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## The Role of Mixed Methods: Qualitative, Quantitative, Positivism, and Post-Positivism

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this literature research is to help hypothesize for future authors in determining research related to mixed methods. Research articles on the role of qualitative, quantitative, positivism, and post-positivism on mixed methods are scientific literature articles within the scope of research methodology. The approach used in this literature review research is descriptive qualitative. The data collection technique is to use literature studies or conduct literature reviews of relevant previous articles. The data used in this research is secondary data, which comes from academic online media such as Thomson Reuters Journals, Sage, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Scopus Emerald, Elsevier, Sage, Springer, Web of Science, Sinta Journals, DOAJ, EBSCO, Google Scholar and digital reference books. In previous studies, 1 relevant previous article was used to review each independent variable. The results of this literature review article are: 1) Qualitative plays a role in Mix Method research; 2) Quantitative plays a role in Mix Method research; 3) Positivism plays a role in Mix Method research; and 4) Post Positivism plays a role in Mix Method research.

**Keywords:** Mix Method, Qualitative, Quantitative, Positivism, Post Positivism

### INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, research approaches have evolved significantly, driven by the need to understand complex social phenomena. Mixed methods, which combine qualitative and quantitative approaches, have emerged as an effective strategy for answering diverse research questions. According to Dewi, (2024), mixed methods allow researchers to combine the strengths of both approaches, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of a problem. This approach not only enriches the data obtained, but also broadens the analytical perspectives that can be taken.

Then, qualitative and quantitative research have unique characteristics. Qualitative research focuses more on an in-depth understanding of the experiences, views, and social context of individuals or groups. Meanwhile, quantitative research focuses on measuring and analyzing numerical data to identify patterns and relationships between variables. According to Purwono et al., (2019), the combination of these two approaches allows researchers not only to measure phenomena but also to understand the meaning behind the numbers. This is particularly

important in complex social contexts, where qualitative factors often cannot be measured by numbers alone.

But in addition to qualitative and quantitative approaches, the philosophies of positivism and post-positivism also play an important role in the development of mixed methods. Positivism, pioneered by Auguste Comte, emphasizes objective observation and measurement as the basis of knowledge. In the context of research, this approach encourages the use of quantitative methods to obtain verifiable and repeatable data. On the other hand, post-positivism, which emerged as a critique of positivism, recognizes that human knowledge is imperfect and always influenced by social and cultural contexts. This approach opens space for qualitative research to provide deeper and contextual insights into the quantitative data obtained (Siregar, 2019).

An example of using mixed methods can be seen in research on the effect of educational programs on student achievement (Rustiana & Chalifa, 2012). In this study, researchers can use quantitative methods to measure student academic achievement through test scores, while qualitative methods can be used to understand the experiences of students and teachers in the program. By combining the two approaches, researchers can gain a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the education program. In this case, quantitative data provides quantifiable information, while qualitative data provides the context and meaning behind the numbers.

Thus, the importance of understanding the role of qualitative, quantitative, positivism, and post-positivism in mixed methods cannot be overlooked. The combination of these approaches not only increases the validity and reliability of research but also enriches our understanding of complex social phenomena. In this context, mixed methods research can make significant contributions to the development of science and practice in various fields, including education, health, and public policy. Therefore, further research on the integration of these approaches is urgently needed to optimize the potential of mixed methods in addressing future research challenges.

### **Problem Formulation**

Based on the background of the problem above, the problem formulation is obtained to be used as a hypothesis for further research, among others: 1) Does Qualitative play a role in Mix Method research?; 2) Does Quantitative play a role in Mix Method research?; 3) Does Positivism play a role in Mix Method research?; and 4) Does Post Positivism play a role in Mix Method research?.

### **METHOD**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to understand research concepts related to research methodology thoroughly, focusing on the context and meaning contained in the mix method. Descriptive qualitative data collection and analysis allows researchers to adapt their approach to the needs of the research and the characteristics of the subject under study, (Dewi, 2024).

The data used in this research comes from previous research related to Qualitative, Quantitative, Positivism and Post Positivism. Researchers will analyze existing literature to identify patterns and trends in mixed methods. By using previous research and other references, researchers can develop stronger and evidence-based arguments and contribute to a broader understanding of mix methods, (Susanto, Arini, Yuntina, et al., 2024).

