

Problems of Social Research in Nigeria

Chukwu Ngozi¹ Ebue Malachy¹ Obikeguna Christy¹ Arionu Ngozi² Agbawodikeizu Patricia¹
Agwu Prince^{1*}

1. Department of Social Work, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
2. Department of Sociology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Abstract

The quest for knowledge is a germane task in an ever increasing changing world from the rear to the fore; from basic to advance and from spatial to a global village. Hence, survival in a world of such dynamism can only be tenable through positive adaptation which is a product of epistemological and ontological truths. Achieving this brings research to bear which is aimed at digging up knowledge for personal and public consumption, while seeking remedy to problems. Research as a factor of discovery and rediscovery of knowledge becomes a relevant ingredient for personal, organizational and national development. A branch of research that explores, explains and describes human behaviorisms and interactions and their consequences on human existence and activities, is the social research. Complexities of human dynamism and several other individual and structural factors often constitute several problems in the execution of the social research venture. It is in this regard that this paper seeks to identify, justify and explain most of these problems plaguing the survival and astuteness of social research and where necessary, make remedial suggestions. The paper would depend on concept-mapping in explaining units of knowledge that make up this work; provide for a theoretical orientation via Paul Romer's New Growth Theory and as well make reference to relevant theoretical and empirical literatures for adequate clarification, comprehension and action sought where needed.

1. Introduction

Development and knowledge have since antiquity been inextricably linked. This owes to the fact that knowledge forms a factor that produces and sustains development. Knowledge also forms an evidence whenever development is witnessed. This is same for individuals, groups, organizations and the broader society. It is in this regard that Odia and Omofonmwan (2013) stated that progressive change which is alteration in the social structure in society is majorly made manifest by the peoples' ability in creative/innovative ideas galvanized by a defined process/procedure in place. Therefore, the evidence of knowledge as a precedent for development is measured through progressive changes occasioned by creativity and innovations. Knowledge needed by societies to develop are birthed through research which is a systematic enquiry into an existing knowledge for the purpose of more insight or the identification, description, explanation, evaluation and exploration of several factors and variables that should lead to the development of new knowledge and eventually, problem solving. It is for this reason that the Organisation for Economic and Co-operation Development (OECD) (2002) maintained that research is formal work undertaken systematically to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humanity, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications. Thus, the exercise of research becomes vital to the production and application of knowledge to enable people gain more insights over issues and as well collectively and individually remedy their problems.

The human society is so big that knowledge must have to be categorized to enable some sort of division of labour which leads to specialization and ultimately, efficient productivity. It is on this note that various categories of research enterprise have been provided to cater for varying unique issues and areas of interests that affect human existence and endeavours. Among these areas include: technology research, health research, meteorological and space science research, agricultural research, geological research and social research (Odia & Omofonmwan, 2013). However, all of these areas at some points would overlap to achieve overarching development for utilizers who must understand that development is a multifaceted concept and would demand a multifaceted approach (Omodia, 2006).

In continuation, this paper has been tailored to just social research which is mostly obtainable in the social sciences. Social research focuses on social life and human actions which encompasses human perceptions, behaviours, interactions, beliefs, culture and origins (Abdullahi, Senekal, Zyl-Schalekemp, Amzat & Saliman, 2012). The beginning of problems in social research starts with handling human populations that are mainly heterogeneous and dynamic. Such dynamisms in beliefs, attitudes and responses have made social research to be a very broad and dynamic venture (Barbie, 2010). Thus, social research becomes problem featured in itself, owing to human dynamisms which social researchers must learn to accommodate. Nonetheless, the problems dotting social research do not cloud its importance in terms of contribution to the knowledge industry, production of innovative ideas that proffer solutions to societal problems and eventually stimulating growth and development for nations. Suffice here that the absence of social research is definitely the absence of development, since the duty of social research is to answer questions regarding: What should be developed? and How should

development be done? The relationship between social research and development was explicated in Nabudere (1977) who maintained that Britain lost the lead when its quest for a colonial empire sheltered it from greater innovation and scientific research. To this end, if Britain could lose its relevance owing to little or no attention given to research that produces innovation and consequently development, then Nigeria must realize that in establishing its relevance at global levels, research must be an integral part of its template.

