

Chapter 20

Research Design and Methodology

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents the research design methodology. It outlines the research process and the philosophical underpinning for this research. It has set out the research problem under investigation and mapped out the various steps that were undertaken. This research adopted a mixed research method approach as the most appropriate and a survey was the most effective instrument in addressing this enquiry of SPP. The philosophical position adopted within this study was one of the pragmatists, which has the capacity to hold different world views and not be constrained by one specific philosophical position. Pragmatists are not committed to one system of philosophy and reality, and researchers are free to choose the methods, techniques, and processes that have the best fit to meet the needs of the research.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research design methodology. It outlines the research process, and the philosophical underpinning for this research. It has set out the research problem under investigation; mapping out the various steps that were undertake. This research adopted a mixed research method approach as the most appropriate and a survey was the most effective instrument in addressing this enquiry of SPP.

The philosophical position adopted within this study, was one of the pragmatists, which has the capacity to hold different world views and not be constrained by one specific philosophical position. According to Creswell (2003:12), pragmatists are not committed to “one system of philosophy and reality”, and researchers are free to choose the methods, techniques and processes which have the best fit to meet the needs of the research. This book required the researcher to collect and analyse data from multiple sources and in different ways, to supports the pragmatist philosophical perspective and as such was the most appropriate fit for the investigation.

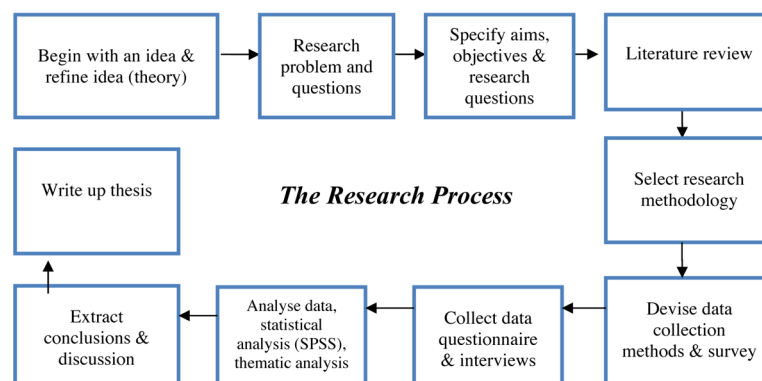
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4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The data collection and analysis methods will be underpinned by the overall research design, as it forms the basis for the direction of the research activities and data collection. According to Churchill (1976), research design is simply the framework or plan for a study used as a guide in collecting and analysing data. Churchill describes research designs as a “blueprint” (1976:98), whereby having a framework will ensure that the research is relevant and enables the researcher to meet the objectives in the most efficient and economical manner. Research design is about organising research activities, including the collection of data in a way that is most likely to achieve the research objectives (Easterby-Smith et al., 2010). The type of research and the data collection methods used will be determined by the area of research under investigation, and the data collection methods used will be aligned to meet the research objectives. Once the research problem has been defined and clearly specified, the research effort will logically turn to data collection and subsequently analysis and interpretation (Churchill, 1976) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The research process framework

Source: author.



4.3 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

This section will provide the philosophical position underpinning the research. The philosophical position which a researcher adopts provides the framework and direction for the study (Creswell, 2007; Saunders et al., 2007; Quinlan, 2011). Researchers who do not consider philosophical questions within their research design may find this has a serious adverse effect on the quality of their research (Easterby-Smith et al., 2010).

Fundamentally, the researcher’s philosophical perspective will reinforce and guide the direction of the research, ensuring that there is clarity and capacity to answer the research questions. According to Quinlan (2011:95), “the research methodology must be appropriate for the research project”; it must fit with the research project in terms of context, content and philosophical presupposition. The suggestion here is that there must be consistency between the philosophical perspective and the strategy which is employed. The choices about which method is used will impact and determine how the data is collected, analysed and interpreted. The most appropriate method must be used in order to answer the

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