

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter deals primarily with the research problem and methodological issues that have relevance to the investigation. It is important to ensure that all the relevant issues are clarified. An attempt has been made to provide an overview of research design as well as providing insight into the various strategies that are available for a qualitative orientated research, such as this. The rationale for the preferred qualitative research design is explained and ways to augment possible limitations that a particular strategy might pose are suggested.

The research is largely descriptive in nature as ‘social science researches are more affected by some properties of society than the natural sciences’ (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 9). The research design, which emerges from the nature of the research problem, is however, both descriptive and explorative in nature. The descriptive part provides a general text on the nature of intergovernmental relations as well as the implementation mechanisms in the Republic of South Africa, and Nigeria. The explorative aspect provides an in-depth analysis of public administration principles that have been employed in Nigeria and South Africa, as a management mechanism for facilitating service delivery in the arena of government. The focus in this respect is intergovernmental relations, its challenges, implications of its management strategies as well as an exploration of the extent to which current practices have been useful in the governance of the state.

This chapter profiles the research design adopted, and subsequently demonstrates through the process of rationalisation why a particular design is preferred to anchor this study. How this research has been planned and how it has been executed to minimise error is discussed.

Public Administration & qualitative research

The history of qualitative research reveals that modern social science disciplines have embraced their mission that appears to be an attempt at analysing and understanding the patterned conduct and social processes of society. The fact that a research in the social sciences can be carried out presupposes that social scientists have the ability to observe their environment objectively. To this end, qualitative methods are a major tool in the quest for deeper understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 18-29) of various issues or experiences hence qualitative research has a long and distinguished history in human discipline.

Denzin & Lincoln (2003: 1) argue this qualitative method can be traced to the 1920s and 1930s which established its importance as a qualitative inquiry for the study of human group life, processes and systems. Qualitative research is also viewed as ‘an interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary and sometimes counter disciplinary field’ as it cross-cuts the humanities and the social sciences (Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg, 1992: 2). Given the above, the qualitative design remains invaluable in the study of Public Administration. An eclectic science, which has over the years benefited from this field of inquiry given that qualitative inquiry allows the Public Administration researcher or scholar to cut across disciplines, fields and subject matter in a manner that is rich and deepens the inquiry.

Regardless of the fact that qualitative research has continued to develop in form over the years, it has remained appropriate and applicable. Denzin and Lincoln (2003: 19-29) identified seven phases of the development of qualitative research. The lessons drawn from these phases that have been applied in this study include how best to offer valid, reliable and objective interpretations such that the research findings become a catalyst for reforming society in a manner that serves the people. Furthermore, there is value in the research approach given that it is underpinned by case studies, historical and ethnographic studies

(which embrace elements, such as class, race, gender and ethnicity amongst others) in a way that shapes the process of inquiry and explore avenues that connect the research issues to any democratic society in an attempt to better understand social processes in societies.

It is clear that the value of qualitative research allows for some level of flexibility and thus has been applied accordingly in this research. The flexible approach that is used in this research allows the researcher probe further, where findings suggest that there is need for deeper insights. Furthermore, the exploratory element allows the researcher in Public Administration to collect information that is open-ended in nature thereby enabling the unravelling of a research problem by uncovering insights about a ‘particular problem or phenomenon rather than test specific predicts’ (Dyer, 1995: 43). In the context of this research study, the researcher utilises the qualitative design to explore the Public Administration approaches that have been utilised to facilitate delivery in selected government ministries or departments and within the framework of intergovernmental relations systems.

Rationale for the utilization of the qualitative research design

The aim of this section is to provide an overview of the qualitative research design that has been utilized as well as to provide insights into the various approaches that the researcher has utilised for the purposes of this research. The design allows the researcher to present arguments or findings that are embedded in literature and analyze information in a manner that enables him/her tackle the research question or solve a problem. Hence, Nelson, Treichler and Grossberg (1992: 2) reflect that qualitative research uses ‘semiotics, narrative, content, discourse, archival and phonemic analysis, even statistics, tables, graphs and numbers’. They also draw upon and utilise the phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, rhizomatics, de-constructionism, ethnography, interviews, psychoanalysis, cultural studies,

survey and participant research, and observation among others, all of which provide valuable and important insights and knowledge.

The current qualitative research is largely discipline-based, descriptive and exploratory in nature. Doodley (1984: 283) captures it as ‘social research based on non-quantitative observations... and analyzed in non statistical ways’. Strydom, Fouche & Delpont (2002: 272) explains qualitative research by highlighting what it is not. He notes that qualitative research does not provide the researcher with a step-by-step plan, unlike quantitative research that ‘determines the researcher’s choices and actions’. The strength of the qualitative research utilized in this study therefore, gives the researcher room to shape research tools and deepen the inquiry on the discourse of intergovernmental relations.