Understanding these problems imply that remedies must suffice to save this vital venture of quintessential essence to the development of individuals, organizations and nations. It is in this vein that Idyorough (2008) in establishing priority for social research maintained that a preponderance of problems in the society are more of social and thus expects social researchers to assiduously document, expose and propose policy options. On the contrary, it is pathetic that social research in this part of the world is just recently competing with researches in other fields who see themselves as superior and have gone to the extent of refuting social research as science. On a comparative scale, these problems have been identified and dealt with by most advanced nations. Increase productivity, enhanced socio-economic wellbeing, enhanced income, infrastructural development, employment opportunities, enhanced quality of local produce for both local and foreign markets and the likes remain the hallmark of well thought out research initiatives and development agenda by prosperous nation with high capacity and visionary/corrupt free leadership (Odia & Omofonmwan, 2013). It is being quoted in Nkwi (1992: 35), that following the Meiji Restoration in 1968, the Emperor of Japan was required to take five oaths, one of which stated that “knowledge will be sought and acquired from any source with all the means at our disposal, for the greatness and security of Japan.” Today, Japan cruises as among the Top seven (G7) nations with the largest, most prosperous and developed economy in the world, even as an island nation with limited resources. It is based on the foregoing that this paper hope to unravel problems that have hitherto affected the quality of social research in Nigeria and also look into those factors that have impeded on its relative rising to equal frequency with ideal models of research at the global stage.

2. Conceptual Clarifications

2.1 Conceptualizing Research and Social Research

The quest for empirical knowledge that could affect development and problem solving has given rise to a systematic method of enquiry which is being referred to as research. It is systematic owing to the lay down process and procedures it follows before arriving at a particular base where knowledge is said to have been reached and equally justified in application. It is in this light that Oyesola (2010) views research as the application of the scientific method to attain or prove new and exciting theories. He further explained that it is search, invention, discovery and establishment of new knowledge, facts, principles, theories and methods. It is also acknowledged as a systematic, and objective search for knowledge, to establish theories and prove the truth of ideas, hypotheses and assumptions. It is a search which requires care and diligence for new facts. It is experimentation to find knowledge, to take existing knowledge and explore ways of applying it to the many problems of life. The fore definition puts into context the essence and ends of research across diverse fields of study and enquiry. More so, research as asserted by Obasi (2007) is a systematic enquiry to discover phenomena, the laws governing them and the diverse means of the application of the knowledge to practical situations. He further stated that the essence of research is to proffer solutions to problems which justifies the need for a systematic enquiry that offers details of research situations before intervention is made. To this end, it becomes obvious that research is a problem solving venture and as well an informative instrument that instigates varying developments at different levels.

Based on the above, nations have taken advantage of this venture to better the lots of their masses. The major difference between the developed and developing countries of the world is the ability of the developed countries to engage in systematic and conscious search for the improvement of the society. Experts from most developed parts of the world work on their social, economic, political, educational and other sectors in order to attain progress. This simply means that they engage in scientific research to improve their nations (Ogbulogo, Kolawole, Omolara & Iyere, 2012). These are the apparent truths behind the developments of nations like Japan, Israel, Germany, China, Canada, United States of America, Singapore and among others (Nkwi, 1992; Cohen, 2002). The case of Nigeria as struggling with getting developed might not be farfetched from problems plaguing the astuteness of its social research and social researchers, as well as other research and researchers from varying fields.

As earlier stated, research could cut across various fields of discipline. But the focus of this very work would be on social research which is obtainable in the social sciences. *Social* as a word, owes its etymology to a Latin lexicon – ‘socius’ which literally means ‘comradship’ or ‘relationship’. The social sciences have been given to the study of man and the entirety of his environment. They go as far as studying varying complexities which form man’s interactional dynamisms as well as his environment. These complexities could come from his values, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, practices, culture, government, family, sub-cultures and among others. In studying these complexities, various disciplines within the social science structure have picked special interest in

