Positivist God and reformed half-nihilist Satan: Examining the research dimension of the story of Job

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Abstract

This study examined the research dimension of the story of Job in the Bible on the premise that it derived from a scientific inquiry. The story portrays Job as an upright man who suffered misfortune through no fault of his; struggled to maintain his integrity throughout his suffering and finally restored beyond his former state. This study, thus, delineated the research features of the story of Job and discussed implications for theory, practice and teaching of research methods. This was a documentary research which employed document analysis to analyze and interpret selected texts with scholarly arguments and reported from an educational researcher's perspective and contextualization within the research paradigms of modern era. The study revealed sixteen (16) salient features that confirm the story derived from an inquiry; an A-B-A-B Single-n design; God's positivist research perspective and the hint from the conclusion that Satan is a reformed half-nihilist.

Keywords: Conceptual frameworks, nihilism, positivist paradigm, reciprocity, Single-n A-B-A-B design

Introduction

Research has become the most reliable and generally acceptable process in pursuit of knowledge. It is the means of tackling societal problems, spurring economic growth and the overall development of nations (George et al., 2016; Solarin & Yen, 2016). The teaching of research in educational and specialized training institutions becomes imperative as a way to imbue a critical mass of the citizenry with scientific thinking, skills and disposition for research in all fields. Educational institutions privilege research output; it is seen as complementary to instruction, and the christening of academic degrees reveals explicitly the connection between academia and philosophy. There is also a link between research and philosophy (Chia, 2002; Creswell, 2013). Thus, academia, research and philosophy may have interrelation, interconnection and interdependence. Research that explores and makes explicit these connections and provides research insight especially from a non-traditional source is worthwhile.

Research Motivation and Statement

This study's premise is that Job's suffering resulted from an inquiry. Biblical insight, research intuition, serendipity and conviction birthed this premise. As an avid reader of the Bible and Research Methods Lecturer in a public university, the thought of the story of Job came up serendipitously. While contemplating suffering, the researcher intuitively reckoned the test of Job's faith to be a scientific inquiry. Examined carefully, the story is logical and systematic in the dialogue (Between God and Satan), the operationalization and eventual implementation. It seemed both wanted to establish the true motive for Job's righteous living and employed suffering as a

tool. Suffering, in a sense, is common to both the story of Job and research thus the motivation to explore the research dimension of the book of Job.

According to Cohen et al. (2007), subjective human experience with phenomena and authority were the earliest sources of truth; Aristotelian deductive reasoning, Baconian inductive reasoning, a combination of the two, inductive-deductive reasoning followed. Finally, scientific research emerged as the most unbiased way of establishing truth. This implies either evolution or invention of research. The Bible must have constituted one of the traditional sources of truth prior to the emergence of research. In a secularized modern era, it seems unsuspecting the Bible has research imprints. Does the Bible, with focus on the Book of Job, have research ideas with implications for theory and practice in today' scientific world? Research efforts toward this end would provide more insight, give a different perspective and add to the history of research.

Literature Review

The review covers the theory of research perspectives and paradigms, a brief context for the book of Job and treatises on it. Research in general is underpinned by some philosophical assumptions about reality. Thus, scientists establish truth through worldviews informed by sets of philosophical assumptions that guide the scientific enterprise called paradigms (Creswell, 2014). The diversity of views on the constitution and experience of reality in research birthed research theoretical perspectives. Ontology and epistemology basically characterize research paradigms. Ontology examines the nature and forms of reality and epistemology focuses on manifestation of reality to the knower. Thus, the assumptions of how knowledge of reality is ascertained (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). These assumptions reveal the theoretical perspective or orientation of a researcher and consequently the paradigm (Mack, 2010). It also provides the basis for methodological considerations (Kusi, 2012). Thus related ontological, epistemological assumptions and methodological considerations constitute a research paradigm (Cohen et al., 2007; Mack, 2010).

The book of Job is believed to be the oldest in the Bible (Ross, 2011). Its authorship is dependent on who is believed to be the author (Fairchild, 2018). The name 'Job' is still prevalent in 21st century Western Europe, the region where most people bear this name and Netherlands, the country where the name is most popular. He is called Ayoub or Ayyub in Arabic; Hiob in Biblical German; Iob in Biblical Greek; 'Iyyov in Biblical Hebrew; Giobbe in Biblical Italian; Iob in Biblical Latin; Joby in English; Ayuba in Hausa; Iyov in Hebrew; Ayoub in Persian and Eyüp in Turkish (Behind the Name, 2019), an attest to the cross-cultural nature of the name and the Bible. Briefly, the story portrays Job as an upright man who suffered misfortune through no fault of his; struggled to maintain his integrity during his suffering and finally restored beyond his former state (Andersen, 2015; Atkinson, 2022; Lyons, 2013).

