Philosophical Assumptions in Communication Qualitative Research: A Scoping Review

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Abstract:

Philosophical assumptions are typically the first ideas in developing a study. This paper presents an overview of philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks in communication qualitative research. Upon adhering to a five-step scoping review, this study combed through articles that looked into philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks in communication qualitative research retrieved from six databases. Articles published in the past two decades were selected for this scoping review. As a result of reviewing 35 selected research papers, there are five stages to conceptualize the research process and situate philosophy and interpretive frameworks within the research process. In addition, the results show four philosophical assumptions including Ontological, Epistemological, Axiological, and Methodological assumptions. Furthermore, the findings revealed nine types of interpretive frameworks that can be used in qualitative research. In conclusion, although the philosophical assumptions are not always stated, the interpretive frameworks do convey different philosophical assumptions, and qualitative researchers need to be aware of this connection.

Keywords: Philosophical Assumptions; interpretive frameworks; Communication Qualitative Research; Scoping Review; PRISMA methodology.

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الافتراضات الفلسفية فى بحوث الاتصال الكيفية: مراجعة حقلية

ملخص الدراسة:

تمثل الافتراضات الفلسفية في البحث العلمي الأفكار الأولية التي ينطلق منها الباحث في بناء الدراسة. وتتناول هذه الدراسة لمحة عامة عن الافتراضات الفلسفية والأطر التفسيرية في البحث الكيفي/ النوعي لعلوم الإعلام والاتصال. اعتمد الباحث في هذه الدراسة على خمس خطوات أساسية لمراجعة التراث العلمي في موضوع البحث والمتمثل في رصد الدراسات التي تناولت الافتراضات الفلسفية والأطر التفسيرية في البحث الكيفي للاتصال من ست قواعد بيانات. وتم اختيار البحوث المنشورة في العقدين الماضيين. ونتيجة لمراجعة 35 دراسة بحثية، توصلت الدراسة أن هناك خمس مراحل رئيسية في عملية البحث وتضمين الافتراضات الفلسفية والأطر التفسيرية ضمن عملية بناء البحث. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أظهرت النتائج وجود أربعة افتراضات فلسفية هي: الافتراضات الوجودية، والمعرفية، والقيمية، والمنهجية. علاوة على ذلك، كشفت النتائج عن تسعة أنواع من الأطر التفسيرية التي يمكن استخدامها في البحث النوعي/ الكيفي. وعلى الرغم من أن الافتراضات الفلسفية لا يتم ذكرها دائما، إلا أن الأطر التفسيرية تنقل افتراضات فلسفية مختلفة، ويجب على الباحثين النوعيين أن يكونوا على دراية بهذا الارتباط.
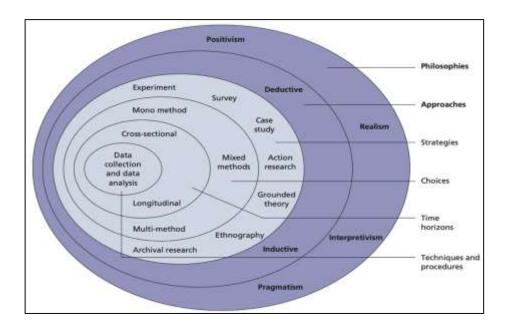
الكلمات المفتاحية: الافتراضات الفلسفية؛ الأطر التفسيرية؛ البحوث النوعية للاتصال؛ مراجعة حقليةScoping ؛ منهجية PRISMA.

Introduction

A research philosophy is a set of thoughts and hypotheses regarding the evolution of knowledge. In other words, Philosophy means the process of utilizing abstract concepts and beliefs to guide the research. Philosophical assumptions are typically the first ideas in developing a study. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the scholar's worldview is focused fundamentally with their perception of the connections and how they are developing. The research philosophy is chosen depending on how the scholar views the generation of knowledge (Saunders & Townsend, 2016). Philosophical assumptions are regularly applied through interpretative frameworks used by scholar when doing research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), the philosophical assumptions are main thoughts which are incorporated interpretive frameworks utilized in study.

