

CHOICE OF RESEARCH DESIGN FOR TRADE UNIONS: REFLECTIONS ON ACTION RESEARCH

By

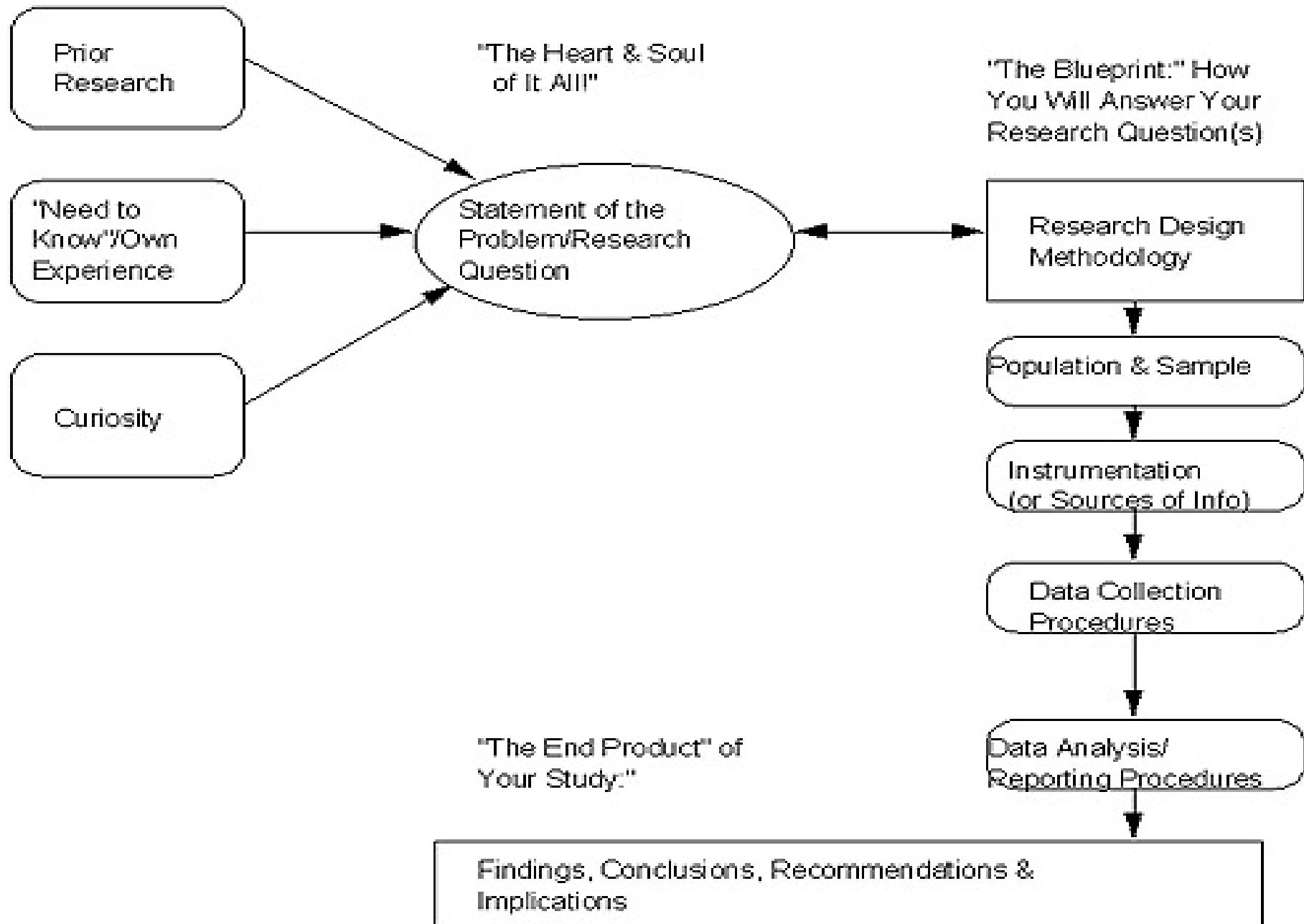
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Figure 1.

