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Contents

Editorial

The current issue of the International Journal of Sales, Retail and Marketing is dedicated to the research methods from an investigative viewpoint of doctoral students. We are proud to present a Guest Editor for this special Issue Dr. Stephen Henderson. .

Thank you for taking interest in publishing and reading The International Journal of Sales, Retailing and Marketing. We hope it will be a valuable help in your professional and academic advancement.

Editor,

Professor Mirko Palić, Ph.D.

Guest Editor Dr. Stephen Henderson

As the internet has made communication both quick and easy, we find ourselves surrounded by vast amounts of information which purport to be 'true'. Whilst even a casual glance around reveals information that is clearly untrue, establishing accurate and useful information is often difficult. For academics, part of the role is to establish working research practices that help us get to that elusive truth. This special issue has come together to highlight some of the key techniques that help researchers to achieve this. Though not all the answers can be found in this special issue, there are a number of good pointers for researchers seeking the truth in what surround us.

It is noticeable that the majority of contributors have chosen to provide papers looking at the case study method of research. Taking a moment to consider why this might be, it's clear that the International Journal of Sales, Retail and Marketing mainly concerns itself with commercial organisations. In this way, using case studies, we seek to find out why we observe spectacular success or, indeed, spectacular failure in these organisations.

As organisations differ widely in a number of attributes such as size, complexity, culture; it's not surprising that academics in this area turn their attention to the case study method looking into situations that appear fascinating to us.

However, I hear you asking 'why should this dominate this special issue?'. In response and support of the selection, I would point you to one of the foremost writers on case study approach when he says "do not underestimate the depth of your challenge" (Yin, 2009, p.3). This special issue aims to shed some light on the depth of the challenge.

Turning to the papers in this special issue, we see Valentina Paula Aczel start with Yin's definition of what makes a case study and the explanation of its roots in particular observed phenomenon. Aczel continues by explaining epistemological and philosophical standpoints that support the case study approach before exploring the qualitative nature of this approach. In the paper from Simone Tumele, the case study approach is revealed as offering a number of choices. This may surprise the less familiar researcher whose initial thoughts might suggest the case study approach is a singular type of approach without much flexibility.

Simone Tumele's paper points to a typology of case study approaches which have an inevitable consequence that there are a variety of research methods that might be chosen. This theme is picked up in the paper by Martina Gog who points to the different typologies and reminds us that the case study might be applied across "psychology, sociology, political science, anthropology, social work, business, education nursing and community planning." Some of these areas might not immediately come to mind for readers of this journal with its focus of on the commercial world. In doing so, it is offering a timely reminder of the versatility and usefulness of case study research in both social and commercial situations. Gog continues by returning to Yin (2009) and highlighting the generalised process to be followed in order to allow the case study research of some quite differing circumstances.

Having covered case study research from the different angles of definition, typology and overall process; we have chosen to include the paper from Elisabeth Göttfert whose writing starts to compare how qualitative and quantitative research methods fit into the case study approach and vica-versa. Given how case studies lend themselves to immersion of the researcher in the phenomenon being researched, it's not surprising that our contributors leaned towards qualitative research. Isabella Mayer and Carolin Graue both explore this area in their papers. Graue chooses to compare qualitative up against quantitative approaches in exploring both their advantages and disadvantages. On the other hand, Mayer chooses to look at qualitative data analysis and concentrates on methods of gathering the data and its analysis. Whilst, superficially, these papers are covering similar areas, their main common ground is the choice of method. In particular, they emphasise the fundamental choice of qualitative or quantitative and the choices within each area. Specifically, these writers point to the choices to strengthen our research outcomes via techniques such as triangulation and the interpretation of qualitative data via content analysis.

As noted earlier, case studies are of interest to those looking into social issues as much as those aiming to interpret the commercial world of business. Both of these sectors have seen the use of focus groups become ubiquitous whether it is political parties seeking out the voters' opinions or market researchers' attempting to interpret what would make successful product or service offerings. Hence, including the paper from Birgit Kellmereit allows us to consider what has become an increasingly popular research method within the case study approach. This look at focus groups takes the reader from the philosophical background to choosing the method through the process to its advantages and disadvantages. In doing so, it not only reveals why this research method has become so popular but also why we should be careful about where and when it is used within a case study.

To observe some of the key points from the preceding papers, it is useful to include the paper from Muhammed Güler as an example of a case study approach in action. Looking at the ambitious growth target of BNP Paribas in Germany, the paper is revealing in its need to take on board a range of research methods under the umbrella of a case study. Of course, Güler's paper uses just one of what can be understood to be a range of approaches to case study that could be chosen. However, it does reflect in its approach much of what has been revealed by the other authors in this special issue.

This special issue is revealing in its look at the depth and complexity that the quote from Yin pointed out at the outset of this editorial. We trust that the individual papers in this special issue of the International Journal of Sales, Retail and Marketing help you in your quest for 'truth' in your research.

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Dr Stephen Henderson MBA

Senior Lecturer in Events Management at Leeds Beckett University. He has spent over ten years working within industry moving from a technical/production role across to sales/marketing. Following a PhD at the University of Leeds and during his period in industry, he gained an MBA from The University of Warwick. He has worked for the Business Schools at the Universities of Warwick, Surrey, Liverpool, Durham, Bradford and The Open University. His consulting clients have included such as Heinz, Tatung, Britvic Soft Drinks, John West, KPMG, Yorkshire Chemical and many others. Publications from his academic career have appeared in a number of international journals.

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Carolin Graue

INTRODUCTION

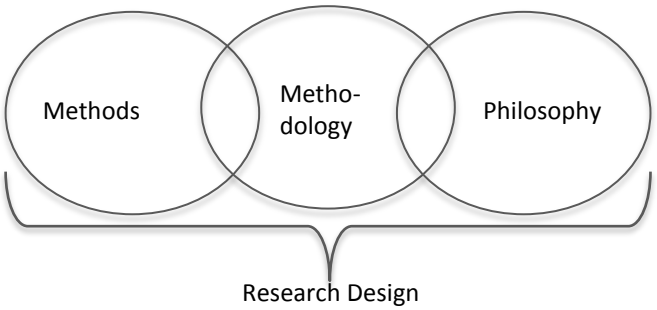
Armstrong said: "Research is creating new knowledge." Therefore conducting research is the logical consequence to the emergence of a question that has not yet been answered. Research can either analyse an already examined phenomenon further or approach a completely new one.

If quantitative research is unrewarding to answer the question, the choice will be qualitative research which, according to Flick (2009: 14) has the following features: "The correct choice of appropriate methods and theories; the recognition and analysis of different perspectives; the researchers' reflections on their research as part of the process of knowledge production; and the variety of approaches and methods". Since qualitative research has increased greatly in importance in recent years and is a widely accepted research method (cf. Flick 2013: 3) this paper is about the analysis of qualitative data, which is a very important part of the research process. First, we take a look at the research philosophy that has an impact on the role of the researcher who is conducting a study. After that, qualitative research is being introduced and a comparison between qualitative and quantitative research is being drawn. Chapter 4 about qualitative data analysis gives an introduction about the general aspects of qualitative data analysis and states types of qualitative data. After that, four approaches to qualitative data analysis (theoretical propositions, triangulations, grounded theory, content analysis) will be presented. This paper finishes with a conclusion on qualitative data analysis that states the necessities for authentic research and analysis. Via the following link, you have access to a Prezi-presentation about this paper:
http://prezi.com/4n9kttjb9zco/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy

RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

The research design is influenced by methods, methodology and philosophy, which are the design's components (cf. Birks & Mills 2010: 4). The philosophy consists of ontology and epistemology.

Figure 1: Components of Research Design



Source: Birks & Mills 2010: 4.

Ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods affect the research concerning the role of the researcher himself within the study. My philosophical background is post-positivist because I believe that reality exists but I am also sure that I only perceive some parts of it (cf. Appendix I).

The ontology influences the selection of the research objective, the research questions and also how the research is conducted. Epistemology and ontology of the researcher are the philosophical foundation and therefore have a big impact on all aspects of the study (cf. Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 4-5). As a post-positivist, I accept the fact that my observations are influenced by my background, theories, values and knowledge. Nevertheless, I strive to be as neutral as possible and try not to influence the collection and interpretation of data (cf. Appendix I, Guest et al. 2013: 6).

The researchers methodology is accountable for the approach to using theory. This one can either be inductive or deductive. Following the inductive approach (mainly qualitative) means that new theory is generated out of the data whereas the deductive approach (mainly quantitative) uses theory or hypotheses to test it against data (cf. Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 5). To provide an overview of the difference between qualitative and quantitative research, table 1 is provided.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

QUANTITATIVE VS. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Whether a researcher decides to follow a quantitative or qualitative research approach depends on the researcher's epistemologically grounded beliefs (cf. Bryman & Bell 2011: 163). In my case, I tend to follow the qualitative research approach. Table 1 shows the main contrasts between qualitative and quantitative research.

Table 1: Contrast between quantitative and qualitative research

Quantitative	Qualitative
Numbers	Words
Point of view of researcher	Points of view of participants
Researcher distant	Researcher close
Theory testing	Theory emergent
Static	Process
Structured	Unstructured
Generalisation	Contextual understanding
Hard, reliable data	Rich, deep data
Macro	Micro
Behaviour	Meaning
Artificial settings	Natural settings

Source: Bryman & Bell 2011: 410.

Some of the differences that emerge from the role of the researcher himself are the point of view and how distant the researcher is. Quantitative research is structured by the concerns of the researcher while qualitative research is structured by the concerns of those who are the subject of the research. Since the involvement of the researcher is larger when doing qualitative research, he can understand better the point of view of the subject of study. When doing quantitative research, the researcher might have no direct contact with the research subject at all. Often he will use hired interviewers or send questionnaires by mail. This lack of involvement can assure that the researcher does not loose his objectivity (cf. Bryman & Bell 2011: 410).

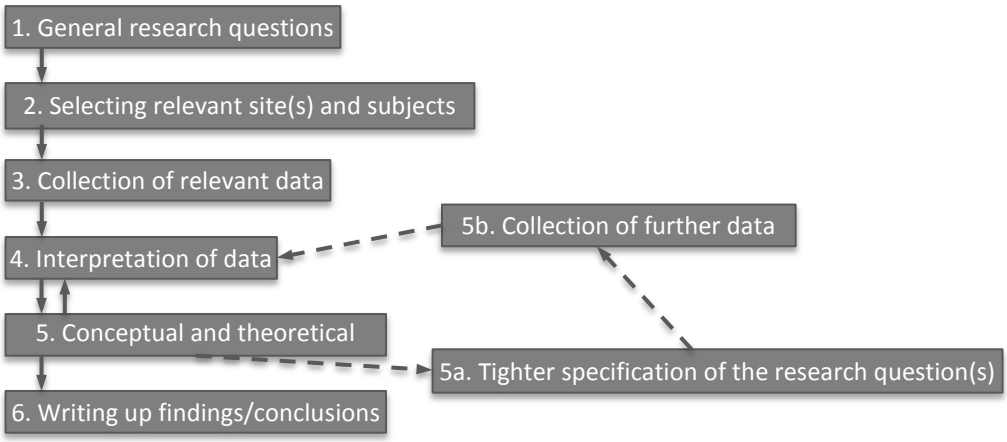
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Bryman & Bell (2011: 392) state: "Two particularly distinctive aspects of the sequence of steps in qualitative research are the highly related issues of the link between theory and concepts with research data".

An open-ended research can be complicated because it might lead to an overload of information and fosters an unfocused approach. Therefore it is advisable to formulate some research questions at the beginning (cf. Bryman & Bell 2011: 79). Formulating an appropriate research question or questions will have the following impact: It gives guidance for literature search, research design, which data needs to be collected and from where, for the analysis and writing-up the data. Additionally it helps the researcher to stay close to the object of study and therefore prevents him from unnecessary circuits (cf. Bryman & Bell 2011: 79).

Since there might be more questions of interests than can be answered, a selection of the most important needs to be done. A good research question is clear and researchable, it links up with theory and the other research questions. Furthermore it should participate to knowledge and not be either too narrow or too broad (cf. Bryman & Bell 2011: 81-83). Selecting the right research question(s) is just one step of qualitative research. The whole process is show in figure 2.

Figure 2: Main steps of qualitative research



Source: Bryman & Bell 2011: 390.

After formulating one or more target-aimed research questions, the relevant site(s) and subjects need to be selected. Now the collection of relevant data can start. After collecting data, the researcher will interpret these data. This interpretation of data will lead to conceptual and theoretical work. This on the other hand will lead to a tighter specification of the research question(s) and therefore to a collection of further data which needs to be interpreted. After all relevant data is collected, the researcher can write up findings and derive conclusions.

The next chapter takes a look at qualitative data analysis. First it clarifies what qualitative data are, then what types of qualitative data there are, after that in introduces four approaches for analysing them and finally concludes in the four key steps of qualitative data analysis.

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

WHAT IS QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS?

Qualitative data analysis is a process of the description, classification and interconnection of phenomena with the researcher's concepts. First, the phenomena under study needs to be described precisely. The researcher needs to be able to interpret and explain the data; therefore a conceptual framework needs to be developed and data classified. After that, concepts can be built and connected to each others (cf. Dey 1993: 31, 41, 48).

Qualitative data analysis has the following general aims (Flick 2013: 4):

Describe a phenomenon in some or greater detail
Comparing several cases on what they have in common or on the differences between them
Develop a theory of the phenomenon under study from the analysis of empirical material

TYPES OF QUALITATIVE DATA

When analysing qualitative data, the researcher deals with meanings and not with plain numbers. Qualitative research can be conducted by using different sorts of sources like observation, unstructured interviews, group interviews, collection of documentary materials and so on. Conducting interviews or collecting materials causes the production of field notes, transcripts from interviews, documents, videos and the like (cf. Dey 1993: 11, 15).

Whereas there are rules how to analyse quantitative data, there are no such explicit rules for qualitative ones (cf. Bryman & Bell 2011: 571). Following, some general approaches to qualitative data analysis will be introduced. These approaches help the researcher to apply a more systematic strategy to the study. The first one being introduced in this paper is theoretical propositions.

APPROACHES TO QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

Definition

Zikmund et al. (2009: 39) define theory as follows: "A theory consists of a coherent set of general propositions that offer an explanation of some phenomena by describing the way other things correspond to this phenomena. Put another way, a theory is a formal, testable explanation of some events that includes explanations of how things relate to one another." Furthermore, Zikmund et al. (2009: 42) define propositions as follows: "Propositions are statements concerned with the relationships among concepts. A proposition explains the logical linkage among certain concepts by asserting a universal connection between concepts."

Usage

If the researcher assumes e.g. a specified reaction as a result of an action, he can approach the study with a theoretical proposition. The counterparts of this proposition are hypotheses that shall be answered. It is the proposition that can be tested during the research. Since there is usually more than just one theory available, the researcher can confirm the theory that fits best by collecting empirical data or making observations (cf. Zikmund et al. 2009: 42-43). Zikmund et al. (2009: 43-44) state: "One task of science is to determine if a given theoretical proposition is false or if there are inconsistencies between competing theories. Just as records are made to be broken, theories are made to be tested".

TRIANGULATIONS

Definition

Triangulation means that the researcher uses data from a variety of sources applying a variety of methods (cf. Bryman & Bell 2011: 397). Doing so, the researcher gains knowledge that is more reliable due to the variety of approaches (cf. Bryman 2003: 1142).

Usage

Triangulations look as follows: the researcher uses one measurement process and compares the findings with the ones using another method. If the second method confirms the findings of the first one, triangulations strengthen the reliability of the finding. If it does not hold, it can be seen as proof that using just one method or measure is not always reliable (cf. Bryman 2003: 1142).

There are four different types of Triangulation as defined by Denzin (1970 cited in Bryman 2003: 1142):

Data triangulation (collecting data by using different sampling strategies)

Investigator triangulation (data collection and analysis is done by at least two researchers)

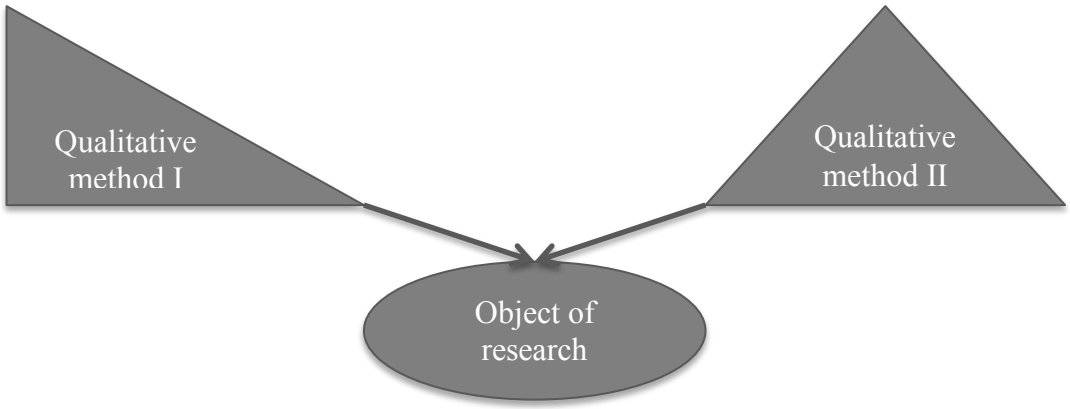
Theoretical triangulation (data is interpreted by using at least two theoretical positions)

Methodological triangulation (collecting data by using at least two methods).

Methodological triangulation is the most commonly used type.

Figure 3 clarifies the triangulation of different qualitative methods. Qualitative method I could be for example interviews and qualitative method II focus groups.

Figure 3: Triangulation of different qualitative methods



Source: Flick 2011: 41.

Advantages

Originally Denzin suggested that the usage of more than on method and different sources to derive data drives a higher confidence in the results. Nowadays Flick (2011: 111) states: "The gain of the triangulation is not as strong in the mutual checking of results, but in expanding the learning opportunity by extension of perspectives on the studied subject".

Disadvantages/Limitations

Critics find fault with triangulations since data, that is collected using different methods, cannot always be compared with each other. Bryman (2003: 1143) states: "Such a view fails to take account of the different social circumstances associated with the administration of different research methods (…)". Another disadvantage might be that it is more expensive due to the high effort of the researcher. Therefore costs and benefits for the study must be carefully weighed (cf. Flick 2011: 111).

GROUNDED THEORY

Besides Theoretical Proposition and Triangulations there are more qualitative research designs available. Following grounded theory shall be introduced.

Definition

Strauss and Corbin (1998 cited in Bryman & Bell 2011: 576) define grounded theory as "theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process. In this method, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another". Bryman and Bell (2011: 576) conclude, that "two central features of grounded theory are that it is concerned with the development of theory out of data and the approach is iterative, or recursive (…) meaning that data collection and analysis proceed in tandem, repeatedly referring back to each other."

Usage

Grounded theory is one of the most common research designs worldwide. Birks and Mills (2010: 1, 9) list the following methods for data collection and analysis: "initial coding and categorization of data; concurrent data generation or collection and analysis; writing memos; theoretical sampling; constant comparative analysis using inductive and abductive logic; theoretical sensitivity; intermediate coding; selecting a core category; theoretical saturation; and theoretical integration."

The data used can be derived from a number of sources like interviews, observations, documents, videos, newspapers, letters or books. All this data can be coded to ensure a valid analysis (cf. Corbin & Strauss 1990: 5).

By applying grounded theory and its methods in a study, the researcher will be able to "explain a process or scheme associated with a phenomenon" (Birks & Mills 2010: 12).

Corbin and Strauss (1990: 6-11) specify the following eleven canons and procedures that need to be followed during data collection and analysis to ensure a consistent application of grounded theory. Since the collection of data and their analysis are an interrelated processes, as soon as the first data is collected, it is time to analyse it because it will influence future interviews or observations. Concepts are the Basic Units of Analysis, because during the process of analysis the researcher needs to conceptualise the data to work with it. Furthermore, categories must be developed and related to each other. For that reason, clustering related concepts forms categories. Corbin and Strauss (1990: 8) also state that "sampling in grounded theory proceeds on theoretical grounds and analysis makes use of constant comparisons". By comparing incidents with other incidents, differences and also similarities can be worked out. To ensure a consistent data set, "patterns and variations must be accounted for". The "process must be build into the theory" to bring it into the analysis. It is impossible for the researcher to keep in mind all categories, hypotheses, generative questions and properties, therefore "writing theoretical memos is an integral part of doing grounded theory" to keep track of all study aspects. "Hypotheses about relationships among categories should be developed and verified as much as possible during the research process" to study it repetitively until it holds true for all aspects of the study object. Since the collaboration of researchers will foster ideas and productive discussions, "a grounded theorist need not work alone". The last point Corbin and Strauss make (1990: 11) is that "broader structural conditions must be analysed, however microscopic the research".

Advantages

Corbin and Strauss (cf. 1990: 6-7) point out some advantages of grounded theory. They consider the systematically and sequentially collection and analysis of data as one big advantage of grounded theory. This "enables the research process to capture all potentially relevant aspects of the topic as soon as they are

perceived. This process is a major source of the effectiveness of the grounded theory approach." Moreover, it hinders the researcher to interfere with the study. Since every concept in use needs to be proved as relevant for the object of study during the inspection, the researcher needs to abandon it no matter of his preferences.

Disadvantages/Limitations

Although grounded theory is very often applied, there are some limitations as well. Following, some of the limitations and criticism are described which Bryman and Bell gathered: Applying grounded theory is a relatively time consuming process. Furthermore, it does not always result in theory because in the end, the research looks only at a specific social phenomenon and not at a wide scope. Some also criticise that coding the data causes a loss of the context (cf. Bryman & Bell 2011: 583-584).

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Definition

Although content analysis was originally a quantitative technique, it can also be applied to qualitative data analysis (cf. Franzosi 2007: 1). Bryman and Bell (2011: 717) define it as "an approach to documents that emphasizes the role of the investigator in the construction of the meaning of and in texts. There is an emphasis on allowing categories to emerge out of data and on recognizing the significance for understanding the meaning of the context in which an item being analysed (and the categories derived from it) appeared". A more general definition by Krippendorff (cited in White & Marsh 2006, 23-27) defines content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use".

Usage

Data to be analysed can be any material, either written down or recorded (cf. Treadwell 2014: 215). First, a research question needs to be formulated. Since qualitative content analysis is inductive, the researcher does not need to work with hypotheses but can also follow open-ended questions. Therefore he can adjust his research questions and the categories while reading through the text, if he notices concepts and patterns which he did not think of before (cf. White & Marsh 2006: 34). Krippendorff (2004 cited in White & Marsh 2006: 34) calls "the process off recontextualizing, reinterpreting, and redefining the research until some kind of satisfactory interpretation is reached" a hermeneutic loop.

Advantages

Stemler (2001) says: "Content analysis is a powerful data reduction technique. Its major benefit comes from the fact that it is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding. It has the attractive features of being unobtrusive, and being useful in dealing with large volumes of data". Additionally, the research method is transparent since coding scheme and the applied sampling can be exposed. It is also flexible because it can be used for different unstructured information (cf. Bryman & Bell 2011: 305).

Disadvantages/Limitations

Usually it is impossible to prevent the coding manual to be influenced by interpretations of the researcher. Furthermore, if the researcher aims to impute latent content, there is always the risk to make invalid conclusions. Additionally, content analysis might be atheoretical in some cases. Researchers might tend to analyse what is measurable instead of what is theoretically important (cf. Bryman & Bell 2011: 308).