For the research to be successful, the researcher has deployed a qualitative research method in a manner that enables scientific enquiry, in a manner that is fully exploited and carefully considered (Smith, 1995: 8). The primary approach employed in this qualitative research is triangulation. The benefit of triangulation is that it takes advantage of the different methodological viewpoints and arrives at a more accurate discussion. The approach therefore departs from the premise that no method measures perfectly and the use of other methods or approaches offers a better chance of assessing the validity of the study. In certain instances, this may be adopted to clarify or solve emerging problems. Below is a diagrammatical illustration of the methods utilized within the triangulation approach constructed by the researcher for this study. The principal approaches utilised in this triangulation consists of the case study, historical and the ethnographic methodological viewpoints.

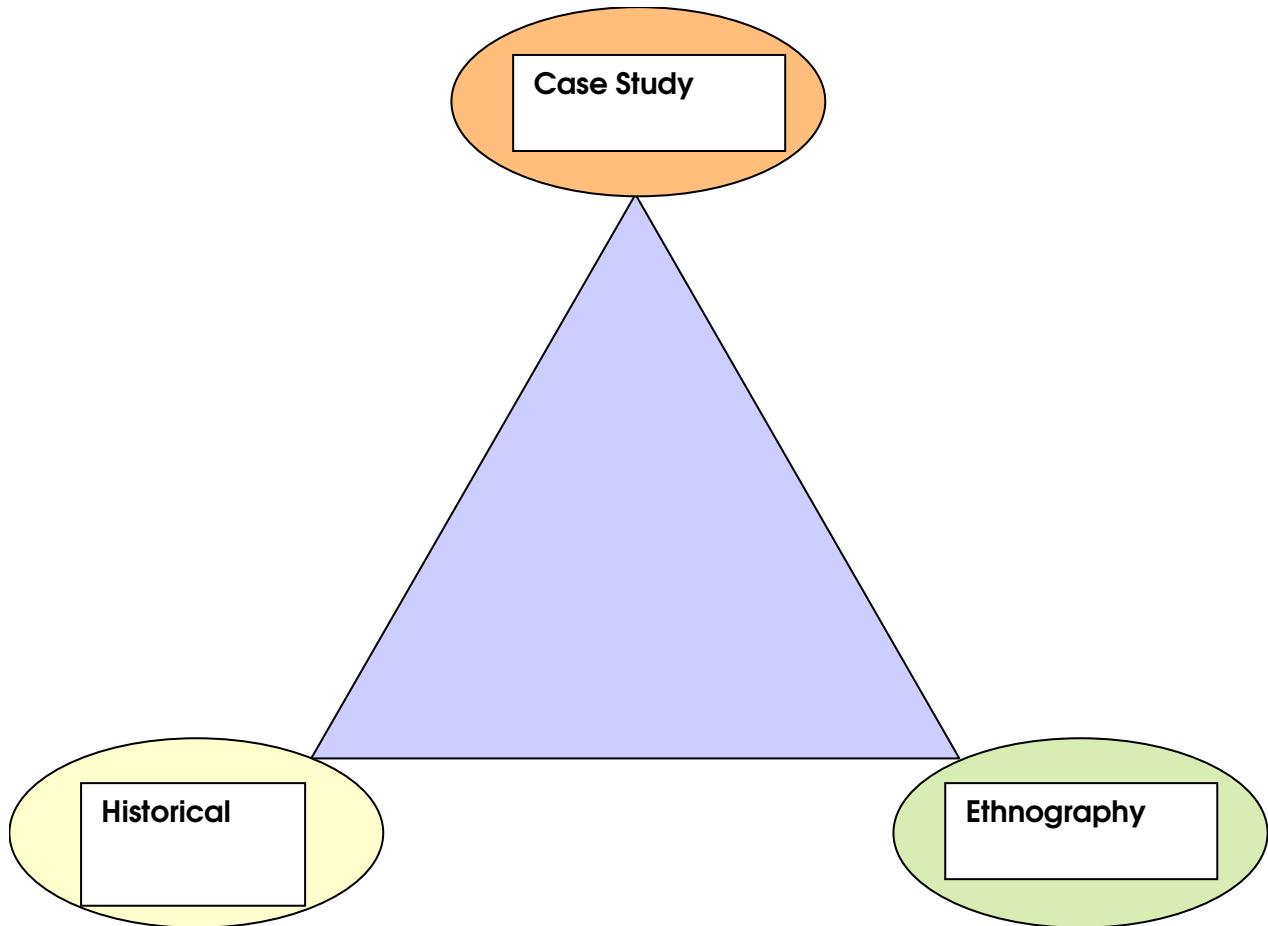


Figure 2 .1 A depiction of the triangulation approach to qualitative research

Triangulation is a multi-method approach and is also known as the multiple measurements. According to Brewer and Hunter (1989: 17), ‘triangulated measurements try to pinpoint the values of a phenomenon more accurately by sighting in on the different methodological viewpoints. This is useful, as the measurement tool can be devised and deployed in a manner that enables the researcher to determine whether the results obtained from IGR management in the selected countries are conflicting or complementary.

