

## Positivism And Post-Positivism Approach In Research

Positivism and post-positivism are two major approaches to research. Both represent contradictory means of doing research. Positivism accepts a descriptive approach to research. In contrast, post-positivism is based on critical realism. To learn about the topic, read the article below:

### **Concept of positivism:**

Positivism research focuses on the knowledge of facts gained through observation. Here the focus is on collecting data and interpreting it in the most objective way as it appears. The researcher can't use his or her subjective interpretations. Hence, the findings in positivism are objective and quantifiable. Some key points about positivism are:

- Knowledge can be gained through experiences and by observing different elements of the world
- It focuses on objectivity and quantifiability of results
- It emphasises empiricism.
- Here, enquiry relies on observable and measurable facts.
- It is preassumed that knowledge can be obtained through the senses.
- It is related deductive approach

Hence, positivism states that natural sciences are only the sciences. Social sciences don't come under the ambit of it because they involve subjective adjustments.

### **Concept of post-positivism:**

Post-positivism, on the other hand, focuses on interpretations that can be scientifically tested by using different methods and techniques. These are based on some specific assumptions and supportive actions. In contrast to positivism, post-positivism states that observations cannot be relied on perfectly because they are subject to error. So, post-positivists do not rely on sciences as pure solutions. Rather, they believe that each source of information has errors. Some important features of this approach are:

- It is contrary to the positivist approach.
- It presumes that scientists are biased and subjective.
- The laws and theories can be tested using scientific methods

Here, research starts with existing theory, collecting data and analysis with the ultimate aim to reject or validate a theory

### **POSITIVISM:**

- Deductive
- Quantitative
- Scientific
- Objectivity
- Certainly
- Absolute reality
- Probability sampling
- Structured and controlled
- Deterministic

### **POST-POSITIVISM:**

- Inductive
- Qualitative
- Probability
- Subjectivity
- Humanistic
- Non deterministic
- Critical reality
- Non probability sampling
- Unstructured and uncontrollable

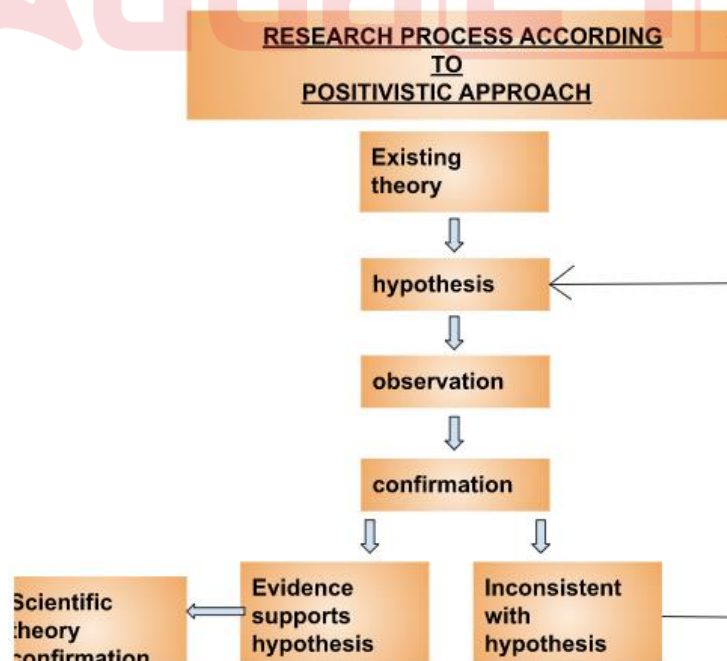
Hence, positivism is a philosophical system stating that certain knowledge is based on natural phenomena. The information is derived from sensory experiences and interpreted through reason and logic. On the other hand,

### **Research process under positivistic vs. post-positivistic approach:**

The research process refers to the detailed outline that how the particular research work will be carried out. The research process is different in both approaches. These are explained below:

#### **• Research process as per positivistic approach:**

Under positivism, the research process follows a quantitative and deductive approach. It involves beginning with a theory, developing hypotheses from that theory, and then collecting and analyzing data to test those hypotheses. If the hypothesis doesn't confirm the theory then they are reframed. Below is the diagrammatic presentation of the research process under the positivistic approach.



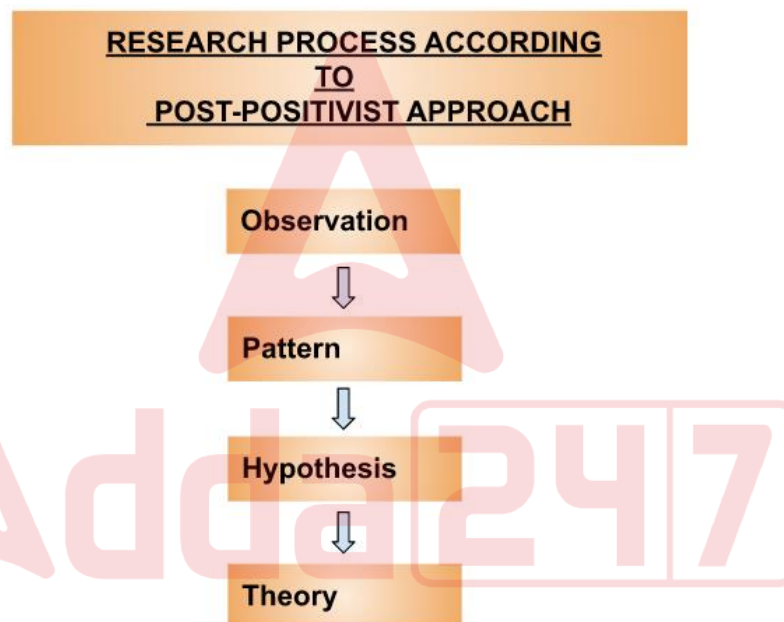
### **Criticism of positivism:**

There are different negatives of positivism highlighted by the researchers:

- Denial to the presence of human emotions
- A major shortcoming of positivism is the “claim to certainty” i.e. claiming that scientific knowledge is purely objective, valid, certain and accurate.
- It just describes the phenomena in an objective way.

### **Research process under post positivistic approach:**

Under post-positivism, the research process follows a qualitative and inductive approach. It involves beginning with specific observations and measures, detecting patterns and regularities, formulating tentative hypotheses that we can explore, and finally developing general conclusions or theories. Below is the diagrammatic presentation of the research process under the positivistic approach.



### **Criticism of the post-positivist approach:**

There are some negatives of this approach which are as follows:

- It questions the objectivity of the research
- It believes that all scientific methods are subject to some error.

In a nutshell, both positivism and post-positivism are separate philosophies of research. If the former is based on deduction and objectivity then the latter presumes subjectivity and induction. Most post-positivists believe that we are constructivists who construct knowledge based on our perception but these perceptions and observations are fallible.