The book of Job is a prose with poetic beauty and complexity (Tomingas, 2020; Van der Lugt, 2021). It furnishes spiritual and moral inspiration and theological understanding of God's permit of suffering for a righteous man (Glatzer, 2002; Kynes, 2020) and a subject of academic treatise in such areas as theology (De Joode, 2018; Jones, 2010; Kwon, 2019), suffering (Atkinson, 2022; Gasser, 2021; Garber Jr, 2015; Zhang, 2020) and trauma and clinical diagnosis (Gotto Jr, 2012; Grafius, 2018; Keener, 2023; Roxberg, et al., 2013). In a rebuttal, it received a philosophical critique that discounted it as a thought experiment (Fehige, 2019; Mackie, 2017). Glatzer (2002) glazed the research dimension in his edited book –'Dimensions of Job: A Study and Selected Readings' which gave the story an extensively review. While Job's story is popular and the subject

of academic treatise, its scientific research dimension remain unexamined. An addition of this dimension that researchers may have overlooked becomes a novel and worthwhile scholarly venture.

Research Purpose and Questions

What will emerge when we place modern-era research templates on the story of Job? What implications do Job's story have for scientific research? This study examined Job's story from modern-era research perspectives and paradigms and addressed the following research questions:

1. What features confirm the story of Job as deriving from a scientific inquiry?
2. What specific research design is implicit in the story of Job?
3. How is God's research theoretical perspective revealed in the context of the story of Job?
4. What research-based implications can be drawn from the story of Job?

This study adds a research dimension to the story of Job thus extends its realm of applicability with ramifications for research theory, practice and the teaching of research methods.

Methodology

This is a qualitative study informed by the interpretivist paradigm. It employed documentary research, "a method used to analyze and interpret document using various approaches" (Tight, 2019). Syvertsen (as cited in Karppinen & Moe, 2012, p.3) defines documents as "written or audio-visual remains not produced or generated by the researcher". It is devoid of researcher's intervention (Bowen, 2009). The Bible is a sacred book, a religious text and a historical document written by about 40 authors over a period of 1500 years (Fairchild, 2018). It is reactive and, in this context, considered both as a source and topic of study (Karppinen & Moe, 2012). The interrogation of biblical texts imply a discourse with its authors and a let into their cognition and culture (Carley, 1994). The Bible constitutes a primary data source and offers contemporaneous corroboration of the history of Job' story. Its internal and external criticism are presumed. The New King James® Version (NKJV) copyrighted by Thomas Nelson International, 1982 was used. The clarity of language and avoidance of the use of Elizabethan English words dictated its choice.

Thus, document analysis was employed. It involves analysis of text in preexisting document (Morgan, 2022). It is an iterative process that involves skimming, reading and interpretation and employs elements of content and thematic analysis (Bowen, 2009). The book of Job stood selected. This was interpreted to derive meanings through emphasized words, phrases, clauses and sentences in excerpts and description of contexts from research perspective to provide evidence of research features. The hermeneutical traditions of hermeneutic divination, reenactment, reconstructivism and production (Patterson & Williams, 2002) informed this study. Thus, the research features were delineated, implicit design illustrated, God's research perspective established and implications for research drawn.

Not all the strategies for trustworthiness are usable in a study (Connelly, 2016; Leung, 2015). This study precludes respondent dependent strategies thus all authenticity requirements. Prolonged engagement, through expense of time familiarizing with the rich data; data triangulation, through identifying salient characteristics and elements; and persistent observation, through use of different

data sources (Other Bible books and scholarly treatises) ensured credibility. Thick descriptions and provision of evidence of applicability of findings to other contexts, in time and place, ensured transferability. Dependability audit, through review by an independent auditor; confirmability, through audit trail, a thorough description of data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes and reflexivity, through keeping of records in a reflective journal were ensured.

Results

The data analyzed for this study showed that God and Satan engaged in a dialogue during which Satan was commissioned to investigate Job's true motive. The data analysis used quotes from the book of Job to provide explicit or implicit evidence and supported inferences and arguments drawing on researcher's knowledge of research in the modern era.

Research features that confirm the story of Job as a scientific inquiry

The explicit and implicit research features have been systematically identified, delineated and explained to answer the first research question.

Motivation and purpose of the study (1)

"***Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth***, *blameless and upright, and* ***one who feared God and shuns evil*** (Job 1:8).

Suffering seemed the theme but the research motivation was to establish the motive for good human behaviour. The purpose stood revealed in God and Satan's collaboration (contest) to test the latter's declaration of a conditional truth- that Job, was properly motivated to live righteously.

Research interest, curiosity and roles of actors and agencies (2)

"*...**considered** my servant Job, ...there is none like him ... one who feared God and shuns evil*" *So Satan answered the LORD and said, "**Does Job fear God for nothing?*** (Job 1:8, 9).

