

METHODOLOGICAL PLURALISM WITH REFERENCE TO RECENT LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the concept of methodological pluralism and discuss its benefits and difficulties with reference to current research literature. I start my discussion with an overview of building blocks of research. I do so because all these concepts will be used throughout the paper. After this I briefly elaborate major research paradigms: positivism, interpretivism and critical realism. Then I discuss quantitative and qualitative research, their strengths and weaknesses. The purpose of this discussion is to provide background knowledge to methodological pluralism or mixed methods research (in this paper I use these two terms interchangeably). As mixed methods research is an integration of different research methods, it seems reasonable to first introduce the quantitative and qualitative research. It may also serve as a comparison to mixed methods research. After this I introduce the concept of methodological pluralism with reference to available literature. Then I analyze why pluralism is necessary and what are the strengths and weaknesses of methodological pluralism. In the end I discuss some of the difficulties of mixed methods research. Summary presents all the major points discussed in the paper with particular reference to mixed methods research.

Keywords: positivism, interpretivism, critical realism, mixed methods, methodological pluralism.