KEY STEPS OF QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

There are four key steps most qualitative data analysis approaches have in common: Data collection, data reduction, data displays and conclusion drawing/verification. Data is collected by conduction interviews or observation. The amount can be overwhelming and therefore

needs to be documented. After that the data can be reduced to manageable amounts that still need to be meaningful. Categorizing or coding the data are ways to organise and prepare the data and make it usable for the analysis (cf. Schutt 2012: 326, 328). Doing the coding, it is crucial to assure that observation and resulting conclusion are reliable (cf. White & Marsh 2006: 36-39). The coded data allows the researcher to draw conclusions and he is able to present his findings (cf. Zhang & Wildemuth 2009: 5). The core of the analysis is examining relationships. At this point, the researcher stops describing and starts explaining why things are as they are. When displaying the data, it needs to be clear to the reader. The research process finishes with a conclusion. The conclusion should include information about the creditability of the informant, whether statements where made spontaneous and if the informant influenced the group members (cf. Schutt 2012: 330-331).

CONCLUSION

This paper introduced four approaches of how to analyse qualitative data - theoretical proposition, triangulation, grounded theory and content analysis.

When analysing the data for a phenomena, the researcher needs to ensure credibility of the study results and the study process in general. Therefore, the researcher should ask himself, as recommended by Denzin (2002 cited in Adams et al. 2007: 355), following questions:

Do they illuminate the phenomenon as lived experience?

Are they based on thickly contextualized materials?

Are they historically and relationally grounded?

Are they processual and interactional?

Do they engulf what is known about the phenomenon?

If the researcher can answer all questions positively, he reached his aim of authenticity.

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APPENDIX I

	Positivist	Post-positivist	Critical theorist	Scientific realist/Critical realist	Constructivist	Interpretivist
Ontology	Real World exists	Real World exists, but cannot truly be perceived	Real World exists, but cannot truly be perceived	Real World is independent of human thought, but meaning or knowledge is always a human construction	Real World is independent of human thought, but meaning or knowledge is always a human construction	Real World can only ever be perceived and its working out (social reality) is a human construction
Epistemology	Inquirer separate from the phenomenon under consideration. Objective	Inquirer strives to be as neutral as possible Acknowledgement of position	Value inherent Bounded by a particular ideology Aimed at changing social structure Social produced 'facts' are central	Inquirer strives to adopt a contemporary scientific perspective Universalistic in scope but particular in interpretation	Realities exist as multiple mental constructions Socially and experientially based Inquirer and the phenomenon under consideration interact to literally 'create' the findings	Realities exist as multiple mental constructions Inquirer is embedded and influences the construction of the shared reality Context-dependent construction
Methodology	Empirical Perceptual Precision, control and manipulation Verification Single method Etic	Empirical Perceptual Precision, control and manipulation Triangulation Seeks 'understanding' Falsification and discovery Etic	To capture the social reality Social and activist Transformative Single method Emic	Empirical Seeks 'understanding' Multi-methodology	Case Ethno-methodology Multi-methodology Emic	'Lived experience' Ethno-methodology Multi-methodology Emic
	Experiment Observation Survey Deductive Inductive	Experiment Observation Survey Deductive Inductive Abductive	Observation Activism Historical Dialectic	Experiment Observation Survey Deductive Inductive Abductive Hermeneutic Dialectic	Hermeneutic Dialectic Ideographic	Observation Hermeneutic Dialectic
Consequences	Correspondence theory of truth Laws	Knowledge remains tentative Strives for balance	Change Ideologically based conclusions	Context and goal dependent Science is driven by questions not methods Methods must follow the questions	Empathetic Specific Rich Thick descriptions	Everything is interpreted Centrality of the symbolic and cultural Rich Empathetic

CASE STUDY METHOD

Paula Aczel

Purpose and Structure

"A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 2003, p. 13).

This definition shows the importance of the case study as a research design. It represents in foreground the qualitative orientation and the great importance of a methodological and conceptual pluralism. Case study as a research design is especially suitable when there are large numbers of variables in a small number of applied units of analysis and when the context plays an important role (Vaus 2001, p. 231).

Epistemological approaches for the design of scientific work

In business research there are two approaches the positive and the normative, both related to the scientific argumentation and the question of the scientific work itself, which are equally important (Fülbier 2004, p 267).

The basic question of scientific work can be based on the theory of concepts and economic theory that tries to fathom how or why something is the way it, referring to the positive research approach or the philosophy of economics when you ask how should be something, this is the normative research approach. The normative oriented economic research is particularly efficiency-oriented and seeks to identify the efficiency benefits to justify the positive research approach of evaluation of the existing data.

In addition to the main types of questions that can be derived from the target system of business administration used for the design of scientific work the key task of a science also includes the progress of knowledge. Any possible questions that may arise refer to how to operate the business administration from a scientific perspective for promoting new insights. This cannot be answered unequivocally, since each business has different opinions of researchers epistemology, because depending on the represented position different approaches and methods are available and assign different roles or tasks. The epistemology of qualitative empirical research is based on the radical constructivism. The representatives of constructivism to which I also belong to denied that one of "us" independent reality is visible, which will again contradict the realism. In chapter 2 deals in detail about the different research philosophies. The reality is subject-dependent and thus a construct of the brain that constructed all our knowledge about the reality on sensory perception (Haug 2004, p. 97; Roth 1995, p. 306). From this position it can be conclude, that the constructivism don't denies "a world out there". Rather, he toned that reality is accessible only by observation - and thus inevitably and subjectively interpreted. People gain knowledge through information from "constructed" data, which is delivered from their sense organs. So consequently, since knowledge or knowledge acquisition is tied to people, it cannot describe a subject-independent reality. The results of empirical research provide therefore no objective knowledge, but "subjective constructs" that are formed by "self-referential processes" researchers brain or in the system of science (Haug 2004, p. 97). One reason for using methods and different approaches is to

handle and simplify the enormous wealth of available information and to solve the research problem rational. Therefore due to cognitive and/or motivational constraints the researcher seeks mostly to use different simplification strategies (Slovic, et al.) and tries to rationally decide the construct of the "bounded rationality", so he must simplify reasoning, shorten lines of argument, accuse the superficial conclusions arrived etc. to:

- oversized wealth of information,
- qualitative information deficit and
- lack of time

to make decisions (Simon 1976, p. 79). In complex decision situations, or if there is a lack of time, money or in-depth information, a detectable manager has access to "cognitive heuristics" to bound the decision making process. But there are also other reasons why researchers don't handle or decide not strict rational: he pursued consciously or unconsciously certain motifs or his own preferences and interests, all this in the service of staging his self and his world view

Research approach and methodology

Research philosophy

The research philosophy describes the fundamental attitude of the researcher for the generation of knowledge. Three research philosophies after Saunders et al. should be highlighted: positivism, realism and the constructivism.

Positivism (positivism) assumes that insights from observation of the phenomena can draw new information and these can be generalized. This approach is taken in particular for the natural sciences, which attempt to deduct quantitatively general laws on the basis of the method results (Saunders et al. 2003, p. 84).

Representatives of constructivism argue that in economics and other sciences the relationships are often complex and unique, so that no regularities can be derived. Due to the heterogeneous views of the various individuals of the attached situation, the researcher must try to interpret and understand them (Saunders et al. 2003, p. 84). Therefore, in such cases especially qualitative methods such as observations are to be used.

The realism finally assumes that there is a reality, which exists independently of human beliefs or thinking. Thus, there are for example, in social and economic influences and interactions, without the awareness of the affected persons. Thus, the researcher has to individually interpret the investigated phenomenon in order to understand larger social structures or effects (Saunders et al. 2003, p. 84-85). Therefore, here qualitative or quantitative methods or combinations can be more useful.

The research methodology chosen by Yin is a research strategy which is attributable to the realism, as it focuses on the deeper depth understanding of the knowledge of management processes through which can be described and interpreted in different ways by various people.

Research approach

The choice of research approach is determined by how clearly an applied theory is already available at the beginning of the research:

In the case of the deductive approach the available theories has to be verified on their causal relationships of variables. For this purpose the hypotheses, which is the basis of quantitative (statistical) methods need to be validated (Robson, 1993, p. 19). Therefore it can be called the theory of the proven or quantitative approach.

For the inductive research approach initially available empirical data of the problem has to be collected and analysed and based on their results new hypotheses are to be derived (Eisenhardt, 1989 p. 533). The objective of this approach is to better understand the problem and its influencing factors better and thus to contribute to the development of new theories.

This Approach refers to a theory of developing or qualitative approach.

Methodological considerations

The analysis of case studies provides a certain type of qualitative research, which is to be distinguished from the so-called quantitative research. While the stated is one of the most important conceptual distinctions of the empirical research (Flick 2002, p. 11; Kleining 1995, p. 40; Bortz / Döring 1995, p. 49) it is nevertheless noted that both don't form uniform "research programs", but are to be understood more in the sense of collective nouns. Flick (2002, p. 33) characterized the qualitative research for example through very different research perspectives (e.g. description of social action vs. reconstruction of interpretation and action generating structures) or heterogeneous theoretical foundations (e.g. the symbolic interactionism as the basis for the 'grounded theory' or psychoanalysis or structuralism as a background of objective hermeneutics).

The quantitative research refers to such research concepts, which are ideal for the social sciences providing a close alignment with the natural sciences and general nomothetic statements (like legislative acts) by determining probabilistic laws and their quantitative formulation describing their development. Quantitative methods associated with a strategy of hypothesis testing are based on the so-called "deductive-nomothetic paradigm" (Popper 1989). It shows out the need of using established theories for the development of study hypotheses, through their confrontation with a possible representative data set and their argumentative generalization. All statements of empirical experience need to be proven and also need the basically possibility to fail the experience (Stier, 1996, p. 6).

Qualitative methods are typically called "phase models" and played a reduced and just supporting role in terms of relevance as a precursor for quantitative studies. According to the mapping of quantitative studies of essentialism and the critical rationalism, qualitative designs are typically attributed to be empirical (induction).

The qualitative methodology is in relation to another perspective also in contrast to the quantitative designs: the former is based on the hermeneutic or constructivist position of a methodological dualism between the natural and social sciences. So it is a feature of the qualitative methodology that emphasized the function context of social action. At this end, an attempt is made on the basis of "ideographic" like the unique descriptive methods to detect the object of study in its entire diversity and consider in particular, the relationship of characteristics of the examined subject matter among themselves and to his context.

The case study approach as a research strategy

The case study as a research approach is often critically discussed. Many authors see it as a weak variant of social science research approaches. Yin (2003, p. 10) states that a case study is reputed, because of its often-qualitative character. Therefore the case study is criticized for less objectivity, quantification, representative significance or robustness than other approaches such as the experiment, purely quantitative surveys of very large samples in the form of standardized surveys, the analysis of archived data or historical consideration.

Social research authors like Shavelson & Townes 2002, who even favour different approaches for each individual phase of a research project, consider the case study an appropriate method for the exploratory phase of an investigation. And for the descriptive phase they consider surveys and "storytelling" to be more reasonable, because the causal relationships between the observed phenomena are just in the explanatory phase and in the context of an experiment possible to be explored.

However each of these research approaches provides an alternative empirical research

strategy. For any approach there are many different ways of collecting and interpreting the empirical evidence but a mix of various research strategies in a study is not advisable in any case. When conducting case studies there is a risk according to the allegation of lack of objectivity, quantification, representative significance or robustness. Nevertheless, the case study is high popular also for not purely social science research questions (Eisenhardt 1989, p. 535).

Essentially it depends on the objective of the research undertaken and the specific research questions, which shows whether a case study can be an adequate approach. In addition the structure and methodology of a case study define over the quality of the insights regarding validity and scientific gain. First, I want to derive a definition of the case study approach as a research strategy and identify the possible areas of application in comparison to other research strategies against a historical background. Finally, I will define the quality requirements for the implementation of a case study.

Definition of Terms

For the definition of terms according to Yin (2003, p. 3) there should be distinguish between two definition levels:

The case study is an empirical inquiry that describes

a contemporary phenomenon in a real-world context under consideration, particularly if

the boundary between the observed phenomenon and context is not clear.

This first level of definition describes the field of view of the case study. It should be emphasized, that in this case the conditions of the observed phenomenon are included, because the context of substantial information is suspected there. Other research strategies such as the experiment exclude explicit this exact area, in order to focus on a few well-defined variables. The conditions are defined by the experimental situation in the experiment and they are considered to be fix.

Just because the phenomenon and its conditions cannot always be separated in real-world observations, the following second level of definition describes other more technical features of a case study:

The case study research

deals with specific situations in which more variables of interest than obvious data points should be added.

Therefore, they must be supplied from a plurality of different data sources, so the data obtained are combined by means of triangulation on several individual points.

This is done with the help of the pre-defined theoretical assumptions, which characterize the process of data collection and analysis them relevant.

In other words, the case study as a research strategy embodies a comprehensive approach, which includes the logic of design, data collection techniques and analytical approaches. The researcher is required in this type of procedure to choose a bespoke design for each case study, which carries the respective research objectives and empirical circumstances into account. Consequently, there is no "one best way" for the case study research.

In the context of the discussion the researcher takes into account not only the statements and perspectives of the direct participants in the observed situation, but he also incorporates the environment of the participants and the interaction between them, to immerse them as deep as possible in the context of the investigated phenomenon. This gives the case study researchers unlike for a survey or experimental research, the normally unheard participants a relevant voice (Tellis, 1997a, p. 6). Exactly these voices are the ones who often bring the unsuspected aspects of a case and make the investigation in an entirely new light.

Justification for the choice of a case study as a research strategy

The selection of the appropriate research strategy should be deducted from the aim of review, which limits the possible research alternatives. The survey can be seen, as an alternative to case study and it is actually his fiercest competitor. It is often the criticism of the case study due to his insufficient objectivity, quantification, representative validity or robustness of a research strategy, which attempts thus to eliminate the heighted fixed number of respondents of a case study. To personally interview hundreds of people as part of a case study means a huge time or personnel investment for the whole research project and with the obtained flood of data is impossible to manage the case studies typical instruments and it threatens to obscure the view for the significant observations away. In such a situation the standardized survey is the best alternative than a case study, because it enables the collection of data from such a large sample.

Once the researcher wants to go deeper into qualitative background of the answers from the respondents in order to discover more interesting aspects of the collected data, or even wants to ask new questions, the survey comes to their limit and a going back in the former situation of data collection is impossible. In such a case the researcher can help his self for example by doing downstream targeted interviews, which illuminate deeper a suspected issue. There are several instruments of data collection within the framework of a comprehensive case study that could figure represents the methodological framework of the study.

Systematic selection of an appropriate research strategy

Yin (2003, p. 3) sees the case study not in a hierarchical arrangement with other methods, but it assumes a pluralistic point of view. He regarded the experiment, the survey, the analysis of archival material, the historical investigation and the case study as equal and comprehensive research strategies, but they can quite overlap and complement each other. The selection of an appropriate research strategy depends on three conditions according on the different actual situation. The considered framework of the situation should take into account first the form of the research questions, secondly, the need for control and access to behavioural situations, and finally the study of current or historical events in terms of a time horizon.

Form of research questions

The first condition deals with the occurrence and thrust of the research questions. A simple categorization provides the distinction in a number of typical question words: "who", "what", "where", "how" and "why", which lead to one of the applicable strategies.

If the research questions rather has the character of "who", "what", "where" there are two possibilities, either it is an exploratory question, which can justify an exploratory study with the aim of hypotheses and assumptions for on going research development. In this case, all five strategies for the study come into question because they hold all the exploratory potential.

Or the expression of what-questions moves more toward a "how much" or "what" investigation. In such a question, the survey is better than a full case study. "Who" and "where" questions can typically be better answered with surveys and the analysis of archival material. These strategies are of advantage, if the aim of analysis is the detection of the occurrence or spread of the phenomena.

In contrast, the "how" and "why" questions are rather descriptive and the use of a case study, an experiment or a historical study are more appropriate in these situations. This is mainly because that questions deal with such issues according to the compounds of operational elements observed over time and thus available via the detection of the occurrence or its dissemination beyond.

Necessity of control, access to behavioural situations and the temporal horizon

In the case of questions with "how" and "why", this questions lead to a need of control or of access to behavioural situations. Historical studies are the preferred research strategy when the researcher has no access to the actual behaviour situation. This approach remains the only choice when e.g. no persons can be interviewed anymore, historical finds or artefacts are not available or not at the disposal as study objects. The case study is selected when contemporary events represent the research aim, but this situation cannot or does not affect the research. There are some similarities to historical investigation. However, the case study takes usually two additional data sources into the research design, which cannot be use by the historical investigation: the direct and participant observation of the events under investigation and the conversation with involved people in the form of interviews.

Quality necessity to the case study research

The data obtained through qualitative research in the context of a case study gain advantage over the purely quantitative data high because they give researchers more opportunities to understand the meaning of observed actions and events. The analysis of qualitative data provides insights; the "hard" data will never be exposed alone (Mintzberg 1979). But this precisely "softness" of the qualitative data, it is what makes the case study so vulnerable as a research strategy. The measurability of the quality of a case study can be deducted logically and structurally from four criteria's of a case study made by Yin (2003, p. 33):

Construct validity

Establishment of appropriate operational measures for the issues to be examined or the phenomena.

Internal validity

Prove or demonstrate the assumed causal relationships between observations.

External validity

Generalizability of the results available via the direct case out through replication of the results to other cases within the same research domain.

Reliability

When applying the same theory and application of the same investigative steps, the re-execution of the case study must have the same results.

Design and methodological background of the case study

The structure and the design of a case study describes a kind of logic with which the retrieved data and the conclusion that one draws from them, are associated with the underlying research questions of the case study. This can be considered as a logical model and as a kind of plan that leads through the process of collection, analysis and interpretation of the available data. This model also reflects the theoretical constructs and assumptions of the design of the underlying project or research. In a way, such a logical model is similar to the construction of an experiment (Yin, 2003 p. 39).

Before we could afford the proper treatment of the question description of what we call "case", "object of analysis" and what we see as relevant "context" within a case study, we had to commit ourselves to a basic methodological form of study design. Basically in the case study research the question of the number and arrangement of cases has to be examined within the research design. To be able to approach a case study operational structure Yin develops a 2x2 matrix for the classification of different types of case study among others.

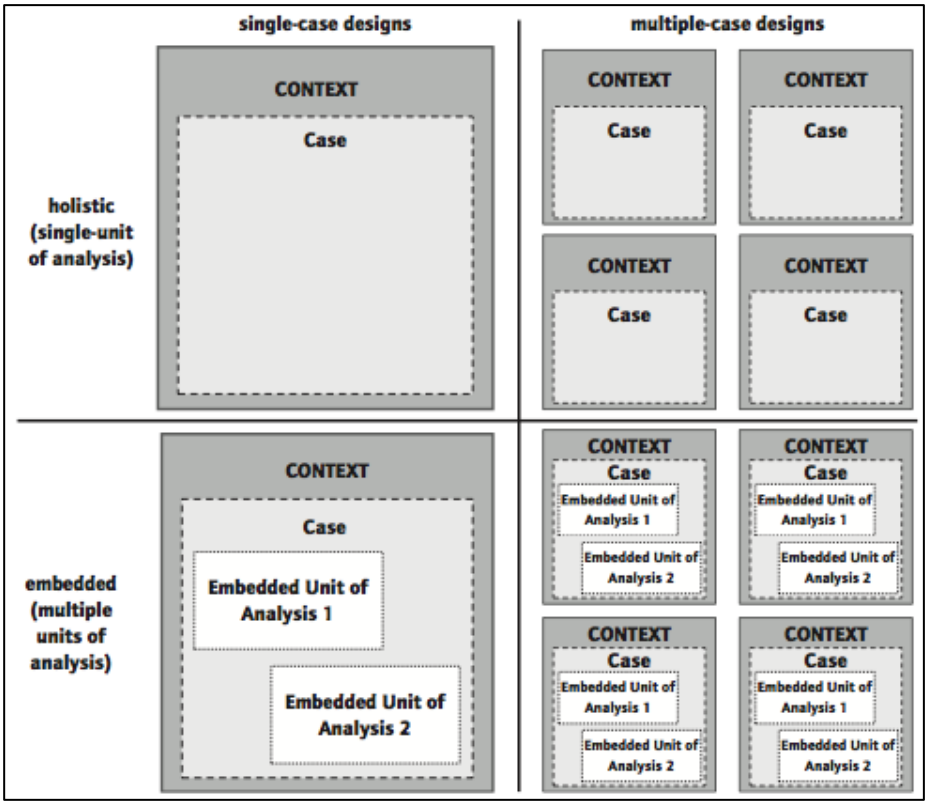

Figure 4: Basic types of designs for case studies (Yin 2003, p. 40)

The classification of basic types for the development of case study design by Yin takes together with the help of two dimensions the distinction between holistic and integrated on the one hand and the individual case and multi-case study on the other hand. He differentiated in holistic case studies according to the relevant context of the data to be examined for the case and the defined case itself, so the simplest form of construction provides the holistic single case study. Such a structure depends only on a one clearly defined case and on its relevant context.

Combining multiple holistic cases within a case study investigation, it refers of a holistic multi-case study. Looking inside a case - for example, in a company - different analysis objects - e.g. several departments - referred to the case study building an "integrated" construct and the combination of several integrated case studies finally represents the integrated multiple-case study.

Against this background the question arises abut the principle of distinction of the elements "object for analysis", "case" and "context". As the limit of the whole case study it is understand the separation between those objects which treat the research questions indirectly (context) or directly (case) and are relevant and those that are neither directly nor indirectly relevant. The number of cases and objects of analysis within the entire case study may vary depending on the problem and objectives of the study.

Conclusion

To answer the research questions the case study analysis by Yin is particularly suitable. This allows the realistic associated research strategy an inductive approach to win explorative new insights available for the quality assurance of the knowledge management. The applied investigation as a cross-sectional study is in particular carried out by the use of expert interviews and allows both a broad overview over the available possible quality assurance approaches as well as deeper insights overt the

available methods used. In the case study is a holistic, high-yield and at the same time very sophisticated research design and out of the mix of methods of business economics and management the theory has become indispensable. When researchers base in the development on case studies on the same methodological principles and use similar heuristics approach to case studies this allow a better comparison of the cases and they can be linked together. A reinforced cumulative alignment of business management research makes sense from both an epistemological research and economic point of view.