According to Huff (2009), it is important for researcher to grasp the philosophical assumptions while their pursing their research projects for many reasons. Firstly, research philosophy directs the research goals and outcomes. For example, a cause-and-effect question type in which specific variables are predicted to clarify an outcome is different from an exploration of a single phenomenon as found in qualitative research. Secondly, philosophical assumptions represent a scope of training and research experiences. These ideas are firmly ingrained in training and reinforced in the workplace by the scholarly community. Lastly, philosophical assumptions are the basis of evaluative criteria for research-related decisions (cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In addition, Saunders et al. (2009) highlighted the importance of research philosophy through the research onion as shown in Figure 1. The research philosophy scholars adopt contains essential assumptions about the way in which they view the world. These assumptions will underpin their chosen research strategy and the methods as part of that strategy. As Johnson and Clark (2006) note, researchers need to be aware of the philosophical commitments they make through their choice of research strategy since this has a significant impact not only on what they do but understanding what it is they are investigating.

Figure 1 *The research onion*

Note. The research onion by Saunders et al. in 2009, indicating the different decisions researcher will need to make when developing a research methodology. From "Research methods for business students (5th ed.)" by M. Saunders, P. Lewis & A. Thornhill, 2009, Pearson Education Limited.

However, philosophical assumptions can be changed over time and over a career, and they often do, especially after a scholar leaves the enclave of his or her discipline and begins to work in more of a trans- or multidisciplinary way. This scoping review aims to provide in-depth coverage of available literature on philosophical assumptions in communication qualitative research. According to Arksey and O'Malley (2005), a scoping study might be undertaken to examine the extent, range, and nature of research activity. In addition, it might be used to determine the value of undertaking a full systematic review. Moreover, it can be utilized for summarizing and disseminating research findings. Last but not least, a scoping review can be designed to identify research gaps in the existing literature.

Research Objectives

This research aims to achieve its general objective of highlighting philosophical assumptions in communication qualitative research by focusing on the following specific objectives:

RO.1 To locate philosophy and interpretative frameworks inside the research process.

RO.2 To determine the four philosophical assumptions in qualitative research.

RO.3 To figure out how to incorporate philosophical assumptions into a qualitative study.

RO.4 To identify the types of interpretive frameworks used into a qualitative study.

RO.5 To identify the linking Philosophy and Interpretive Frameworks in Qualitative Research.

Research Questions

RQ.1 Where do philosophy and interpretive frameworks fit into the overall process of research?

RQ.2 What four philosophical assumptions exist when you choose qualitative research?

RQ.3 How are philosophical assumptions written into a qualitative study?

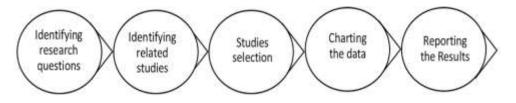RQ.4 What types of interpretive frameworks are used in qualitative research?

RQ.5 How are philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks linked in a qualitative study?

Research Methodology

Qualitative methodologies are widely recognized as valuable and credible approaches to conducting research (Miller et al., 2018). A scoping review was conducted using a framework developed by Arksey and O'Malley (Arksey& O'Malley, 2005). To thoroughly examine the philosophical assumptions literature. The framework has five elements

namely: identifying research question, identifying related studies, studies selection, charting data (collating, mapping, & summarizing), and reporting results.

Figure 2 Scoping review process

Note. This scoping review chart was adopted from (Zaid et al., 2021) based on a methodological framework built by Arksey and O'Malley in 2005, indicating the main five process of scoping review. From "Sadness regulation strategies and measurement: A scoping review" by Zaid et al., 2021, *PLoS ONE 16(8),* 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0256088.

Identifying research question

The main research question addressed in this scoping review is what are philosophical assumptions in communication qualitative research?

Identifying related studies

Relevant articles were identified from the vast literature via a repeated search process in six databases, namely ProQuest, Sage, Science Direct, Scopus, Web of Science, and Wiley. These databases were combed through using three keywords (philosophical assumptions OR interpretive frameworks OR research approaches). Articles published since the past two decades were selected for this scoping review.