God's research interest –"*...**considered** my servant Job…* " and Satan's curiosity- *"**Does Job fear God for nothing?**" are* evident. Satan's use of the phrase "***for nothing***" implies condition thus alluded a cause to Job's 'fear'. God had declared Job alone as one who's 'fear' was unconditional: "*…my servant Job ...none like him… one who feared*" It was not for all humanity. Satan's doubt necessitated an inquiry. God thus commissions the research, grants access and provides ethical guidelines: *... the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person."(*Job 1:12). Since functions imply roles, God [the LORD] played multiple roles as commissioner (sponsor) of research - "*the LORD **said** to Satan*"; owner of the setting (gatekeeper) - "*he is in your power"* and one-man Internal Review Board (IRB) or Ethical Committee- "*do not lay a hand on his person*" Satan's assigned role was a curious field researcher (principal investigator) - "*Behold, all that he has is in your power*".

Research questions (3)

Satan raised research questions illuminating the import of God's declaration: 1. *"Does Job fear God for nothing?" (Job 1:9)* ***2****. "Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? (Job 1:10).* Satan elaborates: "*You have blessed the work of his hands, and [in consequence**, insertion mine**] his possessions have increased*" (Job. 1:10).

He lists enjoyment of protection "*hedge around him*", blessings and increased possessions (prosperity) as the benefits (variables) accounting for Job's integrity.

Hypothesis and its characteristics (4)

Satan hypothesized based on the second research question: *"But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face."* (Job 1:11). The treatment was *"stretch out your hands and touch*" (Job 1:11; Job 2:5); the independent variables were *"all that he has"* (Job 1:11) and hypothesized effect, "*he will surely curse You to Your face*" (Job 1:11). God declared Job's integrity as unconditional. Satan declared the opposite; all humans are motivated by materials benefits and advantages to live with integrity. God deemed that a fallacy of hasty generalization because the declaration referred to Job in particular (Job 1:8; 2:3). The principle of reciprocity, a social psychological norm, is suspect as the theory under test. The hypothesis was unambiguous, testable, theory-based and one-directional.

Constructs (5)

The study reveals integrity/righteousness is an unobservable construct and measurable using observable predictable behaviours (acts of worship) - offering sacrifices, regular appeasement and avoiding evil (Job1:1, 5, 8). Here, there is fusion of constructs. Integrity/righteousness is composed of sub-constructs: "*blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shuns evil"* (Job 1:8). There was interchangeable use of integrity, righteousness and innocence as though same: *"…I will not remove mine* ***integrity*** *from me. My* ***righteousness*** *I hold fast, and …:* ***my heart shall not reproach me*** [**innocence]" (**Job 27:5, 6). This fusion amounts to simplification and compromise of construct validity and by extension, internal validity and external validity.

Research assumptions (6)

"*…my servant Job…who feared God and shuns evil" So Satan… said, "Does Job fear God for nothing?"...touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face"* (Job 1:8, 9, 11).

Implicit assumptions are evident. First, Job's life up to this time was ideal and acceptable to both parties. Second, his integrity/righteousness was not contested (Job 31). Third, reception of material benefits and advantages induces good deeds and fourth, the fear of God implies shunning evil and non-cursing behaviour (Job 1:11).

Cause and effect (7)

The independent variables (IVs) were protection, blessings and prosperity. The dependent variable (DV) was integrity/righteousness, culminating in non-cursing (or blessing) behaviours. This implies direct causal relationship between the IVs and DV. Covariance and temporal precedence between the IVs (treatment) and DV (effect) were presumed. Effect was determinable by the after-treatment observations of behaviour.

Application of research ethics by actors and agencies (8)

God was gatekeeper and owner of research site (Job 1:7, 8). God implicitly grants access to research site and explicitly to participant: "*he…is in your power*" (Job 1:12). He implicitly reviewed and explicitly approved Satan's proposed research design and treatment: "*…touch all that he has…* " (Job 1: 11). God as one-man Internal Review Board (IRB) restrained Satan

(researcher) not to cause reparable harm (health): "*do not lay hand on his person"* (Job 1:12) and later, irreparable harm (death): "…*but spare his life*" (Job 2:6). These reveal application of ethics prior to fieldwork. Satan suggested God conducts the inquiry Himself: "*Stretch out thy hand and touch*" (Job 1:11) but God assigns him the role: *"Behold all that he has is in your power"*. Researchers conduct field studies and implement interventions, not commissioners, gatekeepers and IRBs. Satan assumed the responsibility and was expected to observe the guidelines. *"So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord"* (Job 1:12) to plan and conduct fieldwork.

