

Kenya, Ong'ondo (2010) notes that studies exploring the qualitative methodologies are rare and viewed with suspicion, with the quantitative research being the more acceptable.

I come from a highly positivist background where there was often, in terms of knowledge, one correct answer, one true explanation or right way to most questions... Similarly, in our context, research is mainly defined in terms of experiments and surveys involving probability samples and hypothesis testing using statistics. As such, I am aware of previous efforts to force such parameters even into studies that (I now know) would benefit from qualitative approaches because they sought deeper understanding of socio-cultural, educational, professional or personal phenomena (Ong'ondo, 2010, p. 245).

It is in this context that we used the qualitative case study to investigate media accountability policies and practices at two media houses in Kenya. The focus of the study was to establish what accountability policies and practices are available in the newsrooms, how they are implemented, and the perceptions of journalists regarding the policies and practices available at the media houses. Media accountability has recently been top of the agenda in the discipline of journalism, as scholars argue that it enhances the quality of journalism and democracy (Fengler, 2015; Groenhart, 2012; Muller, 2005; Tettey, 2006).

In the course of our study, we were bombarded with criticism from audiences who were more accustomed to the realist-positivist paradigms and quantitative approaches that are best suited to the natural and clinical sciences. Specifically, we were continually put to our defense by panelists at various stages of our study to explain our small sample size, the subjective nature of our presentation, whether the findings of the study would be generalizable and the overall trustworthiness of the study. As Lisa Givens (2017) writes, although such requests may simply demonstrate our non-qualitative colleagues' general lack of awareness of appropriate, qualitative research practices, the continual act of justifying, defending, and explaining what we do can be a draining and tiresome exercise.

Our determination to use the qualitative case study method got its impetus from the writings of several scholars who have reiterated the increasing use of the QR especially in the social sciences, even in contexts dominated by the traditional (realist-quantitative) paradigms. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) have commented about an explosion and a proliferation of interest in QR while Litchman (2014) aver that many disciplines in the social sciences have embraced some types of qualitative research as an alternative or complement to quantitative research. She writes that:

QR as a way to answer questions is no longer a new idea. While various fields accept or value QR to a greater or lesser extent, it is clear that QR is not the stepchild that it was in the last millennium. Whether in journalism, urban studies, social work, or behavioural sciences, QR is used and will continue to be used by researchers (Litchman 2014, p.4).

These sentiments echo the thinking among many QR researchers but are predominantly directed at Western audiences. Bubaker, Bala and Bernadine (2006) state that much of the literature on QR has focused on research conducted in developed, unicultural or primarily English speaking countries and that studies of qualitative case study research have been embedded in Western or Euro-centric values.

Consequently, in our study, we felt obliged to explain QR principles and procedures to students, fellow lecturers and other audiences to enable them gain a better understanding of the qualitative approach and hopefully reduce what Givens (2017) terms the paradigm wars. Morrow (2005) points out that often, the qualitative researcher is called upon to give a rationale for conducting a qualitative study and to educate the reader about its underpinnings. We start by discussing the choice and importance of the research paradigm, and the qualitative case study. Hereafter, we explain our sampling procedure and the trustworthiness of our study.

Methodology

We adopted the relativist-interpretivist paradigm to guide our overall design of the study. It was important to explain this in a language that would be accessible to peers, examiners, supervisors and other relevant audiences, supported heavily with citations from several publications – most of which were, unfortunately, not published nor available in the context of the study.

Accordingly, we explained that the study took the interpretivist paradigm because it aims to bring into consciousness hidden social forces and structures, and is directed at understanding phenomenon from an individual's perspective, investigating interaction among individuals, as well as, the historical and cultural contexts which people inhabit (Creswell, 2009). We elicited and understood individual constructs of media accountability through interaction with the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), but relied on them for this understanding as much as possible (Creswell, 2009).