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EMBEDDING CASE STUDY RESEARCH INTO THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

Elisabeth Göttfert

Introduction

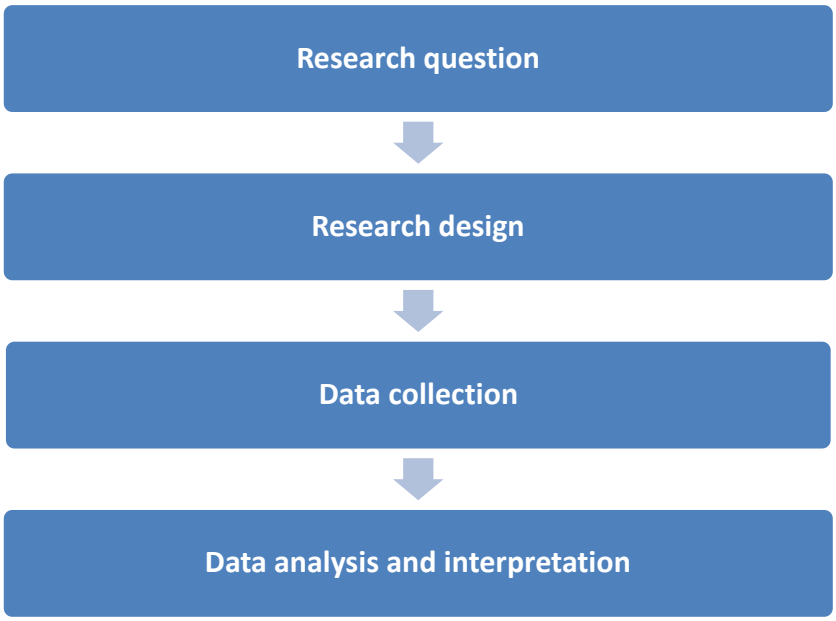
The case study is a frequently used form of research (cf. Fiegen, 2010, p. 393). Especially in social science, academics of different disciplines argue in its favour (cf. Patton & Appelbaum, 2003, p. 69; Zucker, 2012, p. 183). However, embedding the case study in the broad field of research is contradictory. Zucker (2012, p. 171) states that research textbooks categorise the case study as a neither quantitative nor qualitative tool. Controversially she adds, that it is taught among the qualitative methods in research courses. This ambiguity within the literature raises the question how to classify the case study among the types of empirical investigation. Analysing this inquiry is the aim of this paper, which is written from a constructivist perspective. This means that it is believed, that reality exists independently from the researcher, but the meaning that is given to the reality is individual construction, which demands interaction between the researcher and the object of research (cf. Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110f). Therefore first the phases of research are explored and the main differences among quantitative and qualitative research are highlighted. Along these emphasised differences two research methods, the survey and the interview, are categorised exemplary. Then the focus is drawn on case study research, which is described in more detail and is embedded in the research context following the analysis scheme of qualitative and quantitative research. On basis of this analysis in the end a conclusion is drawn.

The Basics of Research

The Research Process

According to Bettis and Gregson (2001, p. 52) research is a systematic, objective process, which includes gathering and analysing valid and reliable empirical data. Valid data captures and answers the posed research question, while reliable data reproduces the same result in every trial, unconcerned of the researcher (cf. Economic & social research council, N/A). Research either aims on the creation of theory and addition to existing knowledge or it is used to solve actual problems (cf. Bettis & Gregson, 2001, p. 52). Due to the novelty of the results the first one is called basic research, while the latter one is applied research, as it uses basic research in a more specific context. The systematic research process is constituted by four phases, which are depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 5: *The four research phases*



Source: Adapted from Kellett, 2005, p. 8.

The research question represents the aim of the study and can best be derived from a mixture of detailed, systematic literature review and experience (cf. Hulley, et al., 2011, p. 25). However, it is important to be very specific in the question, as it determines the further development of the research, for example which data to collect (cf. Kellett, 2005, p. 38) or the feasibility, in terms of time required for the research (cf. Hulley, et al., 2011, p. 20)

In the next phase the research design is chosen. This is the framework used to carry out the study efficiently (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 27). The design can be exploratory, descriptive or causal (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 27).While exploratory research aims on problem analysis, evaluation of alternatives or finding new ideas, descriptive research intents to identify characteristics, behaviours and patterns (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 31; p. 58). For these two types of research design the research questions need to be transferred to propositions, derived from literature and further evidence (cf. Rowley, 2002, p. 17). Causal research, the third option of research design, intends to unravel cause and effect relationships between the study objects (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 82). Lincoln and Denzin (2011, p. 14) state that research design links the research question with the empirical data, among other via a research strategy. A research strategy comprises all the further proceedings of the study to accomplish the goal of answering the research question (cf. Punch, 2013, p. 115). It encompasses the general data sources, the rough sample size and the method for analysis (cf. Punch, 2013, p. 115). Besides, in the design phase, all these factors are specified further: the method, the data to be collected, the measurement and scaling of this data, the sampling procedures and the exact sampling size are determined (cf. Lincoln and Denzin, 2011, p. 14; Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 27). A possible research design could be: By interviewing five female top managers of multinational companies, their attitude to women in management positions is examined. The sample is determined by asking 50 multinational firms for participation. The resulting interviews are analysed with content analysis to detect ostacles

and opportunities for women to rise in hierarchy.

Data collection, as the third step, is crucial for the validity and reliability of the following research. Only if gathering data is performed correctly the subsequent analysis and conclusion can be perceived as accurate and reliable (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 115). The selected method during the design phase frequently determines what type of data is collected. For example a survey or an experiment produces numerical data, such as ages, sizes and distributions, while interviews, focus groups or observation provide richer data in form of opinions, narratives or feelings (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 47).

During the last phase, the data analysis and interpretation phase, the researcher gains deeper understanding of the material to enhance judgement and to draw appropriate conclusions (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 163). The analytical methods for numerical data are based on statistics such as simple or multiple regression (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 202), while methods for non-numerical data are more diverse and allow the researcher to consider the same data from different perspectives by using different techniques (cf. Punch 2013, pp. 168). Such techniques could be content analysis, objective hermeneutics (cf Mayring, 2002, pp. 114-126) or grounded theory (cf. Punch, 2013, p. 179). There are however two analytical methods, abstraction and comparison, which can be applied to both data types (cf. Punch, 2013, p. 178f). Data analysis is the basis for interpretation of the data and finally for the generation of new knowledge. At this point the researcher tries to explain the results of the analysis. Those might be justifications or causes of the development of data and the resulting implications.

In general research, research methods and the resulting data are divided into quantitative and qualitative (see for example the contents of Punch, 2013, p. ix-xi). The choice for one of these positions unravels the researcher's view on reality, affecting the objectivity of research, the way of drawing conclusions and the types of research questions (cf. Perry, 1998, p. 786; Riege, 2003, p. 77). The view on reality can be described by two extreme positions, however there are shades and nuances in between them (cf. Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109, Niglas, 2003, p. 10). For quantitative research a positivist view on reality applies (cf. Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109, Niglas, 2003, p. 10), believing that there is one homogenous reality for all people (cf. Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109). Thus the researcher cannot influence reality resulting in objectively measurable phenomena (cf. Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109). For researchers with this worldview deduction is the preferred method of drawing conclusions (cf. Perry, 1998, p. 786), meaning that the behaviour from a broad sample is applied to the individual (cf. Punch, 2013, p. 348). On the other hand qualitative research relates to the most extreme with constructivist view (cf. Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109, Niglas, 2003, p. 10). This worldview considers reality as being individual to all people (cf. Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109). Thus the researcher infuences the phenomenon, which is examined, resulting in hardly measurable subjective results (cf. Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109). Applying this view induction is used to draw conclusions (cf. Perry, 1998, p. 786). Induction, contrary to deduction generalizes from an individual to a broad population (cf. Punch, 2013, p. 350). Table 1 lists these characteristics for quantitative and qualitative research along with the milestones of a research process.

Table 2: *Characteristics of qualitative and quantitative research*

	Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
Reality	exists independently from the researcher	is influenced by the researcher
Interaction with research object is	low, objective	high, subjective
Research questions aim on	quantitative answers numerical change relationships between variables testing hypotheses	in-depht information developing hypotheses and theories meaning of situations
Research design	descriptive or causal	exploratory, descriptive or causal
Data collected	numerical	non-numerical (opinions, feelings, words)
Data analysis	mathematically based (statistics)	Abstracting, comparing coding memoing content analysis grounded theory hermeneutics
Interpretation/ conclusions	deductive	inductive

Source: adapted from Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109; Perry, 1998, p. 786; Mayring, 2002, pp. 114-126, Muijs, 2004, pp. 1-8, Punch, 2013, pp. 167-179

Along this scheme methods can be assigned to each type of resesarch and therefore be categorised as quantitative or qualitative methods. Exemplary this is performed on the survey and the interview, however the focus will lie on the case study in section 3, as embedding case study research is the main aim of this work. The assignment to one research approach does not necessaryly exclude characteristics of the other, it is only the predominant characteristic.

Example 1: The Survey

A survey is a quantitative instrument, gathering empirical data by asking a representative sample of a population (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 58). The questions are pre-formulated and ordered in a specific sequence usually in form of a questionnaire (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 58). Thus standardization is achieved, leading to a higher degree of objectivity. The survey can be conducted face-to-face, by telephone, by email or via computer aided programs (cf. Saris & Gallhofer, 2014, pp. 5f). The specific methods of interviewing differ from the level of interaction of the researcher with the research objects and thus in the degeree of interviewer bias (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 78). This is the influential effect of the interviewer on the interviewee due to physical appearance, mimic or tone (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 78). While a face-to-face survey has a relatively high risk of this type of bias, the email or web surveys have not, leading to the email or web survey being the most objective type of survey. This method is

frequently used for descriptive research designs (cf. Saris & Gallhofer, 2014, pp. 4) and the data is numerical, as even attitudes can be coded numerically by using a Likert scale or a semantic differentiation scale (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 127). Methods for the analysis of data are tabulation, cross-tabulation or data mining (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 173; p. 176), all being mathematical or statistical instruments of analysis (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 179). These characteristics toghether with the deductive approach of a survey (cf. Gray, 2013, p. 31) are arguments for classifying the survey as a quantitative method, which is in line with the categorisation of this method in literature (cf. Muijs, 2004, p. 3).

Example 2: The Interview

An interview usually is a one-to-one conversation between the researcher and a participant (cf. Lewis & McNaughton Nicholls, 2013, p. 55; Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 47). The aim of an interwiew is to gain deeper understanding about feelings, motivations and beliefs of the interviewee (cf. Gill, et al., 2008, p. 292). In general there are three types of interviews: standardized, semi-structured and unstructured (Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 47). The standardized interview disposes of ordered, standardized, open-ended questions, while semi-structured interviews are more flexible in terms of order of the questions and standardization, meaning the researcher can rephrase inquiries or interrogate in more depht, if it suits the research questions (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 48f). The third type the unstructered interview is not standardized or ordered in any form, allowing the interviewee to guide the conversation in any direction and narrate everything that is considered relevant (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 48). In all three types, the researcher is in direct contact with the object of research and especially in un- or semi-structured interviews this facts stimulates interviewer bias (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 51). The interview bias in this case is additionally increasing subjectivity, as the same results can hardly be reproduced by another researcher, due to the smallest differences of conducting the interview. Interviewing people is an exploratory research design (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 47), whose data results from verbal sometimes narrative communication (cf. Lewis & McNaughton Nicholls, 2013, p. 55). Such type of data can be analysed for example by hermeneutics (cf. Mayring, 2002, p. 121) or grounded theory (cf. Spencer, et al., 2013, p. 335). Conclusions on basis of these analytical tools are usually inductive (cf. Mayring, 2002, p. 123, Gray, 2013, p. 166). The depicted characteristics classify the interview as qualiltative research, being in accordance with the categorisation that can be found in literature (cf. Muijs, 2004, p. 3).

Case Study Research

According to Yin (1994, p. 13) a case study is an *"empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident."* This definition aims on researching an object that is part of an open system and which both interacts with and is influenced by its environment. This leads to the context and its relationship to the case also being considered by researchers (cf. Dooley, 2002, p. 335).

The ideal research question of a case study identifies "how" or "why" events ocurr, that are beyond the control of the researcher (cf. Yin, 1994, p. 9). According to Yin (1994, p. 15) this leads to an application of case study research especially if:

- there might be complex cause and effect relationships between real-life events

- description of an event in its actual environment is sought
- description of themes within an evaluation is pursued
- situations are explored, whose outcome is unclear
- it is the assessment of an evaluation study

Depending on the application, the case study design can be understood to be causal, descriptive and exploratory. Consequently the next steps in the research design are selection of the sample size and the sample itself, which is called "the case". A case is the unit of analysis of case study research (Yin, 1994, p. 21) such as an individual person, an organisation or part of an organization. Considering the sample size single cases as well as multiple cases are possible (cf. Yin, 1994, p. 38), however according to literature a maximum of 15 cases should not be exceeded (cf. Perry, 1998, p. 794). According to Seawright and Gerring (2008, p. 294) the decision which case(s) to choose in particular is the *"primordial task of the case study research"*. The authors also note that in case study research the sampling cannot be separate from analysis, as the selection of appropriate cases is crucial for representativeness. Seawright and Gerring (2008, p. 295) demonstrated via a Monte Carlo simulation that for the small amount of cases, that should be used in case study research, the results are not representative and therefore not appropriate. For the selection of the right cases Yin (1994, p. 51) demands, that there is either literal or theoretical replication. The first term aims on cases with the exact same results, while the latter implies contrasting results for predictable reasons. In literature there are known seven more specific techniques to select representative cases (cf. Levy, 2008, pp. 10-13 Seawright and Gerring 2008, pp. 297f). Table 2 depicts these techniques with a short definition and the appropriate research design. A closer look on the table reveals that especially for exploratory research an analysis of some cases is necessary during the sample phase to determine whether the case is appropriate. When the sample of cases is defined, the data collection methods can be chosen. Yin (1994, p. 80) suggests six sources: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation and physical artefacts. However, he suggests using more than one of these sources of evidence, to enhance the quality of the research (pp. 91f). Depending on the mixture of methods chosen by the researcher, the interaction with the research object varies. For example a construction of a case on basis of document analysis and a survey of a representative amount of employees of a company bear low interaction with the object, therefore enhancing the objectivity of research. On the other hand a case study guided by observation and in-depth interviews with few of the employees provide high interaction, consequently increasing subjectivity.

Table 3: *Case selection techniques*

	Case is	Appropriate for
Typical	typical for examined cross-case relationship	confirmation
Diverse	diverse in cause and effect variables	exploration
Extreme	unusual values for cause or effect	exploration
Deviant	deviate from cross-case relationship	exploration
Influential	stronger influence of independent variable	confirmation
Most similar	similar in all other but the cause and effect variables	exploration
Most different	different in all other but the cause and effect variable	exploration

Source: Following Seawright & Gerring, 2008, pp. 297-298

The proposed use of several methods for case study research leads to the conclusion, that the case study itself cannot be a method on its own, but that it has to be classified differently. The correct labelling of the term should imply the selection of data collection methods, sample procedures and first analytical steps. This description is similar to the definition of a research strategy that was presented earlier by Punch (2013, p. 115), indicating that case study research is a research strategy. This is in line with the opinion of Yin (1994, p. 4), also classifying surveys and interviews as a strategy (p. 6). In a later edition of his book (see Yin, 2008, p. 3) he terms the case study as a research method still along with the other instruments. Nevertheless surveys or interviews, do not provide methods for analysis inherently, rather different ones can be used on one instrument. Additionally methods for analysis have to be selected separately from the data collection method itself. This qualifies surveys or interviews as method, while for the case study first an analysis is necessary for sampling (cf. Seawright and Gerring, 2008, p. 294), advocating the term research strategy. This understanding of case study research as a strategy is shared among different authors (cf. Dooley, 2002, p. 338; Punch, 2013, p. 120).

Although the data produced by the methods suggested by Yin (1994, p. 80) is usually qualitative also a quantitative case study design is possible (cf. Feuer, 2011, p. 14). Thus the data produced in the context of a case study can be either numerical or non- numerical (cf. Yin, 1994, p. 14). The data analysis in a case study research offers various approaches, however in all of them the usage of all relevant evidence, consideration of important rival interpretations, communication of the major characteristics of the case study and unbiased usage of the researchers knowledge is required (cf. Rowley 2002, p. 24). Yin (1994, p.106) proposes seven general techniques to analyse a case study, from which four are dominant and three are weaker practices of analysis. Those techniques with a short explanation are depicted in Table 3.

Table 4: *Analysis techniques for case study research*

	Explanation	
Pattern-matching	comparison of empirical pattern with predicted one	**dominant form**
Explanation building	specific type of pattern-machting including stipulation of a cause and effect relationship	
Time-series-analysis	examination of the development of variables over time	
Program logic models	combination of pattern-matching and time-series-analysis stipulation of a pattern over time	
Analyzing embedded units	applying any of the above techniques on units of the case	**weaker form**
Repeated observation	repeating the study sequencially to smoothen results	
Secondary analysis across cases	Survey of the cases already existing for the topic	

Source: adapted from Yin, 1994, pp. 106-123

A closer look on the techniques reveals that they could be used in the context of both, qualitative and quantitative research. Pattern-matching for example represents a type of comparison, which is generally used in both types of research. Explanation building, used to generate ideas and theories about potential cause and effect relationships, is also possible for an interview, as an exploratory research design. Thus it is specifically aiming on development of new theories (cf. Sreejesh, et al., 2014, p. 31). On the other hand time series are frequently used in quantitative research, if a large amount of data is available (cf. Yin, 1994, p. 113).

As a result of the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods, the conclusions drawn on basis of case studies can be either inductive or deductive (cf. Dooley, 2002, p. 349f). Thus it is to say that case study research strategy cannot be categorised in either qualitative or quantitative research (cf. Dooley, 2002, p. 338), but that this categorization fully depends on the design of the case study itself.

Conclusion

This work first examined the general research process to establish criteria on which to differentiate between quantitative and qualitative research and embedded exemplary one quantitative and one qualitative method along this scheme. The resulting classification is in line with the academic perception of each method. In the following the same procedure was applied on the case study revealing, first that the case study is a research strategy and not as categorised by many scholars a research method (for example Levy, 2008, p. 2; Yin, 2008, p. 3) and second, that it cannot be grouped into either quantitative or qualitative research, but that the classification depends upon the researchers approach to investigating the case.

For a presentation of this topic see: http://prezi.com/tbjqn0gpuer_/embedding-case-study-in-the-research-context/.

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CASE STUDY RESEACH

Martina Gog

Introduction

"[…] first, that science should have generalizing claims. Second, the explanation of social phenomena by revealing the causal mechanism which produce them is the fundamental task of research."

Danermark et al. (2002, p. 1)

The quote by Danermark et al. highlights that the explanation and understanding of one or multiple instances – cases – is basic interest of doing research and that by generalising derived findings from the instances to contribute to knowledge. Therefore, Danermark et al. emphasise the importance of cases in social science. The approach which focuses on cases is called case study research and the main aim of this paper is to present case study as one possible research tool or rather as research strategy.

The paper is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter covers research methodology to introduce the foundation of research and fundamental knowledge. The three sub-chapters focus on methodological approaches, quantitative and qualitative research as well as research design and research methods.
The second main chapter focuses on case study as research strategy for doing research. Therefore, the first sub-chapter provides some definitions on case study followed by advantages and disadvantages of case study research and the last sub-chapter describes the case study research process.
Finally, a conclusion of case study research will be drawn.

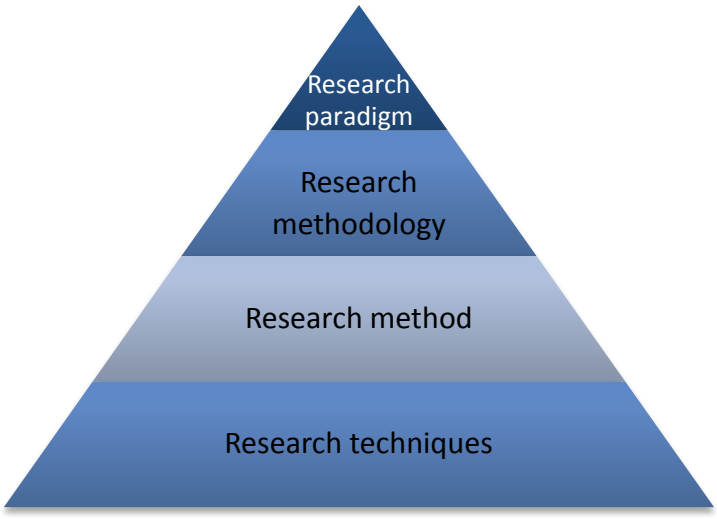
Research methodology

Methodological approaches

The term *research methodology* is often used as overall heading for doing research and for all associated procedures which are illustrated in

Figure 6. However, the research pyramid by Jonker and Pennink (2010, p. 23) indicates that doing research follows a particular hierarchy and sequence of process steps.

Figure 6: The research pyramid



Source: Illustration based on Jonker/Pennink (2010), p. 23.

The research onion as illustrated in **Pogreška! Izvor reference nije pronađen.**on page **Pogreška! Knjižna oznaka nije definirana.** by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill is used as symbol for doing research. In accordance to Jonker and Pennink's research pyramid, research is described a step by step process. Accordingly, conducting research begins by defining the (research) philosophy, the approach, the strategy, the choice of quantitative, qualitative research or mixed methods, the time horizon and finally techniques and procedures are chosen. Consequently, *research* represents a systematic approach to find something out or rather to resolve the research question. (Saunders/Lewis/Thornhill 2012, p. 4)

The term m*ethodology* describes the "understanding of how to proceed from the findings of empirical research to make inference about the truth". (Perri 6/Bellamy 2012, p. 1)

The terms methodology and methods require a precise differentiation. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012, pp. 3-4, 674) define methodology more precisely as theory and basis of philosophical assumption which build the foundation of how research should be conducted. Consequently, methods emerge from the methodology and refer to techniques and procedures to analyse data.

The impetus for conducting research builds a certain research question. Initially, it is necessary to position one's research philosophy which is also referred as research paradigm according to the research pyramid. (Jonker/Pennink 2010, p. 23; Creswell 2009, p. 5) The *research philosophy* describes the underlying worldview of a researcher. According to Stokes (2011, p. 159) the worldview derives from the philosophical German word *Weltanschauung* and expresses a specific view of each individual or rather approach towards the world. Against this background, one's research philosophy cannot be chosen but rather is inherent and may change and develop over time. Consequently, research tools, research designs and standards to judge the research quality are chosen according to each individual's world view.

Furthermore, one's philosophical approach affects how to find a solution to the research question. Research philosophies distinguish between epistemology and ontology. Epistemology focuses on required knowledge to solve the research question and ontology refers to the nature of social entities and the perception of reality which is researched. (Bryman/Bell 2011, pp. 15, 20) Specifying clearly and being aware of one's research philosophy is important because different philosophies may generate different solutions. (Bryman/Bell 2011, p. 24) Positivism is associated as the epistemological position par excellence, whereas interpretivism represents the opposite. Between these two philosophical approaches further positions are distinguished. The different research philosophies are shown in following classification:

- Positivism
- Post-positivism
- Critical theory
- Scientific realism/Critical realism
- Constructivism
- Interpretivism

A clear distinction between these philosophies as well as an explanation is given in **Pogreška! Izvor reference nije pronađen.**on page **Pogreška! Knjižna oznaka nije definirana.**.

This paragraph aims to exemplify the research paradigm. The current paper underlies the epistemological position of an interpretivist. The researcher emphasises the subjective meaning of social action and views the nature of reality as socially constructed. Therefore, doing research among people or objects differs. Furthermore, an interpretivist seeks to obtain understanding by adopting an emphatic position and overtaking the world view of the research subject. (Saunders/Lewis/Thornhill 2011, p. 137) This is also expressed in Max Weber's *Verstehen* approach which describes an "interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects". (Bryman/Bell 2011, p. 16)

The philosophical approach has impact on the research methodology which is defined in the following step.

Quantitative and qualitative research

The distinction between quantitative and qualitative is widely used by researchers. Quantitative research highlights the quantification in data collection and is referred as a deductive approach by testing theories. (Sauders/Lewis/Thornhill 2011, pp. 26-28) Qualitative research, in contrast, entails an inductive approach and aims to generate theories. Quantitative data is predicated on numerical data and quantified data. By contrast, qualitative data is based on non-numerical data and rather meanings expressed by words. Consequently, qualitative research investigates on the understanding and interpretation of individuals regarding their social world which leads to the epistemological position of interpretivism. (Bryman/Bell 2012, pp. 26-28) According to research conducted by David and Bitektine (2011, pp. 167-168) qualitative research methods prevail in organisational studies which furthermore leads to acknowledge them in terms of research.

