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A critical appraisal of doctrinal and Non-doctrinal legal research methodologies in contemporary times

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Abstract
Traditionally legal research is concerned with the development and elaboration of legal doctrines and the normative purposes of the Law. In addition, it generally seeks to establish propositions concerning the nature of Law. This is so because the legal research process cannot be devoid of the essential nature of legal studies and Law itself. This paper seeks to expound by critically examining the difference between doctrinal and non-doctrinal legal research to throw the ongoing debate on methodological usage into bolder relief. Though the doctrinal research method is the most popular and oldest traditional mode of research in the legal field, non-doctrinal research, also known as social-legal research, has recently taken the front burner as an emerging trend in research. Employing methods accepted from other disciplines, it considers the relationship and impact of Law on society. However, this paper emphasises that doctrinal and non-doctrinal research methods are not mutually exclusive and that sacrificing one method for another will be myopic and damaging to research. The work concludes that there is a need for a combination of methodologies rather than competition between the doctrinal and non-doctrinal in addressing current trends in legal research. This paper recommends including this blended approach in most legal scholarly work.

Keywords: Interdisciplinary, non-doctrinal, doctrinal, socio-legal, multi-disciplinary

Introduction
Legal research involves examining legal problems using a suitable methodological framework [1]. Mainly It deals with studying different aspects of Law, its principles, theories, process, historical development, and comparative status, among other matters [2]. This kind of systematic study of problems and issues concerning the Law, such as codes, acts, etc., is legal research [3]. However, the legal researcher can go beyond purely legal matters to study related practical problems of the community, stakeholders, country, and the world generally about Law, called non-doctrinal legal research [4]. Herein lies the main interest of this paper, which is mainly to analyse doctrinal versus non-doctrinal legal research methodology critically [5]. While doctrinal legal research is 'research in law' rather than 'research about law', Non-doctrinal research is more concerned with social values and people [6]. Since the Law is an integral part of the social process, it aims to be an instrument for organising a society in a systematic, peaceful, or orderly manner [7]. So, the researcher's tool should also involve non-doctrinal research to root out the different ever-increasing social evils effectively [8]. Dr Ajay Kumar Bhatt put it most succinctly when he stated as follows:
'Law is for the society, and Law is also the outcome of the present reaction of the society. Society as a dynamic concept also influenced the Law to become dynamic. For upgrading the influence of Law in this dynamic state, empirical legal research is only the solution [9].
Though it is easy to target a specific methodology and identify its strengths and weaknesses, there is no gradation between the two methods as they are all equally important for developing and understanding the Law [10]. Even though both methodologies have advantages and disadvantages, a researcher can obtain both benefits by critical analysis for an all-out result [11]. The combination of methodologies (a mixed method using doctrinal and non-doctrinal) can work together to understand the Law better because Legal doctrinal research forms the basis for Non-Doctrinal Legal Research [12]. The outcomes of Doctrinal Legal Research Methodology are the foundation or footing upon which Non-Doctrinal legal Research Methodology is based [13]. Consequently, the postgraduate research curriculum would improve by compulsory using both research methodologies in all scholarly works [14].

What is Research?
Research is an application of scientific procedures to discover answers to questions.

Those procedures have been developed to increase the likelihood that the information gathered will be relevant to the research question and reliable and unbiased [15]. In common parlance, research refers to a search for knowledge. It can also be defined as a detailed scientific study of a subject to discover new information or reach a (new) understanding [16].

The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English 10th edition defines the meaning of research as a careful investigation or inquiry, specifically through the search for new facts in any branch of knowledge. At the same time, Webster's Dictionary explains the term research as a systematic investigation towards increasing the sum of knowledge. Finally, the 1911 Cambridge edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica defines research as:

The act of searching into a matter closely and carefully, inquiry directed to the discovery of truth and, in particular, the trained scientific investigation of the principles and facts of any subject, based on an original and first-hand study of authorities or experiment. Investigations of every kind based on actual knowledge may be styled research. Without search, no authoritative works have been written, no scientific discoveries or inventions made, and no theories of any value propounded [17].