As already stated, we used the qualitative case study - one of the most frequently used qualitative methods in the social sciences (Ponelis, 2015) - because of its ability to combine a variety of data generation techniques. Litchman (2014) defines a case study as an in-depth investigation of a particular case or cases in real-life context in which multiple perspectives related to the complexity of the cases are sought. Gillham (2000) states that to understand people in real life, one needs to study them in their context and in the way they operate. How people behave, feel and think can only be understood if we get to know their world and what they are trying to do in it (pp.11-12). Therefore, our study sought the perspectives of reporters, editors, media managers and media analysts on media accountability from the media houses where they work. We chose the media houses in order to provide insight on the issue of media accountability in Kenya, and sought to understand the policies and practices as well as the perspectives of journalists and media managers on media accountability at the media houses.

Stake (2005), advises that researchers who use case study should seek out both what is common and what is particular about the case and this involves careful and in-depth consideration of the nature of the case, historical background, physical setting, informants through whom the case can be known and other institutional and political contextual factors (Stake, 2005). We had personal interactions with the cases through interviews and conversations with reporters, editors and newsroom managers.

In line with Stake's (1995) typology, we conducted an instrumental case study of the media houses to advance our understanding of media accountability in Kenya. Stake identifies three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental and multiple instrumental. The intrinsic case study is aimed at understanding a particular case because the case itself is of interest - a case may be of interest because it has particular features or because it is ordinary. An instrumental case study on the other hand, provides insight on an issue or problem and the case is selected to advance understanding of the object of interest. The complexity of the case or the research site is secondary to the issue that the researcher seeks to understand. Stake points out that the case is of secondary interest and only plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else. The difference between the intrinsic and the instrumental case study therefore lies in the purpose of the study.

The third case study that Stake (2005) proposes is the collective or multiple instrumental case study. A multiple instrumental case study refers to a situation where a number of cases are studied jointly in order to understand an issue. The cases may be studied in unison, parallel, or sequential order. Stake notes that a multiple instrumental case study is chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding about a larger collection of cases. In our study, we used a multiple instrumental case study in the sense that we conducted the study in two media houses.

The case study method offered us a thick description of the sites, the participants and their occupations. The cases themselves did

not guide the research but were tools for a better understanding of the subjective experiences of the journalists and media managers on media accountability. We were more interested in the richness of the information from the two cases rather than the ability to generalize. It was instrumental in that the cases helped highlight journalists and media managers' perspectives on media accountability policies and practices in Kenya. Thus, the cases played a supportive role to our understanding of something else (Stake, 2005), that is, media accountability in Kenya. We sought out the policies and practices that were common as well as those that were unique to each media house and the perspectives of journalists and managers from both media houses.

Furthermore, the case study method enabled us to gain multiple perspectives from various sources, while focusing on the units of study. Yin (2009, p.61) advises that it is better to use a multiple case study than a single case study because single case studies are like putting "all your eggs in one basket". Secondly, analytic conclusions arising from two cases are more powerful than those coming from a single case. Furthermore, having two or more cases blunts criticism about a researcher's ability to do empirical work beyond a single case (Yin, 2009).

Sampling

We selected the data sources purposively. In purposive sampling, Mason (2002) notes that researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their typicality or uniqueness. In this way, they build a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs. Since we had adopted the interpretive paradigm to guide our study, our justification in using purposive sampling was to access people with in-depth knowledge about media accountability, by virtue of their roles, power, expertise or experience.

Our main focus was to understand the unique case, rather than finding correlations or cause and effect relationships amongst variables. Therefore, random sampling typical of survey research and experiments was not appropriate given the need to understand and capture the particularity and complexity of the cases. We further considered Mason's

(2002) advice that there is little benefit in seeking a random sample when most of the random sample is ignorant of particular issues and unable to comment on matters of interest to the researcher, in which case a purposive sample is vital. She notes that though the sample may not be representative and their perspectives or comments generalisable, this is not the primary concern of the sampling, rather, the concern is to acquire in-depth information from those in a position to give it.

The study was conducted at two media organisations based in Nairobi and in total, 16 journalists spread across the two newsrooms participated in the study: three reporters, six mid level editors, four managing editors and two former editors now working outside the newsrooms. We selected the participants based on their importance, experience, expertise and the key roles and positions that they hold in the newsrooms. Our consideration of the sample size was based on: the nature of our qualitative approach which usually works with small samples and studies issues in depth, the relatively short time and resources available for an academic study, and the depth of evidence we believed would satisfy our scholarly mentors, peers and colleagues.