Research design and research methods

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2011, p. 160, 680), the research design represents the framework for data collection and data analysis and comprises the following five types: experimental design, cross-sectional or social survey design, longitudinal design, case study design and comparative design. Research methods, however, depict the particular techniques how to collect data and thus a clear distinction is required. (Creswell 2009, p. 15)
There is a great variety of research methods to be chosen such as experiment, survey, archival

analysis history or case (Yin 2014, p. 9) which can be furthermore broken down to research techniques which describe tools and instruments to collect data. These are interviews (structured or semi-structured), questionnaires, observations, focus groups, content/data analysis. (Bryman/Bell 2011, pp. xxxv-xxxvi; Creswell 2009, p. 5; Fitzgerald/Dopson 2011, p. 478; Jonker/Pennink 2010, p. 34)

The application of a research method is determined by three aspects such as the type of the research question, the extent of control the researcher has over the actual behavioural events as well as the degree of focus on the contemporary as opposed to the entire historical events. (Yin 2014, p. 9) Additionally, a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods can be applied which is called a mixed method approach. (Bryman/Bell 2011, p. 28)

Finally, a research sample has to be defined. A sample is a sub-group or rather a part of the whole population. (Saunders/Lewis/Thornhill 2012, p. 681) Sampling prescribes the process to choose units from the whole population. It has to be noted that results derived from the sample can be generalised to the population. (Social Research Methods, URL)

Case Study Research

Definitions of "Case Study"

Yin (2014, p. 16) describes case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident." The features of a case study comprise three aspects. The first aspect is that it deals with technically distinctive situations. The second describes that there are several informational resources which merge by triangulation and thirdly that the case study method can direct the collection and analysis of data by setting up theoretical propositions. (Yin 2014, pp. 17, 241) Yin's twofold definition covers the scope and the features of case study. Consequently, Yin aims to describe an "all-encompassing method". (Yin 2014, p. 17)

Dul and Hak (2008, pp. 4-5) prescribe case study as "[…] a study in which (a) one case (single case study) or a small number of cases (comparative case study) in their real life context are selected, and (b) scores obtained from these cases are analysed in a qualitative manner." Especially Dul and Hak indicate that the case study does not manipulate the object of study which prescribes a "real life context". This is the main characteristic of the differentiation of case study and experiment which manipulates instances.

Gerring however, defines case study as "an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units" (Gerring 2004, p. 342) and views case study as a method to define cases and not as a method describing how to analyse cases. (Gerring 2004, p. 341)

Stake (1995, p. xi) defines case study as "the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances."

By providing these definitions of case study, it can be derived that the definition can differ considerably. There is a substantial difference of reviewed literature in terms of considering case study as a method or as a research strategy.

Table 5 shows reviewed literature that allowed a classification of the authors. The authors describe case study either as a research method or as a research strategy.

On the basis of given table, it can be derived that literature is not clearly defined if case study describes a method or a strategy. Despite Yin's book of case study research which was latest published in 2014 as fifth edition but relates to the first publication in 1984, the latest authors

tend to describe case study as a research strategy and not as a research method (see Saunders/Lewis/Thornhill in 2012, Bryman/Bell in 2011, Jonker/Pennink in 2010, Creswell in 2009 and Dul/Hak in 2008).

Table 5: Classification of reviewed literature

Case study as research method	Case study as research strategy
Ellet 2007, p. 5	Bryman/Bell 2011, pp. 59-64
Gerring 2004, p. 341	Creswell 2009, p. 13
Stake 1995, p. xi	Dul/Hak 2008, pp. 3, 13, 24-25
Yin 2014, p. 3	Eisenhardt 1989, p. 534
Zucker 2009, p. 2	Jammal 2000, book title "case study method" but described as research strategy
	Jonker/Pennink 2010, p. 83
	Saunders/Lewis/Thornhill 2012, p. 666

Furthermore, the paper requires a definition for the term *case* which describes an instance of an object of study according to Dul/Hak (2008, p. 4). The term *study* prescribes a research project (practice- or theory-oriented research object). Referring to Dul and Hak (2008, pp. 30-31) most case studies are practice-oriented. Dul and Hak (2008, p. 23) count 454 case studies as practice-oriented beside 212 case studies as theory-building and 23 case studies as theory-testing which totals to 689 conducted case studies in business research between the period of 2000 and 2005. The business fields strategy, operations and human resource management predominantly use case study research.

Regarding the term *case study,* there are even further specifications such as the case review and the case report. A case review is a critical reappraisal of a case. A case report, in contrast, comprises a summary of cases or as a documentation of considered cases. (Zucker 2009, p. 1)

Case study types

The case study method differentiates four types which rely on the specific purpose of the case study. Yin (2014, pp. 238-241) differs between explanatory, descriptive and exploratory case study. These types are in line with Eisenhardt's and Dul/Hak's distinction. According to Eisenhardt (1989, p. 535) and Dul and Hak (2008, pp. 9-10) case studies can be descriptive, test theory and additionally can provide theory which is referred as theory-building.

Quantitative and qualitative case studies

With reference to the steps introduced in chapter two regarding the research process, a distinction of quantitative and qualitative research approach is required. The case study method can be applied in both quantitative and qualitative research. However, case study is usually classified as qualitative method by highlighting the in-depth understanding acquired predominantly by qualitative methods. (Yin

2009, p. 19; Zucker 2009, p. 1; Eisenhardt 1989, p. 538)

Sampling cases

Regarding the selection of cases the case study research is not described as a sampling research according to Stake. (1995 p. 4) The purpose of the case study research is to get an in-depth understanding and the complexity of at least one case. However, the challenge is to select appropriate cases. Accordingly, Stake emphasises balance and variety when choosing cases as well as cases which are rich in content. (Stake 1995, pp. 6-7; Perri6/Bellamy 2012, pp. 104-105)

Following Stake's approach (1995, p. 3) to the number of cases to be conducted, he concludes not to define a finite number. The number rather depends on the research question and its purpose. Eisenhardt (1989 p. 545), however, suggests conducting more than four cases in order to derive generalizable finings. According to Yin (2014, p. 63) even one case is enough to generate valid data. Generally, there is a positive correlation between investigated cases and validity. Thus, Yin advises to examine multiple cases (when available) because a multiple-case study can strengthen derived findings and does not lead to a direct replication compared to single-case studies. Consequently, having only one case study requires strong argumentation to encounter criticism convincingly.

Advantage and disadvantage of case study research

The choice of the research method depends on the research question. The case study research is preferably used for research question which focus to explain something by using the question terms *how* and *why.* Additionally, the case study method gains relevance the more in-depth explanations and descriptions are required. The field where case study is applied is wide e.g. psychology, sociology, political science, anthropology, social work, business, education nursing and community planning. (Yin 2014, p. 4) Applying the case study method allows to gain a holistic and real world perspective. (Yin 2014, pp. 4, 237) Another advantage is that the case study research can be used retrospectively as well as prospectively. (Zucker 2009, p. 1; Stake 1995, p. 133)

However, dealing with case study research also requires to consider following issues. Regarding a single-case design, reliability as well as the generalisation of the findings is subject of critique. Furthermore, criticism arises because of the deep involvement of the researcher in the study which may affect the results. (Yin 2014, pp. 20-21)

Some criticise that case study lacks systematic procedure and therefore the case study research may be despised as empirical method. (Yin 2014, p. 19; Jonker/Pennink 2010, pp. 88-89) One of the biggest criticisms of qualitative research which also refers to case study research is that it would be too subjective. Derived findings through qualitative research rely considerably on the researcher and its assessment. (Bryman/Bell 2011, p. 408 f.; Jonker/Pennink 2010, p. 89)

Case study research process

Doing research and thus doing case study research follows a particular pattern. The number of steps for conducting a case study research differs from author to author because some authors subsume some steps in one. Basically, the six steps introduced by Yin (2014, p. 1) in

Figure **7** are essential are described following. The case study process by Yin shows that it can be a linear process but also iterative.

Plan- research question

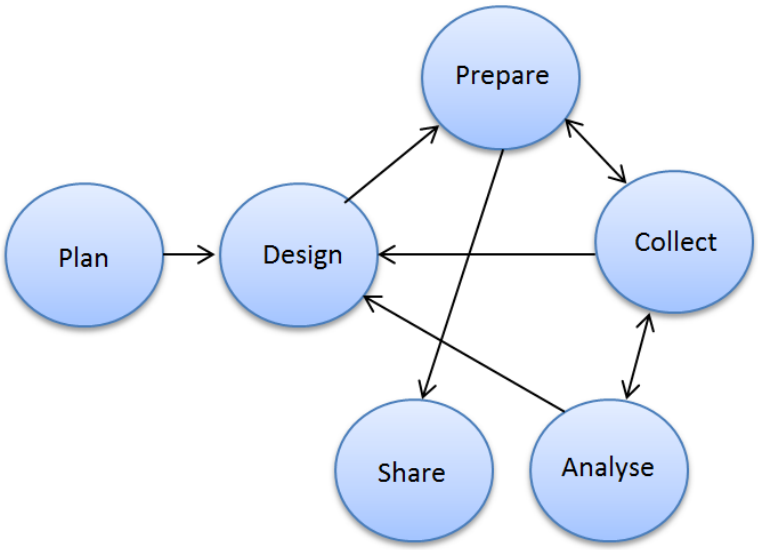
The first step requires to define the research question which is "probably the most import step to be taken" according to Yin by using the usual question words *who*, *what*, *where*, *how* and *why*. (Yin 2014, pp. 10-11) Furthermore, the researcher has to identify which method -

explaining, exploratory or descriptive - is the most advantageous to use referring of the purpose of the study.

Case study design

Regarding the second step, the case study design according to Yin (2014, p. 29) comprise the following components besides the research question:

Figure 7: Case Study Research Process by Yin



Source: Illustration based on Yin (2014, p. 1).

- propositions
- units of analysis
- linking propositions to the research question
- criteria for interpreting the findings

In this step the cases to be examined are specified resulting in a single case study design, a multiple-case study design which describes a holistic case study design whereas multiple units of analysis also referred as embedded case study can be chosen. (Yin 2014, p. 50) Finally, the quality of the case study design regarding validity and reliability has to be ensured. (Yin 2014, pp. 45-46)

Prepare to collect case study data

This step focuses on the skills of a researcher conducting a case study. It is crucial for ensuring validity and reliability that researchers are aware of being biased and hence to avoid any influences when conducting the case study research. (Yin 2014, p. 76)

Collecting case study data

There are six sources to collect data for a case study. According to Yin (2014), these are documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation and physical artefacts. (Yin 2014, p. 102)

Analyse case study data

The fifth step seeks to analyse data for the case study in order to derive findings but literature provides less guidance how to analyse case studies which may result in an unstructured approach and which was already criticised in chapter 0 Advantage and disadvantage of case study. (Yin 2014, p.132) Having an analytical strategy is important to derive empirical findings. No statically defined approach how to analyse case study can be seen as an advantage

of case study research because it allows adapting and developing an analytical strategy for each case study which is most appropriate and highlights the purpose of the research study. Due to the lack of a defined analytical strategy, following four general analytical techniques described by Yin (2014, pp. 136-142) can be used as guidance:

- relying on theoretical propositions
- working your data from bottom up
- developing a case description
- examining plausible rival explanations

The importance of analysing case study data resulted in developing more analytical techniques such as pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models and cross-case synthesis (Yin 2014, p. 142-168)

Share case study findings

Finally, the case study and its derived findings have to be reported and reported for a specific target group. Therefore, textual and visual preparations have to be done in order that the target group can develop own conclusions. (Yin 2014, p. 176)

Yin described how to conduct case study research in general. Therefore, a closer look is necessary how to analyse cases precisely by using the seven steps approach of Jammal (2000). According to Jammal (2000, pp. 9-17) the first step describes to read the case by taking notes and underlining important information in order to get acquainted with the issue. The second step requires to collect relevant information by taking notes and underlining relevant information to identify crucial information as well as to specify missing information and data and finally to make calculation on the basis of given numbers. In the third step, the problems have to be clearly identified. Therefore, tools like the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and -threats analysis (SWOT), financial and other useful analyses can be used to identify the core issue, causes and effects and priorities. The fourth step seeks to precise strategies such as the Boston Consulting Group matrix (BCG-matrix) or the Ansoff-matrix. Furthermore, the fifth step comprises the development and evaluation of other possible solutions as a result of brainstorming and decision tables. The sixth step requires developing a course and a plan of action to assess undertaken assumptions and the probable success. Finally, the presentation of the case study and identified results and findings are presented in the seventh step.

Conclusion

The case study approach is not only a research method. Moreover, it describes a strategy by offering a structured approach e.g. by Yin and useful procedures and methods such as the portfolio analyses, Porter's five-forces approach, value chain analysis and other tools in order to resolve or compile a possible solution of considered cases.

Referring to David and Bitektine (2011) qualitative research methods gain in importance reflected by increasing case study numbers in business research and according to Dul and Hak (2008), the relevance of case studies is predominantly reflected in practice-oriented theory despite considerable concern towards the case study as empirical method. Also Yin (2014) concludes that case study research experiences rising recognition. Therefore, the future development of case study research will be interesting how it will contribute to further knowledge.

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FOCUS GROUPS

Brigit Kellmereit

Introduction

Focus groups are among the most common used research tools in the field of human and social sciences and in marketing (cf. Marková 2007, p. 1). The roots of this technique go back to the time after World War II. It emerged in behavioural science research as part of the qualitative research family. In the field of qualitative marketing studies focus groups became more and more popular over the last 50 years (cf. Stewart/Shamdasani 2015, p. 1) In the United States for example more than 250 thousand focus groups are conducted annually (cf. Focus Vision 2012). However the circumstances of focus groups have changed. There are no longer solely small research groups that are meeting face to face in a room but more and more focus groups conducted via webcams, through social media and in virtual worlds (cf. McDermott 2013). Furthermore today focus groups are often conducted in large numbers and all over the world. One example is given by Boeing and Airbus. In order to support the development of their new airplanes A380 and Boeing787 they conducted hundreds of focus groups across the globe (cf. Babej/Pollack 2006; Emerson/Johnson/Koh 2000).

The aim of the following essay is to examine the research method focus groups more closely and to point out advantages as well as limitations of this research method. Therefore the underlying research philosophy is explained first. Thereafter a short overview on research methods will be given before the focus groups, as a qualitative research method will be examined more closely. Hereby the definition, characteristics and the uses of focus groups as well as the planning and organizing of focus groups will be observed. In addition the advantages and disadvantages of this technique will be pointed out. Finally a conclusion will be drawn, summarizing the most important findings of the paper and giving and outlook on future developments.

Research methodology

Research philosophy

The term research philosophy describes the development of knowledge as well as the nature of that knowledge. Thereby for example answering a problem in an organisation can be understood as developing new knowledge (cf. Saunders et al. 2012, p. 129). During the research usually assumptions are being made. The research questions and the methods used as well as the interpretations of the findings depend on the individual assumption about human knowledge and the nature of realities that are encountered in the research (cf. Crotty 1998). The research philosophy that is being adopted can be seen as the assumptions about the way one sees the world, the so called world view. The research strategy and the methods chosen will be underpinned by these assumptions (cf. Saunders et al. 2012, p. 128). The important issues in this context is the ability to reflect upon the philosophical choices and defend them in respect to the alternatives that could have been adopted (cf. Johnson/Clark 2006). “The challenge is not to be able to fit one’s research approach neatly into any particular category but to ensure self-reflexivity and an awareness of the various ways in which our philosophical assumptions have influenced our research” (Duberley/Johnson 2013, p. 30). In

figure 1 the relationship between the research philosophy and methodology is illustrated.

Figure 8: Relationship between philosophy and methodology in social science and educational research

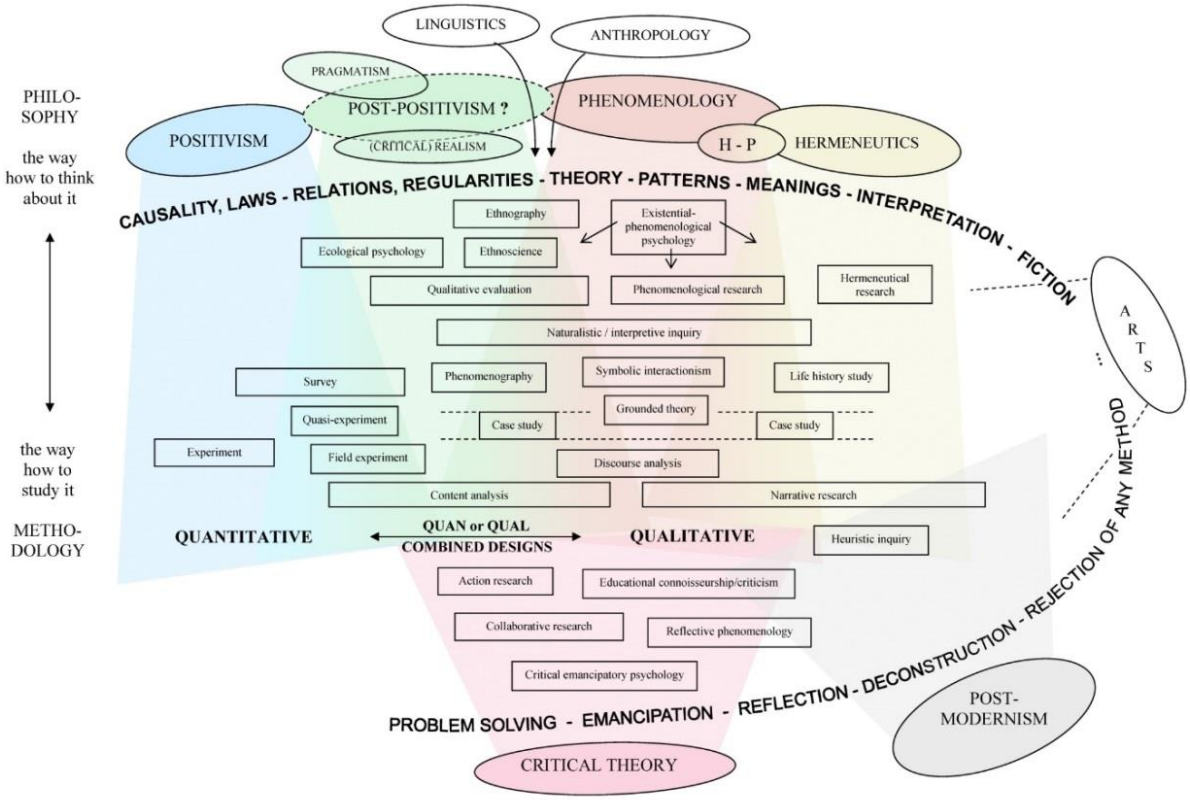


Figure: **Relationship between philosophy and methodology in social science and educational research**

Source: Niglas, K. (2004) The Combined Use of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Educational Research. Tallinn Pedagogical University. Dissertations on Social Sciences. Tallinn:TPÜ Kirjastus. ISBN 9985-58-298-5. (short version: http://www.ear.ee/e-rmtk/sotsiaalt.htm)

Source: Niglas (2004).

My research type is a critical realist. The philosophical position of realism relates to scientific enquiry and assumes that there is a reality independent of the human mind. Furthermore similar to positivism it assumes a scientific approach in respect to the development of knowledge. This assumptions underpins the collection and understanding of data. Two forms of realism exist: the direct realism and the critical realism. Whereas the direct realism shares the opinion that what is being experienced through the senses portrays the world accurately, the critical realists argue that what is being experienced by people is an image of the things in the real world but not the thing directly. This implies that people can be deceived by their senses. Critical realists share the view that the world is experienced in two steps. The first step includes the thing itself and the sensations it conveys whereas the second step is concerned with the mental processing that begins as soon as that sensation meets peoples senses (cf. Saunders et al. 2012, p. 136). The position of the critical realist is that people's knowledge of reality is an outcome of social conditioning. Consequently it cannot be understood independently of the different social actors that are involved in the process of knowledge derivation (cf. Dobson 2002).

Based on the definition of my own research type, the critical realist, I decided for the qualitative approach of focus groups as research method. Following a multi-methods approach

focus groups are often part of a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. They can for example be used to generate ideas or hypothesis in the initial stage of research. These ideas can then be further tested by surveys, questionnaires or interviews. Alternatively focus groups can be used in order to deepen the understanding of the already collected data in a later stage of the research. Thereby focus groups can give insights into the reasons for particular opinions and views (cf. Marková et al. 2007, p. 34). After the research philosophy has been clarified the different research methods are described in the following.

Research methods

Before describing the different research methods the difference between methodology and methods should be clarified. Methodology is about the rationale for the application of specific research methods and frames the use of the particular methods. Methodologies themselves are results of the particular research questions. If the research questions is for example a "how many"-type question than the suggested methodology could be a survey, whereas a "how can I improve"-type of question suggests an action research methodology (cf. Hammond/Wellington 2013, p. 109).

Research methods however describe the means through which data is being gathered and analysed within a research study. These methods can be divided into quantitative and qualitative methods, which will be shortly described in the following (cf. Hammond/Wellington 2013, p. 107).

Quantitative Research methods

Quantitative research can be generally associated with the research philosophy of positivism (cf. Saunders et al. 2012, p. 162). This philosophy assumes "that the world is capable of objective interpretation and (..) that social science should follow the methodologies and methods established in natural science" (Hammond/Wellington 2013, p. 120).

Quantitative research is generally about collecting and measuring data in countable form, like for example test scores, likert scales or reaction times (cf. Hammond/Wellington 2013, p. 107). Quantitative research is normally associated with a deductive approach, where the data is used to test theory. However, it can also follow an inductive approach where the focus is on using data to develop theory. A characteristic of this research type is that it examines relationships between numerically measured and statistical analysed variables. Questions have to be expressed clearly because data is collected in a standard manner. The researcher in this case is seen as independent from the people he is observing. Research strategies in this field are principally experimental and survey research. Survey research strategy is usually conducted through questionnaires, structured interviews or structured observations (cf. Saunders et al. 2012, p. 162 f).

Qualitative Research methods

The research philosophy of interpretivism can be generally associated with qualitative research (cf. Denzin/Lincoln 2005). This philosophy aims to understand the meaning of cultural and institutional practices for those taking part in the research (cf. Hammond/Wellington 2013, p. 88) "Researchers need to make sense of the subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed about the phenomenon being studied" (Saunders et al. 2012, p. 163).

Qualitative research deals with data that are not available in countable form and hence techniques like coding and content analysis are needed in order to managed and analyse the data (cf. Hammond/Wellington 2013, p. 107). It usually commences with an inductive approach. Qualitative research studies the meanings and the relationships between the participants. To develop a conceptual framework it uses a range of data collection techniques as well as analytical

procedures. The collection of data is non-standardized so that questions as well as procedures can alter and emerge during the research process. A variety of strategies exist associated with qualitative research. Some examples are: action research, focus groups, case study research or narrative research (cf. Saunders et al. 2012, p. 163).