The type of data used in this study is secondary data, which utilizes data from various leading academic journals, including Thomson Reuters Journal, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Scopus, Emerald, Sage, WoS, Sinta Journal, DOAJ, and EBSCO, as well as platforms such as Publish or Perish and Google Scholar. By using these sources, researchers can ensure that the data they collect is valid and accountable. The use of multiple sources also allows researchers

to gain a more comprehensive understanding of mixed methods from various perspectives, (Susanto, Arini, Marlita, et al., 2024).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Results

The following are the research findings by considering the context and problem formulation:

#### Mix Method

Mixed method is a research approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods in one study to obtain more comprehensive results. It is used to overcome the limitations that can arise when only one method is used. In mixed method, qualitative data is used to provide context and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, while quantitative data provides measurable and generalizable results. Typically, this research involves parallel or sequential data collection with the goal of integrating findings from both types of data. For example, a quantitative survey may be followed by in-depth interviews to better understand the results.

Indicators or dimensions contained in the Mix Method variable include: 1) Integration of methods: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to obtain more comprehensive results; 2) Parallel Data Collection: Qualitative and quantitative data are collected simultaneously to provide different perspectives; 3) Method sequence: Using one method first, followed by another to deepen the analysis; 4) Triangulation: Validating findings by comparing the results of two methods; 5) Design flexibility: Adjusting the research design to meet data needs; and 6) Contextualization: Providing a deeper interpretation of results by considering the social context.

Mix Method variables are relevant to previous research conducted by: (Purwono et al., 2019), (Azhari et al., 2023), (Justan & Aziz, 2024), (Setyowati et al., 2023), (Nasution et al., 2024).

#### Qualitative

Qualitative methods are research approaches that focus on exploring and understanding social or cultural phenomena from the perspective of individuals or groups. It is descriptive and interpretive, often using in-depth interviews, observation, or document analysis as data collection techniques. The primary purpose of this approach is to explore meanings, motivations, or experiences that cannot be directly measured with numbers. In a qualitative context, the researcher plays an active role in the data analysis process, where subjective interpretations become an important part of answering the research questions.

Indicators or dimensions contained in the Qualitative variable include: 1) Data Validity: Validity is achieved through triangulation or direct verification by the subject; 2) Subjectivity: Emphasis on the viewpoints of research participants; 3) Natural data collection: Data is obtained from the natural environment without manipulation; 4) Thematic Analysis: Discovering patterns or themes from the data collected; 5) Social context: Data is analyzed by considering the cultural or social background; and 6) Inductive Approach: Forming theories based on data findings, not the other way around.

Qualitative variables are relevant to previous research conducted by: (Mu'azzomi et al., 2017), (Kennedy, 2019), (Firmansyah & Dede, 2022).

#### Quantitative

Quantitative research is an approach that focuses on collecting and analyzing numerical data to test hypotheses or answer research questions. This method uses structured instruments, such as surveys, questionnaires, or experiments, to produce objective and generalizable data. Data analysis in quantitative research often uses statistics, both descriptive and inferential.

Indicators or dimensions contained in the Quantitative variable include: 1) Numerical Measurement: Data are expressed in terms of numbers to facilitate statistical analysis; 2) Hypothesis: Research begins with initial conjectures that need to be tested; 3) Structured instruments: Use of questionnaires or surveys with a fixed format; 4) Replication: Research can be repeated to verify findings; 5) Objectivity: Results are not influenced by researcher bias; and 6) Generalizability: Results can be generalized to a larger population.

Quantitative Variables are relevant to previous research conducted by: (Nadirah et al., 2022), (Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023), (Jailani & Saksitha, 2024), (Suryani, 2016).

### **Positivism**

Positivism is a research paradigm that emphasizes the use of scientific methods to objectively explain phenomena. In positivism, reality is seen as fixed and can be measured through systematic observation and experimentation. This paradigm is often used in quantitative research, where researchers seek to identify causal relationships and make generalizations based on empirical data. Positivism focuses on observable facts and avoids subjective speculation or unmeasured interpretation.

