

# [Epistemological assumptions and issues in research psychology essay](https://assignbuster.com/epistemological-assumptions-and-issues-in-research-psychology-essay/)

This paper the researcher constructs the epistemological issues which normally arise when any research methodology is applied in practice rather than the conventional approach. Normally the epistemological position deduce from what the researcher already know about the philosophical underpinnings of the situated systems approach, the researcher is taking the path of using an empirical study of the epistemology in use throughout a comparative application of the methodologies.

To complete this paper, the researcher also uses one specific research approach from different research paradigms. In this study the researcher will give a brief idea about, how to conduct survey of a research from. This paper will also describe and evaluate the epistemological assumptions.

## 1. 1. Epistemological assumptions

The epistemology is the procedure of the theory of knowledge. “ This issue is concerning the major question that is regarding as obtainable discipline in the field of knowledge.” (Bryman, 2001, p. 11). Normally this process is following the two major traditional procedures. One is positivism and another one is interpretivism or hermeneutics.

## 1. 1. 1. Positivism

“ The process of the positivism is an epistemological process that is always try to investigate that proper methods of natural science of the study for social reality and the its beyond.” (Bryman, 2001, p. 506). The ways of its investigation is extremely difficult. For this it can be summarised in different ways. “ This assumption is base on the science that should be verifiable and free form subjectivity. The fundamental notation of its object is found out the reality when and where and who is observing it.” (Lundahl & Skarvad, 1993).

## 1. 1. 2. Interpretivism/Hermeneutics

The interpretive research is means the assumption process of access to reality all the way through social structures which is including the language, the perceptions and the particular meanings of sharing. “ There are two base of this process; one is hermeneutics another one is phenomenology.” (Boland, 1991). “ Normally the process of interpretive research tries to find out the actual meanings via the people assign to them. This process is mainly concentrating the full complexity of human better understanding in the context of two situations, such as independent variables and the indeterminate dependent.” (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994). On the other hand “ the hermeneutics approaches is the process that is original concept where the individual group combining the situation in the written text which is referring the respondents overview to the authors.” (Ratcliff, 1999; Bleicher, 1980). This process is mainly featuring the meaning of the text analogue.

## 1. 1. 3. Identifying Epistemological Approaches

Epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge. “ There are three questions are mainly used for identifying the epistemological approach” (Chua 1986; Hirschheim et al. 1995; Denzin and Lincoln 2000). They are;

What can be known?

What is the relationship between the knower and the known? And

How do we find things out?

Though the first question is regarding the ontological question but the third question methodological issues, these are informed by the epistemological position. These three questions of the epistemological positions compare the two approaches.

## What can be known?

There are different ideas are between the conventional analyst and the situated analyst about what can be known. “ Fundamental to the situated theory of action are the ideas that knowledge is embedded in action and that action is situated in the environment. Implicit in the approach of the conventional analyst was the position that what can be known is that which can be articulated and ultimately represented in the system.” (Waller. et al, 2006).

## What is the relationship between the knower and the known?

The situated analyst and the conventional analyst adopted very different relationships with the ‘ known’, that is, with the system under study. “ Whereas the conventional analyst would typically be characterised as a detached observer, the situated analyst became a participant observer and actually worked as a dispatcher at the different research approach”. (Waller. et al, 2006).

## How do we find things out?

In order to identify opportunities for improvement the situated analyst used the situated systems methodology to evaluate the work practices against stated and tacit goals and constraints. Any identified opportunities for improvement were grounded in the data. In contrast, it appeared that the conventional analyst had an a priori concept of what a system should be like and that he identified problems by reference to this ideal type.

## 1. 1. 4. Summary of the epistemological position

This paper an investigation of the epistemological commitments of the developing situated methodology and also the conventional approaches. This can be analysed by according to the concept of Waller. et al, (2006),

## What can be known

## Relationship between

## knower and known

## How we find things out

## Conventional

## approach

Articulated knowledge

Analytical distance

Detached observation,

comparison to ideal types

## Present

## approach

Both articulated knowledge and tacit knowledge Influence of the environment

Analyst takes subject position of an actor in the system, while also having analytical distance

Immersion in the system

Adapted from: Waller. V, Johnston. B. Robert and Milton. K. Simon., (2006), “ An Empirical Investigation of the Epistemological Assumptions Underlying Two ISD Approaches”. Pg. 7.

## 2. 1. Research method

The research procedure for any study is designing based on the research objectives. In this paper the researcher selected one specific research approach and how to construct the survey in the overall research process. The more detailed research field survey procedure for data collection has been described in the following. There is also some description of qualitative analysis will be describe in this paper.

## 2. 1. 1. Survey planning

The survey planning was designed by gathering both quantitative and qualitative data from primary and secondary sources for every research. In field survey the researcher faces two types of problem in the field. At first the researcher decided how gaining entry into the field and how to getting out from the field.

## 2. 1. 1. 1. Gaining Entry

The most difficult stage of the field based research work was to gain access to the ‘ study field site’. Due to the distinctive characteristics of the location, structure and surrounding environment, gaining entry into the ‘ study field site’ was not as easy as accessing people. Initially, individuals or representatives of the organization, who were selected as prospective respondents may have thought that the information they gave could be unsafe for them. They thought that data could be used against them to identify their weak points. Therefore, they tried to avoid the researcher as he was a stranger to them. The following discussion describes how this problem was overcome.