A collective reading of the above explanations of the term research reveals that research is, by definition, scientific [18]. A Mere aimless, unrecorded, unchecked search is not research [19] because it can never lead to valid conclusions [20]. However, a diligent, intelligent, continued search for something is research. It refers to the process and means of acquiring knowledge about any natural or human phenomenon [21]. It involves a systematic inquiry into a phenomenon of interest. It is the process of discovering or uncovering new facts.

How, then, do we define legal research? Legal research has been described as finding the Law that governs an activity and materials that explain or analyse that Law. The legal analysis includes various processes ranging from gathering information to analysing a problem's facts and communicating the investigation results.

Legal research is about more than just technical knowledge of the Law. Instead, its objective is to find out rational or policy arguments in Law [22]. It is a legal inquiry for researchers of all categories in their search for a thorough understanding of legal issues [23]. Legal research is also concerned with understanding and internal coherence of legal concepts and reasoning [24]. It is a deliberate investigation to clarify or construe a legal phenomenon. It goes beyond description and requires analysis. In this sense, it is a creative process and involves normative activities [25]. It is a diligent and continued search for the more probable accepted answer to a legal question. The such investigation consists of the choice of hypothesis, the assortment ascertainment of facts, their classification, elimination of relevance, the use of inductive and deductive reasoning, and the assertion of a conclusion [26]. In essence, it involves analysing facts, legal propositions and doctrines and applying legal reasoning to conclusions [27].

Legal research has been broadly classified into two distinctive categories, whether it examines theoretical and analytical aspects of Law as it is or observes relevant social facts interrelated with the Law as it ought to be: Doctrinal Research Methodology and Non-Doctrinal Research Methodology.

Doctrinal Research Methodology

The word "doctrinal" is a derivative rooted in the Latin noun "*doctrin*e, " meaning instruction, knowledge, principle, or learning. Doctrinal Legal Research Methodology is a thorough and critical inquiry or investigation into legal rules, doctrines, principles, and concepts. It involves a severe methodical exposition, analysis, and critical evaluation of legal rules, principles, and philosophies and their inter-relationship [28]. It concerns a critical review of legislation and decisional processes and their underlying policy [29].

Doctrinal Legal Research Methodology is also regarded as the Conventional Legal Approach to Law - research into Law as it is [30]. It is an analysis of the black letters of the Law.

Renowned legal scholars have also proffered a definition for Doctrinal Legal Research Methodology. For example, Dr S.N. Jain observed that Doctrinal Research involves analysing case law, arranging, ordering, and systematising legal propositions, and studying legal institutions through legal reasoning and rational deduction [31].

Dr R. Myneni has defined it as "research that has been carried out on a legal proposition or propositions by way of analysing existing statutory provisions and cases by applying the reasoning power." [32] To Ian Dobinson and Francis Johns, "Doctrinal or theoretical legal research can be defined as research which asks what the Law is in a particular area. It is concerned with the legal doctrine's analysis, development and application. This type of research is also known as pure theoretical research [33]. It consists of either simple research directed at finding a specific statement of the Law or a more complex and in-depth analysis of legal reasoning [34]. Paul Chynoweth states that "doctrinal legal research is concerned with the formulation of legal "doctrines" through the analysis of legal rules." [35] Prof. Dr Khushal Vibhute & FiliposAynalem has defined doctrinal legal research as research into legal doctrines through analysis of statutory provisions and cases by the application of the power of reasoning [36]. They stressed that this research methodology emphasises the analysis of legal rules, principles or doctrines [37]. Interestingly Researchers also use 'traditional legal research', 'theoretical legal research', 'library-based legal research', 'basic legal research', armchair legal research, and even 'black-letter law research' interchangeably to denote doctrinal legal research [38].

Types of Doctrinal Legal Research

We will address basic types of Legal doctrinal research. These are: analytical and comparative.