Indicators or dimensions contained in the Positivism variable include: 1) Hypothesis Testing: Tests the causal relationship between variables; 2) Empirical observation: Relying on data that can be observed and measured; 3) Objectivity: Avoiding the influence of subjectivity in the analysis; 4) Experimentation: Manipulating variables to see their effects; 5) Prediction: Using data to predict future phenomena; and 6) Phenomenon Reduction: Breaking down complexity into measurable elements.

Variable Positivism is relevant to previous research conducted by: (Sugiyono, 2016), (Wujarso et al., 2023).

### **Post Positivism**

Postpositivism is a research paradigm that developed as a critique of positivism. This paradigm recognizes that while reality can be measured, such measurements are not completely free of bias or subjectivity. Researchers in this approach often use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study. Post-positivism also emphasizes the importance of context, interpretation, and recognition of the complexity of social reality, making it appropriate for research involving dynamic and diverse aspects of human beings.

Indicators or dimensions contained in the Post Positivism variable include: 1) Critical Approach: Recognizing that reality is not entirely objectively measurable; 2) Controlled Subjectivity: Acknowledging the influence of the researcher's subjectivity but attempting to minimize it; 3) Mixed Methods: Using qualitative and quantitative methods to explore complex realities; 4) Contextualization: Adapting the results of analysis to the socio-cultural background; 5) Multidimensional Interpretation: Understanding that phenomena have many sides and viewpoints; and 6) Hypothesis correction: Initial hypotheses can be revised based on data findings.

Post Positivism variables are relevant to previous research conducted by: (Sundaro, 2022), (Riasnugrahani & Analya, 2023), (Yam, 2022).

### **Previous Research**

Based on the findings above and previous studies, the following research discussion is formulated:

**Table 1. Relevant Previous Research Results**

No	Author (Year)	Research Results	Similarities With This Article	Differences With This Article
1	(Waruwu, 2023)	-Qualitative variables play a role in Mix Method Education Research  -Quantitative variables play a role in Mix Method Education Research	This article has in common that it examines Qualitative and Quantitative variables on the independent variable, and examines the Mix Method variable on the dependent variable.	The difference with previous research is in the Educational Research variable as another dependent variable.
2	(Azhari et al., 2023)	-Qualitative Variables play a Role in Mix Method Research for Dissertation  -Quantitative Variables play a role in Mix Method Research for Dissertation	This article has in common that it examines Quantitative and Qualitative variables on the independent variable, and examines the Mix Method variable on the dependent variable.	-The difference with previous research is in the Research Subject, for Dissertation Mix Method Research
3	(Sundaro, 2022)	-Variable Positivism plays a role in Mixed Methods Research and Urban Planning  Post-positivism variables play a role in mixed methods research and urban planning	This article has in common that it examines the Positivism variable in the independent variable, and examines the Mix Method variable in the dependent variable.	-The difference with previous research is that there are urban planning variables as other dependent variables.
4	(Nadirah et al., 2022)	-Positivism variables play a role in mixed methods research with Mendeley and Nvivo  -Post Positivism variables play a role in Mix Method Research with Mendeley and Nvivo	This article has in common that it examines the Post Positivism variable in the independent variable, and examines the Mix Method variable in the dependent variable.	-The difference with previous research is in the use of Mendeley and Nvivo.

**Discussion**

This literature review will be discussed based on the history of the topic, research objectives, problem formulation, indicators or dimensions, and related previous research:

**1. Qualitative role of mixed methods research**

Qualitative research, which includes data validity, subjectivity, naturalistic data collection, thematic analysis, social context, and inductive approaches, plays an important role in supporting mixed methods research. Data validity in qualitative research ensures that the data obtained are accurate and relevant, usually through the use of triangulation or direct verification from research subjects. This supports the integration of methods in mixed methods research by providing a solid basis for the comprehensive combination of qualitative and quantitative data. With guaranteed validity, research findings can be more trustworthy and make a significant contribution to answering complex research questions.

Subjectivity in qualitative research allows for in-depth exploration of research subjects' experiences, views, and emotions that are often difficult to express through quantitative

methods. This subjectivity enriches parallel data collection in mixed methods, as it can provide a human perspective that complements numerical data results. By combining subjective and objective insights, researchers can gain a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study, strengthening the relevance and accuracy of research findings.