certain areas for the purpose of division labour cum specialization while keeping in view better productivity and efficacy of knowledge and its applications. As a predicate to the foregoing, Adegoke, Adedayo, Aderinto and Yesufu (2010) define social research as a step by step scientific research activities carried out by social scientists in the disciplines of cultural and social anthropology, social policy, sociology, human geography, political science, social psychology and education. They further maintained that the main objective of activities in social research is to describe, identify, classify, categorize, explore, investigate, evaluate and understand social life and human activities in relation to his/her existence. It is in this regard that carrying out such a tasking activity would require quality instruments that would properly make outcomes justifiable. This is more burdensome when researchers of this kind would have to deal with the enumerated complexities and dynamisms of human beings and their vast environments. These complexities are very vivid in the heterogeneous feature of the Nigerian state and all other of its structures and institutions. Complexities are posed as challenges not beyond being provided for. Therefore, the basic sense of curiosity to understand this complexity has cautiously laid the foundation for social science research which has risen to the occasion to continually provide for all complexities in human interactional dynamisms, regardless of the shapes they tend to take (Marvasti, 2004). Thus, social researchers are bound to face humungous problems in their ventures owing to instruments of research and the entire societal system being the focus of the research. Hence, the overriding importance of the scientific process as the bane of knowledge via empiricism become very vital and germane (Obikeze, 1979).

More so, Neuman (2007) in defining social research maintained that it is a process in which people combine a set of principles outlooks and ideas with a collection of specific practices, techniques and strategies (i.e. methodology) to produce knowledge. He further stated the procedures of conduct of social research, which he made mention of it being an exciting process of discovery, that requires persistence, personal integrity, tolerance for ambiguity, interaction with others and pride in doing quality work. In this vein, it is obvious that the stated procedural conducts are likely to conflict with the researcher's self-bias which is another inherent problem in social research. It is in this regard that the emphasis on reliability and validity of research instruments is highly placed in the social sciences which is home to social research.

Scholars in the social sciences have had successful arguments over the scientific nature of the social research. This came as a result of various skeptical look at research done in the social sciences which was once disputed non-science. The triumph over such arguments became evident when it was discovered that research in the social sciences which could imply social research matched up to the scientific dictates of epistemology, ontology and most importantly, methodology (Barbie, 2010). Epistemology refers to the science of knowing and enquiring which is antecedent to research; ontology refers to the philosophy of reality which seeks a balance between forces of actual observation and experimental reality and methodology refers to the process of scientific investigation (Barbie, 2010; Abdullahi et al, 2012).

A much closer look at problems of research in the social sciences center round the nitty-gritties of the above three components of a scientific study. Some of these problems are inherent in them; some are caused by them, while some stem from external factors that try to influence or compromise their stands. It is at this point that this study aims to understand these problems that negatively compromise social research with particular reference to the national community of Nigeria.

3. Theoretical Orientation

This study hopes to take an action sought position in not just unravelling issues that impede on social research but set precedents that should be considered in justifying its essence and appreciating its overriding importance. Thereby, influencing positive actions that should be made toward improving the social research venture for not just researchers and their institutions, but for bringing about a cutting-edge development for Nigeria. To this effect, the New Growth Theory would be utilized.

The New Growth Theory was propounded by Paul Romer as an endogenous theory of economic development, which holds that economic growth is generated from within a system as a direct result of internal processes (Odia and Omofonmwan, 2013). The fundamental assumption of this theory posits that the desires of humans, together with their unlimited wants bring about an ever-increasing productivity and economic growth. This could be narrowed down to the skeptic feature of research which implies that doubts instigate inquisition which motivates the zeal to search; to know and to apply the known accordingly, which is a precursor to get developed. The New Growth Theory emphasizes an internal coordination and hardwork that would in-turn affect development and its pace. It can be explained in the context of counting the cost before the commencement of projects and as well constant review of these costs and projects to reflect current situations. Emphasis made by this theory focuses on creativity, innovations and new technologies. It argues that the aggregation of innovations and new technologies do not just occur but depends on the number of people seeking out new innovations or technologies and how hard they are looking for them (Investopedia, 2016). Innovations and new technologies are all outcomes of research which in an inevitable manner affect the performance approach of all systems at individual and collective levels. Thus, in the absence of innovations and new technologies, systems are bound to

be grounded to a halt where development becomes alien. In the reverse, the presence of these components is expected to buoy a system to development. Social research in this light, continuously unravels innovations and contextualized technologies in the midst of the complexities of human relationships, dynamisms and interactionism. Therefore, development which is carried out by the people and for the people owes so much to a research that seeks to understand this people because development cannot happen in a vacuum, since it is people-centred. Achieving this is a function of social research which should hence not be undermined.