Analytical Legal Research

Analytical research is based on a critical evaluation of the existing Law. An excellent analytical researcher must examine existing laws on the subject matter under review. Where there are conflicts in judicial decisions, the analytical researcher must direct attention to such conflicts to support his conclusions, particularly for possible reform [39]. Analytical Legal research is a form of qualitative inquiry involving intensive thinking abilities and the appraisal of facts and information relative to the research being conducted. It enables lawyers to extract the most relevant information. Analytical research aims at an exposition of Law and legal concepts by looking at its source, the power

behind it, the interconnections with norms at different hierarchies, and the force behind it, which may reflect social recognition. It is essential to focus on meanings; gaps and lacunae in the Law must be filled up by exploring hidden ideas and reading between the lines. To analyse a law, determining its status in the hierarchy of legal norms is necessary. In International Law, constitutional jurisprudence, the Law of precedents, and Common Law, we come across the norms governing hierarchy. Once the Law is located, finding its meaning through analysis and synthesis is the step to be taken. Analytical research enables the discovery of new ideas for reform. For example, examining the increase in Crime Rates in Nigeria between 2015 to 2022 is a form of descriptive research, while explaining the why and the how of the spike in crime rate over time is an example of analytical research.

Comparative Legal Research

Comparative research involves the study of the laws of different countries on any given subject matter, either for law reform or for determining the suitability of any legal precept existing in one state as against the practice of other states. Comparative research compares the laws of several countries. Legislatures emulate each other, and legislative drafting bodies try to learn from each other's experiences. An example of such a comparison is section 84 of the Nigeria Evidence Act 2011, which was based on Section 65B of the Indian Information Technology Act. One of the problems a comparative researcher may encounter is the basis of comparison, which country to choose for study, what books and other materials to consult and how much of the materials collected for the research will be reliable. In addition, the choice of the material for consultation may be available in a variety of forms or places [40].

They are two schools of thought about comparative legal research [41]. The first school sees comparative legal research as a mere method of addressing legal problems. At the same time, the second school treats it as a dogmatic science that aims at studying and collating the laws of different countries in a systematic order, extracting the similarities and differences in the rules adopted by various countries to solve problems in the organised society. Law reformers, for example, the Nigeria law reform commission, will usually carry out a comparative study of foreign systems before initiating or proposing amendments to the existing ones. A comparative approach to the Law gives valuable ideas to the Legislature for effective resolutions to legal problems. However, such comparisons are most effective if applied to laws of countries whose social conditions bear substantial resemblance to each other. In the instant case, India and Nigeria have some areas of similarity in the criminal code. Comparative jurists should primarily refer to legal systems likely to supply them with unique stimulation for the problem examined [42]. A scholar may study the conspiracy offence by conducting a comparative analysis of India, Nigeria and England. This form of legislative *borrowing or transfer* is the most common legal reform or change [43].

The role that legal transferability plays when carrying out comparative research is explained by WATSON when he states that Comparative Law is a study of the legal borrowings or transplants that can and should be made. How, when, why, and from which systems are critical issues [44].

The transferability principle is pertinent to comparative research, particularly for legislative reform. The need for applicability of the transferred Law within the cultural and or national context of the receiving country must be considered. This is because the inapplicability of the transferred Law will lead to failure. Failure of purpose signifies not only the collapse of the intended regulation but also the wastage of resources in drafting the imported Law, enforcing an inevitably failing legislation, and, more importantly, creating the false or fraudulent impression that the problem is adequately addressed [45]. Herein lies the importance of the study of 'legal culture' when carrying out comparative research. PETER and SCHWENKE referred to their approach to the study of comparative Law as follows;

"At all stages of comparative research, the real problems are …the lack of complete knowledge and understanding of foreign legal rules and cultures… They (comparatists) must know something about the historical, social, economic, political, cultural, and psychological context which has made a rule or proposition what it is. We must look not only at rules but at legal cultures, traditions, ideals, ideologies, identities, and entire legal discourses [46].

Given the different legal cultures, comparative research should be conducted on how the legal institution has been transplanted into the recipient legal systems. Taking into account that the transplantation process may vary based on the social, legal, economic, fiscal, financial, and technical circumstances prevailing in each country's legal culture and legal system [47].