Naturalistic data collection in qualitative research, which takes place in the environment where the phenomenon occurs without manipulation, provides a deep context for the data collected. In mixed methods, this approach supports design flexibility, as qualitative data can be used to adapt quantitative methods based on the field situation. This approach ensures that the research remains responsive to the dynamics of the environment, resulting in relevant and applicable findings.

Thematic analysis in qualitative research allows researchers to identify patterns or themes in complex data. This process is relevant in mixed methods research when qualitative data is used to support the sequence of methods, for example, by using initial qualitative findings to design more specific quantitative instruments. The relationship between qualitative themes and numerical data can strengthen research conclusions by providing a richer interpretation of statistical results.

Social context in qualitative research pays attention to the cultural, environmental, and social background factors that influence the phenomenon under study. In mixed methods, this element strongly supports the contextualization process, where research results are understood not only numerically, but also in the relevant social context. In this way, research can produce findings that are more applicable and useful to the community or organization.

The inductive approach to qualitative research, where theory is built from data, allows flexibility in exploring poorly understood phenomena. In mixed methods, this inductive approach can be used to enrich triangulation, where qualitative findings are verified with quantitative data, or vice versa. By combining the strengths of both methods, mixed methods research can provide deeper and more thorough answers to research questions.

With all of these elements, it is clear that the role of qualitative in mixed methods is not only as a complement, but also as an important element that strengthens the overall quality of the research. Data validity, subjectivity, naturalistic data collection, thematic analysis, social context, and inductive approaches contribute to every stage of the mixed methods process, from integrating methods to contextualizing findings. The close relationship between these elements ensures that mixed methods research is able to capture the complexity of phenomena in a way that no single method can.

## **2. The role of Quantitative to Mix Method research**

Quantitative research, which includes numerical measurement, hypothesis testing, use of structured instruments, replication, objectivity, and generalizability, plays a key role in supporting mixed methods research. Numerical measurements in quantitative research allow for the collection of accurate, quantifiable data that provide the basis for robust statistical analysis. In mixed methods, these measurements support method integration by providing quantitative data that can be compared or combined with qualitative data, creating more holistic and information-rich research results.

Hypothesis testing in quantitative research provides a framework for testing relationships between variables using systematic methods. This is consistent with the parallel data collection process in mixed methods, where quantitative data can be used to confirm or challenge qualitative findings. With tested hypotheses, researchers can ensure that research findings not only describe trends, but also provide empirical evidence to support conclusions.

In quantitative research, structured instruments such as questionnaires and Likert scales are used to ensure that the data collected is consistent and reliable. In a mixed methods context, these tools simplify the sequence of methods, where qualitative data can be used to develop relevant quantitative tools, or vice versa. For example, in-depth interviews can identify

variables that are important to measure quantitatively, ensuring that the research remains relevant to its primary objective.

Replication is a major strength of quantitative research, as methods and results can be retested under similar conditions. In mixed methods, this aspect strengthens triangulation, where quantitative results can be compared with qualitative findings to validate the data. Through triangulation, research can reduce bias and increase confidence in the results obtained, ensuring that the findings truly reflect the phenomenon being studied.

Objectivity in quantitative research ensures that the data collected is not influenced by the biases of the researcher. In mixed methods research, this objectivity provides a foundation for design flexibility, allowing quantitative data to be used as a reference point to guide qualitative exploration. By combining quantitative objectivity and qualitative subjectivity, mixed methods research can capture multiple perspectives within a unified framework.

Generalization of results is another advantage of quantitative research, where findings can be applied to a larger population based on a representative sample. In mixed methods, this generalization supports the process of contextualization, where broad quantitative findings are enriched by in-depth qualitative data. This combination ensures that the research is not only relevant in a particular context, but also has broader practical value.

With these elements, quantitative research serves as an integral part of mixed methods. Numerical measures provide baseline data, hypothesis testing provides a framework, structured instruments ensure consistency, replication supports validity, objectivity reduces bias, and generalization ensures broad relevance. All of these aspects are closely interwoven with the other elements of mixed methods, resulting in research that is not only robust but also adaptive to the complexity of the phenomenon under study. Thus, mixed methods research, which combines quantitative and qualitative strengths, is able to provide deeper, more holistic and applicable insights.

