

BEING THE GENERAL REPORT OF THE TWO-DAY METHODOLOGY WORKSHOP FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES, A PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES, HELD BETWEEN 31ST JULY AND 1ST AUGUST, 2023.

DAY 1 (31st July, 2023)

At exactly 8:45am, the opening remark was delivered by Prof Olayode, the Principal Investigator for the programme. He welcomed participants and led the introduction of the participants. His opening address was centred on explaining the objectives of the programme. He emphasized on the nature of the 3-year multilateral programme as a policy and academic oriented project with an aspect of the project covering media engagement. As observed, the core objectives of the project are: to broaden knowledge on scientific research method, nature and scope; identify basic types of research in social sciences; to clarify the discernible differences between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.

As part of the two-in-one presentation made by the Principal Investigator, Prof Olayode, a bird-view of research and research methodology was undertaken. This was prefaced with identify the core reasons for research with emphasis made on the following: the need for satisfaction of man's inherent curiosity; revelation of mysteries of the universe; to improve knowledge; and to find solutions to certain fundamental problems and gaps in knowledge. As such, research is said to be characterized by its systematic style, logicity, action-driven, evidence-based, edification of existing knowledge, and creating a new knowledge that challenges existing knowledge. The closing part of his presentation rests on the identification of research processes starting with its most crucial factor, identification of research problem, and to definition of objectives, research questions and hypothesis, review of literatures, core authors as well as appropriate research methodology.

2ND PRESENTATION

MIXED METHOD IN RESEARCH

(BY DR TAIWO AGBALAJOBI, HOD, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE)

As observed by Dr Agbalajobi, mixed method combines multiple viewpoints and approaches, ranging from data, methods and theories. This, according to Dr Agbalajobi, is often described as 'Triangulation' which is the combination of multiple methods. Listed and examined by the speaker are the types of triangulation. Data triangulation deals with the use of multiple data; Investigator Triangulation, using different researchers; Theory triangulation, use of multiple theories; and Methodological triangulation, dealing with the use of many methods.

Effort was made also to consider the reasons for triangulation. One of these is to have a nuanced understanding of a research problem. To help explore research problems that only one research approach will not be satisfactorily solved. The use of triangulation helps to compliment and validate the findings of one research approach. Also, mixed method helps to get a credible outcome/results integrity of findings. It helps to illustrate quantitative findings and enhance the usefulness of research findings to practitioners and opinion leaders.

The typologies of mixed method research out-listed include: convergent parallel design, exploratory sequential data design, embedded design, hybrid, and inductive-simultaneous design.

The speaker also discussed cultural factor and mixed method approach. That researchers must be sensitive to cultural values of a concerned community or areas where primary data would be sourced. Local cultures influence the quality of research findings. This is why researchers conducting a local or community research must work in accordance with the ethics of his research, and the community. While mixed method can help to understand every phenomenon, researchers must be sensitive to issues and challenges that are capable of distorting the outcome. Probing questions were raised by participants while the speakers addressed them hand-in-hand with opinions from other facilitators.

3RD PRESENTATION

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION METHOD

(BY DR AMOS OYEDOKUN)

According to Dr Amos, quantitative research data deals with the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in an established systematic fashion that enables one to provide answers to the stated research questions, test hypothesis and evaluate outcomes. The data collection is done through the use of certain instrument. Qualitative data, according to the speaker, is numerical in nature and can be mathematically expressed. The data collection relies heavily on random sampling and structured data collection instrument that fit diverse experiences into predetermined response categories. They provide results that are easy to summarize, compare and generalize. Dr Amos established that typical quantitative research data strategies include: experimental clinical trials, observation and recording of well-defined events, obtaining relevant data from management information system, administration of surveys with close-ended questions, and structured interviews.

Data analysis is considered a complex process that involves moving back and forth; between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts; between inductive and deductive reasonings, and between descriptive and Interpretations. It is simply described as the process of making meaning from the data. Factors that the researcher should take note in the course of the research effort, as outlined by the speaker are; clear description of data; identification of what is typical and atypical among the data; keeping eye on the main goal, data presentation, and engagement with the rigorous analysis. All these require that researchers should think about analysis EARLY, starting with a definitive plan, coding and clear interpretation.

Questions and answers were observed as participants shared their experiences and practical issues that can be related to the facilitator's lecture. The lecture was ended at exactly 3:00pm, with lunch time observed thereafter.

DAY 2 OF THE SEMINAR

The seminar was declared open at around 9:00pm with opening address by Dr Wale Olusola. The welcome address was mixed with a recap of the activities and lectures papers presented on the first day of the seminar. Thereafter, the first lecture was anchored by Prof Olayode on Post-

conflict Research, Scope, Resources and Challenges. The lecture, which he described as the most important of the seminar lectures of the day, was prefaced with the definition of key characteristics of post-conflict studies that inform research. He characterized the project as a subset of peace studies. The project which is themed "Capacity Building in Post-conflict Society" presents opportunities to launch sustainable peace processes by political instability, leadership and management deficit, civil strife and abject poverty. Peace research has become a prominent component of any strategy for understanding and promoting peace, security and sustainable development. Due to the fact that the challenges of peace and security undergo continuous changes, the knowledge required for comprehension and response to the persistence of violent conflict demands clear-sighted research.

Furthering this, Prof Olayode discussed the analytical framework of peace studies. The project is said to have been informed by the concept of 'blockages' to peace and development as an analytical tool to understand post-conflict violence as an obstacle to sustainable development and peace.