Multiple-methods research

Two philosophical positions can be considered that lead to the multiple method research designs: critical realism and pragmatism. They believe in an external, objective reality to the world we live in. Furthermore they assume that the particular social conditioning affects the way we see and interpret reality. Following this research strategy researchers may analyse quantitative officially published data and thereafter explore perceptions using qualitative research methods (cf. Saunders et al. 2012, p. 163). Pragmatism could also lead to a multi method research design. Pragmatists are not wedded to a single philosophy but they allow a choice or a mixture of the philosophies depending on what really helps them to undertake their research and on the particular nature of the research. The research approach of a multi method research may be inductive or deductive or a combination of both. For example a theoretical proposition may be tested using quantitative or qualitative research and thereafter a richer theoretical perspective may be developed using further quantitative or qualitative research. A theoretical perspective could also be used to give some direction for the research (cf. Tashakkori/Teddlie 2010).

In the next chapter the research method of focus groups will be examined more closely, thereby the definition of focus groups, the characteristics, the possible uses and the planning and organizing of focus groups will be described. Furthermore some insights on the advantages and possible limitations of this research technique will be given.

Focus Groups

What are focus groups?

The research method focus groups came up during the Second World War and since then it has been through decline and rise in theory and method. It probably goes back to the work of the sociologists *Robert Merton and Paul Lazarsfeld* (cf. Lazarsfeld/Stanton 1944). They used focus groups to comment on radio programmes and to interpret them. These radio programmes were concerned with support of the public for the war saving-bonds of the government. The background is that during the Second World War people were encouraged by the U.S. government to buy bonds to invest money and as a patriotic gesture (cf. Marková et al. 2007).

Sreejesh defines focus groups as follows: "A focus group is defined as group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research" (Sreejesh et al. 2014, p. 51). Another definition comes from *Krueger*. He describes focus groups as "a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment" (Krueger 1994, p.6). The essence of this research method is to tap the unexpected findings resulting from an interactive meeting between the members of the group. The meeting should last approximately two hours, which is considered to be the usual time for a focus group interview. When selecting the members it has to be ensured that their knowledge and experience of the discussed topic is sufficient. Furthermore it is beneficial if the members have common interests, experiences or demographic background because this would facilitate blending among the members and lead to a productive discussion (cf. Sreejesh et al. 2014, p. 51 f.). The group is led by a skilled

interviewer and the discussions are often relaxed so that the participants enjoy sharing their perceptions and ideas (cf. Krueger/Casey 2009, p. 2).

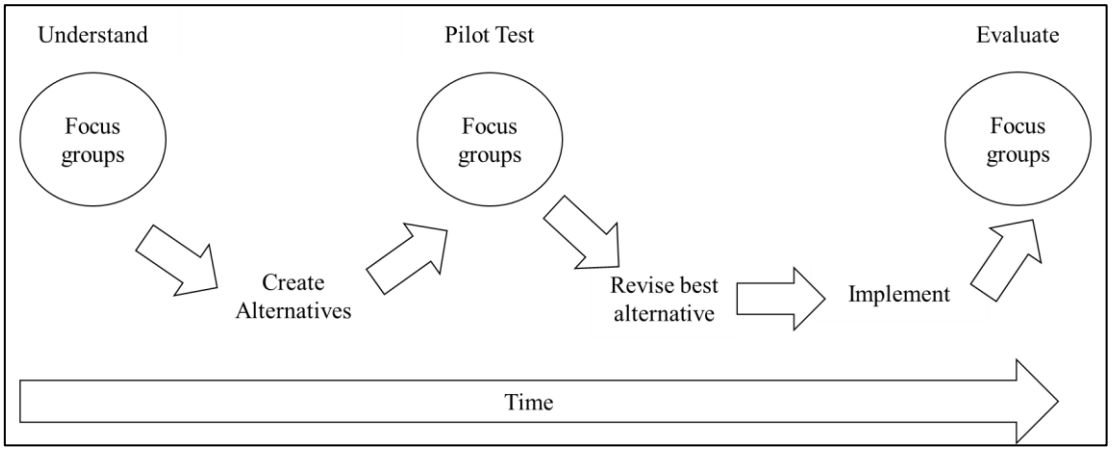
Characteristics

According to *Krueger and Casey* focus group interviews usually have five characteristics, which relate to the ingredients of focus groups. The first characteristic is that a focus group involve people. It usually consist of five to ten people but it can also occur in a range of four to twelve people. The importance is that it is small enough that everybody can share their insights but large enough so that there is enough diversity of perceptions. The second characteristic is that the members of the group possess certain characteristics themselves. In a certain way depending on the research purpose the members are similar to each other. This homogeneity can be defined broadly or narrowly. For example if an education program wants to know how to reach people that do not participate yet in the program, their focus group would be composed out of people who have not yet participated in the program. This would be an example for broader homogeneity. If the initiators of the education program are interested in attracting for example only people from a certain neighbourhood the researchers would use a narrower definitions of homogeneity to select the members of the focus group. The fact that focus groups provide qualitative data is the third characteristic. Thereby the aim of a focus group is to collect data that interests the researcher. To obtain this data open-ended questions are being asked. The environment of a focus group allows people to influence and to be influenced by others like in real life. The researcher serves as a moderator, listener, observer and analyst. The fourth characteristic of a focus group is that they have a focussed discussion. This is due to the fact that the questions are carefully predetermined and sequenced. The researcher uses open-ended questions that seem to be spontaneous but they are being carefully developed after reflection and input. Finally the fifth characteristic is that the previous four characteristics should help the researcher to understand the topic of interest (cf. Krueger/Casey 2009, pp. 6-8).

Uses of focus groups

The uses of focus groups are divers. Focus groups can for example be used to collect background information on a specific topic. Furthermore research hypothesis can be generated that can then be submitted to further research. In general focus groups can help to stimulate new ideas and creative concepts. In addition they can diagnose the potential for problems with respect to new products, services or programs. They can also generate impressions of products or other objects of interest. In addition they can be used to interpret quantitative results that have been obtained before (cf. Stewart/Shamdasani 2015, p.44 f.). Another aspect is that they allow to gain insight in group dynamics, meaning the way how people are influenced by others (cf. Litosseliti 2007, p. 18). *Krueger and Casey* point out that focus groups can also help with decision making by enabling the decision maker to make more informed choices using the findings from the focus group. Furthermore they underline the importance focus groups can have in guiding product or program development. Therefore the stages of product development have to be considered. At three stages of product development focus groups can be helpful (see figure 2).

Figure 9: Recommended Strategy for Product/Program Development



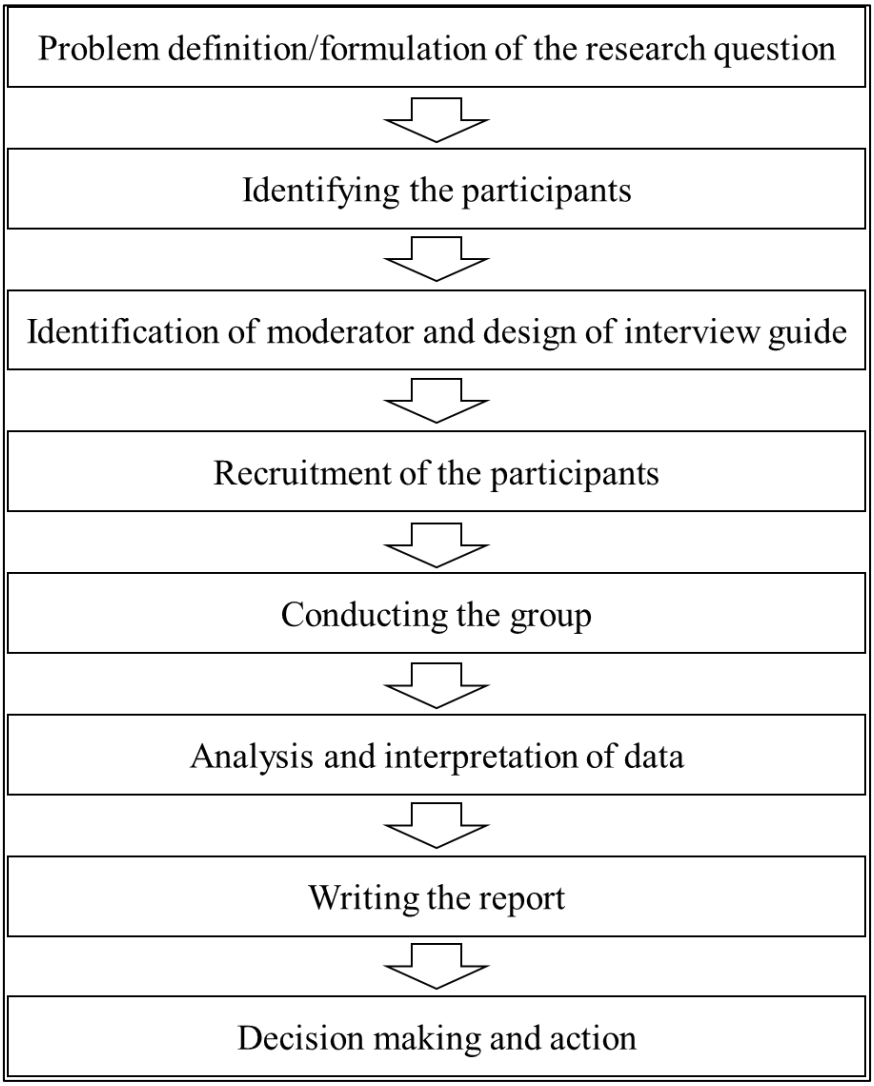
Source: Own representation based on Krueger/Casey (2009), p. 9.

The first stage where focus groups can be useful is when researchers need to gain an understanding. This means seeing the product through the eyes of the target group. Hereby the researcher can find out what the target audience is thinking and feeling about the product. Also it can be observed what they like about the product and what they do not like as well as potential barriers in buying the product and what it would take to get the target group to buy the product. The next stage of product development where focus groups can be useful is during the pilot test of the prototype, which is based on the findings from the first focus groups. At this stage focus groups can again share their opinion on what they like and what they do not like about the prototype. This helps the planners to fine-tune ideas, plans or concepts before implementation. The third point where focus groups can be helpful is after the product is already on the market. At this stage focus groups can be used for evaluation and can answer questions like for example if and how the product could be improved and if the product fulfils the expectations. These three stages of focus group research can be applied in the development of consumer products but also for other areas like the development of advertising campaigns (cf. Krueger/Casey 2009, pp. 8-9). In the next section the process of planning and organizing a focus group is being described.

Planning and organizing focus groups

Figure 3 illustrates the steps in the process of planning focus groups, which are described shortly in the following. The first step of this process is the problem definition. This requires a clear statement about what is the desirable information and from whom it should be obtained. A clear understanding of the general research question or the problem should be ensured because otherwise the moderator may raise incorrect questions or the population of interest is not identified correctly (cf. Stewart/Shamdasani 2015, p. 49 f.).

Figure 10: Steps in the design and use of focus groups



Source: Own representation based on Stewart/Shamdasani (2015), p. 50.

In determining the purpose and the nature of the problem *Krueger and Casey* give a guideline what questions should be answered at this point:

"What is the problem that the study is to address?
What led up to the decision to do this study?
What is the purpose of the study?
What kinds of information do you want?
What types of information are of particular importance?
Who wants the information? (Or, who do you want to give the information to?
How will you use the information? (Or, what do you want others to do with the information?)" (Krueger/Casey 2009, p. 18)

After being clear on the research question a sampling frame has to be identified. This sampling frame is a list of possible participants that are believed to be representative of the larger population that the researcher is interested in. *Stewart and Shamdasani* point out that this step is much more critical in large-scale survey research because it would be inappropriate to generalize far beyond the participants of the focus group. Hence a good approximation of the people of interest would

be enough (cf. Stewart/Shamdasani 2015, p. 51). According to *Krueger and Casey* thinking about whether a list of people fitting in the screens exists, is the best way to begin. This list could be an existing list of clients, employees, members or people who use a certain service of an organization. If there is no existing list another possible way for finding participants would be to ask neutral parties for names and create an own list (cf. Krueger/Casey 2009, p. 68 f.).

In the third step of the focus group planning process the moderator should be identified and the interview guide should be designed. These steps often happen at the same time as the recruitment of the participants. The moderator as well as the questions included in the interview guide have to be compatible with the group that is interviewed. A moderator that is good in interviewing children is not necessarily suited to interview for example design engineers (cf. Stewart/Shamdasani 2015, p. 51). *Liamputtong* points out some characteristics a good moderator should have. Among other characteristics he should be sensitive with respect to the needs of the participants, be open-minded and respect the participants. Furthermore he should be non-judgemental and he should have an adequate knowledge about the discussed issue (cf. Liamputtong 2011, p. 60). Before the recruitment process can start, the time and place for the group have to be identified. *Hennink* remarks that the physical location as well as the internal environment of the venue can enhance a productive group discussion (cf. Hennink 2007, p. 152). In the subsequent recruitment process people in the sampling frame are contacted and asked to take part in a group discussion at a specific time and place. To stimulate their interest they are usually informed about the topic and depending on the research budget also small gifts or higher amounts of money are offered to the participants as an inventive (cf. Stewart/Shamdasani 2015, p. 51). The next step of the process is the focus group interview. The task of the moderator is to lead the participants through the questions on the guide of the interview and if possible to facilitate discussion among the group members. Audio- or videotapes may be conducted to facilitate the analysis later on. Finally the last two steps of the process are the analysis and the interpretation of the data and the report writing. Based on the findings and analysis of the focus group discussion, decisions can be made and measures can be initiated (cf. Stewart/Shamdasani 2015, p. 52). In the next two sections the advantages and limitations of focus groups are being discussed.

Advantages of focus groups

The research method of focus groups enables the researcher, without pressuring the participants to make decisions, to examine what and how they think and why they think in a special way about the issue of importance (cf. Liamputtong 2011, p. 5). According to *Jenny Kitzinger* this methodology is an ideal approach in order to examine the stories, beliefs, needs, points of views and concerns of individuals (cf. Kitzinger 2005, p.57). *Stewart and Shamdasani* point out a number of advantages of focus groups in comparison to other types of research. One advantage focus groups offer is that data can be collected much more quickly and at the same time at less cost than it would be the case if every person of the group were interviewed individually. Another advantage is that focus groups enable the researcher to interact with the respondents on a direct basis, which provides for example opportunities for the clarification of responses. Furthermore nonverbal responses like gestures, smiles or frowns can be observed that may either supplement or even contradict the verbal response. In addition large and comprehensive amounts of data can be obtained through the open response format that a focus group implies. This enables the researcher to obtain for

example deeper levels of meanings. The group setting also creates synergistic effects, where respondents react and build on the statements of other group members. Thereby data or ideas may be produced that would not have been come up in an individual interview. (cf. Stewart/Shamdasani 2015, pp. 45 f.). If the group is homogeneous in respect of the group members' experiences and feelings an atmosphere of security is created which places the participants in a comfort position and thus encourages them to communicate their ideas (cf. Sreejesh et al. 2014, p. 53). Another advantage of focus groups is that they are very flexible and can be used to examine a variety of topics. Lastly the results of a focus group discussion are very user friendly and also easy to understand, what is not always true for more sophisticated survey research. When deciding between the usage of a group interview or a series of individual interviews one should also take into account, that individual interviews will require much more time and also advantages that result out of the group setting cannot be achieved (cf. Stewart/Shamdasani 2015, p. 46).

Limitations of focus groups

Although focus groups offer a lot of advantages and are a valuable research tool there is also some criticism and limitations about focus groups. One possible limitation is that the small number of respondents participating in a focus groups may not be enough to generalize the issue to a larger population. In this context, it has to be considered, that the people who are willing to come to a locale and to participate in a one to two hour group discussion are probably different from the majority of the population of interest for example in respect of compliance or deference (cf. Stewart/Shamdasani 2015, p. 47 f.). However if the focus group is too large and the topic is complicated superficial and trivial results may be produced. Another point of criticism it that focus groups tend to intellectualize. This is shown in a tendency of focus groups participants to portray themselves as thoughtful, reflective and rational individuals when they discuss their past behaviour (cf. Krueger/Casey 2009, p. 13 f.). In fact *Gerald Zaltman* argues that 95 per cent of consumer choices are made unconscious and that this is the reason why the results of many market research strategies are incomplete and erroneous (cf. Zaltman 2003, p. 50). However one has to keep in mind that this criticism affects not only focus groups but all research methods based on questions and answers. This problem can be minimized when multiple strategies of inquiry are used. Another point where the limitations of focus groups can emerge is if the participants have limited or no experience. In this situation the participants may make up answers to not be embarrassed or being negatively reflected on. It could also happen that dominant individuals influence the results. If this seems to happen, the moderator has to intervene and handle the situation. He has to ensure that the participants are able to reflect on various arguments and are not being pressurized by others (cf. Krueger/Casey 2009, pp. 13-15). It could also happen that participants are not taking part in the group discussion. The reason for this can lie in the topic of the discussion. Not all topics are suited for a focus group discussion. Especially very personal topics like financial status or divorce may be better discussed in an individual interview. Furthermore difficulties in using focus groups may appear if topics are discussed where the participants have strong or opposing opinions. In addition participants may be reluctant to talk about their opinions and views if the focus group takes place in an institutional context like the workplace and if the participants are colleagues (cf. Liamputtong 2011, p. 8). *Sreejesh et al.* comment that the spontaneous response from the participants may make it difficult for the researcher to decide which response could be generalized. As a result it could happen that the researchers use their own conclusions what

results in a bias (cf. Sreejesh et al. 2014, p. 54). Finally the open-ended nature of responses collected in a focus group may lead to difficulties when summarizing and interpreting the results of the focus group discussion (cf. Stewart/Shamdasani 2015, p. 48).

Conclusion

Krueger and Casey describe focus groups as "special creatures in the kingdom of groups" (Krueger/Casey 2009, p. 15) because they look like other kinds of group experiences but on closer inspection they have distinctive characteristics. They "collect qualitative data from homogeneous people in a group situation through a focused discussion" (Krueger/Casey 2009, p. 15).

In the wide array of disciplines focus groups are among the more common types of research. As outlined in the essay the uses of focus groups are manifold. Academic researchers, business decision makers and government policymakers use this method. Focus groups have invaluable benefits. They provide rich and detailed data about perceptions, feelings, thoughts and impressions of group members. Furthermore they represent a flexible research tool which can be used for nearly any topic (cf. Stewart/Shamdasani 2015, p. 177). As set out in the essay there is also criticism about focus groups. However at this point it should be mentioned, that no method is perfect and that the different research methods are highly dependent on the environment in which the research is undertaken, on how they are used and on the expertise of the researcher (cf. Krueger/Casey 2009, p. 13). In addition it has to be kept in mind that a large part of the limitations of focus groups can be prevented if certain rules are followed for example on how to conduct an efficient focus group. Some points in this context are, that the group should not be too large and that the moderator should have the necessary qualification to lead the group through a productive discussion. According to *Stewart and Shamdasani* the true test with respect to the validity of a research method can be determined by the frequency with which it produces useful and interesting results. The fact that focus groups persists for more than 50 years and are applied in manifold ways suggest that this research method has fulfilled this standard of validity (cf. Stewart/Shamdasani 2015, p. 180). The successful application of focus groups in the past and the increasing demand on meaningful data suggest that focus groups will play an important role also in the future, in which a shift from the traditional face to face group discussion to a more frequent use of virtual focus groups might occur.

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QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WITH A FOCUS ON QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Isabella Mayer

Purpose and Scope

"Not everything that can be counted counts,
and not everything that counts can be counted"

(Albert Einstein)

The interest in qualitative research has been growing continuously in the last few decades (Flick, 2009, p. 12). Referring to the quote of Albert Einstein, researchers realized that not all phenomena could be counted or measured in terms of quantities. To overcome the limitations of quantitative approaches for certain research interests or questions, qualitative approaches and a wide array of corresponding methods have emerged since then.

The objective of this paper is to provide an overview of research, focussing on qualitative research, whereby approaches to qualitative data analysis will be emphasized. Data analysis represents a central step in qualitative research and has a major impact on the outcome of any research conducted (Flick, 2014, p. 3).

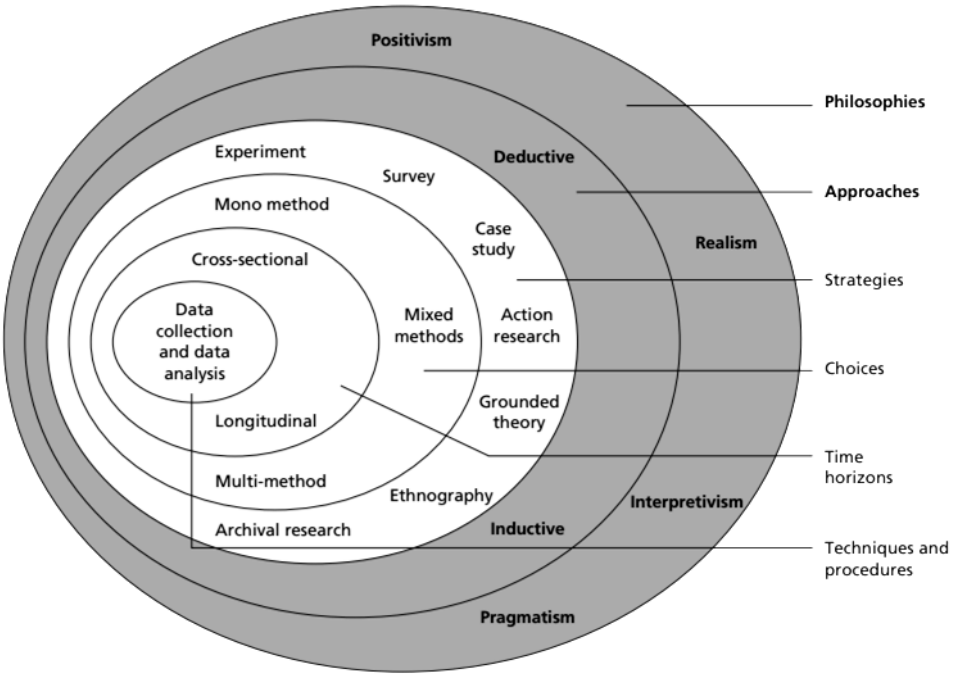
The present paper is structured on the basis of a typical research process in practice (see Appendix 1). After a short introduction to the field of research in chapter 2, the area of research philosophy in chapter 3 will build the basis for further steps. With quantitative and qualitative research, two major methodological approaches are being discussed in chapter 4. Chapter 5 continues with concrete methods and techniques in the area of qualitative data analysis, before the paper concludes in chapter 6.

Introduction to Research

According to its purpose, research can be divided into exploratory, descriptive and causal research. Exploratory research seeks new insights into phenomena and sheds light on ambiguous situations. The aim is not to derive definite evidence but rather to serve as a basis for further research. Descriptive research in contrast, addresses more specific issues. It describes 'characteristics of objects, people, groups, organizations, or environments ... by addressing *who, what, when, where* and *how* questions' (Zikmund et al., 2009, p. 55). The objective of causal or explanatory research is to set up causal relationships between variables so as to explain the relationship between them (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, (2009, p. 140).

The research process can be described by using an onion as a metaphor (Illustration 1) (ibid, p. 108). Before the researcher gets to the inner centre, which is data collection and data analysis, several layers have to be peeled off first. The first layer is the research philosophy, which will be described in the following chapter.

Illustration 1: The Research 'Onion'



Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 108.

Research Philosophy

Adopting a research philosophy represents the starting point of the research process. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p. 107) research philosophy 'relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge' and thereby stands for a certain view of the world of the researcher. The research philosophy adopted builds the basis for the following research process and influences aspects like the formulation of the research question and the selection of research methods (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011; Bryman and Bell, 2011). Furthermore, it enables the researcher to explain the choice for certain methods used and offers particular standards to evaluate the quality of research (Rubin and Rubin, 2012, p. 15). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p. 109), there are two major areas to be considered to determine the researcher's philosophical stance: ontology and epistemology.