Let us now to turn to the number of interviews we conducted. In determining the number of interviews, we considered data saturation, that is, when more interviews were not adding new information from the ones already collected. Bryman (2012) describes saturation as a process in which the researcher continues to sample relevant cases until no new theoretical insights are being gleaned from the data. Baker and Edwards (2012) stress that many experts in qualitative research contend that saturation is central to qualitative sampling.

Over all, we followed Baker and Edwards (2012) in justifying how many interviews would be enough for our study. The authors gathered 14 prominent qualitative methodologists and five early career reflections from those embarking on academic careers to answer the question: “How many qualitative interviews is enough?” They reported that the recurring answer to the question “how many?” was “it depends”. The guidance from the participants to their study was it depended upon:

epistemological and methodological questions about the nature and purpose of the research – whether the focus of the questions and of analysis is on the commonality or difference or uniqueness or complexity or comparison or instances; practical issues such as, the time available, institutional committee requirements; and the judgement of the epistemic community in which a researcher wishes to be or is located.

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Data generation techniques

We used in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documents to gather data for our study. Yin (2009) notes that a major strength of data generation in case studies is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence. We were also guided by his suggestion that using multiple sources of evidence, a process of triangulation and corroboration is likely to yield more convincing and accurate findings or conclusions. Yin notes that case studies using multiple sources of evidence are rated more highly in terms of their overall quality than those that rely on single sources of information.

In-depth individual interviews: As stated above, we primarily used in-depth interviews to collect data for our study. Litchman (2014) defines individual interviewing as a general term used to describe a class of methods that permit a researcher to engage in a dialogue or conversation with a participant. Although it is a conversation, it is orchestrated and directed by the researcher. For Babbie and Mouton (2001), it is a process of obtaining detailed data on how and why interviewees construct meaning on a phenomenon of research. Rubin (2005) similarly refers to interviews as conversations where an interviewer is seeking responses from an interviewee for a particular purpose. Yin (2009, p. 106) points out that the interviews are “guided conversations” rather than structured

questions and describes them as some of the most important sources of case study evidence.

Our justification for using in-depth individual interviews to generate data for this study was to get detailed information and descriptions of first-hand experiences from interviewees. As an extension of ordinary conversation, Rubin (2005) contends that an interview is invented anew each time it occurs. The interviewer determines the next question as the talk flows. The interviews have advantages in terms of creating rapport and allowing researchers to observe participants' non-verbal communication, such as their use of gestures.

We conducted semi-structured interviews lasting between 30 minutes to two hours with the participants. We asked the participants about the status quo of media accountability in the media houses, as well as their perspectives about the issue and used their propositions as a basis for further probes. The nature of the interviews enabled us to probe and explore emerging issues. We developed a general set of questions and format, which we followed and used with all the participants in the study. Although the general structure was the same for all the participants, we sometimes varied the order to accommodate a more natural conversational flow. We asked follow up questions on emerging issues or others that were not clear or required elaboration in a non-obtrusive manner and let the participants talk freely with little interruption.

Throughout the interview process, following Yin's (2009, p. 106) suggestion, we stuck to our line of inquiry as set out in the research questions, but at the same time asked our actual conversational questions in an unbiased manner. Yin notes that case study interviews require one to operate at two levels at the same time: satisfying the needs for line of inquiry, while simultaneously putting forth friendly and non-threatening questions. We conducted the interviews at places and times that were convenient to the participants. We recorded all the interviews using a digital recorder following permission from the participants, but also made personal notes, ensuring that our note-taking did not distract the flow of conversations, which were often frank and uninhibited.

Direct observation: We also used direct observation as a data generation technique. The rationale for using direct observation was to obtain additional information. As Yin (2009) observes, since case studies take place in natural settings, there's opportunity for direct observation of some relevant behaviour or environmental condition.