Studies selection

In total, 235 articles were extracted and exported to Mendeley software based on exclusion criteria. These articles were screened thrice by two authors independently. In the first round, 120 duplicate articles were removed. In the second round, 60 articles were discarded after screening by title and abstract. In the third round of review, full-text of the refined list (55 articles) was screened to finalize eligible articles that

complied with the specified inclusion criteria. Finally, 35 eligible articles were finalized for this scoping review.
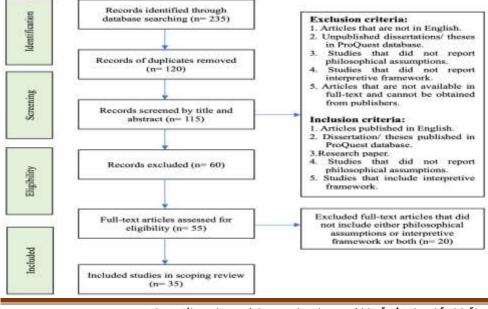
Data charting

Data extracted from the selected studies were summarized and charted into tables. The charted information included situating philosophy and interpretive frameworks within the research process, philosophical assumptions with implications for practice, comparing major interpretive frameworks, interpretive frameworks, and associated philosophical beliefs, and key findings (see 'Results' section).

Reporting results

This scoping review was conducted to present an overview of the philosophical assumptions in qualitative research. The review summarizes all philosophical assumptions mentioned in the finalized articles. Additionally, this review examined the types of interpretive frameworks within the research process and compared major interpretive frameworks. Finally, the interpretive frameworks and associated philosophical beliefs from the finalized articles were reviewed.

Figure 3 PRISMA flow diagram illustrates the process of selecting articles for review.

Note. This flow diagram was adapted from (Zaid et al., 2021), indicating the process of selecting articles for review according to PRISMA methodology. From "Sadness regulation strategies and measurement: A scoping review" by Zaid et al., 2021, *PLoS ONE 16(8),* 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0256088.
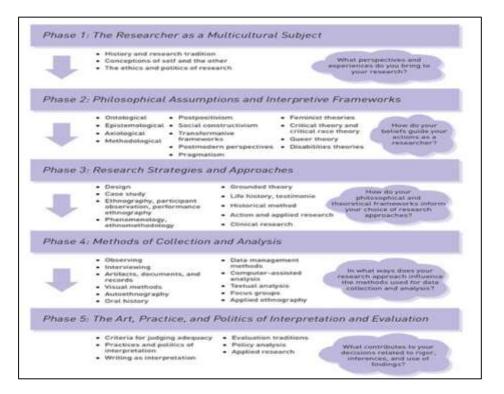
Results

Of the total 235 articles identified, 55 met the criteria for full-text review but only 35 were eligible for inclusion in this qualitative synthesis. Analysis of the 35 articles is presented in as follows:

Situating philosophy and interpretive frameworks within the research process

Figure 4 shows how the researchers can situate the philosophy and interpretive frameworks within the research process. There are five stages to conceptualize the research process. The first phase, the scholars take into account what perspectives and experiences they bring to the study, such as their history and research tradition, views of themselves and others, and ethical and political issues. The second phase shows how the researcher beliefs guide his actions as a researcher. Each researcher brings to the inquiry certain philosophical assumptions. These are stances taken by the scholar that provide direction for the study, such as the researcher's view of reality (ontology), how the researcher knows reality (epistemology), the value-stance taken by the inquirer (axiology), and the procedures used in the study (methodology). These assumptions are often applied in research through the use of paradigms and theories (interpretive frameworks). According to Guba (1990), a paradigm is a fundamental set of ideas that directs action (cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018). Other researchers refer to these beliefs as worldviews. Theories are available in the literature and give a broad explanation of what the researcher intends to uncover in a study or a lens through which to examine the requirements of participants and communities in a study. The third phase indicates how the researcher philosophical and theoretical frameworks guide his choice of research approaches. There are several research strategies and approaches researcher can choose the appropriate one for the study such as case study, ethnography, phenomenology, ground theory… etc. The

fourth phase illustrates the influence of the research approach on the methods used for data collection and analysis. There are many methods of data collection and analysis such as observing, interviewing, artifacts, documents, focus group … etc. Finally, the fifth phase is the interpretation and evaluation of the research findings. Theses phase includes criteria for judging adequacy, practices and politics of interpretation, evaluation traditions, and policy analysis.

Figure 4 *Situating Philosophy and Interpretive Frameworks Within the Research Process*

Note. An overview of research process compiled by Denzin and Lincoln in 2011, indicating the situating Philosophy and Interpretive Frameworks within the research process. From "*Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five approaches* (4th ed.)" by J. W. Creswell & C. N. Poth, 2018, SAGE Publication Inc.