In furtherance, the theory asserts that people also have control over their knowledge capital which implies what to study and how hard to study (Investopedia, 2016). Social research maintains a clear cut from other categories of research and in the Nigeria context, has relatively done so well in achieving its marks. However, the depth of the jurisdiction of social research is a matter of concern for significant bodies which has been plagued with serious institutional, logistical and structural challenges. These impediments have deprived social research in Nigeria of its supposed astuteness when in comparison with trend of similar research venture in other parts of the world, mostly Western. This is quite worrisome and deserves maximal attention as it has affected several areas of the Nigerian nation which include: economic, political, religious, cultural areas and among others. It is in reaction to the foregoing that Adegoke et al (2010) opined that social researchers monitor what is happening at the household and national levels to the historical analysis of phenomenon, and what has happened hundreds of years ago using the combination of art and scientific research methods to seek for meanings; problem solving strategies and applications as needed. It is in favour of this that Paul Romer opined that, nurturing scientific talent is the key to a nation's technological superiority and continued wealth creation. Therefore, research in all of its categories are fundamental precursors to development and deserves maximum attention by all nations who intend to develop and also should be conducted properly by appropriate persons and bodies as concerned.

4. Impeding Issues on Social Research in Nigeria

Several issues have clogged on the wheels of social research in Nigeria. Thereby, slowing the pace of its growth or keeping it stagnated. It has been observed that the proper environment for research is not yet available in Nigeria. As stated in Odia and Omofonmwan (2013), a conducive environment is needed for growth and utilization of research. For this to happen, many things have to be considered, among which include: adequate infrastructure, trained manpower, institutional capacity, and sufficient funding. The entire population must also be motivated to adopt a science culture as a pattern of life. These and other matters call for the urgent attention of practitioners, policy makers and other significant persons in Nigeria (Jimoh 1998). By the New Growth Theory, nations are expected to grow on the bases of human resources they possess. These human resources are responsible for the brewing of knowledge, finding solutions to problems and as well applications. But this is not so in Nigeria, in spite of the numerous human and material resources with which they are blessed.

Based on the precedent set above, we can now explore further on areas that have affected our developmental strides with particular reference to those issues that impede on the astuteness and quality of social research. Scholars have taken varying positions on this particular phenomenon. Nevertheless, they all concur to the fact that social research in Nigeria could have done better, especially when in comparison with what is obtainable in those nations usually referred to as advanced. These scholars among so many include Obikeze (1979); Jimoh (1998); Omodia (2006); Kamba (2008); Dauda (2010); Odia and Omofonmwan (2013) and Mapolisa & Mafa (2013). Among legion of problems that have bedeviled the progress of social research in Nigeria, some of them include:

- **Absence of a clear cut philosophy of national development:** The foundation to achieving harmony between the demands/expectations of a state and the response/obligation of its citizens, is enshrined in clear cut philosophies that are engraved in the minds of the citizens through conscious teachings. If research in Nigeria becomes an inalienable philosophy for its development, citizens would concertedly act to achieving development via the production and reproduction of ideas, innovations and new technologies. It is in the presence of such philosophies that the instability of government would no longer be a challenged since everyone must have to tailor his/her actions to the demands of the stated philosophies. In nations where this is present, people out of even involuntary compulsion tend to see themselves living in such ideals. A consistent, coherent and comprehensive philosophy of national development is essential for concerted research effort (Jimoh 1998).
- **Poor attention given to the development of Human Capacity:** Human resource is a major precedent for development whose importance cannot be overemphasized. It goes beyond population to the quality of the population evident in what is brought to the table by these humans for development to happen. In Nigeria, the poor attention given to the development of human capacity in all ramifications is worrisome and has affected the quality of social research both on the part of the researchers and their respondents. An enlightened and astute researcher might not get the best of results from a respondent who lacks fundamental features of being properly educated. A social researcher who does not have the