Fieldwork- Research procedure (9)

Satan was on field and implemented research procedure. This is evident in this narrative:

> *…a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing, and the donkeys feeding….When the Sabeans raided and took them away…they killed the servants ….While he was still speaking, another… said "The fire…fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants…, another… said, "The Chaldeans…raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants…, another … said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine…and suddenly a great wind came…struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead…"* (Job 1:13-19).

Satan eliminated aggregated IVs (wealth/properties/possessions, servants and children) in turns, in rapid succession and observed effects. First, oxen, donkeys and servants; second, sheep and servants; third, camels and servants and fourth, house, sons and daughters. The order suggests an elimination principle based on assumed degree of statistical significance. The IVs with the smallest to the largest significance were eliminated in turns and their effects observed. This constituted the first-phase treatment. Thus, by "*touch*" (Job 1: 11; 2:5), Satan meant withdrawal of IVs.

The effect of independent variables (10)

The ultimate effect of the series of IV elimination in the first phase of inquiry was: *"Then Job arose, and rent his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshipped"* (Job 1:20). Further, "...he said, *"…The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD"* (Job 1:21). Job's reaction reveals the treatment effects. He initially seemed unsettled by renting his cloth, shaving the head and falling to the ground and then, suddenly resorted to worship, justified God and blessed His name (character). The ultimate effect was emphatic: *"In all this Job did not sin nor charged God with wrong"* (Job 1:22). This reveals the humanity of Job. It is normal to react with despondency to suffering situations however a positive mental reorientation (attitude and optimism), based on an experiential knowledge of God, seem helpful in coping. The effect on Job's integrity was zero.

Research rigour or researcher bias? (11)

Failing to get the desired effect in the first phase, Satan again visited the setting and consequently initiated the second phase of inquiry best described as 'close shave'. He charged God for placing a limitation that precluded infliction of pain on Job himself:

> ***Again*** *…when the sons of God came to present themselves… Satan came also … the LORD said unto Satan, "…considered My servant Job …he holds fast to his integrity,*

> ***although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause****" So Satan answered…, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his* ***bone and his flesh****, and he will surely curse You to Your face"* (Job 2:1-5).

Satan criticized God for inhibiting a more rigorous inquiry, arguing the earlier treatment was not personal and not life threatening to Job. The previous variables were outside of himself-his beasts, servants, house and children. Their pain could not be his! Satan points to the inclusion of Jobs health in the IVs. He implied the selfishness of humanity (Job inclusive): *"all that a man has he will give for his life"* (Job 2:4). Thus, "*all that he has*" excluded Job's wife and friends. Unlike his children, servants and animals, these were not considered his properties. The request was granted but with a restraint: *"Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life"* (Job2:6). This was not arbitrary because Job's death would have been inconsequential since he could not have experienced death and still evince any behavioural response. Life and death are mutually exclusive. This restriction refutes consciousness in death and Hollywood portrayed notions of conscious ghosts. Satan's over-ambition to justify the initial hypothesis is revealed: "… ***you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause****"* (Job 2:3). His true motive was to harm the participant to make a point. A researcher who is prejudiced about the outcome of an inquiry taints and renders the undertaking unscientific and unacceptable. Comparing Job1:12 and Job 2:6, 'hand' is a metaphor for 'power'. Also, Job 2:6 implies there is life in ill-health. Thus, ill-health does not mean certain death. Euthanasia is precluded.

Satan's criticism initiated the second phase of inquiry. With permission granted and limitations given, Satan sets out (Job 2:7). It was rapid. He eliminated the health variable. Job's health failed as Satan "*…struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head*" (Job 2:7). The painful and itchy boils all over his body came with cracked skin that regularly breaks open which Job attributed to worms and dust (Job 7:5). The effect: *Job "took for himself a* ***potsherd*** *with which to scrape himself while he sat in the mist of* ***ashes***" (Job 2:8). He sought relief from pain through chemical and mechanical means rather than curse God! Ash is chemical (a base in nature) and using potsherd to scratch is mechanical and chemical, if proven to have medicinal properties.

Moderator variables and effect in inquiry (12)

Without God's explicit approval, Satan introduced variables he thought could evince his desired effect. He found it first, in Job's wife; second, in his three friends and third, in Elihu. Unlike his servants and children, these were not his property thus suffered no harm. They were not mediator variables but moderator variables (MVs). The suffering did not come directly through them to Job. Job ostensibly mentions: *"Nor is there any mediator between us"* (Job 9:33). They were meant to combine with his poor health to produce Satan's anticipated effect. Thus, in the first phase, IVs were eliminated but in the second, MVs were introduced. The effect of applying the first moderator variable (the wife's attitude)- *"Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die"* (Job 2:9) was: *"But he said unto her…Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity? In all this Job did not sin with his lips.* (Job 2:10). This implies active spousal discouragement may not change the integrity of a suffering person.