The four philosophical assumptions in qualitative research.

The philosophical assumptions include Ontological, Epistemological, Axiological, and Methodological assumptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

1. Ontological Assumption

The ontological assumptions describe the nature of reality and its properties (Guba & Lincolin, 1989). It is a study of being (Crotty, 2003). The ontological assumption of qualitative research is that there are multiple realities and beliefs (Hays & Singh, 2012). When scholars implement qualitative research, they are embracing the idea of multiple realities. Different researchers embrace different realities, as do the individuals being studied and the readers of a qualitative study. When studying individuals, qualitative researchers implement a study with the intent of reporting these multiple realities. Evidence of multiple realities involve the use of multiple forms of evidence in themes using the actual words of different individuals and presenting different perspectives. For example, when writers compile a phenomenology, they report how individuals participating in the study view their experiences differently. In practice, researchers use quote and themes in participants' words and provide evidence of different perspectives.

2. Epistemological Assumption

Epistemology deals with the nature of the relationship between researcher and subject. It describes how we know what we know (Cortty, 2003). The epistemological assumption of qualitative research is that knowledge is gained by the quality of interactions with research participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). With the epistemological assumption, conducting a qualitative study means that researchers try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied. Therefore, subjective evidence is assembled based on individual views. This is how knowledge is known- through the subjective experiences of people. It becomes important, then, to conduct studies in the field where the participants live and work- these are important contexts for understanding what the participants are saying. The longer researchers stay in the field or get to know the participants, the more they know what they know from firsthand information. For example, a good ethnography requires prolonged stay at the research site.

In short, the qualitative researcher tries to minimize the distance or objective separateness between himself or herself and those being researched.
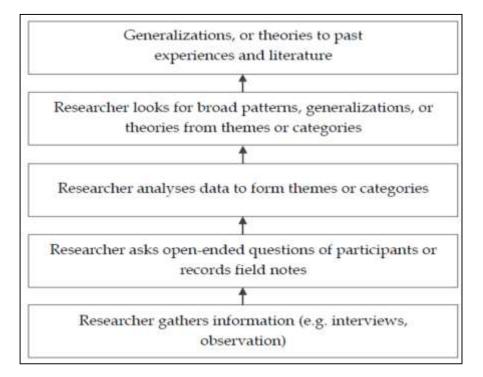
3. Axiological Assumption

Axiology deals with the role of values in a context. In other words, it refers to what is considered right (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). In qualitative research, the researcher acknowledges that research is value laden and that biases are present. The axiological assumption of qualitative research is that researchers' assumptions and values influence the research study's questions and design (Flowers, 2020). In other words, all researchers bring values to a study, but qualitative researchers make their values known in a study. This is the axiological assumption that characterizes qualitative research. In a qualitative study, the inquirers admit the value-laden nature of the study and actively report their values and biases as well as the value-laden nature of information gathered from the field. Researchers position themselves by identifying their positionality in relation to the context and setting of the research. Among the aspects described are researcher's social position (e.g., gender, age, race, immigration status), personal experiences, and political and professional beliefs. In an interpretive biography, for example, the researcher's presence is apparent in the text, and the author admits that the stories voiced represent an interpretation of the author as much as the subject of the study.

4. Methodological Assumption

Methodology deals with the process of research. Its objective is to explain, assess, and rationalize the usage of certain methodologies (Wellington, 2000). In qualitative research, the researcher uses inductive logic, studies the topic within its context, and uses an emerging design. The procedures of qualitative research, or its methodology, are characterized as inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing the data. The logic that the qualitative researcher follows is inductive, from the ground up, rather than handed down entirely from a theory or from the perspectives of the inquirer. Sometimes the research questions change in the middle of the study to reflect better the types of questions needed to understand the research problem. In response, the data collection

strategy, planned before the study, needs to be modified to accompany the new questions. During the data analysis, the researcher follows a path of analyzing the data to develop an increasingly detailed knowledge of the topic being studied. To sum it up, an inductive technique is commonly utilized in qualitative studies, and it is viewed progressing from a specific to a general viewpoint toward theory development (Saunders et al., 2009).