penchant for research owing to lack of motivations and a research enabled environ might also not get the best of results no matter how enlightened his/her respondents might be. All of these boils down to the absence of quality attention offered to the development of human capacity, most importantly at institutional levels. Even a clear cut philosophy of national development would not survive in an environment of mediocrity, in as much as they are interdependent. The foregoing was captured in Kamba (2008) who stated that expected outcomes of a functional research and development initiatives entail equipping the people with the needed capacity with which they need to carry out their economic activities with appreciable degree of proficiency leading to the attainment of maximum output. They further inferred that these capacities encompass enhancing the people with the skills and competences needed to effectively harness and utilize the potentials found in one's environment. In conclusion, they maintained that Nigeria's case today is evidence of the fact that it is a nation highly populated with whole lot of potentials but with inadequate competences needed to translate these potentials into socio-economic transformations for the nation.

- **Absence of Quality Tertiary Education:** Tertiary education all over the world are known to be seats of research. They occupy a vital position in the heart of research. They are instrumental to carrying out these researches for contribution to knowledge base and for applied purposes. They also train researchers at different levels. Most research centres are located within these tertiary institutions for the purpose of intelligence, logistics and manpower. Tertiary institutions are supposedly to assume a mentorship position for those at the secondary level of education via exchange of ideas either on special invites, provision of secondary schools' research educators, provision of text materials, to mention but few. It is pathetic that a Nigerian student spends six years all through secondary education without having an introduction or quality experience in proper research ventures. This has adversely affected the quality of social research in Nigeria, in relation to researchers who are expected to know all in a space of four, five or six years as the case may be. It has also affected the quality of social research results especially when these students in these secondary schools are expected to be respondents for a particular study. More so, disciplines like psychology and archeology lack those special equipment and apparatus that make experimental studies veritable, which to a very large extent affect the degree of their productivity in having excellent research results. This poses limits on the scope of what they can do, thus, having them to be poorly rated when in comparison with their contemporaries in advanced nations. In a study conducted by Odia and Omofonmwan (2007), they lamented the poor synergy that exists between tertiary institutions and secondary education and those of research outcomes and intelligence for industries. This brings to the fore that social research conducted in Nigeria is mainly for academic purposes and promotional requirements as against proper application by significant persons and bodies to better the lots of the people. The absence of these and many more is no motivation at all. To this end, it is obvious that the absence of quality tertiary education in content, logistics and synergies have clamped on the advancement of social research in Nigeria. As rightly stated by Odia and Omofonmwan (2013), nations in the world that have attained a reasonable degree of development and those who aspire to attain similar height are nations that have identified and embraced the tenets of qualitative education, research and development as well as making their services accessible to its people. Thus, the university serves as a broker between government and private interests. It also has the opportunity to serve the public and common good by provoking public debates with unbiased research (Orbach, 2001). In a study conducted by Odia and Omofonmwan (2013) on Research and Development Initiatives in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects, using the six geo-political zones of Nigeria, a significant large percentage of the respondents concurred to the fact that a nation's level of development is a function of its research initiatives and development structure which is navigated by the works of quality tertiary institutions. Hence, social research in Nigeria would become only as good as the quality of tertiary institutions within the nation.
- **Funding:** Funding has been a major issue for most ventures all over the world, owing to scarce resources. Nonetheless, nations have resorted to getting priorities right to circumvent the ills of poor funding on productivity. This is evident in the fact that areas that are capable of yielding more resources are prioritized in their budgets. One of such areas is education and research which have been proven to be major precursors and requisites for development to happen. In the Nigeria's case, these areas have long been affected which tells on its development. Lack of adequate funds for a people-centred research like that of the social research has clogged the wheels of advancement for such developmental germane venture. The overbearing preference given to the pure and physical sciences over the social sciences has also affected the funding of social research. The Nigerian government and related institutions could spend so much on space science, meteorological studies, geological mining and other relatives. Studies and research in the social sciences such as gerontology, criminology, religion studies, conflict management, human resource management, public relations, juvenile care, child welfare, policy studies

and among others, when in comparison with their contemporaries in the pure and physical sciences, suffer for lack of adequate funding. This has led to disciplines who are adequately funded to scorn those who are not, thus undermining their relevance. This has equally affected the real application of such knowledge within those areas of neglect to the actual course for which they have been informed. Suffice here that the myriad of social problems faced by Nigeria is a show of the neglect of these areas responsible to social research, which has been described people-centred. Therefore, development as a people-centered project becomes untenable for such a nation. To confirm the above, Okunamiri, Okoli and Okunamiri (2008) in their study, asserted that a nation's pace of development is determined by its level of research funding.