Advantages of Doctrinal Legal Research Methodology: -

i) Doctrinal Legal research is mostly stress-free. It spares the researcher the rigour of gathering first-hand information from field studies since it never deals with field study or any other empirical means. Instead, it analyses available secondary data from authoritative sources which have already been collected and processed by others.
ii) It provides lawyers, judges and others with reachable, accessible and immediate instruments to reach a legal decision.
iii) It helps in the consistency and certainty of the Law. In addition, such research contributes to understanding the Law, legal concepts and doctrines.
iv) Doctrinal Legal research provides quick answers to legal problems.
v) It also helps point out the inbuilt loopholes, gaps, ambiguities or inconsistencies in the substantive Law.
vi) Doctrinal Legal research helps predict how legal principles, concepts or doctrines will proceed [48].

Disadvantages of Doctrinal Legal Research

i) This research methodology has been criticised for being highly theoretical, technical, uncritical, and conservative without due attention or thought to the legal process's social, economic, and political importance [49].
ii) It is subjective since it results from an individual analysis of a researcher.
iii) Events have revealed that several factors outside the legal system may be responsible for the non-implementation or poor implementation of a given piece of legislation. However, doctrinal Research Methodology needs to look into these factors. This has led to the conclusion that the study of Law in isolation

cannot build rights for human society. Consequently, a newer approach to studying Law with a socio-legal perspective (non-doctrinal legal research methodology) has emerged in the international legal research arena.

iv) In many cases, the gap between the actual social behaviour and the behaviour demanded by the Legal norm is not addressed by Doctrinal Research Methodology.

v) Doctrinal legal research emphasises traditional sources of Law and comparative judicial pronouncements of appellate courts. It fails to explore the actual practice of lower courts and administrative agencies with judicial and quasi-judicial functions due to inadequate reporting culture.

Non-Doctrinal Legal Research or Socio-Legal

In these modern times, doctrinal legal research has received a severe jolt due to changes in the philosophy of Law towards socio-economic transformation through Law and legal institutions. This metamorphosis is because Law is now perceived as an integral part of the social process. It aims to organise society in a systematic and peaceful or orderly manner. Therefore, research tools must be altered to cope with societal problems or devise measures to eliminate the different evils. Therefore, non-doctrinal legal research is a tool for social engineering because the Law is for society, and the Law is also the outcome of the present reaction of society. Society is a dynamic concept and has also influenced the Law to become dynamic. To influence Law in this dynamic state, empirical legal research is the only solution to this metamorphosis.

The main reasons and arguments stressing the need to refocus on social facets of Law are:

Firstly, the emergence of sociological jurisprudence [50] Furthermore, its underlying philosophy assigned Law with the task of social engineering. Almost every modern civilised state perceives 'law' as an active instrument of socio-economic justice and, thereby, a vehicle of social engineering. This new operational facet of Law has inevitably led to enacting enormous statutes with specified socio-economic drivers. We have come to live in an age of social welfare laws. The Childs Right Act 2003 and eventual Child Rights Laws adopted by individual states in Nigeria were in response to the sudden increase in child abuse, defilement and sexual-related offences affecting minors in the country. This is a clear response to the current biting menace of child molestation in Nigeria

secondly, it has become necessary to carry out frequent opinion enquiry (such as public hearings usually carried out in the senate or house of assembly) of stakeholders so that the Legislature can utilise this feedback to carry out its function effectively.

Thirdly, non-legal factors may be responsible for a law's non-implementation or poor implementation. A systematic probe into these factors (in the form of public hearings) and their influence on the operation of the Law is necessary to identify this blockage to implement appropriate strategies to remove them or minimise their impact on the Law so that the Law can be made an effective instrument of socio-economic transformation. For example, the subject of open grazing in Nigeria led to several public hearings until the issues surrounding the ban were duly trashed locally and nationally. In Rivers state, several unreported sexual offences existed, leading to poor prosecution of sexual offenders. The Rivers state administration of the criminal justice monitoring council set up a sexual assault response team to provide quick response and refuge for victims and systems to facilitate apprehension and prosecution of suspects, thereby strengthening the potential of the Childs Right Law [51].