The approach provides an opportunity for the complementary methods to be utilised and deployed because it departs from the premise that no method measures perfectly and the use of other methods or approaches offers a better chance of assessing the validity of the

findings. The use of three methodological viewpoints allows the researcher to solve emerging problems with the most appropriate approach. However, some critics of this approach argue that the use of a variety of approaches will only lead to confusion and endless controversy (Blalock, 1978: 22), this approach remains powerful in the field of social and human sciences research. Although there may be justifications for the use of a single method, the multi-method approach is a more attractive option as it integrates the various results from the methods utilised in such a way that the findings tend to be more coherent.

In the triangulation, there are a few deviations, and these have been distinguished into four main types (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 289) and these are as follows:

- Data Triangulation (The use of different data sources which should be distinguished from the use of different methods for producing data)
- Investigator Triangulation (Used to minimize bias resulting from the researcher as a person)
- Theory triangulation (Approaching data with different perspectives and hypotheses in mind), and finally
- Methodological triangulation (Researching within methods and among methods)

The research design emerging from this study can be located within the methodological triangulation framework, with case study, ethnography and historical approaches having been employed and profiled in the next section.

Data and Information collection

A descriptive overview of the methods utilized for the purposes of collecting information and data for this research are contained in this section. Their strength, possible limitations

and how these are limitation as to pro-actively managed in the course of this research investigation is discussed below.

Case studies

The case study approach has been selected as one of the methods for this research, because it provides insight into a particular investigation with a view that the problem will be better understood. For the purposes of this study, two countries (Nigeria & South Africa) have been selected for in-depth study in terms of their approaches to intergovernmental relations. The case study approach utilised in this study is more inclined towards the exploratory design as the researcher seeks to function within a broad theoretical framework rather than a case study that is inclined towards gathering evidence in support or refutation of a theory (Dyer, 1995: 51).

The value of the case study includes the fact that case studies provide an opportunity to deal with ‘understanding uniqueness and the idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity’ rather than generalized or regular deductions (Welman & Kruger, 2002: 183). In this way, case studies provide deep insights; hence Dyer (1995:47) reflects that case studies can be likened to the case history of a patient with detailed information relating to systems, symptoms, diagnosis, record of treatment and eventual outcome with a view of highlighting any usual or unusual traits. In this way, the researcher is able to investigate the dynamics of institutional interactions within the framework of intergovernmental relations in selected states.

In this research the intergovernmental relations and public administration functions have been fully explored in chapter 3 and 4. It is important to note that elements of comparison may have been harnessed in the course of this study, among the selected countries. This

comparative approach permits the in-depth understanding of the peculiarities through the use of case studies in the selected countries. The form of the data utilized for this purpose includes descriptive statistics for Nigeria and South Africa in order to amplify the understanding of the context and, where appropriate mass media material has been deployed as this provided valuable insight with regard to content analysis.

A further strength of the case study approach is that it allows for the carrying out of a detailed in-depth study, in a descriptive process-orientated manner while limiting a multitude of factors, such as the number of cases studied by demarcating the boundaries of the study. Hence, the case studies in this research are tightly grounded in theory (Dyer, 1995:50) particularly the systems approach, allowing for comprehensiveness in the intergovernmental relations.

The case study method is systematic and process orientated (Dyer, 1995: 48) as it explores the nature of a process that has occurred over time within a particular context and is in contrast to snapshots thereby tracking the socio-political metamorphosis of intergovernmental relations in the selected countries. Lastly, it allowed for in-depth, unique experiences to be shared in a highly detailed and narrative manner. The case study approach and the critical elements applicable in this study are identifiable as

- Systematic nature of the processes and activities of public administration(in a federal or unitary government)
- Explorative and comparative
- Context uniqueness and in-depth narrative

All of which are further amplified in the diagram below:

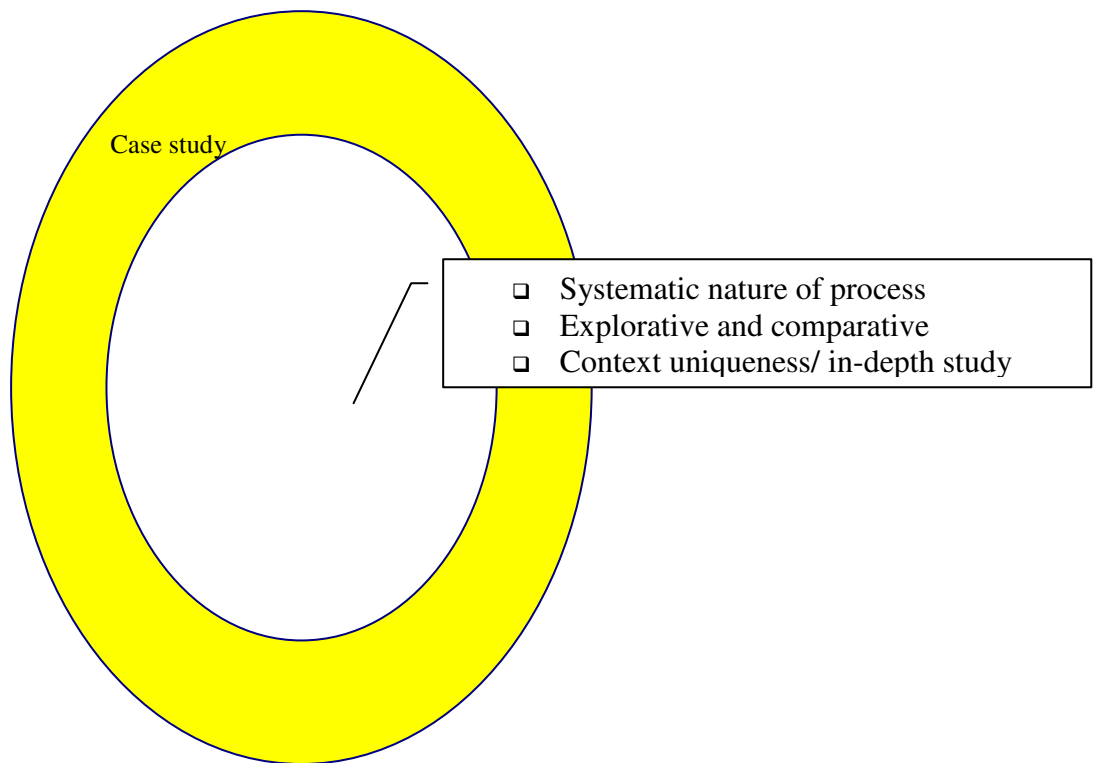


Figure 2.2: Variation of case study approach adopted

Ile's (2006) configuration of the variant of the case study approach adopted.

A major criticism of case studies however, is the presentation of facts (Dyer, 1995:52) especially the way information is selected and findings generalised. Hence, Huysamen's (1995:2) argues that the researcher's reasoning may be conducted logically but the results will be erroneous because the material proceeds from a false premise. To safeguard the validity of the research, care is taken to ensure the authenticity of the sources consulted by ensuring there is a fair spread of opinions and representation in order to remain objective and minimize subjective bias. Furthermore, the application of other methods such as the historical and ethnographic methods will be useful in making important decisions on what to include, thereby ensuring relevancy.

Finally and with regard to the utilisation of the case studies, the discussions in this work used a range of approaches as complementary tools to ensure a rich and robust discussion

but primarily, the Public administration approach which includes the normative operational approach will be the primary tool for analysing the issues and case studies.

Historical method

Intergovernmental relations have a great deal to do with interactions inherent within or amongst organizations. An in-depth understanding of the institutions and how they have related in the past provide an important backdrop for the research. According to Welman and Kruger (2002: 179), a historical understanding can be obtained through a number of sources including documents (newspapers, reports, correspondence, official statistics) and information from the past that have been preserved.

The historical method has been used in line with Brynard and Hanekom's (1997: 6), arguments that it is useful when the researcher wants to give a rational and logical explanation of the effect of an event(s) on a society. But even beyond that, it could seek to advance a better understanding of social interactions. Mouton (2001: 107) further notes that this approach can be enriched by keeping a detailed record of the precise location of the data sources, missing documents or parts of a document as well as issues relating to the authenticity of the historical sources. Its aim is to provide a near accurate account of happenings in the past in a chronological fashion as well as to make any deductions about the way the events have taken place and how governmental systems such as intergovernmental relations have emerged.

The researcher is not directly observing these events as they have already occurred but seeks to describe, analyse and interpret the emerging issues in light of the framework of the current research. To this extent, the influence and value of history is even more important given that the context has been influenced and continues to be influenced by the socio-

political, demographic and political climate in the selected countries thereby re-emphasizing the importance of a detailed descriptive approach to the research.