### **3. The role of positivism in mixed methods research**

Positivism, with its approach that emphasizes hypothesis testing, empirical observation, objectivity, experimentation, prediction, and reduction of phenomena, is an important foundation for mixed methods research. Hypothesis testing, as one of the main principles of positivism, provides a scientific framework for systematically testing relationships between variables. In mixed methods research, this hypothesis testing supports method integration, where quantitative findings based on hypothesis testing can be compared or supplemented with qualitative data to provide more complete results.

Empirical observation in positivism emphasizes the importance of directly observable and measurable data. In mixed methods research, parallel data collection between quantitative and qualitative approaches allows the combination of objective empirical observations with deep insights from the social context. This ensures that research findings are not only based on measurable observations, but are also relevant to a more complex reality.

Objectivity, another tenet of positivism, ensures that research is free from the subjective biases of the researcher. In the context of mixed methods, this objectivity contributes to the sequencing of methods, where objective quantitative data can be used to guide qualitative exploration, or vice versa. For example, the results of statistical analysis can help identify areas that need further exploration through in-depth interviews or observations.

Experiments, often used in positivist research, allow causality between variables to be tested. In mixed methods, experiments can be combined with data triangulation, where quantitative experimental results are verified or enriched with qualitative data. This approach provides double validation of research findings, reducing the possibility of bias or error in data interpretation.

Prediction, which is the primary goal of the positivist approach, supports design flexibility in mixed methods research. By using quantitative models to predict certain outcomes,

researchers can design more adaptive qualitative components to explore phenomena that cannot be measured directly. This combination of prediction and exploration ensures that research remains relevant and responsive to needs or changes in the research context.

Phenomenon reduction, a hallmark of positivism, seeks to simplify the complexity of reality into measurable variables. In mixed methods, this reduction supports the process of contextualization, where focused quantitative data can be contextualized with broader qualitative data. In this way, the research not only provides a deep understanding of specific elements, but also presents a holistic picture of the phenomenon under study.

Overall, the principles of positivism play a crucial role in mixed methods research. Hypothesis testing provides a scientific foundation, empirical observations provide measurable data, objectivity reduces bias, experiments reveal causality, predictions guide design flexibility, and phenomenon reduction helps focus on key variables. All of these elements support method integration, parallel data collection, method sequencing, triangulation, design flexibility, and contextualization in mixed methods research. Thus, positivism not only strengthens the validity and reliability of research, but also ensures that research is able to answer complex questions in a structured and in-depth manner.

#### **4. The role of post-positivism in mixed methods research**

Post-positivism, with its critical approach that recognizes the limited absoluteness of scientific truth, plays an important role in mixed methods research. This critical approach emphasizes the evaluation of research findings to ensure that they not only reflect objective reality, but also take into account the social and cultural complexities that influence the phenomenon under study. In the context of mixed methods, this approach supports method integration, where quantitative and qualitative approaches are combined to provide a more holistic and critical understanding of the phenomenon.

Controlled subjectivity is a hallmark of post-positivism, which recognizes that the views of the researcher influence the research process, but with careful control. In mixed methods, this subjectivity is integrated through parallel data collection between quantitative and qualitative methods. For example, quantitative data from surveys can be juxtaposed with in-depth interviews where the researcher maintains a balance between subjective interpretations and data-driven findings.

Mixed methods are becoming an important element of post-positivism, which sees merit in blending different approaches to achieve accuracy and depth. Mixed methods support a sequence of methods in which quantitative data can be used as a basis for qualitative analysis, or vice versa. This approach ensures that the research not only answers the research question numerically, but also provides an in-depth narrative that explains the context of the findings.

Contextualization in postpositivism recognizes that research findings are influenced by the specific environment and conditions. This is consistent with triangulation in mixed methods, where multiple sources of data are used to strengthen the validity of findings. For example, in customer satisfaction research, quantitative survey data can be augmented with direct observation and interviews to provide a more complete picture of the customer experience.

Multidimensional interpretation, which allows analysis from multiple perspectives, is particularly important in mixed methods. Post-positivism encourages design flexibility, where research can be adjusted based on data that emerges during the research process. For example, initial findings from a quantitative survey may open up opportunities to explore new themes through qualitative interviews so that the research remains relevant to the phenomenon under study.

