

# Chapter 2

## Paradigm: Positivism, Interpretivism, Pragmatists, and Critical Thought

**Nisha Jayasuriya**

*Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Sri Lanka*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter aims to provide a simple but a complete idea about the difficult concepts in the research field. Research paradigm is a concept which is difficult for new researchers to understand and memorize. This chapter covers the key concepts in the research paradigm: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Researchers can understand these concept and decide the best paradigm to investigate different phenomena. To make these difficult concepts simple, this chapter has been organized with brief explanations and graphs.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Research philosophy and methodology are some critical aspects that make research sound and successful. A researcher who conducts the study without a proper understanding of these concepts may end up doing an incomplete study. Hence, the simple approach used in this chapter will be useful for novel researchers to make sure that they are following the correct systematic approach in conducting this study. Following the correct approach will essentially be helpful for the researchers in publishing their articles in reputed journals and conferences.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-6859-3.ch002

This chapter aims to provide a simple but complete idea about the difficult concepts in the research field. It covers the key concepts in the research paradigm: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Researchers can understand these concepts and decide the best approach to investigate different phenomena. To make these difficult concepts simple, this chapter has been organized with simple explanations, graphs and video links.

## **RESEARCH PARADIGM**

A new researcher who is curious about social problems thinks about giving solutions through conducting research. There is a novel and fresh idea like a seed to grow. This curious researcher, like a planter, needs to find appropriate soil and fertilizer to grow this seed and this process is like selecting a research paradigm for the study.

There is no one method to plant your seeds, but there are several methods. Like that, a researcher can see the problem from different angles. These different viewpoints we can see as research paradigms. So, once you have a research idea, you should think what the best way to grow the idea and get a solution for the research question. It is like finding a proper ground to plant your seeds. If you select the wrong place, you will not get the expected crop. Same as a plant if you do not select the correct respondents your findings may not be valuable.

In the field of research, the research paradigm is called the way you understand the reality of the world. A paradigm is based on assumptions about 1) ontology, 2) epistemology, 3) and methods (Figure 1). These elements can be identified as the foundation of research and it is very important to have a clear understanding to make a systematic study successful. Paradigm contains important assumptions about the way the researcher sees the world. The research approach, strategy, and methodology are part of this assumption and are based on the selection of the researcher (Saunders, et al., 2012). Therefore, this chapter focuses on discussing this belief system in detail.

### **Ontology**

Everyone wears their glasses when they see the world. People make different assumptions about reality based on their experiences and assumptions. Same as that, ontology can be identified as the nature of our belief about reality (Saunders, et al., 2012). Before starting the study researchers have some assumptions about reality and how it exists. E.g., Is everything and everyone temporary? So, the answer is yes, everything temporary, or no, they are not. Whatever your answer, it is based on your experiences and assumptions. It explains the way you see the world.

9 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: [www.igi-global.com/chapter/paradigm/320207](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/paradigm/320207)

## Related Content

---

### Sifting Through the Sets: The Significance and Availability of Open Data

Claudia McGivney (2018). *Maximizing Social Science Research Through Publicly Accessible Data Sets* (pp. 1-22).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/sifting-through-the-sets/190066](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/sifting-through-the-sets/190066)

### Reciprocity as Being and Its Theses: Making a Consensus

(2022). *Reciprocity and Its Practice in Social Research* (pp. 140-166).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/reciprocity-as-being-and-its-theses/310626](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/reciprocity-as-being-and-its-theses/310626)

### Morphological Ontology Design Engineering: A Methodology to Model Ill-Structured Problems

Joey Jansen van Vuuren, Louise Leenen, Marthie M. Grobler, Ka Fai Peter Chanand Zubeida C. Khan (2016). *Mixed Methods Research for Improved Scientific Study* (pp. 262-291).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/morphological-ontology-design-engineering/147780](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/morphological-ontology-design-engineering/147780)

### Factor Analysis of the Sydney Metro's ITS: System Integration Iteration

Koorosh Gharehbaghi, Kenneth Farnes, Kathryn M. Robsonand Neville Hurst (2021). *International Journal of Strategic Engineering* (pp. 1-13).

[www.irma-international.org/article/factor-analysis-of-the-sydney-metros-its/279642](http://www.irma-international.org/article/factor-analysis-of-the-sydney-metros-its/279642)

### Examining the Dynamics of Value Propositions in Digital Books: A Social Constructivist Perspective

Wilson Ozuemad Geoff Lancaster (2015). *Handbook of Research on Scholarly Publishing and Research Methods* (pp. 295-311).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/examining-the-dynamics-of-value-propositions-in-digital-books/120343](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/examining-the-dynamics-of-value-propositions-in-digital-books/120343)