A Diagram of the Research Process

Sources of Research Ideas



RESEARCH PARADIGM

- **QUANTITATIVE**

- Objective explanation by statistical description & manipulation

- Highly structured instruments

- Statistical (random) samples

- **DESIGN: Survey, Experiments**

RESEARCH PARADIGM

- **QUALITATIVE**
 - Understanding of event or behaviour from actor's perspective
 - Less structured instruments
 - Convenience or purposive (non random) samples
- **DESIGN: Case study, historical, grounded theory.**

RESEARCH PARADIGM

– MIXED METHODS

- Integration of two methods problem definition, data collection, data analysis and interpretation and conclusions
- Sequential links of research design

Significance of Research Design

- Smooth & efficient sailing (sets boundaries & prevents blind search)
- Yields maximum information (avoids collection of unnecessary data)
- Costs least in terms of effort, time & money
- Maximizes reliability of results
- Provides firm foundation to the endeavour
- Averts misleading conclusions & thoughtless futile exercise
- Helps organising ones ideas

Significance of Research Design

- Gives chance to foresee flaws & inadequacies (anticipates problems)
- Incorporates by learning from others critical comments & evaluations
- Like a successful journey,
 - Broadens your mind
 - Gives fascinating & exciting experience
 - Gives insight into world around you
 - Provides opportunity to meet people
 - Gives fun and reward, but at times, very tedious & monotonous too

Relation among choice of Topic, Methods, Theoretical and Practical considerations

- **CHOICE OF TOPIC**
- **THEORETICAL PREFERENCE**
- **PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS**
- **RESEARCH METHODS**

Categorization of Research Design (Design Typology Criteria)

1.The degree of formulation of problem

- a. Exploratory
- b. Descriptive, Diagnostic, Analytical

2.The topical scope

- a. Historical study
- b. Survey
- c. Case study (History material), Accounts, Episodes, Story of experience
- d. Statistical study

Categorization of Research Design (Design Typology Criteria)

3.The search environment, i.e., the field or lab setting

- a. Field survey
- b. Lab experiment

4.The time dimension

- a. Cross Sectional (one time)
- b. Longitudinal, Trend, Developmental (Follow up or Cohort Studies)

5.The mode of data collection

- a. Survey
- b. Observational

Categorization of Research Design (Design Typology Criteria)

6. The manipulation of the variables under study

- a. Experimental (Hypothesis Testing)
- b. Ex post facto

7. The nature of the relationship among variables

- a. Causal/ Prediction
- b. . Descriptive/ Relational
 - (i) Association (ii) Correlation

Categorization of Research Design (Design Typology Criteria)

8a. Conceptual (Fundamental, Basic, Pure)

b. Empirical (Applied, Action)

9. a. Conclusion oriented b. Decision oriented

10. a. Qualitative b. Quantitative

Action Research Vs. Applied Research

Action Research:

- Scientific method is more loosely interpreted (flexibility & adaptability)
- Conditional & relaxed
- More extensive coverage
- Not keen on generalising

Action Research Vs. Applied Research

- ***Applied research***
 - Focus on establishing relationship
 - Rigorous
 - Involves large number of cases
 - As much control as possible over variables
 - Precise sampling technique
 - Generalizes its finding

Action Research...

- **Action Research is a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention**
- **FEATURES:**
- **1.Situational (i.e., specific context)**
- **2.Collaborative & Co-operative (teams of researchers and practitioners)**
- **3.Participatory (involves direct or indirect implementation)**
- **4.Self-evaluative (within the ongoing situation)**

What is Action Research?

- Action research, according to a description by Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 108) is “a type of applied research that focuses on finding a solution to a local problem in a local setting”.
- By applied research, they mean a “project which can inform human decision making about practical problems” (Leedy and Ormrod 2005: 43).

What is Action Research?

- Action research design was perceived as best suited for type of investigation where the researcher worked in the place of research, aimed at improving or changing and understanding work processes (McClure, 1989; Zuber-Skerritt and Fletcher, 2007).
- According to Gray (2004: 26), “action research involves
- close collaboration between researcher and practitioners and places an emphasis on promoting change in an organization”.
- Zuber-Skerritt and Perry (2002) have done some studies on the concept of action research and come up with the model that is represented in the next Figure

