

SOCIAL PARADIGMS IN GUIDING SOCIAL RESEARCH DESIGN: THE FUNCTIONAL, INTERPRETIVE, RADICAL HUMANIST AND RADICAL STRUCTURAL PARADIGMS

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Abstract

The four paradigms are influential philosophical stances applied to advocate social research designs since they have been supported by eight different analytical lenses and had various functions for analysing the research nature as well as social phenomena based on two main analytical approaches, objective and subjective viewpoints. After clarifying their application in social research methods, we have concluded that the functionalist paradigm is very compatible with most of quantitative research methods whereas the interpretive paradigm is very fit for the majority of qualitative research designs. In terms of the radical humanist paradigm, it is extremely applicable with participatory action research, emancipatory action research and transformative design while the radical structuralist paradigm is very appropriate with technical action research, experimental research,, quasi-experimental research and embedded design. However, some research designs intertwine between two paradigms; for example, mixed convergent parallel, mixed multiphase design, and mixed embedded design. Therefore, they make the researcher confusing.

Keywords: Paradigm, approach, method, research, design.