Hypothesis correction is another important element of postpositivism, which recognizes that initial hypotheses may need to be modified based on the data collected. This is consistent with the contextualization process in mixed methods, where quantitative data are used as a basis for contextualizing broader findings through qualitative analysis. For example, if the initial



hypothesis about the relationship between training and employee productivity is not supported by quantitative data, qualitative analysis can help explain factors that may not have been measured in the survey.

Overall, postpositivism supports key elements of mixed methods research, such as method integration, parallel data collection, method sequencing, triangulation, design flexibility, and contextualization. With its critical approach, controlled subjectivity, mixed methods, contextualization, multidimensional interpretation, and hypothesis correction, post-positivism provides a rich framework for thoroughly understanding complex phenomena. This approach ensures that research not only produces valid and reliable data, but is also relevant to the broader social and cultural context, enriching the research contribution to knowledge and practice.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is determined based on the formulation of the problem, research objectives and previous studies that are relevant to the discussion of this literature research:

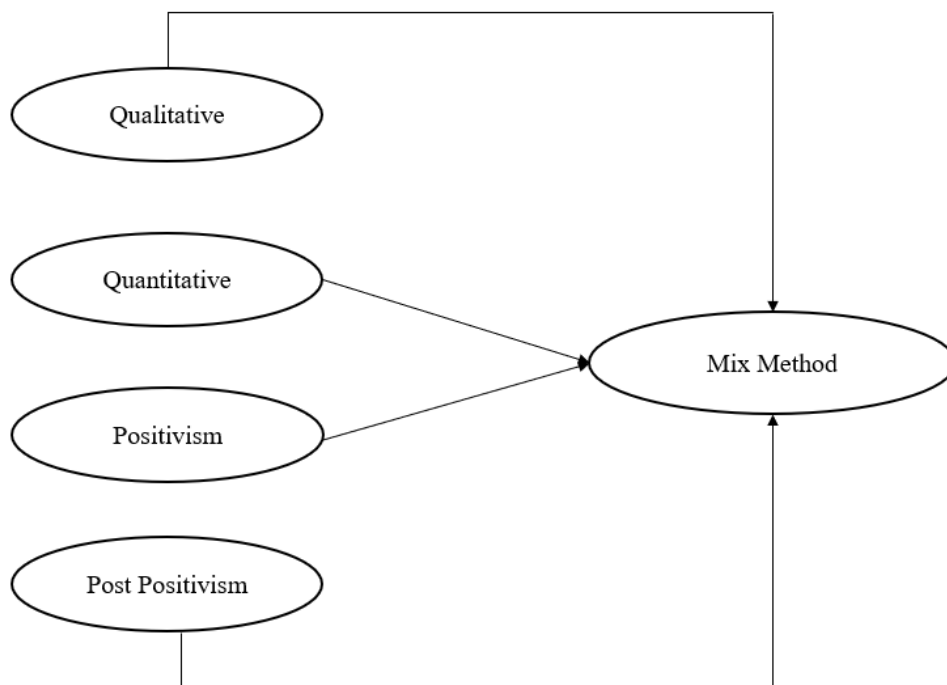


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Based on Figure 2 above, qualitative, quantitative, positivism and post positivism play a role in mix method research. However, in addition to qualitative, quantitative, positivism and post positivism variables that play a role in mix method research, there are other variables that influence, including:

- 1) Data Type: (Gabriela et al., 2023), (Jailani & Saksitha, 2024), (Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023), (Fadilla & Wulandari, 2023).
- 2) Research Objectives: (Prihantoro & Hidayat, 2019), (Susanto, Arini, Marlita, et al., 2024), (Firmansyah & Dede, 2022).
- 3) Research Question: (Abduh et al., 2023), (Nur'aini, 2020), (Assyakurrohim et al., 2023), (Arief & Abbas, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the problem formulation, results and discussion above, the conclusions of this study are:

1. Qualitative plays a role in Mix Method research;
2. Quantitative plays a role in Mix Method research;
3. Positivism plays a role in Mix Method research;
4. Post Positivism plays a role in Mix Method research.

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