## 2. 1. 1. 2. Getting out

The required data for collecting taking a period of time. After evaluating the data and when the researcher is finding it satisfactory, the researcher feel that it is the time to close down data collection and leave the field.

## 2. 1. 2. Theoretical Orientation and Research Approach

All research is conducted according to a set of ideas and judgements about the nature of the work and how it should be understood. It characterizes a wide view that defines, for its holder, the nature of the research, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that research and its parts. In the research approach, “ one or more data collection techniques could be used” (Neuman, 1994). In general, a researcher decides the data collection techniques (one or more) considering appropriateness based on the research and practical factors such as expectations of data quality, costs, assumed non response rates, level of error expectation and data collection period.

## 2. 1. 3. Sampling strategy: Principles and approaches

Sampling strategy is an essential step in every research project since it is rarely realistic, capable or ethical to study whole populations. The selection and development of an appropriate sample strategy depends upon the aim of the study. In any study, both research questions and methods define the sampling plan, the type of sample used, and the number of the population of the study sample. The factors that may affect determination of the sample sizes and sampling plans are access to the subject population, the number of study variables, the desired level of efficiency, cost and time constraints.

The sampling method refers to the determination of the sampling strategy. “ Quantitative or probability sampling strategy is aiming to draw a representative sample from the main population to eliminate conscious or subconscious biases that may occur when selecting samples and results can be generalised back to the population” (Marshall, 1996). However, “ less rigorous or non-probability sampling strategy also used for the research study which does not ensure a representative sample” (Kaplan, 1988; Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994). In non-probability sampling, “ there is an inherent risk of sampling bias because the populations of interest may not be represented accurately. In qualitative research, no strict criterion is suggested for sampling plan and sample size determination” (Patton, 1990). In this paper the researcher describe some probability and non probability strategies.

Stratified random sampling: “ Stratified random sampling is a combination of stratified sampling and random sampling. Stratified sampling can allow subgroups or strata to be studied in greater detail of population” (Islam, 2005). “ The most common approach of representative sampling strategy is to use random or probability samples. In a random sample, the nature of the population is predefined and all populations have an equal chance of selection” (Islam, 2005). In a stratified random sample strategy, “ the sampling population is initially categorised into non-overlapping groups or strata based on research aims” (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991).

Purposive sampling: “ Purposive sampling is a random selection of the sample of the population with the most information as possible as the study requires on the attribute within the segment” (Bernard 2002; Lewis & Sheppard, 2006). “ This sampling approach enables researchers to obtain the best information from a relatively small sample, and provides more freedom to the researcher in accessing the data and information” (Bernard, 2002).

## 2. 1. 4. Quantitative approach and data collection

“ Quantitative research is thought to be objective, in that in gaining, analysing and interpreting quantitative data, the researcher can remain detached. Quantitative research is a preference to test hypothesis and theory to produce results that could be generalised” (Galal and McDonnel, 1997). Moreover, quantitative research uses structured data in the form of number or can be converted into number by using statistical and mathematical analysis according to research design to explore the result.

## 2. 1. 5. Qualitative approach and data collection

“ Qualitative approaches to research are the way of studying where reality is based upon perceptions that are different from one person to another and can change over time” (Urquhart, 2001). In this approach, “ different perceptions are put together to make wholes and meaning is produced” (Rich and Ginsburg, 1999). Different meanings could come out due to perceptions which vary with the individual. In qualitative research, “ rigour is associated with openness, reliable adherence to a philosophical angle, thoroughness in collecting data, and consideration of all the data to produce a theory” (Melia, 1996). “ Qualitative investigation is used as a range of philosophical approaches to interpretive research” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). “ Qualitative methods can produce detailed valid data with diverse angles and allow the formulation of innovative theory with ideas for future study” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

## 2. 1. 6. Sample selection

There are different types of sample selection in the data collection. In this paper the researcher describe a sample selection process according to a stratified plan following Barnett (2002) and Patwary et al., (2009).

## 2. 1. 7. Qualitative modes of analysis

Qualitative modes of analysis distinguish the incomparability of the subject under discussion in the research. This paper will show the interpretive modes of analysis of the qualitative data.

## 2. 1. 7. 1. Interpretive research

“ Interpretive research is based on the assumption of access to reality through social structures including language, perception and sharing of particular meanings. Hermeneutics and phenomenology is the philosophical base of the interpretive research approach” (Boland, 1991). “ The interpretive research approach concentrates on the full complexity of human understanding as the situation appears with indeterminate dependent and independent variables” (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994).

Hermeneutics: “ The hermeneutics approach is the process of original philosophy where the individual respondent makes sense of a written text in a situation which refers to the respondents’ story not the author’s” (Ratcliff, 1999; Bleacher, 1980).

Phenomenology: “ Phenomenology describes the experience of consciousness of the theory with assumptions from different phenomena, such as natural science, in a structured way” (Denzin, and Lincoln, 1994). It appears as multiple realities because of each individual have his/her own reality and perceptions.

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## Conclusion

This paper work is very important because there has been detailed about epistemological concept and also one research approaches procedure. The research procedure was described in detail and how to conduct it in case of the methodology in an investigation. The overall process was just the conceptual overview of the investigation.