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Study on Paradigm Shift in Social Science Research**Bishnu Maya Joshi¹, Shambhu Prasad Khatiwada², Basudeb Khanal³***Article History : Submitted 2 Dec. 2025; Reviewed 13 Jan. 2026; Accepted 6 Feb. 2026**Author : Bishnu Maya Joshi**Email: joshibishnu92@gmail.com**DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/oj.v3i4.91085>*

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Abstract

Social science research provides the rationalization of social behavior by relying on the belief that its causes better known and measurable. The research aims to find laws and postulate theories for scientific knowledge meant for explaining natural or social phenomena. Within the field of social science research, many philosophical approaches are possible; but, in step with the authors, additional extreme approaches are often delimiting. solely arbitrator. This study aims to explore the emerging trends in social sciences research. The methodological approach of this research is based on the desk review known as a literature review or secondary research, includes a systematic analysis and synthesis of existing academic studies. Academic literatures were retrieved from Google Scholar. Relevant institutional and policy documents were also included where applicable. Peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books and well-regarded research reports published in English language were included in this study. Studies with weak methodological rigor, limited relevance to the review scope, duplicate records, and those lacking full-text availability were excluded from the final selection. Pragmatic studies become a very powerful way of the transformative research problem. By incorporating new approaches like Arts-based research, studies on paradigm shifts can be more transformative. This study concluded the blend of literary genres, new ways of thinking, and different quality standards provides a powerful framework for professional development that goes beyond traditional research methods.

Key Words: Paradigm shift, social science research, emerging trend, pragmatism, desk review

Background of the Study

Social science refers to the science of individuals or collections of individuals, like teams, firms, societies, or economies, and their individual as well as collective behavior. Social sciences are historically classified into disciplines like scientific discipline – the science of human behavior, sociology the science of social teams, social science – the science of corporations, markets, and economics, social science – pertains to the systems of governance, the analysis of political activities, thoughts, and behavior and History – the study of past events, significantly in human affairs (Hollis, 1994). The research aims to find laws and postulate theories for scientific knowledge meant for explaining natural or social phenomena. The knowledge base is predicated on scientific ways, which refers to a collection of techniques for building a knowledge base in terms of validity and dependability of observations and its generalization. The methodology facilitates the independent and impartial testing of theories and findings and additionally places them for open debate, modifications, or enhancements. The inclusion of social sciences in school curricula since the beginning of the twenty-first century is particularly significant for this study, as these subjects play a central role in developing critical thinking, civic awareness, and evidence-based reasoning among learners. Examining methodological approaches within social science education is therefore essential to ensure that curricular objectives are effectively supported by rigorous and transparent research practices (Lewin, 2016).

The purpose of social science research is to provide rationalization of social behavior by relying on the belief that its causes are better known and measurable. Some researchers currently compare science analysis with inevitable fastened mechanisms like mechanics, while the opposite aim is to try and do the identical within the wake of missing info. What is more, some researchers like the analogy of biology with social behavior evolving in response to learning and adaptation, whereas another works in historical institutionalism. Putting it otherwise, social sciences these days are being thought of because the selection between the agency and structural explanations and also the perplexity corresponds in some ways to the recent (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). The social sciences square measure needed for the sake of a better potential society that is additionally crucial to humankind's interconnection in terms of economic, cultural, and resource globally. The social sciences contributed during this context to making the globe additionally intelligible (Žukauskas et al., 2018). At the identical time, this context offers varied potentialities for advancement and abstract innovation of not solely the social sciences but also of the humanities; however, additionally, for the empirical testing on an outsized scale. Still, these potential square measures unlikely to be completed unless institutional initiatives square.

During the four decades, the overwhelming majority of researchers within the man of science relying heavily on applied math testing, which is powerfully known with the likelihood or significance testing. the method of acceptive or rejecting the null hypothesis has set this research, going away the hope of acceptive an alternate, instructive hypothesis to the mercies of somewhat impulsive designations of likelihood chances A paradigm shift in social sciences once the applied math Testing in social science analysis can diminish and social sciences are treated at par with the natural sciences (Rodney, 2020). Research styles area unit

characterized by a mix of data, aims, and methods for information generation that is that the key to polishing off productive research.