Figure 5 *The Inductive Logic of Research in a Qualitative Study*

Note. The inductive logic of research in a qualitative study by T. R. Farouk in 2021. From "Predicting the organic food purchase behaviour in Egypt: an empirical study investigating the pro-environmental and service-scape effect on the consumer's purchase behaviour" by T. R. Farouk, 2021, *Doctoral thesis, Northumbria University*, p.91.

Table 1 *Philosophical assumptions with implications for practice*

Philosophical Assumption	Question	Characteristics	Implications for Practice (Examples)
Ontological	What is the nature of reality?	Reality is subjective and multiple, as seen by participants in the study.	Researcher uses quotes and themes in words of participants and provides evidence of different perspectives
Epistemological	What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched? What counts as knowledge? How are knowledge claims justified?	Subjective evidence is obtained from participants. Researcher attempts to lessen distance between himself or herself and that being researched.	The researcher relies on quotes as evidence from the participant. Researcher collaborates, spends time in field with participants, and becomes an "insider".
Axiological	What is the role of values?	Researcher acknowledges that research is value-laden and that biases are present in relation to their role in the study context.	Researcher openly discusses values that shape the narrative and includes his or her own interpretation in conjunction with the interpretations of participants
Methodological	What is the process of research? What is the language of research?	Research uses inductive logic, studies the topic within its context, and uses an emerging design.	Researcher works with particulars (details) before generalizations, describes in detail the context of the study, and continually revises questions from experiences in the field.

Writing the philosophical assumptions into a qualitative study

Some qualitative studies hide the research philosophy; however, the distinguished audience can conclude it by observing the multiple points of view that appear in the themes, the detailed rendering of subjective quotes from participants, the carefully laid-out biases of the researcher, or the emerging design that evolves in ever-increasing levels of abstraction from description to themes to broad generalizations.

In other studies, the philosophy is made explicit by a special section in the study- typically in the methods section. Here, the researcher talks about ontology, epistemology, and other assumptions explicitly and details how they are exemplified in the study. The form of this discussion is to convey the assumptions, to provide definitions for them, and to discuss how they are illustrated in the study. In doctoral dissertations, journal articles reported in major qualitative journals, and conference paper presentations this where the readers can find the underlying philosophy of the study.

Types of interpretive frameworks used into a qualitative study

The philosophical assumptions are often applied within interpretive frameworks that qualitative researchers use when they conduct a study. Thus, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) consider the philosophical assumptions (ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology) as key premises that are folded into interpretive frameworks used in qualitative research (cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interpretive Frameworks may be paradigms, or beliefs that the researcher brings to the process of research, or they may be theories or theoretical orientations that guide the practice of research. Paradigm interpretative frameworks may be post-positivism, social constructivism, transformation, and post-modern. Theories may be social science theories to frame their theoretical lens in studies, such as the use of these theories in ethnography.

1. Post-positivism

Refer to those who engage in qualitative research using a belief system grounded in post-positivism. They will employ a social science theoretical lens. Post-positivism has the elements of being reductionistic, logical, empirical, cause-and-effect oriented, and deterministic based on a priori theories (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). In practice, postpositivist researchers view inquiry as a series of logically related steps, believe in multiple perspectives from participants rather than a single reality, and espouse rigorous methods of qualitative data collection and analysis. They use multiple levels of data analysis for rigor, employ computer programs to assist in their analysis, encourage the use of validity approaches, and write their qualitative studies in the

form of scientific reports, with a structure resembling quantitative articles (e.g., problem, questions, data collection, results, conclusions).

The postpositivist ontological assumption that there is only one reality that is independent of the observer. The epistemological assumption that requires researchers to use a detached approach to capture information or reality that exists outside of the person. The axiological assumptions linked with the postpositivist paradigm are consistent with those mentioned in the Belmont Report of the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. The methodological assumption represents the use of scientific methods that allow the evaluator to explore laws about human behavior through empirical observations, with experimental designs in the form of randomized control trials prioritizing the use of random selection of subjects and random assignment to intervention conditions.

2. Social Constructivism

Constructivism takes the position 'that reality is constructed, multi-dimensional, and ever-changing,' and that 'there is no such thing as a single, immutable reality waiting to be observed and measured (Merriam, 1995: 54). Social constructivism (interpretivism) is another paradigm or worldview. In social constructivism, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live, work, and interact together (McKinley, 2015). They develop subjective meanings of their experiences- meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation. Often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. In practice, the questions become broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons. The more open- ended the questioning, the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what people say or do in their life setting.

