

Chapter 1

Integrated–Flexible Research Methodology: An Alternative Approach

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ABSTRACT

The research process is not a smooth process that moves from one stage to another, or a sequential process growing from the roots of ontology and epistemology towards the data collection and analytical techniques and interpretations. The existentialist position of the interpretive/reformist paradigm is that reality is subjective and multiple, that it does not exist independently in the human mind. Their epistemological stance is that the available knowledge depends on the researcher's thoughts and desires. That is, "knowledge" is created by the seeker and deploying a specific methodology which is not necessarily a sequential set of "stages", a "step-by-step" course or a "layer-by-layer" peeling activity like peeling-off an onion.

It is more practical to follow a continuous interaction progression by reconsidering, revising, and revisiting activities to achieve more presentable cogent arguments. Therefore, a dynamic research process is presented as a integrated-flexible vigorous set of activities as a Ven diagram by adding the activity of publishing as a critical element of the research process.

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INTRODUCTION

Social Research is defined as a systematic in-depth study about social issues and the way we understand the world. It is, in fact,

“...a never-ending journey of discovery, because the ‘knowledge’ that is presented today as ‘new’ can be nullified by another ‘new’ discovery tomorrow. Such negatives occur frequently and inevitably, reminding us of the impermanent nature of the world” (Saliya, 2022, p. 7).

Common knowledge is generated from critical discourses among scholars holding different world views. However, the *falsification principle* proposed by Karl Popper (1959 in McLeod, 2020) argues that the possibility of falsifying a scientific theory is an essential feature for knowledge to be scientific. Meanwhile, more modern scholars such as Mano Sinham (2020) reject this falsification requirement as a myth and suggest abandoning it.

Every type of research, either of natural sciences (biology, chemistry, mathematics, etc.) or social sciences (economics, political science, accounting, history, and aesthetics etc.), it is scientific because they follow a systematic process; methodological.

Academic research is basically of two types; quantitative and qualitative and, recently a third type (mixed method) came by combining these two to add more rigor. Traditionally, only quantitative research using numbers were considered as scientific but today qualitative inquiry, which goes beyond dealing with numbers, too is also considered as valid, dependable, credible, and therefore scientific. The ‘knowledge’ discovered through academic research should be published in indexed journals/conferences or as book chapters in edited books published by reputed publishers. Otherwise, such discoveries would be wasted; “publish or perish”, they say.

SOCIAL RESEARCH AND QUANTUM MECHANICS

Contradicting positivist scientism, the analogy between evolution and quantum mechanics and sociology has demonstrated that quantum mechanics has an individual and a social consciousness for material objects (Nakmanson, 2003). Positivism, which is based on empiricism is challenged by post-positivist paradigms such as interpretivism, constructivism, pragmatism and critical thought. Empiricism is based on sensory experiences, through five senses, but certain things such as gravitation or any other attraction, which is felt towards the earth, cannot be smelled, tasted, touched, heard or seen with our five sensory organs. There are certain things that cannot be cognized or apprehended through five senses. Therefore, the positivist-

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