The use of quantitative testing supported null hypothesis can diminish in scientific discipline analysis and term as “paradigm shift,” and therefore the social sciences can become additional just like the natural sciences. The agents of amendment or innovation in economic and social spheres of the economy square measure needed for the well-being (Ashta & Mor, 2017). It conjointly contributes to the general development of the society by increasing consumption, production, income, environmental security, health, and overall family welfare. show that there's a desire for modification within the behaviors of various stakeholders, organizations and adapt existing rules to bring the specified changes within the overall institution.

Philosophers considered science and were with success able to shift the focus of scientific inquiry from the context of justification to the context of discovery. The main threads of Kuhn's approach to the science area unit acknowledge (Disman, 2011). Science gets afoot once a scientific tradition has succeeded in formulating a paradigm. A paradigm is used for making new objects and patterns once outlining or coming up with one thing new and is a general however distinct worldview or theory at intervals in the philosophy of science. To put it otherwise, paradigms embrace a various set of parts – abstract schemes, analysis techniques, bodies of accepted knowledge and theory, and embedded criteria and processes for the validation of results. Paradigms don't seem to be subject to testing or justification; rather empirical procedures are unit embedded within paradigms. The history of science is jam-packed with paradigm shifts. In Social Sciences, Kuhn's read, the existence of one governing paradigm is characteristic of natural sciences, whereas philosophy and far of scientific discipline area unit characterized by claims, counterclaims, and debates over basic principles. Kuhn's conception of paradigm shift is easily applied to social sciences. In economic science, the economic expert revolution is often viewed as a major paradigm shift as for over a century Say's Law dominated economic thoughts before the focus shifted to economic theory in terms of underemployment, underinvestment over saving, etc (Muñoz, 2020). The movement is understood because of the scientific discipline. In government, the focus has been shifting from geo-Politics & geostrategic to geo-economics; moreover, as realistic and scientific theories to essential theories specializing in drawback finding marked the paradigm shifts. The notion of history as solely the story of the “learned” is giving thanks to the inclusion of, therefore, individuals in the society.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to explore the emerging trends in social sciences research. It also examine the recent research's philosophical context, focusing on the shift from positivism to pragmatism.

Research Methodology

This study uses the desk review method as primary research approach. The desk review method known as a literature review or secondary research, includes a systematic

analysis and synthesis of existing academic studies, including scholarly books, journal articles, and research papers (Guerin et al., 2018; Topolewski et al., 2023). Instead of collecting new data through surveys, interview, focus group discussion, or interventions, the researchers rely on the body of knowledge already created by other academics. This approach allows the evaluation, comparison, and critical interpretation of existing findings to identify patterns, gaps, and emerging themes in the literatures. To enhance the methodological rigor and transparency, explicit criteria were used for selecting relevant literatures. Academic literatures were retrieved from Google Scholar. Relevant institutional and policy documents were also included where applicable.

In selecting studies, we applied various inclusion criteria encompassing only peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books and well-regarded research reports in English. Only studies that specifically focused on the area of interest to the study and were relevant for its research objectives, were taken into account. Thus, included were both empirical papers, theoretical papers and systematic review type articles that provided substantive contribution toward the research problem being addressed to equally capture depth and breadth. On the other hand, we also had exclusion criteria that allowed to get rid of opinion articles, editorials and non-academic sources. Studies without clarity of methodology or weak academic rigor were also excluded, additionally, publications that were not squarely fall within the scope of this review, and duplicate files and studies without full-text availability from the final list of articles assessed.

Result and Discussion

Scientific research philosophy may be a system of the researcher's thought, following that new, reliable data concerning the analysis object is obtained. In other words, it's the premise of the analysis, that involves the selection of analysis strategy, formulation of the matter, knowledge assortment, processing, and analysis. The paradigm of research, in turn, consists of metaphysics, philosophy methodology, and strategies. Holden and Kill, ought to be associated with the philosophical position of the people of science and therefore the analyzed scientific discipline development. Within the field of social science research, many philosophical approaches are possible; but, in step with the authors, additional extreme approaches are often delimiting. The solely intercessor philosophical approach permits the man of science to reconcile philosophy, methodology, and therefore the drawback of analysis (Benton & Craib, 2023; Bhandari, 2023). However, Crossan historians' attention to the fact that typically there's a giant distinction between quantitative and qualitative analysis philosophies and strategies, and triangulation of recent analysis strategies is common in social sciences. It's so vital to grasp the strengths and weaknesses of every approach, this enables getting ready for the analysis and understanding the analyzed drawback higher. The theories of research philosophy and paradigms in social sciences are on the premise of that the analysis within the treatise focuses on distinguishing the amount of development of the research culture to implement scholars' social responsibility, a square measure given in figures that distinguish the degree of structure culture and their interaction, that is, scholars'

social responsibility stages, that replicate the philosophy and paradigm of this analysis (Ferguson, 2007; Monson, 2023; Omodan, 2024).