According to the constructivist ontological assumption, individuals generate knowledge by digesting their experiences through interaction

with external inputs. The constructivist Epistemological assumption, the evaluator needs to develop knowledge, the evaluator must connect with participants and engage in meaningful discourse and reflection. In a methodological a constructivist attempts to interpret meaning from the standpoint of the people who have the experiences. It is likely that the individuals themselves do not completely comprehend the event. Thus, an evaluator can employ several ways to assist make visible understandings for varied stakeholders.

3. Transformative Frameworks

The basic tenet of the transformative framework is that knowledge is not neutral, and it reflects the power and social relationships within society; thus, the purpose of knowledge construction is to aid people to improve society (Sweetman et al., 2010). These individuals include marginalized groups such as indigenous groups, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender persons, queers, and societies that need a more hopeful, positive psychology and resilience. Qualitative research, then, should contain an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of participants, the institutions in which they live and work, or even the researchers' lives. In practice, transformative inquirers collaborate with research participants. They may ask participants to help with designing the questions, collecting the data, analyzing it, and shaping the final report of the research. In this way, the "voice" of the participants becomes heard throughout the research process and the research products meaningful for all involved.

The transformative ontological assumption acknowledges reality's multifaceted character. Humans frequently feel that they know what is real, yet each perception of what is real is impacted by the person's positionality. In the transformative epistemological assumption, knowledge is not absolute nor relative; it is formed within a system of power and privilege. To create settings conducive to disclosing information from varied viewpoints, evaluators must cultivate respectful and collaborative relationships that are culturally relevant to the demands of the various stakeholder groups. The transformative methodological assumption does not imply a specific strategy to evaluation. Rather, methodological choices are made to determine the

framework that will best facilitate the use of the process and findings to improve social justice; identify the systemic forces that support the status quo and those that will allow change to occur; and recognize the need for a critical and reflexive relationship between the evaluator and the stakeholders.

4. Postmodern Perspectives

Postmodernism might be considered a family of theories and perspectives that have something in common. The basic concept is that knowledge claims must be set within the conditions of the world today and in the multiple perspectives of class, race, gender, and other group affiliations. These are negative conditions, and they show themselves in the presence of hierarchies, power and control by individuals, and the multiple meanings of language. The conditions include the importance of different discourses, the importance of marginalized people and groups (the "other"), and the presence of "metanarratives" or universals that hold true regardless of the social conditions. Also included is the need to "deconstruct" texts in terms of language, their reading and their writing, and the examining and bringing to the surface of concealed hierarchies as well as dominations, oppositions, inconsistencies, and contradictions.

5. Pragmatism

Pragmatism focuses on the outcomes of the research- the actions, situations, and consequences of inquiry- rather than antecedent conditions (as in postpositivism). It attempts to balance objectivism and subjectivism, facts and values, precise and rigorous information, and many contextually relevant experiences (Talaat, 2021). In practice, researchers use multiple methods of data collection to best answer the research question, employ multiple sources of data collection, focus on the practical implications of the research, and emphasize the importance of conducting research that best addresses the research problem.

In terms of ontology, pragmatists avoid debating metaphysical concepts such as truth and reality. They claim that the usefulness of assessment is predicated on demonstrating that the results operate in relation to the topic being examined, not on whether they discover the truth. In terms of epistemology, the evaluator is allowed to form whatever kinds of

interactions with stakeholders are suitable for the subject under examination. In terms of methodology, this philosophical position has been used to support the use of mixed techniques in evaluation.

6. Feminist Theories

Feminist research approaches center on and make problematic women's diverse situations and the institutions that frame those situations. Its goal is to grasp the essence of gender bias. It investigates the social responsibilities, experiences, preferences, tasks, and feminist politics of men and women (Chodorow, 1989). Research topics may include a postcolonial thought related to forms of feminism depending on the context of nationalism, globalization and diverse international contexts (e.g., sex workers, domestic servants), and work by or about specific groups of women, such as standpoint theories about lesbians, women with disabilities, and women of color. Feminist research also embraces many of the tenets of postmodern and poststructuralist critiques as a challenge to the injustices of current society. In feminist research approaches, the goals are to establish collaborative and nonexploitative relationships, to place the researcher within the study so as to avoid objectification, and to conduct research that is transformative.

7. Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory

Critical theory perspectives are concerned with empowering human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender. Researchers need to acknowledge their own power, engage in dialogues, and use theory to interpret or illuminate social action. For critical theorists, the goal of research is to identify and disrupt social inequities (Kezar, 2003; Willis, 2007). Central themes that a critical researcher might explore include the scientific study of social institutions and their transformations through interpreting the meanings of social life; the historical problems of domination, alienation, and social struggles; and a critique of society and the envisioning of new possibilities. In research, critical theory can be defined by the particular configuration of methodological postures it embraces. The critical researcher might design, for example, an ethnographic study to include changes in how people think; encourage people to interact, form

networks, become activists, and form action-oriented groups; and help individuals examine the conditions of their existence.

8. Critical race theory

Focuses theoretical attention on studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power. Race and racism are deeply embedded within the framework of American society and have directly shaped the U.S. legal system and the ways people think about the law, racial categories, and privilege. According to Parker and Lynn (2002), critical race theory has three main goals. Its first goal is to present stories about discrimination from the perspective of people of color. As a second goal, critical race theory argues for the eradication of racial subjugation while simultaneously recognizing that race is a social construct. Finally, the third goal of critical race theory addresses other areas of difference, such as gender, class, and any inequities experienced by individuals (cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018). In research, the use of critical race theory methodology means that the researcher foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research process; challenges the traditional research paradigms, texts, and theories used to explain the experiences of people of color; and offers transformative solutions to racial, gender, and class subordination in our societal and institutional structures. Researchers sometimes use critical race theory in concert with other frameworks—for example, disability studies or feminist theories.

9. Queer Theory

Queer theory is characterized by a variety of methods and strategies relating to individual identity. It is a post-structuralist field that originated in the early 1990s from queer studies (gay and lesbian studies) and women's studies (Hall, 2017). The term- queer theory, rather than gay, lesbian, or homosexual theory- allows for keeping open to question the elements of race, class, age, and anything else, and it is a term that has changed in meaning over the years and differs across cultures and languages. Most queer theorists work to challenge and undercut identity as singular, fixed, or normal. They also seek to challenge categorization processes and their deconstructions, rather than focus on specific populations. Queer theorists have engaged in

research such as the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) and Queer Nation around HIV/AIDS awareness, as well as artistic and cultural representations of art and theater aimed at disrupting or rendering unnatural and strange practices that are taken for granted. These representations convey the voices and experiences of individuals who have been suppressed and provide important insights for informing policies and practices.

10. Disability Theories

Disability inquiry addresses the meaning of inclusion in schools and encompasses administrators, teachers, and parents who have children with disabilities. Now, researchers using a disability interpretive lens focus on disability as a dimension of human difference and not as a defect. Viewing individuals with disabilities as different is reflected in the research process, such as in the types of questions asked, the labels applied to these individuals, considerations of how the data collection will benefit the community, the appropriateness of communication methods, and how the data are reported in a way that is respectful of power relationships. Table 2 compares the major interpretive framework that can be used in qualitative research.

Table 2 *Comparing Major Interpretive Frameworks*

Interpretive Frameworks	Possible Researcher Goals	Potential Researcher Influences	Examples of Researcher Practices
Post-positivism	To discover contributors to probability within situations of cause and effect	Prior quantitative research training	Reports systematic data collection and analysis procedures followed to ensure rigor
Social constructivism	To understand the world in which they live and work.	Recognition of background as shaping interpretation.	Interprets participants constructions of meaning in his/her account.
Transformative frameworks	To act for societal improvements.	Knowledge of power and social relationships within society.	Adopts an action agenda for addressing the injustices of marginalized groups

Postmodern perspectives	To change ways of thinking.	Understandings of the conditions of the world today.	Situates research to highlight multiplicity of perspectives
Pragmatism	To find solutions to real-world problems.	Appreciation for diverse approaches to collecting and analyzing and the contexts in which research takes place.	Uses the most appropriate methods for addressing the research question.
Feminist theories	To conduct research that is transformative for women.	Perspectives of power relationships and individuals' social position and how they impact women.	Poses questions that relate to the centrality of gender in the shaping of our consciousness.
Critical theory and critical race theory	To address areas of inequities and empower humans.	Acknowledgment of own power, engagement in dialogues, and use of theory to interpret social actions.	Designs research in such a way that transforms the underlying orders of social life.
Queer theory	To convey the voices and experiences of individuals who have been suppressed.	Understandings of need for thinking about sexual categories as open, fluid, and nonfixed.	Engages in inquiry with a focus on exploring the myriad complexities of individual identity.
Disability theories	To address the meaning of inclusion.	Recognition of disability as a dimension of human difference and not as a defect.	Employs a disability interpretive lens for informing the research process.