There is nearly always a particular 'gap' between actual social behaviour and the behaviour demanded by the Law. Identifying the 'gap' becomes necessary for strengthening the Law's potential as a vehicle for socio-economic justice [52]. Indeed investigation by empirical data, the operational facets of Law intended to change or mould human attitudes and to bring some socio-economic transformation in the society is as important as analysing Law as it exists in the book because the emphasis is not only on legal concepts or doctrines but on people, social values and social institutions.

Types of Non-Doctrinal/Socio-legal Research

Empirical Research

Empiricism refers to a foundation in experience or experiment. The word “empirical” denotes evidence based on observation or experience. Empirical research helps to bring the black letter law into reality by building our theoretical understanding of Law as a social and political phenomenon and contributes to the development of social theory. However, there has been a slow development of the empirical methodology in Law, which has continued [53].

There are several ways of collecting empirical data for social-legal research. The essential

Tools of data collection for socio-legal analysis are ***(i)*** interview, (ii) questionnaire, (iii) schedule, (iv) interview guide, (v) observation, participant or non-participant, and (vi) published or unpublished materials (such as Census Reports, Reports of Governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies, and appropriate literature on the sociology of Law). The first five methods of data collection are primary sources of empirical data. The last is a secondary source of information, as the researcher indirectly collects the necessary information from published documents. Further, the interview and schedule involve direct oral communication between the information-giver (respondent) and the information-seeker (investigator). In contrast, a questionnaire involves written communication between the researcher and his respondents. Finally, in observation, the researcher uses his eyes for data collection. Thus it is called a visual method of data collection [54]. It enables all stakeholders of the legal profession to appreciate how the Law works in its social context. However, the value of empiricism in Law is still in its teething stage.

Inter-Disciplinary Legal Research

Inter-disciplinary legal research is research done by a legal scholar in association with scholars from other disciplines related to Law, such as sociology, anthropology, political science, history, philosophy, psychology, and economics. It is a collaborative effort by scholars of different disciplines to integrate their disciplinary insights and apply the same to the study of legal problems. Interdisciplinary legal research leads to better insight into the legal fact under investigation. It also offers more sound and sophisticated solutions to problems that can be suggested with doctrinal research. Interdisciplinary research needs some operational difficulties. A few prominent among them are:

1. Each discipline has its concepts. It may take a

considerable time for the participants to understand the different content expressions. For example, the languages of Law and social sciences differ. The language of the Law is essentially directive and normative, whereas the language of sociology is descriptive, revealing or explanatory. This may be a barrier between a legal scholar and a non-lawyer joining cooperative legal research.
2. Every discipline has its research tools, techniques and methods. However, they vary from discipline to discipline. Therefore, sometimes integrating these tools, methods and techniques in interdisciplinary legal research becomes difficult.
3. Each participant, consciously or unconsciously, may be tempted to insist that his discipline dominates the other in the research endeavour.
4. Cooperative legal research requires compatible scholars' habits and a comfortable working atmosphere. Both of these two may encourage individual researchers to take the initiative. However, unfortunately, the hitherto tradition of mono-disciplinary research has inculcated some peculiar habits in the researchers, which they might find challenging to deviate from [55].

Scientific Legal Research

Research is, by definition, scientific. Most academic lawyers have been reluctant to engage in scientific, legal research [56]. It is no surprise that there is no Nobel Prize in legal science [57]. The scientific aspect of legal analysis is evolving through engaging other disciplines, particularly within social sciences. Indeed, the contribution of legal research to science is mainly limited to engagement with social sciences [58]. For instance, such scientific, legal analysis has been exploited to test the economic theory called ***Coase*** theorem. This theorem states that legal rules (in particular, the allocation of property rights) will not be necessary if there are no transaction costs because good bargaining will lead to a more efficient outcome than rules [59]. Controlled experiments can be helpful and have indeed confirmed the ***Coase theorem*** [60]. Other examples concern the likely impact of legal rules. For example, whether damage caps affect the parties' behaviour in lawsuits has been queried. Experiments have demonstrated that the level of the damage cap influences the probability of an out-of-court settlement [61]. These experimental strategies are the point where Law and science mostly meet.