The problem of the analysis is raised by the subsequent questions: what square measures the essential principles of analytic philosophy and paradigm? And what is the way to use them to make the analysis position?

Within the same problem as their education appeared from philosophical and system frames that restricted them. Social sciences accepted this recommendation for alternative reasons. Furthermore, analysis philosophy is often outlined because of the development of research assumption, its data, and its nature. The belief is perceived as a preliminary statement of reasoning; however, it's supported by the exposition person's data and insights that square measure born as a product of intellectual activity. Alfred Joseph Hitchcock and Hughes additionally claim that analysis stems from assumptions. This suggests that completely different, researchers might have different assumptions concerning the character of truth and data and its acquisition. Research philosophy may be a methodology that, once applied, permits the scientists to get concepts into data within the context of analysis. There are four main trends of analytical philosophy that are distinguished and mentioned within the works by several authors: the positivist analysis philosophy, the interpretivist analysis philosophy, the pragmatist analysis philosophy, and the realistic analysis philosophy.

Among the philosophical bases, in a recent period, most of the social sciences researches applied pragmatism. Pragmatist analysis philosophy deals with the facts (Ahmad et al., 2020). It claims that the selection of analysis philosophy is generally determined by the analysis drawback. During this analysis philosophy, the sensible results square measure thought of necessary. Researchers have freedom of selection. They're "free" to settle on the strategies, techniques, and procedures that best meet their wants and research aims (Smith et al., 2020). Pragmatists don't see the globe as an absolute unity. The reality is what's presently in action; it doesn't rely upon the mind that's not subject to reality and therefore the mind's philosophical system.

Driven by scientific issues, the paradigm shift additionally seems like a social reality involving the whole community of scientists. Throughout the crisis, the increase within the range of researchers concerned with the new scientific approach induces a social development that can cumulatively foster its attractiveness (Morgan, 2014). More researchers in an educational field at the same time will increase the potential audience of a given analysis, raise the convenience in finding ancient co-writers, guarantees Associate in Nursing easier access to publication mediums, and contribute to simplifying the funding of research. The rise of the scientific community fascinated by a scientific field has intrinsically influenced Alternative, once the new set of assumptions attracts most of a replacement generation of scientists, the older faculty disappears. Researchers at the United Nations agency keep operating in the old-fashioned see their influence decreasing and their contribution are speedily marginalized (Zimmermann, 2006). Demographic components additionally contribute to the dynamics of science. The history of science provides varied illustrations of the very fact that the retirement of one generation of elite scientists and their replacement by a replacement generation permits the latter to develop a lot of simply new theories or

approaches (Barber, 1961). Besides, one cannot neglect the stimulation delivered to researchers through paradigm competition. Consistent with Kuhn and Hacking (1970), "Competition between segments of the scientific community is the solely historical method that ever really results in the rejection of 1 antecedently accepted theory or in the adoption of another". During times of traditional science, opponents to the dominant approach highlight the existence of anomalies that appear inconsistent with the leading paradigm. In answer, supporters of the paradigm pay an outsized part of their career within the method of puzzle determination, associating in the nursing activity that permits them to comfort the established framework. Paradigm competition seems mutual, further driving forces of scientific productivity (Taylor et al., 2011).

This study revealed several notable trends in contemporary social science research. A consistent finding across the reviewed literature is a growing emphasis on methodological pluralism, where researchers increasingly combine quantitative and qualitative approaches rather than adhering to a single methodological tradition. This trend reflects a broader shift away from rigid, mono-paradigmatic research designs toward more flexible and problem-oriented approaches (Benton & Craib, 2023; Bhandari, 2023). Another key trend identified is the increasing acceptance of triangulation in social science research. Studies frequently employ multiple data sources, methods, or theoretical perspectives to enhance the credibility and depth of findings. This development highlights researchers' recognition of the complex and context-dependent nature of social phenomena, which cannot be fully captured through a single methodological lens.