Satan applies three-in-one moderator variables-his three friends-Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar (Job 42:9). Eliphaz doubted Job's integrity and accused him of not being stoical enough: *"But now it is*

come upon you, and you are weary; it touches you, and you are troubled." **(Job 4:5**). Bildad followed suit and urged Job to repent: *…earnestly seek God and make your supplication…; if you were pure and upright; surely now he would awake for you, and prosper your rightful dwelling place.* (Job 8:5-7). Zophar blames Jobs plight on his evil deeds. **"***If iniquity were in your hand, and you put it far away…not let wickedness dwell in thy tent…the eyes of the wicked will fail…they shall not escape, And their hope- loss of life!"* (**J**ob 11:14, 20).

Job's responded to the three friends: "*But you forgers of lies, you are all worthless physicians. Oh that you would be silent, and it would be your wisdom!"* (Job 13:4, 5). He resolves to maintain his integrity come what may:

> *Far be it from me that I should say you are right: till I die I will not put away my integrity…. My righteousness I hold fast…my heart shall not reproach me …"* **…***"So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.* **(**Job 27:5, 6; 32:1).

The moderating effect of the three friends on Job was zero. It implies impugning motives, accusing and castigating a suffering person by associates may not have any statistically significant effect of evincing bad behaviour. Elihu's intervention was both negative and positive but also had no effect. He chastises Job for self-justification in faulting God and condemns his friends for not having right answers. He declared God as just in his dealing with humans and allowing them to be tested, an exercise of His divine prerogative. God has no intention to afflict and delights not in the suffering of man. Thus, the second phase treatment involved elimination of a major independent variable (health) and sequential introduction of major (wife) and graduated minor moderator variables (friends and Elihu) in turns. The effect of variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Table of effect of variables on Job's behaviour

Phases	Variables	Effect on Job's Behavior	
		Initial	Final
Phase 1	Oxen, donkeys and servants	No reaction	None
	Cattle and servants	No reaction	None
	Camels and servants	No reaction	None
	Children (sons)	Unsettled	Worship/Justified God
Phase 2	Health (Major independent variable)	Unfazed/Sought relief	None
	Health plus Wife (Major moderator variable)	Disappointed/defensive	None
	Health plus Three Friends (Minor moderator variables)	Unfazed/defensive	None

Elihu's intervention (Minor moderator variable)	Unfazed	None

Source: Author's own construction

There were moments Job seemed unsettled but he was unfazed. He worshipped and justified God, sought relief, felt disappointed in his wife and defensive with friends. The ultimate effect on Job was nil. This implies loss of health and active discouragement by wife and friends, in isolation or combined, had no negative effects on Job's integrity.

Threats to internal validity (13)

Threats to internal validity include selection, selection by maturation, maturation, instrumentation, testing, regression, history, and, mortality (attrition). Job stood selected and attrition would mean no participant. From the design, attrition, selection, regression and selection by maturation interactions were precluded. On history, Job had no prior test; on instrumentation, both parties agreed on test administration process and deemed the test reliable and valid. The rapidity of the inquiry process, the brief gap between the first and the second phase of inquiry and increased rigour of the testing process reduced any chances for Job's maturation. This makes the experiment one with a high internal validity and by implication external validity. Anybody with Job's motive for integrity will demonstrate same response irrespective of culture, race, location and time.

Limitations (14)

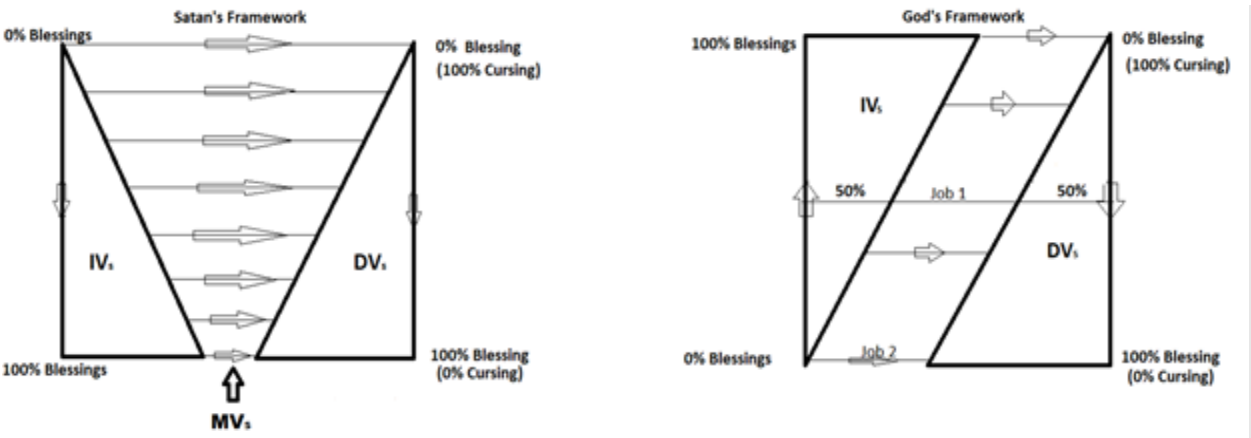
The features suggest a quantitative study but there were no numerical data and calibration on a named scale of measurement. This precludes statistical verification of effect. Threats to internal validity applicable to A-B-A-B design were not listed and control processes were not explained. There was no explicit statement either in support or not of the hypothesis. Satan's null hypothesis was: "*he will surely curse You to Your face*" (Job 1:11), thus the implied alternative hypothesis should be "*he will **not** [insertion mine] surely curse You to Your face*" (Job 1:11). In consonance with the principle of proof by contradiction, the null hypothesis rather assume the negative statement form. This is a further proof of Satan's bias.