Most academic lawyers have proffered [62], various explanations for reluctance to participate in scientific discussion. To wit

- Lack of training, particularly in empirical methods [63].
- Academic institutions emphasise that they focus on preparing students for legal practice only. Consequently, legal academics are usually more concerned with accurately describing the Law than scientific theories.
- Finally, in contrast to nature and many other social sciences, the Law is peculiar. It is like a wanderer in the desert. Few words changed by legislation may change a law drastically. Therefore, no accepted or objective theory of Law applies to every legal system and to which legal scholars in every country can appeal in explaining institutions or rules of their systems as the case is in science" [64].

Nevertheless, there is still a need to combine doctrinal research with empirical scientific research in Law if the legal analysis is to contribute usefully to knowledge generation.

1. Legal Research Involving Non-Legal Topics

The legal approach to non-legal issues is expected. For example, academic and corporate lawyers use corporate governance to analyse legal aspects of ethics, corporate social responsibility, transparency, and shadow directors to determine how a company is governed [65]. This approach is, however, more comprehensive than commercial questions. Another example is the analysis of factors contributing to a high crime rate in a particular state or country. Concerning Law, one can examine the strength of the Law on free education, job and income inequality and the composition of the population concerning crime [66]. Another topical issue is the adoption of the hijab by the supreme court in Nigeria, which is essentially a religious issue being addressed legally by the supreme court. The hijab has unleashed all kinds of multifactorial issues like gender equality, religious fundamentalism, and tradition. Culture and political extremism even worldwide. Another topical non-legal theme is the measures that should be adopted to tackle climate change. Concerning the Law, various national and international endeavours can be discussed, such as regional planning and housing through treaties that can prevent human interference with climate; similarly, climate change as a natural phenomenon can also be addressed by developing technologies such as ocean fertilisation activities and other strategies to speed up the ocean carbon cycle [67].

The attractiveness of applying these legal approaches to non-legal issues is that they provide a comprehensive view of a particular topic. These approaches avoid falling into the trap of focusing on one piece of the jigsaw only to disregard other essential and interconnected issues. As the links between Law and other factors are researched, achieving complete results could also be relatively easy.

Advantages of Non-Doctrinal Legal Research [68]

Advantages

Non-doctrinal legal research seeks answers to various questions that have a bearing on the social dimension or social performance of Law and its impact on social behaviour. Socio-legal research has several advantages. A few prominent among them are:

1. Social-legal research exposes the gaps between legislative ideals and social reality and paints a realistic picture of law-in-action. It particularly reveals the gap between the practice of law enforcers, regulators, and adjudicators and the improper use of the Law by intended beneficiaries of the Law. Socio-legal research exposes the cause of ineffectiveness. It also reveals the reasons or factors causing the inability to use the Law. Through experience, the non-doctrinal legal study highlights the underlying currents or factors (like unawareness on the part of the beneficiaries, the unaffordable cost of seeking legal redress, or the fear of further victimisation if the legal redress is pursued) that have been desisting them from seeking the benefits that the Law provides. It, thus, exposes the bottlenecks in the operation of Law.
2. Non-doctrinal legal research through empiricism and socio-legal research enables the assessment of the

influence of Law on the social values, outlook, and attitude towards the changes anticipated by Law under inquiry. Furthermore, it emphasises the factors creating impediments or problems for the Law in attaining its goals.
3. Non-doctrinal legal research provides essential feedback to the policy-makers, Legislature, and Judges for better formulation, enforcement and interpretation of the Law.
4. Socio-legal research is invaluable in shaping social legislation making them more effective instruments of socio-economic transformation [69].

Limitations

Though socio-legal research has great potential, a few limitations [70] must be mentioned to put its role in the proper perspective. A few significant points are outlined below.