Gillham (2000) points out that observation involves watching what people do; listening to what they say; and sometimes asking them clarifying questions. We used observation to observe the setting of the offices, equipment, technology at the workplaces and side activities. In addition, we were aware that journalists rarely welcome distractions in the course of their work mainly due to the urgency and the general "madness" that goes on as they race to beat the strict production deadlines. Therefore, we did our best not to appear intrusive or to interrupt operations in the course of our observations. We also used this technique in the course of collecting interview data, observing the body language of the participants, listening to what they said and asking them clarifying questions.

Document analysis: Document analysis is another data gathering technique that we employed in this study. We relied on Yin's (2009) observation that documentary information is likely to be relevant to every case study topic and should be the object of explicit data collection plans. He further notes that documentary sources are used as primary focus of research and serve to supplement the material the researchers collect themselves. Documents are essentially used to investigate the activities, strategies and decisions that the organisation takes. Gillham (2000) also contends that since an organisation's documents are deposited formally in writing, they play a part in the effort to triangulate evidence. They can help stabilise the informal reality by comparing it to the formal and structured one.

In our study, document analysis helped to supplement and cross-check evidence collected through other techniques. We collected documents that are relevant to the purpose of our study. We chose the types of documents to review based on the research questions. We accessed the

media houses main editorial policy, the social media policy, policy on coverage of terrorism, and policy on the coverage of military issues. We also accessed some of the documents such as vision and mission statements and core values and similar policy statements on a wide range of issues including, environment, education, health, partnerships, communications, people commitment, employment, and investors from the websites. We also looked at news articles appearing in the websites and formal evaluations of the media situation in Kenya such as the State of the Media in Kenya report.

Other documents found on the websites included corporate social responsibility programmes and a statement on social philosophy in working with the communities. While some of these do not appear to be editorially related, it turned out that they actually influence what the media houses give priority to in terms of coverage. For example, one of the media house's policy on environment was noted to influence its coverage of environmental issues. We concentrated on the meanings and interpretations we drew from the documents to understand the cases rather than the number of the documents. Following the suggestion by Deacon et al. (1999), we scrutinised the documentary sources for representativeness, authenticity and credibility. Deacon et al. explain that representativeness means the degree to which a researcher tries to take adequate samples of documents; authenticity requires being cautious of documents, and credibility has to do with checking the accuracy and honesty of the information.

Data analysis and presentation

We analysed the data thematically. The analysis combined data obtained through in-depth individual interviews, direct observation and document analysis. It was informed by both theoretical and empirical considerations. Thematic analysis is one of the most commonly used methods of data analysis in qualitative research (Jwan & Ong'ondo, 2011). Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. Our choice of thematic analysis was informed by its flexibility, which Braun

and Clarke suggest can provide a rich and detailed yet complex account of data. Part of the flexibility of thematic analysis which attracted us was that it allows the researcher to determine themes. Our choice was also informed by Klenke (2008), who reasons that qualitative analysis seeks to capture the richness of people's experiences in their own terms and involves the non-numerical organization of data to discover patterns, themes, and qualities found in field notes, interviews, transcripts, diaries and cases.

Braun and Clarke (2006) explain further that a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data. They note that an important question to address in terms of coding is: what counts as a pattern/theme, or what size does a theme need to be? To that question, they write that what counts as a theme is a question of prevalence, in terms of space within each data item and of prevalence across the entire data.

Braun and Clarke (2006) write that the process of thematic analysis starts when the analyst begins to notice, and look for patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data – this may be during data collection. The endpoint is the reporting of the content and meaning of patterns (themes) in the data, where themes are abstract (and often fuzzy) constructs that the investigators identify before, during, and after analysis. Analysis involves a constant moving back and forward between the entire data set. The table 1 below shows the steps we followed in analyzing our data.

Table 1: Our steps in thematic data analysis

1. Transcription	After the interviews, we transcribed all the interviews verbatim.
2. Familiarisation	We read all the transcribed data to familiarise with it and ensure that it faithfully reflected the content of the interviews. We also cleaned the document by deleting words that were unnecessary, such as repetitions.
3. Generating initial codes	After ensuring that all the transcriptions were accurate, we read and re-read the entire data to understand it better, searching for meanings and patterns. We then began the process of initial coding.
4. Searching for themes	After the initial coding, we grouped the codes into potential themes, which were then refined by ensuring that there was a coherent pattern in each of the themes.
5. Defining and naming themes	We then defined the themes, identifying and telling a story for each theme. We also looked for sub themes in each of the themes, gave the themes working titles and described their content.
6. Producing the report	This stage began when we had a set of fully worked out themes. It involved the final analysis and write-up of the report in a manner that would make sense to the readers.