- **Neo-colonialism:** The foundation for colonialism is expressed in the principle of Manicheanism that holds the superiority of white over black (Achebe, 1958). This prejudice has been sustained over time dating back to colonialism and hitherto through neo-colonialism. This factor has largely influenced scholarship in Africa and adversely affects social research in Nigeria. Very pathetic is the fact that the mentality of dependency created by colonialism for the black population still features prominently in the activities of the blacks, with little or no efforts boldly taken to overturn the table. Most Nigerian scholars depend on foreign scholarships, grants and aids to sponsor their research projects since the Nigerian government poorly funds such venture. The Nigerian government equally gets to partner with these foreign agencies for the purpose of research which can solely be done by them if they commit themselves unwaveringly. Jimoh (1998) confirms the foregoing when he asserted that consequently, developing African countries still depend on all forms of foreign aid to support research, such as those provided by the USAID and the UNESCO. Over-reliance on foreign aid would only reduce the relevance of research activities to the Nigerian situation. In order to sustain scientific and technological impetus regardless of general depression, Sub-Saharan nations must inject huge amounts of funds into initiating and expanding training and research facilities (Jimoh 1998). More so, the fact that African Scholars who venture into varying research projects seek to be scored and rated on impact factor by some foreign controlled bodies is worrisome. At times, research made to promote and emancipate indigenous cultural heritage and pride of Africans tend to hit the rock when to be reviewed and published by some foreign based bodies who feel affected. This obviously impedes on actual rating based on originality of research content since the raters might not have relevant socio-cultural experience to justify such scores and the sweet savour of African pride. Nonetheless, Africans can cease being victims of neo-colonialism the moment they start forming world class scholarship forums and assessment grounds, hence social research in Nigeria would remain in its not so good condition. More so, one area that neo-colonialism has affected social research is the aspect of brain-drain. Very principle to this is the neglect of these scholarly ventures by principally the government and its institutions. This has culminated to many social researchers who travel out of the country in search for greener pastures and self-actualization. Thereby, making the venture back home to suffer. The above was captured in the words of Odiya and Omofonmwan (2013) who opined that the seemingly absence of conducive environment needed for qualitative and productive research and scholarship endeavor in the country have over time propelled the incidence of brain drain by legions of scholars and researchers to other parts of the world. The home system deserves rejuvenation and enhancement in order to be able to groom more scholars and encourage brain gain. A system where unproductive researchers/academia who lack innovation/creativity in every sense of it dominate the scene cannot move the system any step forward.
- **Insufficient adjustment to the demands of Information and Communication and Technology:** The social research space has been largely affected by the demands of ICT. The problem here is not the absence of ICT in Nigerian's social research nor the adjustment to its demands but the insufficiency of the expected adjustments required. Kamba (2008) highlighted that researchers and scholars need the Internet for literature searches and data collection. Equally, data can be processed and analyzed using ICT and findings can be disseminated. This knowledge is only prominent among students in Tertiary schools with very little obtainable in secondary schools. Some of the lecturers in tertiary institutions are also oblivious regarding the functionality of ICT in strengthening social research. Hence, they lack the know-how. More to just social research is the fact that the virtual world created by ICT has brought to bear several ingredients that could strengthen social research such as online courses/trainings, electronic libraries, virtual opinion sampling and among others. Pathetically, several social researchers in Nigeria cannot have access to such logistics to enable them bring the best to the table within the minutest of time, which portends enormous problem for social research in Nigeria.
- **Political Atmosphere:** Very key to the progress of any happening in a State is politics. Social researchers oft do research into relationship between people and the State and the influence of the State on this people. Such researches are conducted through the structures and institutions of the state. Thus,

most of these researchers would rely on data and information from these institutions and their elements. Most nations in Africa fall short of comprehensiveness and thus usually have issues with accuracy of data that in turn tell negatively on the research and consequently, interventions. More so, the kind of politics practiced in most African nations abhor truth telling and to such end, would also affect the quality of social research, especially when information is sought after from these politicians.