Linking Philosophy and Interpretive Frameworks in Qualitative Research

Although the philosophical assumptions are not always stated, the interpretive frameworks do convey different philosophical assumptions, and qualitative researchers need to be aware of this connection. The philosophical assumptions of ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology take different forms given the interpretive framework used by the inquirer. If the intent of the qualitative narrative study was to examine a marginalized group of disabled learners with attention to their struggles for identity about prostheses that they wear, and with utmost respect for their views and values, and in the end of the study to call for changes in how the disabled group is perceived, then a strong disability interpretive framework would be in use. Table 3 shows

more clarification on the association between interpretive framework and philosophical assumptions.

Table 3 *Interpretive Frameworks and Associated Philosophical Beliefs*

Interpretive Frameworks	Ontological Beliefs (the nature of reality)	Epistemological Beliefs (how reality is known)	Axiological Beliefs (role of values)	Methodological Beliefs (approach to inquiry)
Post-positivism	A single reality exists beyond ourselves, "out there." The researcher may not be able to understand it or get to it because of lack of absolutes.	Reality can only be approximated, but it is constructed through research and statistics. Interaction with research subjects is kept to a minimum. Validity comes from peers, not participants.	The researcher's biases need to be controlled and not expressed in a study.	Scientific method and writing is used. Object of research is to create new knowledge. Method is important. Deductive methods are important, such as testing of theories, specifying important variables, and making comparisons among groups.
Social constructivism	Multiple realities are constructed through our lived experiences and interactions with others.	Reality is co-constructed between the researcher and the researched and shaped by individual experiences.	Individual values are honoured and are negotiated among individuals.	More of a literary style of writing is used. Use of an inductive method of emergent ideas (through consensus) is obtained through methods such as interviewing, observing, and analyzing texts.

Transformative/ postmodern	Participation between researcher and communities or individuals is being studied. Often a subjective–objective reality emerges.	There are co-created findings with multiple ways of knowing.	There is respect for indigenous values; values need to be problematized and interrogated.	Methods consist of using collaborative processes of research, encouraging political participation, questioning of methods, and highlighting issues and concerns.
Pragmatism	Reality is what is useful, is practical, and "works."	Reality is known through using many tools of research that reflect both deductive (objective) evidence and inductive (subjective) evidence.	Values are discussed because of the way that knowledge reflects both the researchers' and the participants' views.	The research process involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis.
Critical, race, feminist, queer, disability	Reality is based on power and identity struggles. Privilege or oppression based on race or ethnicity, class, gender, mental abilities, sexual preference.	Reality is known through the study of social structures, freedom and oppression, power, and control. Reality can be changed through research.	Diversity of values is emphasized within the standpoint of various communities.	Start with assumptions of power and identity struggles, document them, and call for action and change.

Limitations and future direction

The three keywords used in this study were philosophical assumptions, interpretive frameworks, and research approaches; to retrieve more articles and general information about this topic. Therefore, other articles might have not been included by the stated search keywords. Future research should include different search terms and strategies, aside from introducing new frameworks. Because this scoping review focuses on philosophical assumptions in communication qualitative research, future studies may give insight into other fields of research. Last but not least, future research may concentrate on Arabic studies and how Arab researcher situates philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks in their studies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this scoping review provides an overview of philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks in communication qualitative research. As a result of reviewing 35 selected research papers, there were five stages to conceptualize the research process and Situate philosophy and interpretive frameworks within the research process. In addition, the results showed four philosophical assumptions including Ontological, Epistemological, Axiological, and Methodological assumptions. Furthermore, the findings revealed nine types of interpretive frameworks that can be used in qualitative research. Although the philosophical assumptions are not always stated, the interpretive frameworks do convey different philosophical assumptions, and qualitative researchers need to be aware of this connection.

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