Conclusions (15)

"*In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong*" (Job 1:22); "*In all this Job did not sin with his lips*" (Job 2:9). "*…for the LORD had accepted Job…and restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before*" (Job 42:9, 10). The conclusion was that the treatment did not elicit the predicted behavioural effect. Job did not live by the principle of reciprocity. Thus, not all humans live by it no matter how evidently widespread this norm in human society.

Conceptual Framework(s) (16)

The context was a contest of ideas, thus required two conceptual frameworks-one for God and the other for Satan. "…Satan came also among them (Job 1:6), not to bow before the Eternal King, but to further **his own** malicious ***designs*** against the righteous (White, 2022, p.373). These implicit conceptual frameworks are juxtaposed and explained as shown in figures 1a and 1b.



Figures 1a and 1b: Satan and God's conceptual frameworks

Source: Author's own construction

In standard conceptual frameworks, variables are isolated, represented as blocks and labeled. This study's conceptualization required alteration to reflect the logic behind reciprocity as argued by God and Satan thus used triangular representations. Briefly, Satan's framework implied direct proportion but God's incorporate both direct and inverse proportions. In Satan's, the value of an independent variable (IV) corresponds to the value of dependent variable [DV] throughout. This exactly depicts reciprocity of human behaviour-good for good and bad for bad or reward of kind actions and punishment of unkind ones (Falk & Fischbacher, 2006). In God's, the diagram is inverse but incorporates direct proportionality at the mid-point (JOB 1), indicating the reality of reciprocity but not as all pervading. It shows people can have blessings and still curse God and the opposite as well; those who still bless (do not curse) God even when blessings are withdrawn. Thus, Satan's framework was a constant or invariable relationship but in God's, the degree of blessing and cursing inversely vary. JOB1 depicts Job's pre-treatment condition (acknowledged by both) and JOB2 depicts Job's post-treatment condition (God's argument for Job before and after test). The region above JOB 1 shows ingratitude and below it shows philanthropy. God's view of the theory is extensive. It captures that aspect of the theory which indicate: 'good for better and evil for more evil'. This was absent in Satan's. Satan's framework had moderator variables (MVs) but these were absent in God's. In both frameworks the lines from the IVs to the DV are horizontal, not diagonal. It is however conclusive that intricate deferring conceptual frameworks implicitly underlie the story of Job.

These 16 identified research features confirm the story of Job as deriving from a scientific inquiry thus respond to the first question. The second question sought to determine the design implicit in Job's story. Designs, qualitative or quantitative, vary and are determinable using their characteristic features (Maxwell, 2008) as every research has an implicit or explicit design (Yin, 2009). The revealed features in the story of Job are thus used to determine the research design implicit.

Research design implicit in the story of Job

The inquiry had a single human participant-Job and aimed to correct hasty generalization. There were other humans but these were not the focus. Theory-based and testable hypothesis was derived

from research questions. Treatment involved eliminating IVs and introducing MVs in turns, and effects observed. Some threats to internal validity were addressed and carryover effect eliminated through stable baselines. Conceptual frameworks also contextualized the study. These are features of experiments, implying a quantitative approach. This precludes all qualitative designs and non-experimental quantitative designs under surveys, correlation and ex- post-facto. The absence of randomization and control precludes pure experiment. It points to a quasi-experimental design conducted at the same site in two phases. The design was a single-site, two-phase, multi-variate, single subject design. A multivariate A-B-A-B Single-n design fits this study. Table 2 reveals the implicit design.