- **Cultural and Ethical Issues:** The fallible nature of humans as part of their complexities have made research carriers to immune themselves in order to represent the idea of being scientific. However, this tends to be a factor that can be ameliorated as against being eradicated. Ethics are set of principles governing interactions at varying levels. Social researchers are guided by ethics while carrying out their enterprise. Nonetheless, they are still faced with certain structural problems in this regard. The absence of a veritable yardstick in curbing and penalizing plagiarism issues in Nigeria impedes on the ethical performance of social researchers. More so, the traditional culture of Nigerians as culture loving people and the ethnic divide/prejudice tend to influence the perceptions and perspectives of most Nigerian social researchers while carrying out certain social research activities that would demand conflict of values. The researcher from the South who embarks on an educational research in the North already has a bias that imply poor educational output which might end up influencing instruments for data collection and as well research findings even when the opposite is the real case. This is the need for the advocacy of an ethical board and veritable data management software to ascertain the quality of research instruments in line with ethical demands and standards for social research ventures. Obikeze (1979) in reaction to the foregoing stated that researchers harbour orientations and philosophies acquired in the course of their training and professional practice. Differences in these orientations have created sharp divisions among individuals and groups of social scientists. The cultural belief of the people in Nigeria also affects the quality of social research in Nigeria. Among the superstitious beliefs still current among some groups of Nigerians is the belief that children are not to be counted. More so, Nigerians do not seem to have acquired a scientific concept of causality that teaches them that effects could be traced to certain causes that must be scientifically investigated for truth to be discovered, which predicates problem solving and development on the continuum. This impedes on the efficacy of the scientific community in the social sciences. Again, as a result of cultural factors, Nigerians still largely regard certain concepts, issues and topics as taboo and obscene subjects that should not be discussed in public or openly. And although the Nigerian undergraduate might discuss sex, family planning, politics, AIDS with his peers, he might feel too shy or otherwise uncomfortable to let an adult who might be a stranger (researcher) into the secret of how he feels about any of these subjects. Thereby, making findings to be largely faulted (Jimoh, 1998).

5. Conclusion

Having looked at the problems plaguing the astuteness and relevance of social research in Nigeria, it becomes pertinent to understand that benefits of social research to overall development of a nation cannot be overemphasized. Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011) captured this in their positions that human resource has been identified as one of the most important catalyst in a nation's development. In fact, it is the major propeller for development. They concluded that in Nigeria, this important and critical resource has not been fully developed, managed and utilized in such a manner that would engender development. It is on this ground that some scholars feel that Nigeria among several African nations is resource-cursed. Conclusively, a relationship has been established between the development of human resources and the growth and development of a nation's social, economic and political space. Therefore, educational/research development should be given utmost attention if sustainable economic growth and development must be enhanced. Since a healthy, well-educated, innovative people make an economy more productive, it is apparent that capacity building through investment in human capital, particularly education and research can enhance economic growth, alleviate poverty and protect the Nigerian economy from further distortions and backwardness (Odia & Omofonmwan, 2010; Dauda, 2010). Therefore, for Nigeria to meet its future developmental plans and goals, social research must be an integral part of its developmental process. This work has shown that advanced nations today paid attention to this enterprise and enjoyed its dividends. Development is a people-centred project and so is social research. Social research justifies the people-centeredness of development. Hence, in its absence, development for any nation becomes a mirage. In lieu of the foregoing, scholars, academics and researchers are expecting bold steps to be taken in correcting the anomalies that have preyed on the astuteness of social research in Nigeria, so as to evade another generation of brain-drain as against brain-gain, turning out to become prominent.