The data was presented in narrative form with quotations, summaries and paraphrases from the above-mentioned data sources. The main body of data subjected to analysis and interpretation was interview data, while observations and documents were used to cross-check for the validity of the information. Texts that were quoted were those that we deemed to be the most concise and useful, and while the concepts covered were overlapping, theme by theme presentation was used for

analytic reasons. In the presentation, we used symbols to indicate the sources of the citations that featured in our data presentation (see table 2).

Table 2: Symbols used to indicate sources of data

A1	Interview with associate editor from media house A.
A2	Interview with chief sub-editor from media house A.
A3	Interview with deputy chief sub-editor from media house A.
A4	Interview with a sub-editor from media house A.
A5	Interview with a managing editor from media house A.
A6	Interview with a chief sub-editor from media house A.
A7	Interview with a reporter from media house A.
A8	Interview with a deputy managing editor from media house A.
A9	Interview with managing editor from media house A.
A10	Interview with associate editor from media house A.
B1	Interview with a reporter from media house B.
B2	Interview with managing editor from media house B.
B3	Interview with a senior reporter from media house B.
B4	Interview with associate editor from media house B.
C1	Interview with a former editor at media house B.
C2	Interview with a former editor at media house A.

The presentation stage began when we had a set of fully worked out themes and involved the final analysis and write-up of the report. We focused on narrating and offering thick descriptions with the aim of providing a holistic representation of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) point out that the task of the write-up of a thematic analysis, whether it is for publication or for a research assignment or dissertation, is to tell the complicated story of data in a way which convinces the reader

of the merit and validity of the analysis. We embarked on the narration and explanation of the data in a manner that would make sense to the readers of the report. In doing this, we took into consideration Braun and Clarke's advice that it is important that the write-up, including data extracts, provides a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the story the data tell – within and across themes.

Following the advice of Bekker and Clark (2018), we made sure the write-up had sufficient evidence of the themes within the data by including enough data extracts to demonstrate the prevalence of the theme, and chose vivid examples of easily identifiable extracts which captured the essence of the points we wanted to demonstrate. The extracts were embedded within our analysis in order to illustrate the story that we wanted to tell about the data. In writing the report, we went beyond the data to make an argument in relation to the research questions.

Reporting the data thematically made it possible to avoid repetition by capturing similar patterns and themes from the participants across the two media houses. However, we made sure we identified and reported unique practices from each of the media houses. Narratives and thick descriptions were used as a means of capturing the complex nature of the media accountability policies and practices in a manner that provided a holistic representation of the data. The findings section had long descriptions with headings and sub-headings that organized the text according to the points deemed salient.

We presented the multiple cases in their typicality while emphasising their unique aspects and differences, and only exploring specific points in the discussion section. This approach gave us the freedom to organize the data into an in-depth story that was rich in contextual details, thus facilitating the development of a manuscript that would fully engage readers. We provided a rich description of media accountability policies and practices at the two media houses, and then drew from the descriptions to make theoretical connections. The narrative presentations weaved together interpretation and data excerpts — leading to an integrative

presentation of findings. We noted that our success in presenting the data lay in having a highly skilled and engaging writing competency (Bekker & Clark, 2018).

Trustworthiness in the study

Trustworthiness is still the most often cited standard of truthfulness and authenticity for qualitative research (Reilly, 2013). Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) define trustworthiness as ensuring that the research process is truthful, careful and rigorous enough to make the claims it makes. Trust enhances the utility value of a study as peers, other researchers or academics may want to refer to it.

In judging the trustworthiness of a study, many qualitative researchers often use parallel criteria comparable to those used in quantitative research (Litchman, 2014). Thus while internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity are used to demonstrate trustworthiness in quantitative research, qualitative researchers use parallel terms such as credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability) and confirmability (objectivity) to ensure trustworthiness.