Ontology refers to assumptions about the nature of reality (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 108) describe the ontological questions as follows: 'What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?'. Epistemology includes assumptions about who can be a knower or formulated differently, 'What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be done?' (ibid, p. 108).

As stated before, it is important that the researcher identifies his or her personal philosophical position. The author of the present paper adopts a post-positivist stance, inheriting the ontology of a critical realist and the epistemology of a modified dualist/objectivist

(Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). According to Adam (2014, p. 6) post-positivism goes beyond positivism; however it does not completely reject quantitative approaches. The post-positivist researcher is rather careful with one-sided interpretations or a too extensive use of (quantitative) data and methods. In its core, post-positivism deals with questions relating to the quality of data, the usage of more integrated approaches and the context of the phenomenon under study.

Reimer (1996, p. 123) describes qualitative research as 'a child of the post-positivist world'. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011, p. 16) categorize post-positivism alongside with the interpretive strand and the critical strand as the primary approaches to qualitative research. However, they classify post-positivism as a rather atypical approach to qualitative research.

Appendix 2 shows the relationship between philosophy and methodology. In this illustration, post-positivism spans over combined designs of qualitative and quantitative research. The present paper will take post-positivism as the methodological framework for research, focussing on qualitative approaches but also on the triangulation of methods and approaches.

Research Methodology

Methodology and Methods

After the researcher defined the way he thinks the world is (ontology) and what he thinks can be known about it (epistemology), the question to answer is then how it can be investigated, i.e. the methodological question. Kothari (2004, p. 8) states that "research methodology has many dimensions and research methods do constitute part of the research methodology.' He stresses the importance of considering the logic behind each research method chosen. Explaining why a certain method has been chosen enables the researcher himself or others to evaluate the research results. Jonker and Penning (2010, p. 32) derive the meaning of methodology from its Greek roots standing for 'the way along which' and state that 'a methodology assumes there is a logical order the researcher needs to follow in order to achieve a certain predetermined result'. Consulting another metaphor, research methodology can also be seen as a bridge, which connects the philosophical perspective with the research methods (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011, p. 6). Kothari (2004, p. 5) distinguishes between two different types of approaches to research: the quantitative and the qualitative research approach.

However, linking different philosophical stances to certain methodologies has been criticised in literature (Niglas, 2004, p.6). With regard to this discussion, Niglas (2004, p. 7) systematically analysed 48 research papers and found out that 'it is the concrete research problem or aim rather than the philosophical position which determines the design (or overall strategy) of the study whereby, depending on the nature and complexity of the problem, the design can be either qualitative or quantitative or a combination of both'. However, Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 26) regard a distinction between quantitative and qualitative research approaches as a useful means to classify different research methods. This approach will be adopted in this paper.

Table 1 shows the basic contrasts between quantitative and qualitative research, which make a fundamental difference. The corresponding approaches and methods will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3.

Table 6: Fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative research

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research	Deductive; testing theory	Inductive; generation of theory
Epistemological orientation	Natural science model, in particular positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological orientation	Objectivism	Constructivism

Source: Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 27.

Quantitative Research

The term 'quantity' in this research approach refers to measuring and counting and implies an emphasis on quantification in the area of data collection and analysis. Quantitative research has its roots in natural science which postulates that 'knowledge about reality can only be obtained "through the eyes of the researcher"'(Jonker and Penning, 2010, p. 66). It is based particularly on the assumptions of positivism and 'embodies a view of social reality as an external objective reality (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 27).

Quantitative research works with closed questions, which are elaborated from existing theories. These questions result in a problem definition, which will not change during the research process (Jonker and Penning, 2010, p. 66). The theory is then tested in a deductive empirical cycle. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p. 125) describe the main characteristics of deductions processes as follows:

Explanation of causal relationships between variables

Testing of hypothesis

Reliability by using highly structured methodology

Reduction of problems/concepts to the simplest possible elements to allow operationalisation

Selection of samples with sufficient numerical size to allow generalisation

Quantitative research approaches can be criticised for several aspects. The emphasis on figures entails that they are perceived as objective facts; however this approach has only instrumental neutrality. Moreover it is based on the assumption, that theory correctly represents the reality of the problem. Last, the generated data does not speak for itself; it always has to be interpreted to become meaningful (Jonker and Penning, 2010, p. 74). This paper focuses primarily on qualitative research; therefore it will not go into further detail regarding quantitative research.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research emerged in the 20th century with the rise of social sciences, which focused on an understanding of the way in which humans view their social world (Saunder, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 126). Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 4-5) define qualitative research as follows: 'Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible ... They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. … This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.'

While quantitative research approaches focus quantification in data collection and analysis,

qualitative research emphasizes words. It 'embodies a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals' creation (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 27). Qualitative research is especially concerned with the context of certain phenomena (Saunder, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 126).

Qualitative research works with open questions, which might change during the course of research. The flexible nature of this approach is an important characteristic. The definite shape of the research question is obtained based on an inductive empirical cycle. Induction is concerned with generating theory from data, i.e. theory follows data rather than the opposite way as with a deductive approach. In contrast to a deductive approach, small samples of subjects might be appropriate (ibid, p. 78).

However, there are also shortcomings to qualitative research. The flexibility that is inherent in open questions also leads to a certain degree of uncertainty and gives qualitative research an 'open end character'. Furthermore, the research is influenced by the researcher's subjectivity, as he is directly involved; facts and interpretations might be difficult to differentiate. Last, it might be difficult to assess the results by applying classical methodological criteria (Jonker and Penning, 2010, p. 89).

Van Maanen (1979, p. 520) defines qualitative methods as 'an umbrella term covering an array of interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world'. Tesch (1990, p. 58) identified over 40 different approaches to qualitative research. The approaches shown in Table 2 cannot be attributed to the same level and might span from research philosophies to concrete research methods (Niglas, 2004, p. 3).

Table 2: Different Approaches to Qualitative Research
Source: Tesch, 1990, p. 58.

action research	ethnographic content analysis	interpretive interactionism
case study	interpretive human studies	life history study
clinical research	ethnography	naturalistic inquiry
cognitive anthropology	ethnography of communication	panel research
collaborative enquiry	oral history	participant observation
content analysis	ethnomethodology	participative research
dialogical research	ethnoscience	phenomenography
conversation analysis	experiential psychology	phenomenology
Delphi study	field study	qualitative evaluation
descriptive research	focus group research	structural ethnography
direct research	grounded theory	symbolic interactionism
discourse analysis	hermeneutics	transcendental realism
document study	heuristic research	transformative research
ecological psychology	holistic ethnography	
educational connoisseurship and criticism	imaginal psychology	
educational ethnography	intensive evaluation	

According to Tesch (1991, p. 17-25), this variety of approaches can be divided into three basic orientations, depending on the research interest. 'Language oriented' approaches are interested in the characteristic of language and the communication between people. 'Descriptive/interpretive' approaches are interested in discovering regularities by providing thorough descriptions of social phenomena. The third approach is called 'theory-building' and seeks to identify connections between social phenomena. Flick (2014, p. 3) states that the area of qualitative research is continuously growing, thereby becoming more complex and less structured. As this paper focuses qualitative research approaches, the next chapter will examine qualitative data analysis in more detail.

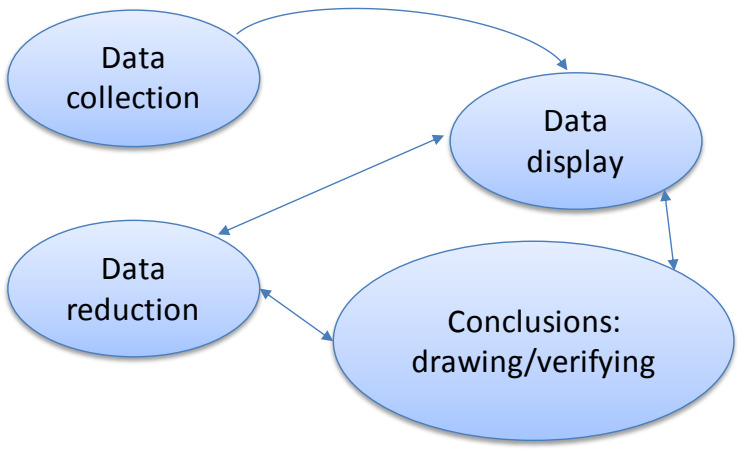
Qualitative Data Analysis

Components of Qualitative Data Analysis

Data analysis is of vital importance within qualitative research as it has a major influence on the results of each research conducted (Flick, 2014, p. 3). It represents one step among various other steps within the research process, yet there are different approaches to the role of qualitative data analysis within this process. In some models, data analysis starts only after data collection and preparation has been finished. In other models, data collection and analysis are applied in parallel with both steps being entangled. In yet other cases, data analysis might represent the central step within the research process, with all other steps seen as subordinate (ibid, p. 10).

Punch (2009, p. 174-175) describes 'data reduction', 'data display' and 'drawing and verifying conclusions' as the three major components of qualitative data analysis (see also Schutt, 2012, p. 326). Illustration 3 shows, that these three activities interact during the analysis.

Illustration 3: Components of Qualitative Data Analysis: Interactive Model



Source: Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 12 in Punch, 2009, p. 174.

Data reduction is part of the analysis and occurs constantly during the analysis. The main objective, congruent with quantitative analysis, is to reduce data without losing information. In the area of qualitative analysis it is additionally important to preserve information within its context. Ways of reducing data may vary throughout the different stages of research and span from editing and summarizing in the early stages over coding and memoing in the middle stages to conceptualizing and explaining in the later stages. Data displays arrange, condense

and assemble information by means of graphs, charts, or different forms of diagrams. The objective of repeated and iterative data displays is to provide information about the current status of the research and to build the basis for further research. (See also chapter 5.2.3 on grounded theory). Data reduction and display are important to assist in drawing and verifying conclusions. This step logically follows after the first two steps; however, possible conclusions can also be drawn vaguely in earlier stages of the analysis and sharpened throughout the whole process. When all data has been analysed, final conclusions can be drawn as propositions, which then need to be verified (Punch, 2009, p. 174-175). The next chapter will now look more closely on different approaches in qualitative data analysis.

Approaches to Qualitative Data Analysis

Conceptual Framework

Data can be analysed in a more systematic manner if the study is based on particular theoretical propositions or a conceptual framework. Zikmund et al. (2009, p. 42) define propositions as 'statements concerned with the relationships among concepts. A proposition explains the *logical* linkage among certain concepts by asserting a universal connection between concepts.' Maxwell (2013, p. 39) describes the conceptual framework as 'the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories' supporting and informing the research conducted. It can be composed of the experiential knowledge of the researcher, existing theory and research, pilot and exploratory research as well as thought experiments (ibid, p. 44).

Heinrich (1984, p. 151 in Maxwell, 2013, p. 39) emphasizes the importance of a conceptual framework when concluding: 'Even carefully collected results can be misleading if the underlying context of assumptions is wrong'. Therefore, the conceptual framework constitutes a key part of the research design.

Triangulation

According to Bryman (2004, p. 1142), 'Triangulation refers to the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings.' The main objective of triangulation is to enhance and demonstrate reliability of research findings. Nevertheless, even if triangulation leads to convergent results, it cannot be concluded, that research results are unquestionable. Flick (2011, p. 111) criticises the reduction of triangulation to the validation of results and mentions another benefit of triangulation: different perspectives allow an enlargement of the focus on the phenomenon under study.

Denzin (1970 in Bryman, 2004, p. 1142) distinguishes between four forms of triangulation: Data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and methodological triangulation:

Data triangulation refers to the use of different data sources like interview data or observational data. By means of various sampling strategies, data is collected at different times, in different social situations and on a variety of people.

Investigator triangulation implies letting other researchers participate to collect and interpret data.

Theoretical triangulation describes the use of more than one theoretical position when interpreting data

Methodological triangulation refers to the use of more than one research method. This type of triangulation is often referred to as the essence of triangulation. It might also describe the use of both quantitative and qualitative research.

Triangulation has also been criticised in literature. It has been accused to follow a naive realism which assumes that there can only be one definite account of social reality. Another critique refers to the assumption that data which was gathered with different research methods cannot necessarily be compared and seen as

equally suitable to answer a research question (Bryman, 2004, p. 1143).

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory can be seen as a general approach to research as well as a set of techniques to develop theory through data analysis (Punch, 2009, p. 182). It emerged during a four-year study on examining the experience of dying by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. Corbin and Strauss (1994, p. 273) define grounded theory as 'a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed.' Theory evolves during the research process through the constant interaction between analysis and data collection. A main feature of this analytical approach is the 'comparative analysis', which is the reason why the method is often referred to as the constant comparative method.

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012, p. 58) identified the following key analytical operations when applying grounded theory: cycle of theoretical sampling; constant comparisons; evolving theory, leading to theoretical saturation:

Theoretical sampling represents an iterative process. When using grounded theory, samples are not drawn of particular groups of individuals but rather in terms of concepts and their properties. The first sample is based on a general idea about the phenomenon under study. The researcher will then find out that further data is required for categories that emerged from earlier stages of the analysis and will therefore continue to refine the categories until saturation is reached (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p. 8).

Constant comparative analysis describes the process of continually comparing incidents against other incidents for similarities or differences. The identification of differences within categories leads to the creation of subcategories. This process continues until a grounded theory is completely integrated (Birks and Mills, 2010, p. 11). This form of comparison leads to greater precision and consistency within research (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p. 9).

The process of data collection and analysis should continue until theoretical saturation has been accomplished, i.e. until no new variations of exiting categories emerge. An integrated grounded theory, which explains a process related to a phenomenon, is the final product of this approach (Birks and Mills, 2010, p. 12). However, Willig (2013, p. 71) points out that 'theoretical saturation functions as a goal rather than as a reality'. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 40 in Willig, 2013, p. 71) note that 'the published word is not the final one, but only a pause in the never-ending process of generating theory.'

When using grounded theory, the researcher has to bear in mind, that this implies a process which is very intensive and time consuming and which requires reflection. Therefore, the timeframe, the required level of competence and access to data need to be considered in advance (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p. 511).

Content Analysis

The roots of content analysis go back to the study of mass communication in the 1950s; the first textbook on the subject was published by Berelson in 1952. Krippendorff (2013, p. 24) offers a broad definition of content analysis as 'a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use.' Taking several definitions originating from the early times of content analysis, Holsti (1965, p. 598) states that it emerged as a quantitative technique. Conversely, Krippendorff (2013, p. 22) clearly questions the legitimacy and the value of distinguishing between quantitative and qualitative content analyses as he classifies the reading of texts as qualitative, even if certain features of this text will be converted into numbers during the analysis.

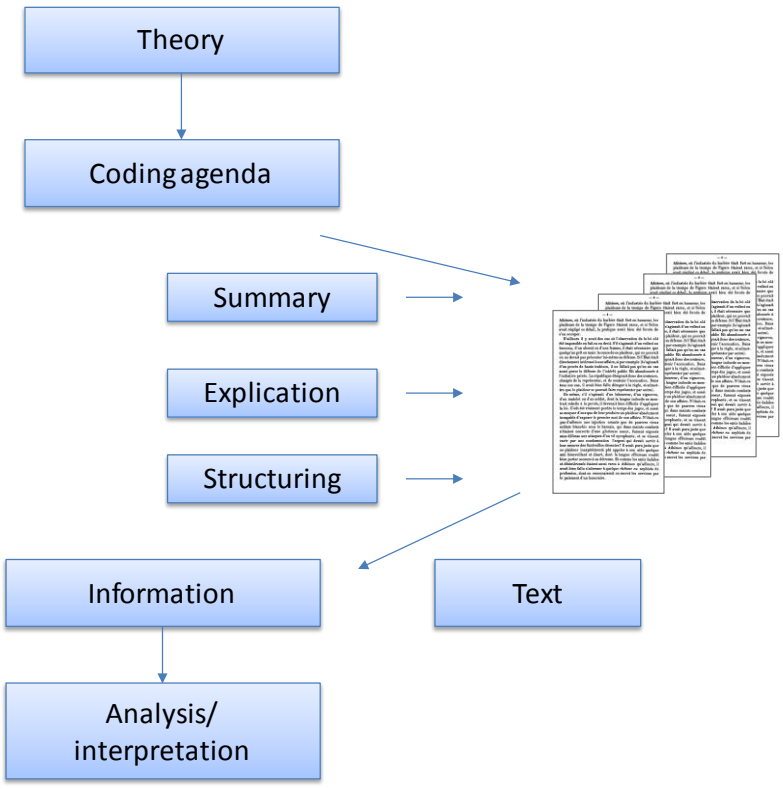
Furthermore, Franzosi (2008, p. xxvii) describes disunity in literature whether to classify content analysis as a method for data collection or data

analysis. As an explanation, he refers to different to epistemological views of the research process: If the purpose of content analysis it to gather numbers as input for statistical procedures, content analysis represents a method for data collection in a quantitative approach. In contrast to this, within qualitative approaches there is no clear distinction between the phases of data collection and analysis, which might proceed in parallel and in a reflexive interaction with the content to be analyzed. Following this view, content analysis constitutes a method of data analysis of content collected by means of other methods (e.g. in-depth interviews, psychoanalytical sessions). The present paper follows post-positivism and thereby predominantly qualitative approaches; therefore, content analysis will be regarded as an analysis method in the area of qualitative research.

The central idea of content analysis is selective reduction. This implies a reduction of text to categories including words or a set of phrases, on which the researchers concentrates. Specific words or patterns are indicators of the research question and determine the level of analysis (Jonker and Penning, 2010, p. 156). Different authors list various uses of content analysis. Holsti (1969 in Krippendorf, 2013, p. 51) distinguishes between three main purposes: to ask *what*, *how*, and *to whom* something is said; *why* something is said as well as asking *with what effects* something is said.

Content analysis can be applied to various types of structured and unstructured information. Krippendorf (2013, p. 27) refers to texts in terms of 'printed matter, recorded speech, visual communications, works of art, websites, and cultural artifacts'. Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 290-91) further mention transcripts of semi- and unstructured interviews or case studies of organizations. Illustration 3 shows the process of a qualitative content analysis in a simplified form.

Illustration 3: Basic Proceeding of Qualitative Content Analysis



Source: Kohlbacher (2006).

Zhang and Wildemuth (2009, p. 2) describe a content analysis with the following basic steps:

Preparation of data: As stated above, various types of sources can be used for analysis; however data generally needs to be transformed into written text first, for example by means of transcription.

Definition of the unit of analysis: The definition of this basic unit of text is fundamental, as variations in unit definition may affect coding decisions. Units of analysis represent usually individual themes rather than physical linguistic units like words or sentences.

Development of categories and a coding scheme: Data, earlier related studies, and theories can be used to derive categories and a coding scheme. These coding schemes can be derived deductively from theory or inductively from the data with the use of the constant comparative method (see chapter 5.2.3). Consistency in the use of codes is ensured by a coding manual, which includes category names, definitions, coding rules as well as examples.

Test of coding scheme on a sample of text: The consistency of the previously developed coding scheme needs to be tested and revised in an iterative process until a high level of inter-coder agreement and coding consistency is reached.

Coding of the whole text: During coding of the text, new themes might continue to emerge and might require an adaption of the coding manual.

Assessment of coding consistency: The evaluation of the coding consistency described in step 4 needs to be rechecked to avoid mistakes during the coding process.

Conclusions from the coded data: Deriving meanings of data represents a critical step in the whole process and depends greatly on the researchers reasoning abilities. This includes activities such as identifying properties of categories, examining relationships between them or uncovering patterns.

Report about methods and findings: To ensure the reproducibility of the study, all analytical procedures and processes need to be reported. Presenting the findings should be done by maintaining a balance between description and interpretation.

Bryman and Bell (2009, p. 305) state several advantages of content analysis. The reproducibility of results by reporting the coding scheme and sampling procedures turns content analysis into a transparent method within research. Furthermore, content analysis allows for longitudinal analysis and thereby changes in emphasis of certain aspects can be examined. The high degree of flexibility of the method is another advantage; the wide range of data, which can be analysed, offers various application fields in social science as well as in business research. Last, by measuring the frequency with which some words occur, researchers can recognize their importance.

However, there are also limitations to content analysis. When doing a content analysis, the quality of the documents used needs to be ensured. Therefore, they need to be checked for authenticity, credibility as well as representativeness. This proves to be especially difficult for company reports or internal documents. Another shortcoming of this method is that a certain degree of interpretation from the coder during the coding process cannot be avoided. Content analysis is not necessarily the best approach to answer 'why'-questions, i.e. to ascertain the motives of the author when writing certain content (ibid, p. 308).

Conclusion and Outlook

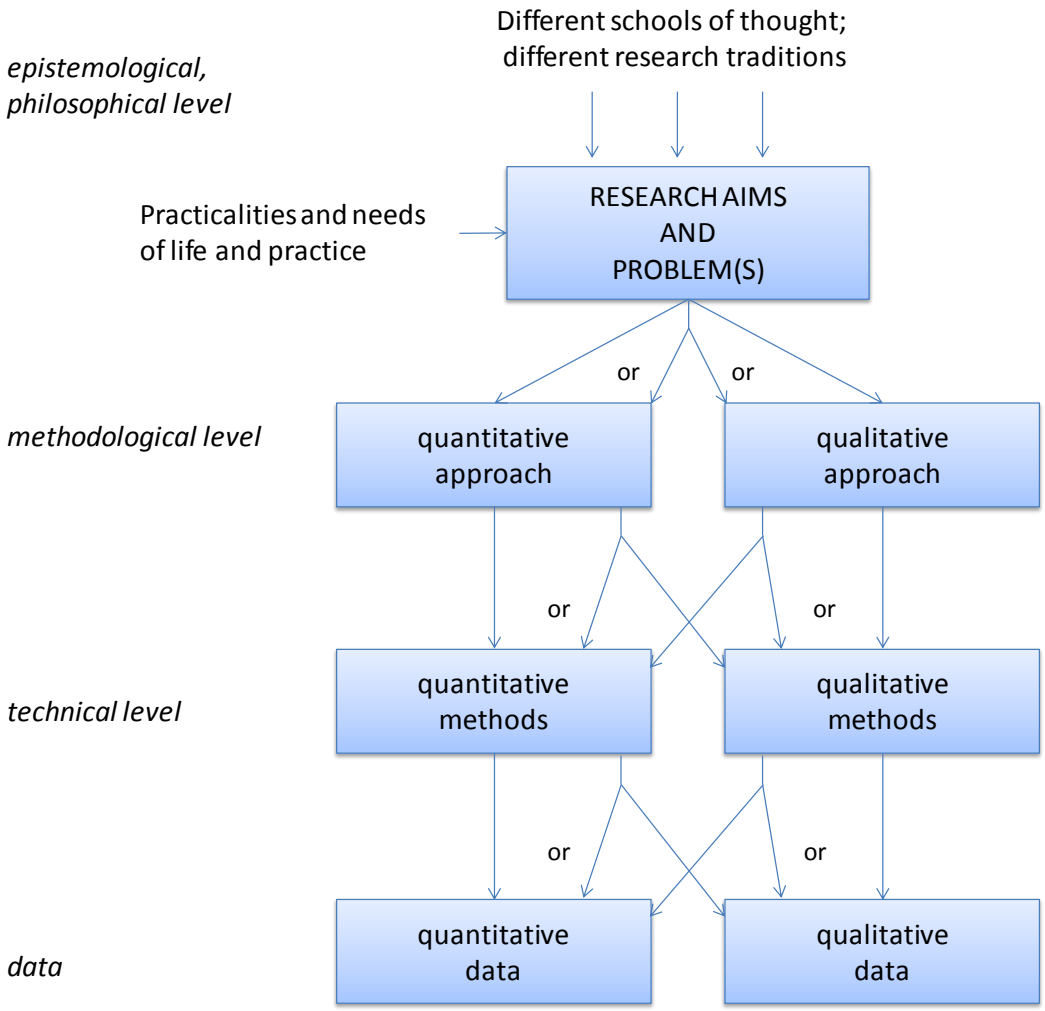
When conducting research, the researcher can choose among numerous methods and approaches. All of these approaches have their strengths as well as their weaknesses and have to be selected carefully in the light of the view of the world of the researcher as well as the particular objective of the research.