Project Goal/Specific Objectives

The general objective of the research support is geared towards understanding blockages to peace and specifically focuses on:

- Understanding why effective accountable and inclusive institutions have not been built in conflict-affected or post-conflict societies
- Understanding the dynamics of blockages to peace construction with a primary focus on factors, actors, internal and external dynamics, including the reasons for not implementing peace deals
- Examining factors that hinder peace at the local, national and regional levels.
- Establishing a post-conflict studies network comprising of universities in the network.

On how to define a Post-conflict Environment, Prof Olayode made reference to Reyhler and Langer's note that "post-conflict" scenarios are often characterized by "multiple transition

processes," including the transition from war to peace, but also often accompanied by democratization, decentralization, and market liberalization. Transition from war to peace itself involves multiple processes such as 'conflict resolution, peace-building, peace-enforcement, demobilization, disarmament, resettlement, rehabilitation, reconciliation, reconstruction, institutional building, among others. The transformation of conflict-torn societies into peaceful, stable and more prosperous ones is an immensely complex task, often susceptible to contradictory pressures and concomitant risks of a relapse into violence. A more productive approach to conceptualizing the post.

Moreover, Prof Olayode examined the new challenges in Post-conflict environment and research agenda. Numbered among these are:

- Environment and Research Agenda
- General insecurity, internal displacement (NEMA, SEMA) Proliferation of small arms and light weapons, arms trafficking
- Emergence of war lords, demobilization, rehabilitation, reintegration
- Banditry, kidnapping for ransom, vandalization, sabotage, bunkering Sexual and gender-based violence, corruption
- Democratization/political transition/General Amnesty
- Institutional building/Reconstruction/ Infrastructural Development/Policy Reforms Reconciliation, Fact-finding (Truth & Reconciliation Commission/Oputa Panel)
- Unemployment, loss of income etc., and
- Pervasive SGBV, forced marriage of girls, abduction, out of school girls-Chibok etc.
- Proliferation of donor service agencies and challenges of coordination/duplication.

On the opportunities available under ARUA/UKRI project, Prof Olayode listed out the following: PhD Grants, Grants for Publication of Journal Articles/Policy Briefs Travelling Supports for Field Work (Collaborating Countries), Residence Scholarship (Publication inclusive), Data

collection/literature review at OAU Social Science Methodology Workshop/Training, Media Engagement, Stakeholders' Meeting/Validation, and Knowledge and information sharing (face to face/video conference)

2ND PRESENTATION

THE QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION, MANAGEMENT, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Dr Melvin described qualitative research as a type which focused on understanding and interpreting people's experiences, behaviours and perceptions. The qualitative data collection methods involve gathering non-numerical information and often use open-ended questions to explore participants' thoughts and feelings. Such non-numerical data can come in forms of images, observations, words, to understand individual's attitudes, behaviours, belief, and motivation in a specific context. The qualitative data collection methods include interviews, focused group discussion, observations, text analysis, video recording, etc.

On the question of interview as a qualitative method, Dr Melvin identified three main types, namely: Structured, Unstructured and Semi-structured. An extensive analysis of the three was done while also emphasizing the need for patience and active listening by researchers engaged in interviews. Structured interviews consist of predetermined (and usually closed) questions with little or no variation between interviewees. There is generally no scope for elaboration or follow-up questions, making them better suited to researching specific topics. Unstructured Interviews will often be based on a single question, with the interviewer and interviewee then shaping the conversation in real time, rather than following a prewritten schedule. This can be particularly suited to methods in which participants are being encouraged to tell a story of their life or experiences, such as narrative enquiry. For this reason, unstructured interviews are generally only used when little is known about the subject area or when in-depth responses are required on a particular subject.

Dr Melvin furthered his analysis by examining the core reasons why researchers mostly use interviews. One of these is that they allow researcher to collect highly personalized information

directly from the source. Also, they explore participants' opinions, motivations, beliefs, and experiences. Again, they are also particularly beneficial in gathering data on sensitive topics: participants are more likely to open up in a one-on-one setting than in a group environment

On the discussion of focus group discussion, keynotes from Dr Melvin are that:

Focus groups are most helpful in gathering data from a specific group of people, such as donors or clients from a particular demographic.

- The discussion should be focused on a specific topic and carefully guided and moderated by the researcher to determine participant views and the reasoning behind them.
- Feedback in a group setting often provides richer data than one-on-one interviews, as participants are generally more open to sharing when others are sharing too.
- Plus, input from one participant may spark insight from another that would not have come to light otherwise.
- Focus groups share much in common with less structured interviews.
- The key difference being that the goal is to collect data from several participants simultaneously.
- Focus groups are effective in gathering information based on collective views
- They are one of the most popular data collection instruments in qualitative research when a series of one-on-one interviews proves too time-consuming or difficult to schedule.

A broad overview of other outlined methods of qualitative research was done. This was followed by discussion of probing questions asked participants. Through this avenue, experiences were shared on the challenges, opportunities and issues with the use of qualitative research methods. The closing remark, which served as the epilogue to the 2-day seminar was done by Prof Olayode, the Principal Investigator. He encouraged participants and the general community of peace researchers to be innovative as they make endeavours to contribute to capacity building in the post-conflict environment. Certificates of participation and

acknowledge were distributed to participants. This was attended by refreshment for lunch. The seminar was declared closed at exactly 2:45pm.