References

Abdullahi, A. A., Senekal, A., Zyl-Schalekamp, V. C., Amzat, J & Saliman, T. (2012). Contemporary discourses in qualitative research: Lessons for health research in Nigeria. *African Sociological Review* 16 (1), 20 –

- 40.
- Achebe, C. (1958). *Things fall apart*. Harlow: Heinemann.
- Adegoke, A. T., Adedayo, V. T., Aderinto, A & Yesufu, A. R. (2010). *Methods of social research*. Lagos: National Open University.
- Barbie, E. (2010). *The practice of social research*: 12th Edition. Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.
- Cohen, N. (2002). *The Israel high-tech industry fifty years of excellence*. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs – *The State of Israel 2008*. Retrieved from www.Mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel
- Dauda, R. S. (2010). Investment in education and economic growth in Nigeria: An empirical evidence. *International Research Journal of Finance and Economics*, (55).
- Idyorough, A. E. (2008). *History and philosophy of social welfare services in Nigeria 1900 – 1960*. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers.
- Investopedia (2016). *New growth theory*. Retrieved from www.investopedia.com/terms/n/new-growth-theory.asp
- Jimoh, S. A. (1998). *Educational research in Nigeria: Some local forces inhibiting progress and the way forward*. Retrieved from www.unilorin.ng/newsite2/EDUC
- Kamba, M. A. (2008). The changing roles of researchers in Nigeria: The internet as an alternative future to modernity. *Library of Philosophy and Practice*.
- Lawal, T. & Oluwatoyin, A. (2011). National development in Nigeria: Issues, challenges prospects. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research* 3 (9), 237-241.
- Mapolisa, T & Mafa, O. (2013). Challenges being experienced by undergraduate students in conducting research in open and distance learning. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 2 (10), 1672 – 1684.
- Marvasti, A. B. (2004). *Qualitative research in sociology: An introduction*. London: Sage Publications.
- Nabudere, D. (1977). *The political economy of imperialism*. London: Zed Press.
- Neuman, L. W. (2007). *Basics of social research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston: Pearson Education Inc.
- Nkwi, P. N. (1992). *Funding research in Africa*. Chicago AAAS Publication based on the symposium organised by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, pp 25 – 42.
- OECD (2002). *Frascati manual: Proposed standard practice for surveys on research and experimental development*, 6th edition. Retrieved from www.oecd.org/sti/frascaticmanual
- Obasi, I. (2007). *Politics and globe dictionary*. Enugu: Keny & Brothers Enterprises.
- Obikeze, D. S. (1979). A new approach to social research in Africa: The exchange process. *International Social Science Journal*, 31 (4), 732 – 740.
- Odia, L.O. & Omofonmwan, S. I. (2007). Educational system in Nigeria: Problems and prospects. *Journal of Social Sciences, New Delhi, Indian*, 14 (1), 81-86.
- Odia, L. O & Omofonmwan, S. I. (2010). Technology and higher output in Nigeria. *The Nigerian Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 4 (2), 141-159.
- Odia, O. L & Omofonmwan, S. I. (2013). Research and development initiatives in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 4 (2), 257 – 265.
- Ogbulogo, C., Kolawole, M. E., Omolara, D & Iyere, T. O. (2012). *Research methods*. Lagos: National Open University.
- Okunamiri, P. O., Okoli, E. C & Okunamiri, M. C. (2008). Implications of poor funding of tertiary education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Management (IJEM)*, 5 (6).
- Omodia, S. M. (2006). The problems of political science research in Nigeria and its implications on the political development of the Nigerian state. *The Social Sciences*, 1 (4), 323 – 326.
- Orbach, R. L. (2001). Universities should be honest brokers between business and the public sector. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 47 (30).
- Oyesola, G. O. (2010). *The contribution of research to the development of the national education System*. Retrieved from <http://unilorin.edu.ng/journals/education/ije/sept1988/the%20contribution%20of%20research%20to%20the%20development%20of%20the%20national>.
- Romer, P.M. (1994). The origin of endogenous growth. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 8 (1).

Acknowledgement

We specially acknowledge the contributions of all the contributing authors in bringing about this timely action oriented paper as a panacea to the impeding development of our country Nigeria. We also acknowledge our research course tutors (Professor. Obikeze, D. S & Dr. Uzoma Okoye) for their efforts in leading us through the nitty-gritties of social research.