The present paper gave an overview of qualitative research and of selected approaches to qualitative data analysis. Only a few approaches and methods could be focused; however the field continues to grow and to sprawl.

Knoblauch (2013, p. 10-11) ventures a look at the future of qualitative research and envisages further differentiation as well as a certain degree of standardization of methods. Differentiation of qualitative methods is concerned with the innovation of new methods as well as a differentiation within various scientific fields such as psychology, media research or theology. Standardization comes along with the institutionalisation of research and manifests itself for example in the mushrooming of specialized literature and encyclopaedia. The area of qualitative research will therefore stay dynamic and remain an interesting field for further studies.

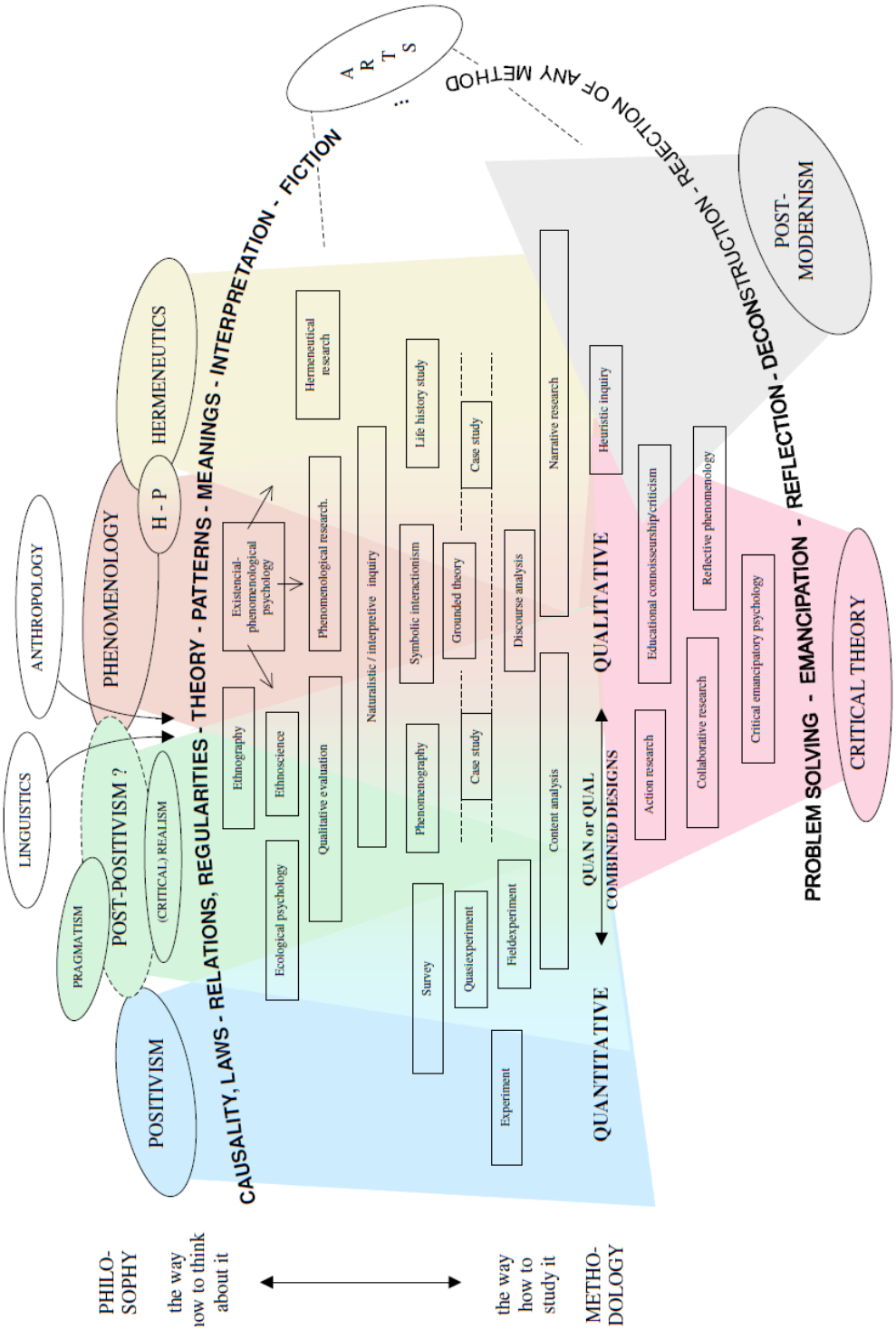
Appendix

Appendix 1: The levels of research in practice



Source: Niglas (2004), p. 8.

Appendix 2: Relationship between philosophy and methodology



Source: Niglas, 2004, p. 10

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CASE STUDY RESEARCH

Simone Tumele

Introduction

Aristotle once said "All men by nature desire knowledge". This is true as people instinctively desire to know how things are and why they are as they are. This is true for questions in everyday life like "What do we need to get from the grocery", as well as questions with the potential to change the way we see the world, like "What is life good for?". Therefore, all people are sort of researchers. The only difference between the normal people who would never have the idea to call themselves researcher and so called researchers is a formalized and systematic empirical approach to the acquisition of knowledge in order to increase credibility (cf. Hancook/Algozzine 2006, p. 3). Various research philosophies, frameworks and derived methods have evolved in the history of formalized research. One such formalized approach to the acquisition of knowledge is case study research. This research method is very interesting as it has been strongly discussed about. The discussion was not only about its usefulness and most suitable application fields but also about its legitimization from research philosophies and frameworks (cf. Easton 2010, p. 118). This paper shall therefore present the key features of case study research and analyze the crucial question of its connection with research philosophy. Consequently, the paper first introduces the subjects of research philosophy and research methods, before defining and assessing case study research.

Research philosophy

Generally, it is believed that underneath any given research design and choice of methods lies and should lie a researcher's (often implicit) philosophy, meaning his understanding of the nature of the world and how it should be studied (cf. Corbetta 2003, p. 12; Moses 2007, p. 2). These different philosophies of researchers can be seen as different paradigmatic views on ontology, epistemology and methodology (cf. Corbetta 2003, p. 12; Della Porta/Keating 2008, p. 20f.). Ontology is the study and belief of the nature and form of social reality, whereas epistemology is the study and belief of the relationship between the observer and the reality observed. The term methodology describes the ways in which knowledge about social reality can be acquired (cf. Corbetta 2003, p. 12; Moses 2007, p. 2). Methodology and method are frequently used synonymously. But according to Moses (2007, p. 4) their relationship can be best described with the analogy that methods are problem-specific techniques which are more specific than the well-equipped toolbox of methodology. The definitions show that these three fundamental study fields are interrelated and that their boundaries are not clearly distinguishable (cf. Corbetta 2003, p. 13). In social science there exists a multiplicity of different definitions for research paradigms. This inconsistency already starts with the number of different existing paradigms. All scholars distinguish at least between two opposite paradigms which are called predominantly "Positivism" and "Interpretivism". Additionally, most scholars define a more nuanced paradigm which is principally called "Postpositivism" (cf. Della Porta/Keating 2008, p. 21). Table 1 shows a

simplified synopsis of these three different paradigms with regard to their view on ontology, epistemology and methodology. As postpositivism "makes the ontological assumption that there is a reality but that it is usually difficult to apprehend" (Easton 2010, p. 128), this paradigm represents the author's research philosophy.

Table 7: *Characteristics of the basis paradigms of social research*

	Positivism	Postpositivism	Interpretivism
Ontology	Naive realism: social reality is real and knowable	Critical realism: social reality is real but only imperfectly knowable	Constructivism: the knowable world is that of meanings attributed by individuals
Epistemology	Dualism-objectivity between scholar and research object	Modified dualism-objectivity: knowledge is influenced by scholar	Aims at understanding subjective knowledge
Methodology	Experimental-objectivity	Modified experimental-objectivity	Empathetic interaction between scholar and object studied

Source: partially adapted from Corbetta 2003, p. 14 and Della Porta/Keating 2008, p. 23.

Research methods

Until the beginning of the 1980's it was commonsensical that a researchers' philosophy is automatically the deciding factor for the research method to be used. In regard to this belief quantitative research methods should only have been used by positivists and qualitative research methods by interpretivists (cf. Niglas 2004, p. 6). The distinction of research methods into quantitative and qualitative research methods classifies research methods into two general strategies to conduct social research (cf. Bryman 2012, p. 35f.). As table 2 shows, the differences between these research strategies are not limited to the superficial issue of the use of quantification but are rather numerous and complex (cf. Hancock 2006, p. 7; Bryman 2012, p. 35f.). Despite this useful distinction, there are a variety of research studies which combine several research methods and have characteristics of both strategies, so called mixed methods research (cf. Yin 2006, p. 41f.; Bryman 2012, p. 37).

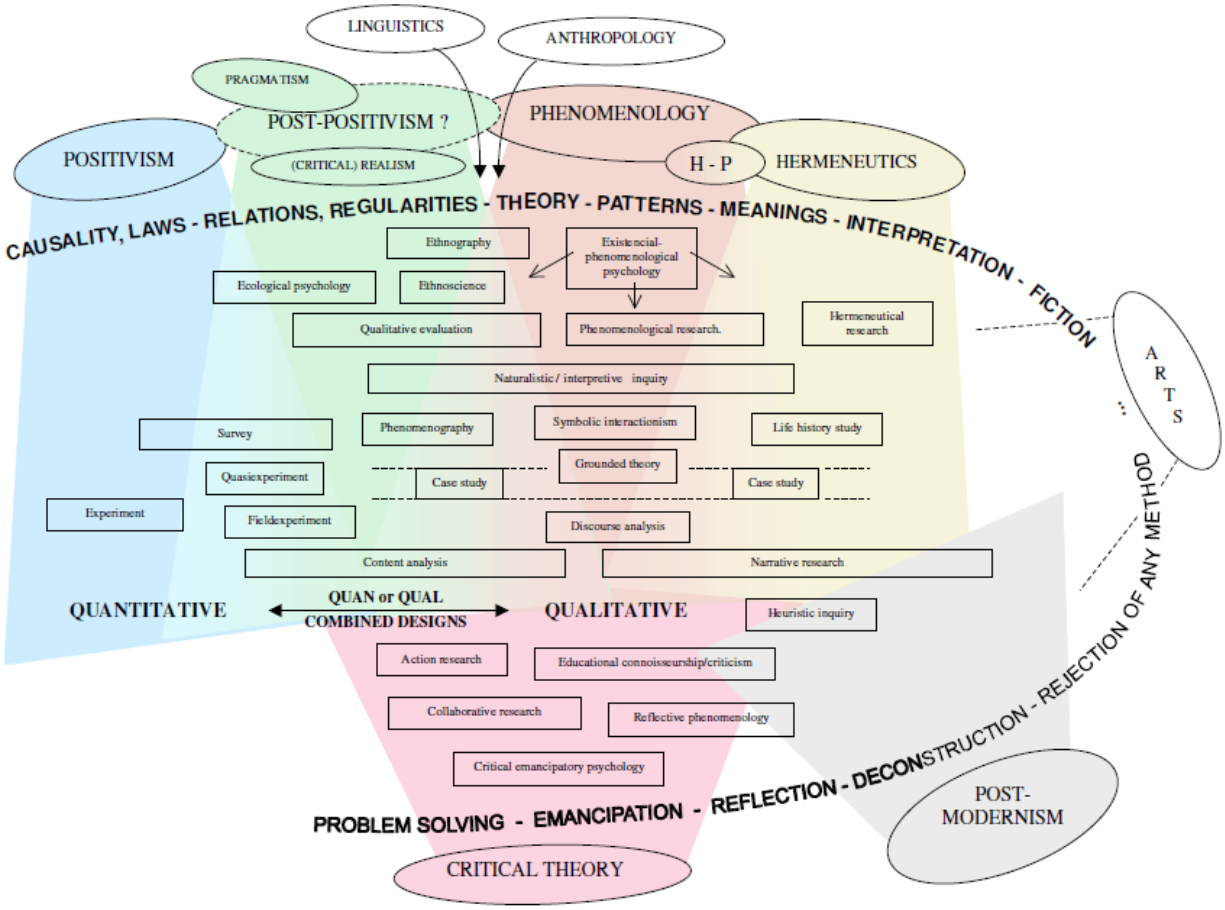
Table 8: *Comparison of quantitative and qualitative studies*

	Quantitative Studies	Qualitative Studies
Research question	Often stated in hypotheses that are accepted or rejected using statistical tests and analyses	Discovering answers that emerge from information that is available as a result of the study
Research process	May vary greatly from context being investigated	Designed to reflect the natural, ongoing context being investigated
Representative methods	Surveys Experiment	Phenomenological studies Ethnographic studies
Information collection	Generally of short-term duration using carefully constructed measures	May last a few months or as long as it takes for an adequate answer to emerge
Outcome report	Generally expository, consisting of a series of statistical answers	Generally narrative, consisting of a series of "pages to the story"

Source: partially adapted from Hancock 2006, p. 9f. and Yin 2006, p. 41f.

Nowadays, it is argued that the researcher's paradigmatic view and therefore his choice for a research method should vary depending on the prevailing research question (cf. Niglas 2004, p. 5-7; Moses 2007, p. 6). Accordingly, figure 1 depicts the relationships of research philosophies and possible connected research methods. "On the scheme, there are two main dimensions: from left to right runs the quantitative-qualitative continuum and from top and bottom to the centre the philosophy-methodology continuum" (Niglas 2004, p. 8).

Figure 11: *Relationship of research philosophy and methods*



Source: partially adapted from Niglas 2004, p. 10.

Anyhow, this tendency to elect a research method depending on the current research problem has drawn criticism because it neglects the inherent methodological differences of quantitative and qualitative methods (cf. Niglas 2004, p. 9). In addition to this criticism, practicing scientists do not apply the theoretically advised decision process, but decide more and more for the research method based on their level of knowledge of a certain method (cf. Moses 2007, p. 2).

Case study research

Definition

Case study research is increasingly seen as a favoured research method, particularly in social science. One reason for this could be that there exists no commonsensical definition and consequently in practice a broad variety of different research studies is called case study research (cf. Levy 2008, p. 2; Easton 2010, p. 119). This research method has been used in many disciplines to build on or produce new

theory, to dispute or challenge theory, to explain a situation, to provide a basis to apply solutions to situations, to explore, or to describe a phenomenon (cf. Dooley, p. 343f.). The most distinctive and characteristic definitions of case study research shall be presented here concisely.

George and Bennett (2004, p. 5) define case study research as "the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events". In contrast to this definition which focuses on the examination of past historical phenomenon, several scientists define case study research as an examination of a contemporary phenomenon. Among these the definition of Yin about the scope of a case study is the most cited one: "A case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin 2014, p. 16). In this context the term phenomenon covers a wide range of possible cases, e.g. particular programs, events, persons, processes, institutions and social groups (cf. Hancock 2006, p. 15). The second part of the twofold definition from Yin covers the features of a case study: "A case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion, and as a result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis" (Yin 2014, p. 17). Woodside and Wilson (2003) suggested expanding Yin's definition of the scope of case studies to an inquiry which focuses on "describing, understanding, predicting, and/or controlling" (Woodside/Wilson 2003, p. 493) the case. Hereby they broadened the definition of Yin, because they embraced historical and contemporary phenomenon as well as phenomenon with and without clearly evident boundaries to their context as case study research (cf. Woodside/Wilson 2003, p. 494).

As the definition from Woodside/Wilson is seen as too extensive, the definition from Yin will serve as the underlying definition of case study research in this paper. Moreover, case study research primarily focuses on answering "how" and "why" questions and is therefore of exploratory, descriptive or explanatory nature (cf. Yin 2014, p. 9-15). Additional characteristics of the definition will be further described by the following explanations of the typology and conduction process of case study research.

Typology

Consistent with the multiplicity of scientific definitions for case study research, there exist several divergent typologies to classify this research method. One of the first influential typologies was composed by Lijphart in 1971. He defined six different functions that case study researches can inherit on a continuum stretching from descriptive to theory defining or testing (cf. Moses 2007, p. 132f.). This typology served as a starting point for the drafting of other typologies. Levy (2008) aspired to construct a simpler and more useful classification by focusing on the functions of case study researches. As a consequence his typology consists of the types: idiographic, hypothesis generating, plausibility probing and hypothesis testing case studies. Nevertheless, Levy acknowledges that these are ideal types which are rarely found in practice and that one case study can fulfil several functions. This is why his types build a continuum which starts with rather describing functions and ends with testing functions (cf. Levy 2008, p. 3). Yin (2003) distinguishes between exploratory, descriptive and explanatory types of case study researches. An exploratory case study shall explore and

define the research objective of a subsequent study. In a descriptive case study a phenomenon is described and in an explanatory type cause-effect relationships of the phenomena are to be discovered (cf. Yin 2003, p. 5). Furthermore, Stake defined 1995 the typology of intrinsic and instrumental types. Intrinsic case studies explore a phenomenon to understand it better and instrumental case studies shall deliver insight for refining theory (cf. Baxter/Jack 2008, p. 548f.). Comparing these different typologies, it can be seen that they all try to classify case study researches according to their primary research objective. Table 3 shows which types of the different typologies reflect similar or even the same functions.

Table 9: *Comparison of case study typologies*

Author	Case study types				
Lijphhart	atheoretical	interpretive	hypothesis generating		theory-confirming, infirming & deviant
Levy	idiographic		hypothesis generating	plausibility probing	hypothesis testing
Yin	descriptive	explanatory	exploratory		
Stake	intrinsic		instrumental		

Source: based on Yin 2003; Moses 2007; Baxter/Jack 2008 and Levy 2008.

Besides the functional typologies, there are two classifications for the design of case study research methods. First, case study designs can be differentiated between single case and multiple case designs. Whereas a single case study focuses on only one case, multiple case studies compare at least two cases in one study. The cases need to be carefully selected to produce either similar (literal replication) or contrasting results (theoretical replication) (cf. Rowley 2002, p. 21; Yin 2003, p. 5). Moreover, the design of case studies can vary regarding the number of units of analysis. Case studies with a single unit of analysis are described as holistic and have the potential to be superficial; while case studies with several individually analysed units of analysis are labelled embedded case studies (cf. Rowley 2002, p. 21f.).

Conduction process

The conduction process of a case study research has to adhere to a standard procedure to ensure a legitimate and useful research result (cf. Patton/Appelbaum 2003, p. 66). After having chosen a case study research as the appropriate research method, the following phases should be undertaken: research design, data collection, data analysis and composition.

A research design can be described in its essence as “the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions” (Yin 2014, p. 28). This is drawn up through the determination of the case study type, including the research question, the propositions (if applicable) and the unit(s) of analysis. Furthermore, the logic of linking the data to the propositions and the criteria for interpreting the findings have to be defined. The proper definition of the research question and the propositions is crucial and should therefore follow a review of what has already been theoretically written and empirically researched about the topic. In selecting the unit(s) of analysis the researcher has to assure that the case(s) will allow the research question to be

investigated completely. Moreover, it has to be decided how the data shall be collected (via quantitative, qualitative or multiple methods) and interpreted (cf. Dooley 2002, p. 338-340; Hancock 2006, p. 26-38; Yin 2014, p. 29-37). The data collection phase begins with its preparation, constituting of securing the investigators adequate level of knowledge, training the investigators for the specific case study, developing a protocol, screening candidate cases and conducting a pilot case study. The case study protocol includes an overview of the case study project of field procedures and case study questions to be used. Due to the fact that data collection is emergent, which means collected data leads to subsequent data collection, the use of a systematic case study database and the chain of evidence-principle are important (cf. Dooley 2002, p. 340-342; Rowley 2002, p. 22f.; Yin 2014, p. 70f.; 131). The goal of data analysis is to examine, categorize, tabulate, test or otherwise recombine evidence in order to uncover patterns, determine explanations and time-series, construct conclusions and build theory (cf. Rowley 2002, p. 24; Patton/Appelbaum 2003, p. 67; Yin 2014, p. 132f.). The last phase of the case study research is the composition of the case study report which synthesises the results of the research and displays enough evidence. It is of utmost importance to define the intended audience of the report before starting to write it (cf. Rowley 2002, p. 24; Patton/Appelbaum 2003, p. 67; Yin 2014, p. 176f.)

Following the described standard procedure ensures a high quality of the case study research. Such an achievement can be tested by construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. Construct validity establishes accurate operational measures for the concepts being studied. Thus, the main object is to expose and reduce subjectivity of the researcher. Internal validity is only needed in explanatory and causal case study types, because it aspires to establish a causal relationship whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships. External validity designates how the findings can be generalized analytically and reliability demonstrates that the operations of a study can be repeated with the same results (cf. Riege 2003, p. 75-81; Thollander/Rohdin 2011, p. 12; Yin 2014, p. 45f.). Table 4 summarizes which parts of the standard procedure contribute to the excelling at these validity and reliability tests.

Table 10: *Case study tactics for design tests*

Design tests	Case study tactics	Research phase of the tactic
Construct validity	Multiple source of evidence	Data collection
	Establish chain of evidence	Data collection
	Key informants review draft case study report	Composition
Internal validity	Pattern matching	Data analysis
	Explanation building	Data analysis
	Rival explanations	Data analysis
	Logic models	Data analysis
External validity	Theory in single case studies	Research design
	Replication logic in multiple case studies	Research design
Reliability	Case study protocol	Data collection
	Case study database	Data collection

Source: adapted from Yin 2014, p. 45.

Assessment

Several issues in case study research have been criticised. The most frequently named ones are the following. One major criticism is the researcher's subjectivity and his strong influence on the research result. This influence is given by the researcher's personal interpretation during the data collection and analysis process. It is based on the researcher's access to the research object and his preunderstanding. These two factors fulfil important premises for the conduction of the research as well as danger in form of reasons for bias by the researcher (cf. Patton/Appelbaum 2003, p. 68f.). Another popular criticism which has been exercised frequently is the missing generalization of research results. However, this criticism is only partly true as only statistical generalization through enumerating frequencies cannot be made. But case study research aims for analytical generalization which means expanding and generalizing theory. Therefore, this criticism is wrongly based on a misinterpretation or a lack of information about the research method (cf. Patton/Appelbaum 2003, p. 65; Thollander/Rohdin 2011, p. 14).

