research problem is to examine, understand and describe a phenomenon. These methods also refers to research problems in political science and are often used to study ideas, beliefs, human behaviors and other research questions that do not involve studying the relationship between variables. Quantitative methods (experimental and survey) are used to examine the relationship between variables with the primary goal being to analyze and represent that relationship mathematically through statistical analysis (Jackson, 2015, pp. 260). This is the type of research approach most commonly used in scientific research problems. But, in political sciences the most used are mixed methods.

3.6. Contribution of research

Contribution can be divided into scientific and social. Scientific contribution may defer whether research design will contribute in developing new methods or scientific knowledge or to verify the existed methods and scientific knowledge. Therefore, the role of research design is to verify or to expand scientific knowledge in political science. Also, social contribution refers to application of the research or solving certain social or political issues.

4. CONCLUSION

Although there are various classifications of research design, it is essential for conducting research in social and political sciences. Any well-developed design will achieve to identify the research problem from a certain research area, then research approaches, literature and theories, hypothesis, goals of research, research methods and contribution of research. If we select a research approach such as quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches, it will determine our research goals and methods. Usually the distinction between qualitative research and quantitative research is framed in terms of using words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative), or using closed-ended questions (quantitative hypotheses) rather than open-ended questions (qualitative interview questions). The theoretical framework represents the conceptual

foundation of our study. Therefore, our research design should include an explicit set of logically derived hypotheses, basic postulates, or assumptions that can be tested in relation to the research problem. Goals of research design, such as description, classification, explanation, discovery and prediction are necessary to determine the level of scientific knowledge. If a phenomena or process has not studied entirely, we will use description, but if we have to extent the existed knowledge, we have to use explanation or even prediction to predict future trends of certain phenomena or process. Regarding research design, methods may be qualitative, quantitative, and mixed. Qualitative methods (narrative research and case study) are chosen when the goal of the research problem is to examine, understand and describe a phenomenon. Quantitative methods (experimental and survey) are used to examine the relationship between variables with the primary goal being to analyze and represent that relationship mathematically through statistical analysis, but in political sciences the most used are mixed methods. Also, scientific contribution of the research design is to verify or to expand scientific knowledge in political science. The social contribution refers to application of the research or solving certain social or political issues. It is essential to support teaching in order to develop methods and research design in the methodology of political science.

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