Credibility is referred to as internal validity in quantitative research. This is the extent to which the researcher actually investigates what he/she claims to investigate (Yin, 2009). The extent to which a research fact is what it claims to be or the extent does the researcher demonstrate having been there (Eisenhart, 2006). In this study, we demonstrated credibility by giving a detailed account or description of the research process and the use and explanation of concepts from the literature, excerpts from field notes and quotes from the interviews. According to Litchman (2014), you can judge what you read from the information provided about how it was done. Adding clear explanations and specific details about methodology helps the reader understand and make critical judgements about suitability and appropriateness of the study.

We also involved our peers and experienced researchers in reviewing our key concepts, methodology, analysis and report in conformity with

Ong'ondo (2009). We have attempted to convincingly present, in an iterative manner, what our study was all about throughout the thesis and comprehensively reported our findings and show how the study is related to other studies. According to Litchman (2014), it is up to the writer to make a convincing argument that the topic is important and may be one from which we learn about the situation. A researcher should be able to demonstrate what was studied, what was found and how the research connects to the larger body of research.

We also demonstrated credibility by using three techniques of data triangulation – interviews, observation and document analysis, which made it possible for me to explore media accountability in Kenya in different ways, thereby yielding rich data. We relied on Yin (2009), who point out that using multiple sources of evidence yields more convincing and accurate findings and conclusions. Yin further argues that studies with multiple sources of evidence are more highly rated in terms of quality than those that rely on single sources of information. We also ensured credibility by including various views, perspectives, and voices in the text.

Transferability refers to the extent that a study's findings can be generalized or the wider claims we can make on the basis of our research. Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) point out that there are divergent views as to what sort of generalisations can be claimed from case study research. They argue that the power of qualitative research lies in its ability to represent the particular and that this distinguishes it from other research that depend on generalisability. This point is buttressed by Gillham (2000), who argues that generalization in human behavior is often suspect because there are too many elements specific to a group or institution. Nevertheless, in order to ensure transferability, we used a multiple case study of two media houses. Yin (2009) contends that multiple cases can enhance the transferability of case studies, arguing that analytic conclusions arising from two cases will be more powerful than those coming from a single case.

The objective of dependability is to be sure that if one conducted the research all over again and followed the same procedure as described by the earlier investigator, the later investigator should arrive at the same findings and conclusions (Yin, 2009). Yin actually posits that one should conduct research “as if someone was always looking over your shoulder” (p. 45). To ensure dependability we have maintained a chain of evidence and detailed the steps we followed in the research process. Furthermore, we have maintained a database for our study from the transcriptions, field notes and case study documents. These have provided citations for our report of findings and conclusion.

Confirmability refers to fairness and neutrality in qualitative research. Though researchers might have an influence on the study, this does not rule out its trustworthiness (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). To ensure confirmability, we have explained the rationale for our decisions and activities and acknowledged our role in the research process and admitted any possible influences. Our understanding was that it is normal for researchers to carry their prejudices and experiences into the research process, but the researchers should try to understand these influences on the research process.

In addition to the parallel criteria discussed in the preceding paragraphs, we strived for trustworthiness in our study through convincing arguments, rich detail and attractive communication (Lichtman, 2014). Lichtman argues that it is up to the writer to make a convincing argument that the topic is important and may be one from which we learn about the situation, and the reported findings should be directly connected to the research questions. A researcher should be able to demonstrate what was studied, what was found and how the research connects to the larger body of research. She advises further that adding clear explanations and specific details about methodology helps the reader understand and make critical judgements about suitability and appropriateness of the study. In terms of communication, the author points out that readers can judge the worth of a research by what we read or hear or see - intriguing opening, engaging style, reflections, integration, rich detail, voices of others, justification, and new meanings.

Conclusion

In this paper, we sought to demonstrate the complexity of qualitative case studies by explaining how we used a multiple case study to conduct a research on media accountability at two media houses in Kenya, hoping to foster understanding about the nature of the qualitative research. Our thinking was that by talking with colleagues, editors, reviewers, students, and others about the qualitative approach and how it influences our methods, our analyses, and our writing techniques, we can work towards a better understanding of the interpretive paradigm in a context dominated by positivist orientations (Givens, 2017).

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