These findings directly address the first objective of the study by demonstrating that contemporary social science research is characterized by adaptability, integration of methods, and a growing concern for practical relevance. The review further indicates a clear philosophical shift from positivism toward pragmatism in recent social science research. While positivism remains influential, particularly in quantitatively driven studies, it is increasingly viewed as limited in its ability to address complex social realities. Strict positivist assumptions regarding objectivity and value-free inquiry are often challenged in contemporary research (Ahmad et al., 2020).

Pragmatism has emerged as a dominant philosophical orientation, particularly in applied and interdisciplinary social science research. The reviewed studies suggest that pragmatism allows researchers to select methods based on the research problem rather than philosophical allegiance. This flexibility enables the integration of empirical evidence with contextual understanding and practical outcomes (Smith et al., 2020). As a result, pragmatism supports both explanatory depth and real-world applicability, making it particularly suitable for social science inquiries. This finding directly fulfills the second objective of the study by demonstrating how philosophical orientations in social science research have evolved in response to changing research demands.

The analysis also highlights the close relationship between research philosophy, paradigm, and methodological choice. Research paradigms were found to influence not only data collection and analysis techniques but also the formulation of research questions and interpretation of findings. Scholars increasingly acknowledge that no single paradigm can

comprehensively explain social realities, leading to the adoption of intermediary or integrative philosophical positions (Ferguson, 2007; Monson, 2023; Omodan, 2024). The findings suggest that understanding the strengths and limitations of different paradigms enables researchers to design studies that are methodologically sound and philosophically coherent. This awareness contributes to the development of a mature research culture in social sciences, where methodological decisions are transparent and aligned with research objectives.

The review further reveals that paradigm shifts in social science research are not solely intellectual developments but are also shaped by social and institutional dynamics. Consistent with Kuhn's theory of scientific change, the reviewed literature indicates that paradigm competition plays a significant role in advancing knowledge (Morgan, 2014). As newer generations of researchers adopt alternative philosophical assumptions, traditional paradigms gradually lose dominance (Zimmermann, 2006; Barber, 1961). This competitive dynamic encourages innovation, critical debate, and theoretical refinement. The increasing prominence of pragmatism can therefore be understood not only as a methodological preference but also as a response to broader academic, institutional, and societal demands for socially responsible and impactful research.

The findings of this study suggest that contemporary social science research is moving toward flexible, problem-driven, and socially responsive approaches. The growing influence of pragmatism reflects researchers' desire to bridge theory and practice while addressing real-world challenges. This shift has important implications for research training, curriculum design, and the evaluation of scholarly work in social sciences. By linking philosophical perspectives to methodological choices and research outcomes, this study contributes to a clearer understanding of how research paradigms shape knowledge production in social sciences.

Conclusion

Contemporary research paradigms often don't stand alone as rigid frameworks; instead, they can be blended to create a more flexible and powerful approach to inquiry. Unlike the traditional positivist paradigm, which emphasizes a singular, objective reality and quantitative methods, newer paradigms like interpretive, critical, and arts-based research can act as referents. This means a researcher can strategically draw upon the methods, assumptions, and quality standards of multiple paradigms to design a single, cohesive study. This blending is often a necessity, as real-world problems are complex and rarely fit neatly into one methodological box.

The most common example of this blending is pragmatism. Pragmatism isn't a standalone paradigm in the same vein as positivism; rather, it's a philosophical stance that prioritizes the practical consequences and utility of research. A pragmatic study might combine the quantitative methods and a focus on objectivity from the positivist paradigm with the qualitative, context-rich insights of the interpretive paradigm. This mixed-methods approach allows a researcher to collect both numerical data and a deep understanding of human experiences, providing a more comprehensive and robust picture of the phenomenon

under study. For instance, a study on the effectiveness of a new educational program could use a randomized controlled trial (a positivist method) to measure student performance, while also conducting in-depth interviews with teachers and students (an interpretive method) to understand their experiences and perceptions of the program.

This study highlights major changes in modern social science research. There is a noticeable shift away from strict positivist traditions toward more flexible and problem-focused philosophical approaches, with pragmatism becoming a leading view. The findings show a growing acceptance of using a mix of methods and triangulation. This change reflects researchers' efforts to tackle the complexity of social issues and improve the practical relevance of research findings. These trends suggest that the research culture in social sciences is maturing. Philosophical alignment, choice of methods, and societal relevance are closely linked. By bringing these developments together, the study emphasizes the need for adaptable and context-sensitive research philosophies to boost the rigor, relevance, and impact of social science research.

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