This research places value and emphasis on interactions in the intergovernmental relations systems of the selected countries. History provides a better understanding of the context and the context, in turn, enables a deeper insight into the issue at hand. This is logical in the sense that human activities cannot be dissociated from their context. The study of intergovernmental relations within the socio-political context of Nigeria and South Africa provides explanations and further insights on the research subject.

In an attempt to ensure validity and reduce the margin of error, every attempt has been made to use primary information sources where they exist, given that reliance on only secondary data may be subject to ‘inadequate or deliberately distorted’ information (Welman & Kruger, 2002: 179). This means that government and relevant policy documents and pronouncements have to be directly engaged. Information uncovered has not be taken at face value but has been subjected to analysis in terms of the authenticity as well the credibility of both content and source. This required the use of accredited sources including peer reviewed journals as well as works of distinguished scholars to corroborate findings through the use of multiple sources.

Ethnography

This is defined as research inquiry that aims to describe and interpret the place of culture in human affairs. Ethnography is primarily defined not by the methodology adopted but by the subject matter of a research study that is embedded in ethos or strong in terms of the cultural perspective sought in the exploration of research problem.

Anthropologists largely used ethnography, but this is no longer the ‘sole province of anthropologists’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 391). The value of the ethnographic method in this research is that intergovernmental relations rest on interactions among institutions and individuals (as members of the institutions). Therefore, social aspects of society have provided perspectives to enable the researcher to examine customs, ways of life, norms and behaviours that provide a cultural portrait of a group(s) through the study of their behaviours within governmental systems. The relevant literature was employed to provide structure for interpretation and reporting through extensive description of experiences.

This method required the researcher to immerse himself /herself in the real life context as a participant observer. Over a period of time, the researcher was then able to gather data and apply it accordingly through an inductive methodology that seeks to uncover deeper issues. According to Mouton and Marais (1988: 122), the emphasis of this approach is on unstructured direct and indirect observation, ranging from the discourse analysis to the historical analysis” or in the words of Bailey (1998:36) from “micro to macro” collective behaviour.

The different types of ethnography have been categorised by Silverman (2002: 17) as integrative ethnography (which is participatory in approach), narrative ethnography and combinative ethnography. For the purposes of this research investigation, the researcher will deploy the narrative ethnographic type in an attempt to capture emerging interaction patterns that may directly affect public administration approaches that are being implemented within a particular setting or context. Thus Rubin and Babbie (2001: 391) describe the approach as one that seeks to capture the meaning as a ‘naturalistic observation and holistic understanding of the cultures and sub-cultures’, all of which provide a better understanding of the subjects being studied.

Applied Ethnography:

An ethnographic research study may be basic or applied in nature. The applied ethnographic method is utilised in this study and seeks to offer views of how ethnographic understanding of a subject could shed more light on the research investigation. The ethnographic research inquiry has evolved and grown over the past years. Ethnographic research inquiry is made up of three approaches as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2003:392). The first attempt at the ethnographic research method was when the British colonial administration in Africa sought to better understand issues from what they termed the ‘native’s point of view’. As a result, they were able to obtain valuable information that assisted their decision-making process and agenda.

The second approach was brought about by the integration of cultural concepts and ethnographic data obtained by the British colonial administration. The value of this was even more obvious given the multi-cultural outlook of the British colonies. And the last approach sought to utilize observation as a mainstay of the ethnographic research methodology.

For the purposes of the study, the researcher has applied a combination of the first and second approaches. The first approach of applied ethnography is relevant in the sense that the current research offers views on how ethnographic understanding could assist governments shape their intergovernmental relations arena. And in a complementary way, the second approach becomes useful in the sense that the selected countries that provide primary sites for this research are diverse in nature.

The combinative approach allows for unique ways of integrating findings into the intergovernmental relations landscape and promotes policy reform and programme

development. In this sense, the value of the applied ethnographic inquiry goes beyond the descriptions to reflect on and puts forward prepositions with regard to reforms in the governance systems.

Having noted the approaches of applied ethnographic studies, the cognitive approach derived from Denzin and Lincoln (2003:399-400) tends to focus on a research population that is part of a large group that would have been otherwise too large to study. In this research the selection of the two African countries was to allow an understanding of and to provide perspectives on IGR that are relevant to most African countries as most of the counties on the continent are diverse in nature. The relevance of this approach in the current research study is even more appropriate given that the cognitive approach to ethnographic requires a research problem that is, at least, defined by the some larger social “problem”.