Table 2: Illustration of Research Design Implicit

IVs present=Effect	1st set of IVs withdrawn =Effect	IV present=Effect	IV withdrawn =Effect
	2nd set of IVs withdrawn =Effect		IV withdrawn + 1st MV=Effect
	3rd set of IVs withdrawn =Effect		IV withdrawn + 2nd MV= Effect
	4th set of IVs withdrawn =Effect		IV withdrawn + 3rd MV=Effect
1st Baseline (Assumed effect)	Phase 1 predicted effect	2nd Baseline (Assumed effect)	Phase 2 predicted effect
A	**B**	**A**	**B**
(Job Chapter 1)		(Job Chapter 2-37)	

Source: Author's own construction

The third question sought to establish the research philosophical perspective of God. This was done in reference to the context, features and design implicit in the story of Job.

God's research theoretical perspective or orientation

God's research theoretical perspective or orientation in Job's story was positivism. The implicit design provides evidence. Experimental designs-single-n, pre-experimental, quasi-experimental and true experimental are categorized as quantitative research designs informed by the positivist perspective. Positivists develop hypotheses to test theories to make generalized conclusions. It means that God has no aversion for the positivist paradigm neither experiments involving human participant.

The fourth question sought to draw implications from the story of Job, once established as deriving from research, for theory and practice.

Research-based implications from the story of Job

1. The book of Job is a report of an experimental research. It contains salient research features and a design still relevant in a modern era. Limited to the book of Job, the Bible is a quasi-research textbook for A-B-A-B single-n quasi-experimental design, thus adaptable for teaching post-graduate research students (PGRs). PGRs prior familiarity with the story would make it easy for use in explaining experimental research to their understanding.

2. If the book of Job is the oldest in the Bible, then God (with Satan), not Aristotle (Mertens, 2023) or Comte (Pawlikowski et al., 2018), is the originator of positivism. The first proponent and first to use single-n design for testing a hypothesis in a rigorous, high-stake and high-risk inquiry involving a human participant to test the principle of reciprocity and prove its non-generalizability to all humanity. Job's story predates proponents of positivism cited in modern literature and is in verity the case when proponents are considered as generators of ideas or philosophies that guide thinking and practice.

3. The role and relevance of all agencies and research actors as existing in the modern era are a replication of the biblical model. Sponsors commission research, gatekeepers grant access, researchers conduct studies and review boards provide ethical guidelines and grant approval. This indicts research and higher educational institutions without ethical review boards or committees.

4. Job is a cross-cultural figure. He is a historical figure to Jews, Christians, Muslims and the Bahai faith among others. Research implications of the story of Job would appeal and receive the appreciation of all classes of people on the scientific thinking and investigation underlying the story. It shows that research has divine origins and endorsement, it is cross-cultural and addresses cross-cultural issues that affect humanity.

Discussion

The study examined the research dimension of Job's story. It delineated features that confirm the story as a scientific inquiry, determined the specific design, established God's research theoretical perspective and drew implications from the story. This was done through a documentary analysis of the book of Job in the New King James Version of Bible.

Job's story is purposeful, logical and systematic and investigated truth. It has key characteristics of research in Kerlinger's 1970 (as cited in Cohen et al., 2007, p.6) lingering half-a-century-old definition of research. The 16 delineated experimental research features points to research as discovered rather than invented by mankind. Job's story underscores the commissioning and conduct of curiosity-driven but relevant research that tests theories and extends knowledge. Thus, agencies- gatekeepers, commissioners, IRBs and researchers- are still relevant to modern-era research enterprise and been modelled. God's multiple roles as gatekeeper, commissioner and IRB is however inconsistent with modern–era perspectives and practice. It raises issues of conflict of interest and sacrifice of institutional autonomy. This notwithstanding, curiosity, interest and purpose still drive scientific undertakings. Research interests of funders are revealed in scheme notes; and grant proposals that meet this interest and look at scientific issues from global and multidisciplinary perspectives attract their funds. Multiple perspectives add freshness of insight and mirror the interconnection and interdependence of issues and phenomena in our complex

world. In this study, suffering, a global phenomenon, is the academic subject; investigation denotes research; God with Satan reveals the theological dimension and the tested theory, reciprocity, hints at how God and Satan hypothesized human behaviour. Thus, education (academia), theology, research, and social psychology synergized confirming the multi-dimensional nature of the story of Job (Glatzer, 2002).

The test of reciprocity- a social norm of "responding to a positive action with another positive action" and its converse in negative action (Fehr & Gächter, 2000) confirms theory testing as focal to explanatory research (Cohen et al., 2007). This focus remains the broader goal of natural, behavioural and social scientists in their bid to understand the complexity and not exactly predictable behaviour of humans (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The study reveals conceptual frameworks that defy single-diagram representation proposed as ideal (Oso & Onen, 2011) while the tested experimental hypothesis also had all the characteristics of a good hypothesis- theory-based, testable, unambiguity and existence of independent and dependent variables (Mitchell & Jolley, 2007). In line with current trends, hypotheses are derived from research objectives or questions (Oso & Onen, 2011, p.42, 43) and this is also modelled.

