Chapter 13
Nonquantitative Research:
A Modern Primer

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ABSTRACT

In the field of qualitative – hermeneutic - social research there are a variety of different approaches and currents stemming from various philosophical and disciplinary traditions. However, most of the qualitative research styles share certain characteristics such as the research being very open in its approach to the researched subject. At the beginning of the research concerning the problem area, the researcher often chooses a broad thematic framework. During the research, work, focuses, modifications, and reorientations of interest may occur. Openness also means that the research process cannot be precisely planned or predicted in advance.

As a doctoral student, the power of statistics and the clean lines of quantitative research appealed to me, but I fell in love with the richness and depth of qualitative research. -Brené Brown

Research is seeing what everybody else has seen and thinking what nobody else has thought. -Albert Szent-Györgyi

INTRODUCTION

From the outset, the researcher enters science as others may into religion; one quickly learns that one has a mission of engaging in an endless quest. The researcher is a bearer of hope, for whom time should not matter, who vows poverty, forgetfulness and self-sacrifice to serve science better and not abuse it. Like predecessors, an idealist of modern times, a contemporary knight without cognitive fear and methodological reproach, one sets out to conquer knowledge while caressing, in the deepest secret of intimacy, the unspeakable hope of being invited to sit with dignity at the master's table. However, the key to the transition from the rectangular table to the round table is singular: it is partly due to the research writings forming the modest contribution to the construction of scientific accumulation, that is, the thesis, the article, the chapter or the volume.

The researcher is thus invited to ensure their initiatory passage into the world of adults by following a path in three phases: schooling, fieldwork, and analysis. Positive knowledge cannot be revealed either by the inexperienced eye of the layman or by the overly experienced eye of the bearer of academic prejudices; a necessary reformatting precedes and allows access to reality. Having decoded the lessons of a carefully concocted list of classics necessarily representative of the field, the researcher is invited to end their studies by compiling the handling of their intellectual collections in a theoretical or analytical report. This first step authorises the apprentice to approach reality in all the neutrality that the latter commands. Thus, with the reference points so patiently acquired, at the confines of the kingdom to which s/he owes everything, the researcher immerses him/herself in the object during the field phase. Once this has been concluded, exhausted but amazed, even stunned by the field's richness, the researcher must become the indescribable narrator (O'Sullivan, 2015).

One must clarify here that there is no question of playing the troubadour, of transforming reality into poems, and of going to sing the properties of the object in all the castles of the kingdom. On the contrary, it is about fully assuming the role of a scientific apprentice, transforming empirical data into theoretical analyses, and presenting the results in various forums for this purpose.

The qualitative method is justified when the research object is complex, multidimensional and historically situated (Legendre & Legendre, 2012). The generalisation of acquired knowledge meets these three criteria since it occurs outside the program (complexity), has two components (content and context), and its conceptual evolution is identifiable. In sum, the undeniable advantage of the qualitative method is that it can focus on the human experience as a whole. It allows us to preserve the complexity of the situations experienced. Looking at the taxonomy of the generalisation of the acquired as a conceptual frame during interviews, the

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