In this regard, the cognitive approach applied to ethnography derives much of its relevance and practical value from the fact that it tends to focus on failures of communication that may have occurred over time or on cultural breakdowns. For the purposes of this study, the management of intergovernmental relations has great impact on governance processes, as intergovernmental relations provides the forum for institutional engagement, hence the extent to which appropriate Public Administration approaches/systems have been deployed have to be investigated. Given that communications between governmental groups tends to be lower than desired, the tensions could be such that the environment breeds mistrust.

The researcher has selected the applied ethnographic research method; and in addition to the strengths already discussed, the fact that this method provides a holistic focus through the understanding of socio-political dimensions (as these are critical in the work) make this research inquiry increasingly attractive for the purposes of this research study.

Research tools

In the course of this research, data was collected from a number of sources. These sources, according to McNabb (2002:391) could be wide ranging and could be from symbols or nonverbal signs, non-written communication to written text, which could either be formal or non-formal in nature.

Nonverbal communication and symbols indicate the use of data emanating from the interpretation of body language, music and art among other aspects. This certainly has value when the sociologist and anthropologist seek to understand and document insights from the culture of a group or groups of people. It may be subject to the interpretation of the researcher and could reflect high margins of error in some cases. Similar to this group is the non-written communication that may include the utilization of data from videos and photographs for data collection purposes.

Written materials are used extensively in a study as this enables the researcher obtain the insights and information which otherwise would not have been easily attained. However, it is necessary to ensure the information obtained is properly analysed by the use of other relevant documentation through cross referencing and not accepted at face value as already noted.

In this study the literature review is central. According to McNabb (2002:393) it seeks to provide information in a systemic manner with the aim of harnessing relevant information, analysing the data collected and subsequently, interpreting these within the framework of a particular research topic. This systematic methodology is reiterated by Welman and Kruger (2002: 32-40), who reflect that the literature review process includes literature searches, tracing relevant data, recording relevant data, planning for further searches, compiling the

literature and managing the referencing system. The importance of literature review is that it reveals previous researches that provides a basis for the researcher to depart from, and enables the researcher to deepen the search/study as the information derived may not necessarily make logical sense at first or may require the researcher to sieve data and resolve or at least pinpoint where contradictions may exist.

The important role that intergovernmental relations has to play in all democracies (young and old alike) as in the case of South Africa and Nigeria is unquestionable and needs to be tackled proactively. A survey of the relevant literature in this area shows that effective intergovernmental relations could enable governments to better achieve their mandates especially if they have taken into account the peculiarities within a particular country and evolved systematically. In most African states, the development of an effective and efficient intergovernmental relations system remains a challenge as governments struggle to manage tensions that would otherwise have been contained by extensive and comprehensive intergovernmental relations mechanisms. It could be argued that the public administration approaches utilised in the management of intergovernmental relations of government have proved to be an opportunity for some while, for others, they have been the cause of tensions and even wars. What this suggests, is that there are an array of lessons that can be learnt. African countries in general, could benefit from this, as the continent seeks to deepen and strengthen democracy on all fronts. The research thus makes a contribution to the discipline of Public Administration, the practice of public administration and to the peoples of Africa.

Data analysis, validation and reporting

The data analysis and interpretation has been anchored in a content analysis methodology. For Welman and Kruger (2002: 194), content analysis seeks to interpret qualitative results by seeking 'recurrent themes'. This approach requires the researcher to examine the content

in a systematic manner so that emerging trends, their frequency of occurrence and the manner in which they are portrayed are captured and reflected in the research study. The steps of content analysis are captured by Welman and Kruger (2002: 195) and have been represented diagrammatically as follows by the researcher:

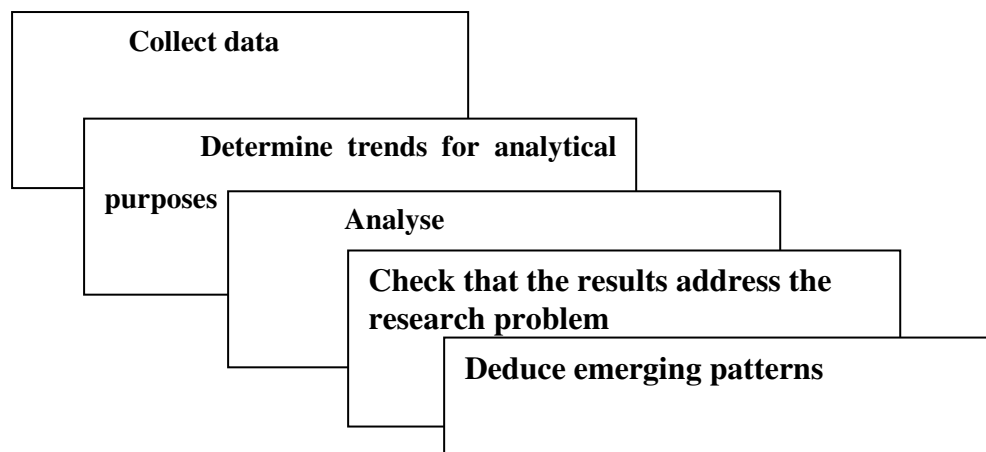


Figure 2.3 Steps of content analysis

Ile's (2005) configuration of the steps of content analysis

The content analysis encompasses both micro/macro analyses. This recognises that applied ethnography is really not about experiences and their isolated descriptions, but rather about the relationships of a particular institution or institutions in a particular society. In this regard, the methodology utilised, although qualitative in nature, will tap into descriptive data (which may be statistical in nature) of the selected countries to enrich the analysis from a local level of micro analysis to a national level of macro analysis frame in an attempt to analyse emerging trends in the management of IGR.

Furthermore, while it may be argued that content analysis could lead to a situation where data is isolated from the context, in this particular research study, the use of case studies nullifies that argument as the analysis of information is contextualised to enable the

researcher draw comparisons where necessary. For the purposes of content analysis, various documents have been sourced and utilised. Special attention was paid to policy documents, making policy analysis an integral activity of the content analysis. The value of policy analysis to this research is that it will provide insights, a basis for comparisons and assist the researcher draw conclusions, within the broad triangulation already articulated.

Ethical considerations in the research study

Given the role that research plays in shaping the public administration arena, the researcher has made every effort to ensure that the issues are truthfully presented, thoroughly engaged and handled meticulously throughout the research process. McNabb (2002:36) indicates that there is immense value in maintaining research ethics. Ethics is the study of moral behaviour of humans within the framework of society and the rightfulness or wrongfulness of actions. It deals with the values that relate to human conduct and the implications thereof (Mafunisa, 2004:193)

In any research study, attaining high levels of ethical conduct can be assured if ample time and care are taken in the planning, analysis and reflection of research findings. It is therefore important for the researcher to reflect the findings in the field just as they are. Given that findings from an applied research study, such as this, may be employed as part of the knowledge base from which relevant stakeholders may consider and re-consider decisions affecting the fate of communities and their environments, the researcher has made every effort to ensure that:

- objectivity in research is maintained throughout this research; hence the researcher has assumed the role of the third person and refers to herself as the “researcher”

through this study, to ensure that the researcher retains the appropriate role and limits the levels of subjectivity that research like this may be subjected to.

- ❑ data or information is not misinterpreted, massaged or watered down
- ❑ truthfulness is not compromised
- ❑ advice is sought from a mentor (in this case, the academic promoter) when faced with difficult decisions, and
- ❑ every attempt is made to acknowledge sources consulted or utilised in the course of this research.

Limitations of the study

The research study is captured through the title as ‘A Public Administration approach to managing intergovernmental relations in the governance of a state: with particular reference to Nigeria and South Africa’. The study does not investigate all instruments related to IGR but primarily relies on the constitution of both countries as the framework for the comparative analysis of this research. Furthermore, in an attempt to focus of the research, the researcher provides the parameters that guide the usage of some key terms and phrases from the title to achieve this. The key words are:

- ❑ **Public Administration Approach:** The public administration approach refers to functions that focus on governmental activities. These are also known as the generic functions of public administration. They include, policy, organizing, control, work procedures, staffing and financing. Within the framework of this study, the researcher has derived insights with regard to all the functions of public administration, but particularly focuses on the issues around policy and organization – in terms of structures and the role of communication as a management strategy in intergovernmental relations, as well as staff and resource implications.
- ❑ **Intergovernmental Relations:** From the broad arena of intergovernmental relations,

the researcher has delimited the focus to the operative framework as well as the reference to some policy framework and structures that allow for IGR with the emphasis on interaction between various governmental structures,

- Governance of the state: The elements, such as societal democratization and the processes, supremacy of the body politic, public accountability, participation, fairness and reasonableness, probity, and efficiency and effectiveness will provide important pointers within the intergovernmental relations framework of the selected states and the nature of the state (including the unitary vis-à-vis stronger federal characteristics of the selected countries).
- International: The internationalization of the work is important as it seeks patterns across a very large population. The narrative provided in the form of overviews would pull experiences and profile countries such as Switzerland, Canada, and Australia. This was then be narrowed to case studies of selected African countries. Two countries have been selected to provide insights according to the regional blocks from Southern Africa/SADC region (South Africa) and from the West Africa/ECOWAS region (Nigeria).

Finally, it may be worthwhile to note that the countries selected for this study are both largely Anglophone countries and are members of the Commonwealth of Nations. This is to allow for synergy in emerging trends hence the francophone countries are not included.