Job's story confirms every research has an implicit or explicit design (Yin, 2009; Maxwell, 2008) which researchers are obliged to make "explicit, to get it out in the open, where its strengths, limitations, and implications can be clearly understood" (Maxwell, 2008, p. 219). It confirms Yin's (2003) designation of designs as logical plans rather than logistical plans; Thompson and Panacek's (2006) definition of design as a "plan for setting up and testing a specific hypothesis or research question" (p.242); tying research designs and approaches to various paradigms and philosophical perspectives (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2014; Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006) and quantitative research as characterized by linear designs (Maxwell, 2008). Maxwell argues linear designs fail to represent "the logic and process of qualitative research". The designation of the design in Job's story (Single-n) under quantitative design is supported (see Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). It is conclusive the Bible has a record of a sophisticated single-n design used in high-stake and sensitive experiment with high internal validity. This endorses a design still in use in modern era (Mitchell & Jolley, 2007). Though rarely used in educational research because of single participant, it has reputation and extensive usage in psychology (Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021).

The synchrony of God's research perspective or orientation and design reveals the reflexive nexus between theory and practice of research. That early career researchers have difficulty applying the concept of research paradigm in proposals (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017) implies the knowledge of theoretical and philosophical perspectives is vital for research in academia. This underscores Kusi (2012) call for PDRs to demonstrate an "understanding of these issues" (p.11).

There is a clear endorsement of ethical research involving human participants. That God was a one-man IRB calls for its immediate creation by research and educational institutions which do not have it and for existing ones to be effective in their operations. The 1975 World Medical Association's prescription to establish review committees (Ruyter, 2019) is still relevant today.

That not all humans live by reciprocity constitutes a refutation of stereotyping and Nietzsche's nihilism-the philosophy of absence and nothingness (Slocombe, 2003; Gillespie, 1995) which reflects in modern-era devaluing of biblical morals and religious scruples. Job's story reveals the centrality of human choice in our behavioral response to suffering and captures a gamut of responses unexplainable by reciprocity alone. There is non-reciprocity, where people get what they

do not deserve in good or bad. This embraces ingratitude and stoical altruism (philanthropy). The former by those who receive blessings and yet curse and the later by those who do not receive blessings yet bless. Job's prayer for his guilty friends was non-reciprocal, yet it reciprocated his restoration by God. Life in an imperfect world reflects both principles. The inference is that Satan is a reformed half-nihilist. He already believed in God's existence (had a discussion and got approval from Him or else has no existence himself) and had evidence of the importance of moral and religious values in the restoration of Job. This story highlights patience, perseverance, endurance, loyalty, integrity and faith in God as enduring virtues. In Bible context, there is a declared certainty of reward for righteousness (Psalm 58:11).

The features of Job's story give indications of a scientific experiment with sophistry comparable to modern era thus deflates its discount, not even as a thought experiment (Fehige, 2019). It suggests a report of an empirical research commissioned and conducted by supernatural actors whose roles portray them as if they were human actors. This precludes a view of God and Satan as impersonal forces or energy but rather as beings with intelligence and investigative capacities.

Conclusions, limitations, recommendations and suggestion for future research

Job's story has 16 salient features of an inquiry. An experiment initiated, commissioned and ethically reviewed by God and conducted by Satan on Job, the participant. It employed A-B-A-B single-n design to test the principle of reciprocity suggesting God with Satan is not averse with the positivists' paradigm. In this context, God is a positivist. Thus, God, not Aristotle or Comte, is arguably the father of positivism. That Job did not live by reciprocity refutes stereotyping and nihilism. Reciprocity has an antithesis in non-reciprocity, which comprises of ingratitude and philanthropy. Satan as a reformed half-nihilist. The book of Job is a quasi-experimental textbook on sophisticated model used in modern era thus adoptable for teaching research.

This study has limitations. Documents do not allow verification of import of actions of actors or meanings of words. The Author(s) may not have witnessed Job's suffering story personally. This notwithstanding, the Bible is widely regarded as authentic. Though criticized for seeming inconsistencies and undermined on some points, it is hardly called a false document in totality. Majority of the world's population believe it wholly or partly and many more, its divine origin. This study presumed its authenticity thus the researcher derived meanings from text and in contexts, and avoided the pitfall of making unsubstantiated inferences. The trustworthiness of this study was thus appropriately safeguarded.

This contexts can facilitate explanation of research concepts to research students. To spur innovative research, familiar but non-traditional sources of research require exploring for research imprints. The 10-day study that compared the looks (health) of Daniel and his three friends, who feed on vegetarian diet (palp and water) to their Babylonian counterparts, who fed on the king's provisions, suggests a non-equivalent group design (Daniel 1). This can be explored and compared to Job's. A study that explores HDRs' ability to determine the design implicit in Job's story will be a good sequel.

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