1. Non-doctrinal legal research is highly time-consuming and expensive as it involves much time for data collection from the field. It also demands additional training in designing and employing data collection tools, which entails more time and costs for researchers or policy-makers [71].
2. The essential data collection tools, *namely* interview, questionnaire, schedule and observation, require specialised skills and are full of difficulties. The consequence of this limitation of non-doctrinal legal research is that even well-trained social scientists can only undertake socio-legal research with a solid background in doctrinal legal research. Similarly, a scholar with a strong base in legal principles cannot quickly embark on non-doctrinal legal research without sufficient training in social science research techniques. In either case, non-doctrinal legal research becomes a nightmare for both. A way out, therefore, is an interdisciplinary approach to investigating legal problems despite their peculiar challenges.
3. Due to complicated social, political and economic settings and multiple factors, the socio-legal researcher may rely on his personal bias to solve research problems.

Due to these limitations of socio-legal research, it is not surprising that scholars of Law and legal academia have contributed little to non-doctrinal legal analysis. The vital professional priorities of law teachers that have kept them away from socio-legal research are obsessive pre-occupation with teaching, preparation of teaching materials and casebooks for monetary and professional gains, and tendering advice to their clients [72]. Many are not well-trained in the techniques and nuances of socio-legal research. This lack of training has made thee wary of non-doctrinal legal study and developed a somewhat professionally unfavourable climate for socio-legal research.

The Growth and Justification for Interdisciplinary Legal Research

In a fast-changing world, which depends on science and technology, it is tough for disciplines to remain isolated and distinct from each other. When fields isolate, research outcomes and achievements are affected negatively. Interdisciplinary research equips the researcher with multi-skills when disciplines interact with each other. To address this, “interdisciplinary studies have become an emerging trend to solve a problem that is hard to solve by a single discipline [73]. Researchers from different disciplines use different terminology to understand "interdisciplinary studies". For example, we hear about "multi-disciplinary" and "the study of interdisciplinary, mono-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary, Quasi-disciplinary interdisciplinary Legal research.

Conventionally, legal scholars have been engaged in analysing legal concepts, doctrines, statutes, or statutory provisions in the light of judicial pronouncements. This type of legal research is categorised as 'monodisciplinary legal research' as only one discipline is involved. Doctrinal legal research falls into this category. However, as discussed above, mono-disciplinary/doctrinal legal research has limitations.

Recently some new trends away from mono-disciplinary legal research have emerged .wherein an inquiry into legal issues transgresses the discipline of Law and touches upon the disciplines related to Law. Hence, it may be labelled as transdisciplinary legal research.

It is now trite that laws govern real-life situations. All disciplines that are connected with real life have some nexus with Law. History, philosophy, sociology, psychology, and religion are thus related to Law [74]. This affinity has led some legal scholars to extend their range of investigation beyond Law and to enter into other related disciplines to extract the broader implications of laws and their applicability. Such legal research is called 'trans-disciplinary legal research [75]. As it goes beyond the Law to peep into another discipline with which Law is proximately connected [76]. Compared to mono-disciplinary legal research, trans-disciplinary legal research has more potential for contributing to the advancement of knowledge and development [77]. Trans-disciplinary legal research may be quasi-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, or interdisciplinary [78].

Quasi-disciplinary legal research is research undertaken by the same scholar of Law from different perspectives that transgress the discipline of Law. For example, a writer on taxation laws uses his learning in accountancy or public finance to explain the legal rules in-depth.

Multi-disciplinary legal research, unlike quasi-disciplinary research, involves a study of a common problem by scholars of several disciplines, each studying it from his specialised angle. For example, scholars of Law, sociology, or political science may individually explore the issues of gender equality [79].

Scholars from different disciplines jointly undertake interdisciplinary legal research. However, **trans-disciplinary research**, *namely*, **quasi-disciplinary** and **inter-disciplinary**, are closely related to legal research. Hence, they do deserve our attention.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Even though all stakeholders in the legal profession have adopted the doctrinal legal research methodology as the traditional research method, the shortcomings of the doctrinal legal research methodology as discussed above, viz a viz the dynamism of the society, has caused the realisation that the doctrinal legal research methodology is inadequate in addressing the various societal problems. This realisation led to the advent of the non-doctrinal legal research methodology, which focused on studying the relationship between Law and different aspects of society.