Significance of the research study

The management of Intergovernmental Relations framework is a critical block for success and could be improved in most of Africa. Adamolekun (1999: 303) notes ‘managing intergovernmental relations relies on a variety of political and administrative mechanisms as well as judicial process’. This current research explores the “administrative mechanisms”

that are crucial for the success of the management of intergovernmental relations through the identified case studies and for highlighting the lessons therein.

The fact that governance systems in most African countries were born out of shaky arrangement (largely as a result of colonialism) is rather troubling and could very well have provided the stunted start that has proved very difficult to stabilize. Although federalism has remained less than perfect, given the heterogeneous nature of most African nations (some of which will be captured in this work) a unitary system of government could not have done any better and the experiences of the selected countries reveal this. With an increased need for the integration of governmental activities across all spheres or levels, ways must be sought to continually promote and sustain liaison with various stakeholders.

The importance of an efficient and effective intergovernmental relations model for any country, including young democracies like South Africa and not so young democracies like Nigeria, cannot be over-emphasised. The challenges may vary given the nature of the governance system in that particular country. In federations, Peach (1998: 7) notes that there are a number of challenges that may characterize its design. And with unitary systems which have all powers located at the centre (Coulter, 1987: 60) there may also be similar design challenges. In reality, every modern state combines features of both centralization and decentralization, although the degree of application of each of these elements may vary from one country to another, in order to maintain a balance. This balancing act takes into consideration the country's historical, economic and socio-cultural realities.

In this research, an overview of the state, and the management of intergovernmental relations in the selected countries is presented with an aim of highlighting lessons that could be learnt from the countries and the continent. The interactions between institutions and the

community are vital ingredients, as these should be properly managed if governmental objectives are to be accomplished. In light of these interactions in intergovernmental relations, pertinent issues, such as those reflected below, had to be considered:

- ❑ The Public administration principles that are critical to the management of intergovernmental relations
- ❑ The integrated nature of the Public Administration principles and the complexity in application
- ❑ The extent to which intergovernmental relations management can assist or limit the attainment of governmental objectives
- ❑ The need for recognizing the relevance of both formal structures and non-formal mechanisms that may be available to promote intergovernmental relations.

The significance of the research proposed is to determine to what extent the intergovernmental relations systems in selected African countries Africa are fore-grounded on Public Administration principles, the management of complexities as well as the implications for the current intergovernmental relations system. The research establishes the interlocked linkages of these principles within the intergovernmental relations framework and the administrative implications thereof, as tensions exist in the managing of governmental activities. The ideal is one that embraces and manages the critical elements that enable governments to attain benefits of a synchronized and harmonious system.

There are lessons to be learnt from the selected countries. The reality is that the poor or inadequate management of intergovernmental relations has brought about less than desired or negative consequences in particular countries. Nevertheless, there may also be pockets of excellence and these have been highlighted. The management of different structures, policies or contradictions within the intergovernmental relations system requires promotion

of an integrated approach, if common goals are to be achieved.

Attempts have been made to understand these key issues and uncover the extent to which the management of intergovernmental relations has contributed to the current state of governance in a particular state. The selected countries will provide the case studies for evaluating the management of Intergovernmental relations and an in-depth analysis of its appropriateness and comprehensiveness.

Chapter Summary

In most African states, the development of an effective and efficient intergovernmental relations system remains a challenge as governments struggle to manage tensions that would have otherwise been contained by an extensive and comprehensive IGR mechanism. The research area and issues were duly considered before an appropriate methodology was selected.

The manner in which this research has been set out has been extensively discussed in this chapter with approaches that complement themselves being selected through triangulation (using case studies, historical and ethnographic research inquiry) to ensure that the findings are valid, credible and reliable. The study utilises the qualitative methodology of research inquiry that has enabled the researcher to explore public administration approaches that have been utilized within the intergovernmental relations framework in the selected countries.

The selection of the qualitative research approach provides an avenue for presenting summaries, intricate detail and information that may not be clearly articulated through the use of numbers and statistics. Much has been said about the approaches and limitations. Despite the shortfalls of the approaches discussed and the criticisms raised, a crucial point

that has emerged is that a fair mix of approaches used in a qualitative research studies comes across as more effective than the use of a single approach, as the strengths include attributes of objectivity, enquiry, respect for valid data and information.

In conclusion, the development of the selected research design has not been a simplistic one, but has required the researcher to be engaged in a series of choices and decisions. The researcher has not stopped at describing methods available but has reflected on the limitation of the selected approaches used in the study and has made attempts to compensate for the shortfalls by seeking complementary approaches that even out the shortfalls detected.