However, It is worthy of emphasis that the non-doctrinal legal research methodology has its footing on the outcome of the doctrinal legal research methodology Gestel and Miclitz summarised this mixed relationship in the following words:

"It is just as impossible to undertake good multi-disciplinary or empirical research without a proper understanding of legal doctrine as it is to conduct solid doctrinal research without at least some knowledge of facts and fact-finding. One needs this understanding, not in the last place, in order to be able to raise the right questions without making a mockery of Law and legal theory. If the opposite were true, things would be a lot easier, and there would probably not have been such a long history of friction between legal formalism, naturalism and (new) legal realism..." [80].

Stemming from the preceding, the distinction between doctrinal and non-doctrinal legal research is mainly of emphasis. In doctrinal legal research, the main objective is to clarify the Law, take a position, give reasons when the Law is in conflict, and establish methods for improving the Law. In contrast, non-doctrinal legal research focuses on understanding the social dimension or social facet of Law and its impact on social attitude. In addition, it emphasises the social auditing of Law [81].

From the above analysis, the truth is that both legal research forms have advantages and disadvantages. This means that none of them is infallible or complete in itself. One is rooted in theory, while the other is in practicality. As theory cannot be sacrificed for practicality alone and vice versa, both have roles in research [82].

They need to and must support each other. Doctrinal legal research and non-doctrinal legal research are not mutually exclusive, and they are complementary to each other. Non-doctrinal legal research cannot displace doctrinal legal research. It can be a valuable supplement or addition to doctrinal legal research or usable in a hybrid form. Indeed It is now accepted that theoretical research without any empirical content is hollow and that empirical work without supporting theory is shallow [83]. Social research must thrive on a solid infrastructure base on doctrinal analyses of authoritative legal materials. Convergence rather than the rivalry between doctrinal and non-doctrinal socio-legal research could only be the best approach to tackle problems in the legal field. Both legal research methods should complement each other's limitations where applicable. Legal issues coupled with manifold social facts regarding the economy, environment, culture, psychology, information technology, and religion are studied while conducting socio-legal research. To conduct such studies, a proper foundation of the doctrinal analysis of statutes, legal principles and case laws from authorities can only be supplied through observing the problems. The socio-legal impact study of Law based on public opinion can bring practical world problems to policy-makers.

Nevertheless, the foundation could again be doctrinal research outcomes to make public opinion mature. Doctrinal legal researches give input to the public to reach well-informed decisions, resulting in mature and correct public opinion. The depository knowledge generated from doctrinal legal research could be the basis for public opinion formation on legal reform and the impact of a particular law. Those public opinions can be brought as data through empirical studies. Indeed, much good can be generated by harmonising doctrinal and non-doctrinal legal research methods when solving real-life problems [84]. Consequent to the above recommend as follows.

- A robust study of non-doctrinal research methods should be included as coursework in the undergraduate curriculum. This will help catch them early enough to bridge the gap of inadequate training that has previously caused difficulty in empirical research. Consequently, students will be enabled to ease into the mixed method proposed in this paper.
- This mixed approach should also be a compulsory regimen in all scholarly works at postgraduate levels.
- Academic institutions should encourage and motivate postgraduate proposals with a well-blended approach by providing incentives such as scholarships, awards and grants. This will facilitate and gravitate research scholars towards more deliberate engagement in this kind of research.
- The Federal Government, in line with Law Reform Commission Act [85] should sponsor all legal research with a sociological flavour and interest in effective reform. Such financial support will ensure that all reform proposals thoroughly involve all aspects of doctrinal and non-doctrinal research.

Legal academics must be willing to engage in joint work and co-authorship with colleagues from other disciplines. Interdisciplinary co-authorship should be applauded, supported, and encouraged in academic circles. Many significant social and global problems cross disciplinary boundaries. The intricacy of these problems calls for synthesising multiple disciplines and new research areas beyond traditional disciplinary frameworks. An all-inclusive approach to understanding these problems necessitates the integration of different branches of knowledge [86]. Co-authorship will increase the trend towards the blended approach proposed in this paper.

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