Opposing these critical characteristics of case study research are its numerous advantages. One valuable strength is its conceptual validity. This means its possibility to investigate social phenomenon which are difficult to measure and need to be analyzed in consideration of its context. Examples for such phenomenon are democracy; power and political culture (cf. George/Bennett 2004, p. 19f.). Another major benefit of case study research is its feasibility and opportunity of using multiple data sources and collection techniques. This triangulated use of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques is called a mixed methods design. It enhances a research because a diverse and stronger array of evidence can be collected which leads to a deeper and more thorough understanding of the phenomenon, including even the most diverse facets of the phenomenon. Thus, broader and more complicated research questions can be investigated (cf. Dooley 2002, p. 340; Baxter/Jack 2008, p. 544; Yin 2014, p. 65-67). Moreover, case study research allows the researcher to remain flexible during the research conduction. The researcher can react accordingly to arising new insights in the phenomenon and may identify new sources to be collected or new analyzing techniques to be exercised (cf. Dooley 2002, p. 342; Easton 2010, p. 119). These mentioned beneficial features of case study research contribute to its overall advantage of a deep and comprehensive understanding of a complex real-life phenomenon regarding "how" and "why" research questions (cf. Dooley 2002, p. 344; Baxter/Jack 2008, p. 556; Easton 2010, p. 119).

Applicable research philosophy

One of the first scientists to describe case study research comprehensively was Yin. In 1994 he described this research method from a positivist perspective. At this time his main arguments for case study research being a positivist research method were the analytic approach to generalisation, the necessity of theory to inform propositions and that the researcher only acts as a commentator. Since then this concept is object of ongoing debates and representatives for applying case study research to various paradigms can be found (cf. Rowley 2002, p. 25).

Perry (1998, p. 787) supported Yin's concept of positivism to be the preferred paradigm of case study research. He based this on the following arguments. Firstly, case study research questions are generally contemporary and pre-paradigmatic. Secondly, the objectivistic view of realists simplifies the work of a case study research and moreover the commensurability of case study research fits the realist's paradigm.

Other scientists saw the close collaboration between the researcher and the research participants as the decisive factor to interpretivism being the suitable root of case study research (cf. Baxter 2008, p. 545). Easton (2010, p. 118-128) denies the positivistic affiliations of case study research because as such a research method it could not answer "why" questions but only state how the causal sequence is. Furthermore, he rejects interpretivism because interpretations as the basis for the analyses of a particular phenomenon would rule out regularity and comparison criteria in the data analysis phase. This would make it more difficult to achieve research results. Instead of realism and interpretivism, Easton argues in favour of critical realism as the applicable research philosophy of case study research. As a reason he states that "it justifies the study of any situation, regardless of the numbers of research units involved, but only if the process involves thoughtful in depth research with the objective of understanding why things are as they are" (Easton 2010, p. 119). In opposition to these rigid opinions, Dooley (2002, p. 336-338) and Yin (2014, p. 17) regard case study research of being able to embrace multiple research paradigms. This approach stems from its unique flexible characteristic to use quantitative and/or qualitative data collection and diverse data analyses techniques as well as single or multiple unit(s) of analyses. Therefore, the researcher can adjust the case study research to his methodological position. Hence, the multiple research philosophy approach of Dooley and Yin is particularly comprehensible.

Conclusion

To sum up, a quotation by Bryman (2012, p. 36) is used: „Discussing the nature of social research is just as complex as conducting in the real world". As the paper has shown, this statement is particularly true for case study research.

Case study research has been described by various scientists during the last decades. These descriptions vary from being consistent to being rather divergent; not only between different scientists but partly also scientists developed and altered their opinions on case study research within time. Nevertheless, it is obvious that case study research is an important mean to gain deep insights into complex contemporary phenomenon. However, due to its unique characteristic of high methodological flexibility it should be regarded as a research strategy rather than a simple form of a research method (cf. Dooley 2002, p. 338; Rowley 2002, p. 16).

Appendix

Appendix 1: Classification of paradigms

Author	Paradigms			
Perry 1998	Positivism		Phenomenology	
Corbetta 2003	Positivism	Postpositivism	Interpretivism	
Riege 2003	Positivism	Realism	Critical theory	Constructivism
Niglas 2004	Positivism	Post-Positivism	Phenomenology	Critical theory
Moses 2007	Positivism	Scientific realism	Constructivism	
Della Porta 2008	Positivism	Post-Positivism	Interpretivism	Humanistic
Easton 2010	Positivism		Interpretivism	

Source: based on Perry 1998, p. 786f.; Corbetta 2003, p. 13f.; Riege 2003, p. 77; Niglas 2004, p. 10; Moses 2007, p. 7-15; Della Porta / Keating 2008, p. 21-25 and Easton 2010, p. 118-128

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CASE STUDY: AMBITIOUS GROWTH TARGET OF BNP PARIBAS IN GERMANY

Muhammed Güler

Research questions and objectives

In order to significantly contribute to the ambitious growth targets in Germany, BNP Paribas ordered a new initiative targeting to optimize the achievement of the German Growth Plan by 2016.

About the Company

BNP Paribas is one of the leading banks in the world, which offers a comprehensive package of financial services for private individuals, the self-employed, professionals, small enterprises and public organizations. It is present in 80 countries worldwide and has almost 200,000 employees, including over 145,000 in Europe.

That case study is talking about "Corporate and Investment Banking" (CIB) activity of the bank. BNP Paribas holds key positions in its CIB activity with 15,000 clients all over the world, consisting of corporates, financial institutions and investment funds, which are central to its strategy and business model. Staff´s main aim is to develop and maintain long-term relationship with clients, support them in their expansion or investment strategy and provide global solutions to meet their financing, advisory and risk management needs.

Recently, banks are being tried to increase their revenues due to the fact that the impact of globalization, the introduction of new international banking standards and its regulations (e.g. Basel 3) and the improvement of processes, that increase the awareness of client toward particular products or services. Senior managers realized that price and quality are no longer the ideal factors for successful operation, rather than creating strong relationship with clients. According to Vignali, Feraco and Vranesevic, "if you do not give your clients some good reason to stay, your competitors will give them a reason to leave".

BNP Paribas´s Board members conducted pre-project has uncovered various weaknesses in the coverage organization and as a result recommended best practices and procedures to improve the coverage effort of the bank. Over the last months, they have reviewed the CIB coverage model and have decided to further accelerate growth through a 'Salesforce Effectiveness Project'

In the beginning of 2014, the bank decided to conduct a so-called "TOP (Transform to Outperform) project" with an external agency, started in two Business Centers of the bank (Frankfurt and Stuttgart) and now rolling-out in other Business Centers in Germany.

Challenges

Both Business Centers have annual growth targets around 30% and for both the acquisition of additional clients will be key in reaching the objectives. Growth of the organization in both Business Centers will support the revenue increase but provides additional challenges. In that context, BNP Paribas is trying to increase business relationships in order to achieve an increase in the number of clients targeted, a significant revenue growth target. Furthermore and even with new bankers staff hires, the growth plan requires 20-30% increase in coverage bankers productivity.

Research objectives

Significantly contribute to the ambitious growth targets by raising RM´s productivity and quality of client activities, in a holistic manner:
Optimize processes
Improve performance management of the teams and coach managers
Up-skill the team
Work on mindsets
Establish a success case in the organization to create bottom-up pull for the TOP project and therefore to design a future state of the organization
Implementation of a new working system
Establish a methodology and toolbox which can be rolled out effectively to the rest of Germany and Europe and building up of capabilities in local management and department heads

Research philosophy

I define myself as a critical realist.
The reasons are clear: I share a holistic view, which at the same time don´t negate individuality.
Therefore, in order to optimize and improve business relationships, I pay great attention to the particular needs as well as thinking about a just form to adapt to the general needs of the clients.
Which methods to choose will depend on the nature of the project, the type of information needed the context our case study and the availability of recourses (time, money, and human). I use two types of research, qualitative and quantitative, which is called pluralistic research (also triangulation). The methods we employ should make us aware of those particularities, so we need to take into account the diverse opinions of our employees and our existing and/or future clients. The use of surveys, interview, questionnaire, focus group, observation, data collection and conducting experiments are then necessary to enable a good understanding of their behavior.
The multi-methodology also strengthens the bonds in the company because it needs a global view, which is made possible only by the union of all persons involved. “One for all, All for one”.

Research purpose and design

The research process should begin with a definition of the research problem and the establishment of specific research objectives. According to Woodstock D., a major difficulty here is converting a series of business problems into tightly drawn and achievable research object.
The aim of the research is to investigate the client´s relationship by BNP Paribas. In addition, it will give us the main objective through that investigation, which is to significantly contribute to the ambitious growth targets by raising Coverage banker´s productivity and quality of client activities. In order to fully address improvement potential we do not focus on tools and processes alone but take a holistic approach. Customer requirements are high: how do we use all our customer insights to deliver the most effective client service is an essential question in the strategy of the bank to achieve objectives.
Design will focus on four dimensions:
Optimization of processes: our processes require lots of interface management and administrative work: how can we achieve better processes?
Team Management: managers often act as administrators or are just the best experts: how can they lead their team more efficiently?
Organization and skills: we have so successful people: how can we broaden networking, knowledge exchange and capability building?
Mindsets and behavior: we just think about improvement in major programs – how can we improve on a daily, continuous basis?

Customer knowledge and understanding will remind the core activity our design phase analysis. The purpose of the research was to significantly contribute to the ambitious growth target´s by raising coverage banker´s productivity and quality of client activities.

Preliminary topics for Design

In order to construct our design phase, we need to conduct a preliminary design with five core dimensions:

Client

Redesign the current way of account planning, if necessary starting from scratch (e.g. formalized métiers interaction with follow-up on monthly basis)

Work on prospect management (i.e. not existing client in our scope)

Processes

Formalized interaction with the different métiers (Cash Management, Global Trade Solutions, Leasing Solutions, Personal Investors, Wealth Management, Real Estate…)

Team Management

Organization of the work week (when to involve métiers etc.)

Reinforce the sharing of best practices between coverage bankers (hunting skills vs. farming skills + successful first approach with new clients)

Organization and skills

Clarify the roles and responsibilities of each position (coverage bankers, associates…)

Utilization of different skillsets in the organization (Hunter/Farmer)

Roles and responsibilities when working together with support functions

Refresh training on strategic selling

Mindsets and behaviors

Create sustainable motivation for the marathon

Establish platform for putting´ client service in center stage´ across business lines and functions

Research Data

As market research being an integral part of every decision making of today, it is critical to comprehend one´s area of work thoroughly. Information "need to be accurate and timely" (Vranesevic, Vignali & Vrontis, p. 111) and the way to procure information is through the process of research. Therefore, market research aids in providing important information and in guiding business strategy, which improves marketing decisions.

BNP Paribas is accumulating mass quantities of data to meet regulatory compliance requirements or support corporate-wide business intelligence. Some of the most used tools or models for analyzing the data collected (quantitative methods) are for e.g. Forecasting Models, Factor analysis or Data Mining. Any of these methods will be used for our research but will be directly selected in our data system.

Research and Data collection

The data we are going to collect about clients is one of the greatest assets that any business has available. From a financial, organizational and managerial point of view, data from clients are already in our database system, as we collected it by starting our banking relationship. However, prospect clients are not in our client database system and therefore, we need to gather a new range of data that is waiting to be collected and processed, as for quantitative as for as qualitative research data. To start a new relationship with a new-targeted client, it is easily to gather information published on the Internet, as we need to have a look to the financial statements to analyze the current financial, managerial and strategic environment of the client, before to be interested for.

As our program is essentially based on qualitative and quantitative research, most of information is already available to us, which save us time.

BNP Paribas CRM tools give the possibility to make a significant competitive advantage. CRM is offering the synergy of business processes and IT applications, which helps to organize information and to manage relationship with clients. Coverage bankers, associates and/or employees can see all relevant and important information in CRM application which help them to make better overview of clients. BNP Paribas uses 7 different CRM tools (including CRM in T-mobile) to manage relationship with corporate

clients. To collect data and research information about clients, information is immediately available from "BNP Paribas Corporate SharePoint" on the Internet (Hot topics deep dive – client & share with clients – efficiency toolbox – communities – product forum deep dive). Moreover, a direct access to capital markets and FI web, market information and economic research will be easier for us to gather actualized market information.

Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of gathering, modeling, and transforming data with the objective of accenting and highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions, discussing strategies and supporting decision-making. Data analysis has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques under a variety of names, in different business, science, and social science (C. Vignali, A. Feraco, T. Vranesevic).

In order to have a look at our current position on the market, we´ll gather information from the "Greenwich Associate survey 2012", which help its clients to improve their business performance through unique market information and business insights. Greenwich Associate survey shows that BNP Paribas should focus on several factors influencing lead relationship penetration.

Secondly, time analysis is essential in order to achieve financial objectives. We will collect information about time spent on tasks by coverage bankers and associates in their daily businesses and time spent per activity, which is the biggest part of our data analysis. However, the road that leads from data to information and knowledge we can base our business decisions on, is not an easy one.

Time analysis: Coverage bankers

Based on 86 time writing analyzed and on at least 5 individual time writings, time analysis of coverage bankers waterfall shows large variation in time spent between coverage bankers implying potential for best practice sharing. The biggest spent time is by advising client in personal meeting or by advising client through phone or email and by contacting prospect clients, which represent 23,1% of total time. In total 47% of time is spent on client directed activities. Additionally to the analysis, deal execution and other tasks might hide loops with support functions and tasks not directly client oriented (contracting etc.). Almost 16% of time is spent on internal meetings/coordination with other coverage bankers and business lines. Documentation within deal execution takes up less than 3% of total time, but is one of the most mentioned "time wasting" activities.

Per activity, large share of time is spent on tasks, which don´t necessitate the skill set of Coverage bankers. Time spent per activity shows that 21% is spent on client interaction and preparation, 18% on coordination with mid/back office, 14% on gathering client information, 9% on non sales related client activities (e.g. client diner, invitation events/corporate breakfasts…) and 8% on internal queries.

Time analysis: Associates

Based on 23 time writing analyzed and on at least 5 individual time writings, associates spend more than 20% of their time in internal meetings and preparing for them (presentations, follow-up, templates…). The percentage of training time might be skewed due to hand-over processes of one associate. 12% of time is spent on internal meetings and 9% on preparation of internal meetings. As we analyzed, time spent on tasks by Associates focused on the preparation of internal and client presentations. When we gather information about the spent time per activity, we analyze that 27% of time is spent on internal meeting, 12% in self organization (e.g. uploading notes to the computer), 12 % on client interaction, preparation, 14% on training, 8% on identifying prospect clients, 9% on gather information regarding products/clients and 6% on answer ad-hoc client questions.

Answer ad-hoc client and internal questions together with back office coordination represents one third of time spent. Very substantial amount of time is spent on administrative tasks and overall, limited time is spent on commercial activities.

Based on three Coverage banker´s interviews and one associate to observe the part of time spent on existing clients or prospects, majority of client facing time is spent on active clients, 70% versus 30%. Furthermore, on average 42% of prospect have been contacted.

Other analyses

In accordance with our objectives, we are going to conduct other analysis like: allocation of effort, network, number of clients, revenue per client or meeting analysis. However, these analyses will not be included in our research data.

Methods and procedures

A clear purpose on what BNP Paribas wants to decide as a result of the research should be defined. Therefore, we will ask Coverage bankers, associates and clients with questioning to determine their individual impact and dimension about the business. Additionally, we´ll conduct group interviews, in-depth interviews and numerous projective techniques, that are generally observed as an aid to conducting motivational research (stimulate employees to certain actions or behavior). To present analysis, observe results and discuss, we´ll introduce with all employee´s involved workshops, whiteboard meeting and gallery walk once a week.

Our research will be scientific as much as creative. Combining several methods, our research will provide us different perspectives and insights into client activities much needed for the bank in search of increasing revenues of client and productivity of bankers and solving organization problems.

From a general point of view, we can collect data by using either Primary research (developing questionnaires, focus groups, one-on-ones and in-depth interviews) or Secondary research (data that is already available to us). Both of the methods are important depending on what we want to investigate.

For our research we are going to use Primary research method, and we are going to design two types of data collection:

Quantitative research means that we´ll collect data through designing Likert scales questionnaire with 30 questions developed to coverage bankers randomly (Client focus/processes – Team Management – Organization & Skills/ Mindsets & Behavior). That questionnaire is specific for achieving our objectives. Questions will be divided into sections, which means that we´ll have questions related to the client focus and processes, the team management and the organization and behavior. On-site survey will be used, which means that the Likert scale questionnaire will be developed in the bank. The limitation of the method is the response rate (employees may will turnover the questionnaire), and moreover, the time for answering the questions is another limitations of this method

Qualitative research means that we will develop an interview map with 18 questions (3 open-ended questions) about client performance management, understands and needs, products, requests execution and overall question about BNP Paribas. The idea is to raise client approach with the bank. Therefore, we will develop a rating scale questionnaire, which can be distributed to 50 client participants, where at the same time we can input the data into SPSS, our computer program for analyzing.

Walkthrough

Before to start our research, a walkthrough will be served as kick-start for the project and help´s developing targeted approach for diagnostic

phase, i.e., got to know people and management, compare current way of working against best practices, check current processes against best practices, identify first improvement levers along 5 dimensions together with employees (Customer understanding – Process optimization – Team management – Capability building and organization – Mindsets and behaviors), develop first perspective on key levers and gain input for detailed planning of targeted diagnostic phase. The walkthrough is intended to derive preliminary set of potential improvement themes early on in the project.
Walkthrough interviews are not – and this is really important – reviewing individual contribution and performance or judging of individuals. Our diagnostic will be a mixture of interviews and sessions called "shadowing". There will be 2 hours slots with every coverage banker/associate. We will spend the time at the desk of the according employee and observe what kind of work is be done, with what systems, what documents are needed etc. to learn how a typical day the typical works look like.

Internal interview – Likert scale questionnaire
Likert scales questionnaire structure is a measurement scale with 5-7 response categories. Responses are given numerical values, which reflect the strength and direction of respondent's attitudes. Our developed Likert scale questionnaire will mainly focus on the 4 dimensions our design phase (optimization of processes – Team Management – Organization and skills – Mindsets and behavior), asking 19 out 22 participants, mainly coverage bankers and associates. Participants will provide their answers by ranking internal aspect of the bank, such as performance dialogue, motivation or problem solving. Our scale includes 4 points, Totally agree 1 – Fairly agree 2 – Fairly disagree 3 – Totally disagree 4.

Focus groups

Kitzinger (1995) stated that focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalizes on communication between research participants in order to generate data
As coverage bankers, associates or employees are relatively unfamiliar with the project, we will conduct a traditional full focus group of 60 minutes discussion with all involved employees.
We will take qualitative marketing research to address two targeted questions:

What it feels like to work in the BC today?
What we would like it to feel like tomorrow?

This focus group interview are an important part our action research as it provides the opportunity for us to investigate further, to solve future problems and to gather information which could not have been obtained in other ways.

Client interview – rating scale questionnaire
Conducting a successful client interview requires both tact and expertise. The purpose of our client interview is to collect enough information to help solve the client's problem. Our job during the interview is to show the client that we care and have the ability to help him. The interview is developed to assess basic qualitative as well as quantitative information about client management (e.g. quality of back-office service, clarity of contact with your interlocutors), products (e.g. competitive pricing, timing) or execution (e.g. turn around time for new product requests).
Analysis
Internal interview analysis

Client focuses/processes

When asked about client focuses/processes, participants are on average fairly agree with the sufficient information to identify client needs to spot business opportunities (1.7). When asked if participants get good support from people in

other functions (middle/back office), they are fairly agree (2.3).

Team Management

When asked about target, i.e. "clear performance targets to meet in my work" or "I feel challenged by my managers to reach my goals", participants are totally agree (on average 1.1). About the management of the bank, when asked if the bank in Germany has a strong leadership team, participants are fairly agree (2.1) and about senior management open communication as well (2.0). However, when asked about trustworthy relationship, participants are totally agree (1.3) but are just fairly agree about management reaction to poor performance (2.2). When asked if the performance is evaluated fairly and at adequate frequency, participants responded fairly agree (2.0) and (2.2) when good performance is recognized by management.

We got different results about problem solving. When asked if they cooperate effectively to solve problems by identifying and removing the problem source, participants are fairly agree (2.4) and totally agree (1.4) when asked if the "person I report to support me in resolving problems".

The worst result from this section is when asked about performance and incentives (2.5). Nevertheless, the potential of a higher bonus motivates participants to work harder (1.4).

Organization and Skills/Mindsets & Behavior

About performance dialogue, when asked if frequency and quality of the personal development review are sufficient to support their personal development, participants responded fairly agree (2.3). When asked about training, i.e. effective training & development program for people, participants are fairly agree (2.3). One of the best result collected from this section, is when asked about roles and responsibilities. Participants responded totally agree (1.7) to the question "I have a clear understanding of my responsibilities vs. support teams for onboarding and credit process". Concerning motivation, participants are looking forward to come to work (1.6) and motivated by their long-term career (2.0).

The 2 questions which have a strong link with the objective of the bank about assessment of current state, participants responded fairly agree when asked if targets of the German Growth Plan is certainly achievable (2.3) and totally agree (1.7) that business is performing well.

Focus groups analysis

What if feels like to work in the BC today?

Participant's feedback is quite interesting. About the BC atmosphere, participants responded that BC has a "very good atmosphere", comfortable environment, "no competition within the BC", good team spirit and strong belief in the bank and its strengths. Regarding concerns about ability to reach the German Growth Target, participants are aware about the challenge to achieve it and assumed that everyone has to be Superman to reach the goals. Though, there is much more confidence, and participants will reach targets if the work is spread equally. Coverage bankers pointed out the dissatisfaction with support functions and business lines and declared they are the last barrier between the client and the bank.

What we would like it to feel like tomorrow?

The first response to this question is more proactive business lines, which should be queuing to come to coverage and pitch to clients. Participants want not be tied up by admin work and would like to have a less uphill battle in order to increase efficiency. Many comments have been supposed on reaching the goals of the bank together, like enjoying successes together, being competitive within the

market, or being reliable banking partner without increasing complexity in the bank too much. As reminded when first question was asked, participants want to maintain the good atmosphere in the BC during the long way to go with a smile in the face.

To conclude, there is a good atmosphere in the focus group but common feeling about the need to become Superman to accomplish GGP target. Participants understanding of desire to be a top player, but operational challenges are an obstacle to further growth.

Client interview analysis

The client interview is based on a rating scale questionnaire from 1 to 5 (Very poor – Poor – Fair – Good – Very good) and gives the possibility to the clients to contribute with specific examples for each question. The total interview time is 30 minutes and 50 clients are selected.

Our rating scale questionnaire includes open-ended questions using ordinal scales, which will help us to measure gradations in opinions, attitudes and behaviors. These questions are designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer using the subject´s own knowledge and/or feelings.

How satisfied are you regarding the following categories?

Rapid response to enquiries
Quality of Back-Office services
Clarity of contact with your interlocutors
Proactive communication from the bank

Understanding my needs and address them
Provides added-value solutions
Relevance/Breadth of product range vs. needs

Competitive pricing
What products have you been introduced to?
On specialized banking products, how well is BNP Paribas doing on?

Timing: bringing the right solution at the right time
Customization of products: providing tailor made solutions

Turn-around time for new credit lines/ product requests

What aspect of BNP Paribas service do you value most highly?
What aspect most irritates you?
What would it take for you to increase business done with BNP Paribas

How would you rate BNP Paribas overall performance?
How likely are you recommend BNP Paribas to another company

These questions have been asked to the clients without to get any prompt feedback so far.

Conclusion

Conducted pre-project research had uncovered various weaknesses in the coverage organization and as a result recommended best practices and procedures to improve coverage effort. To that effect, BNP Paribas will be creating the new business unit ‘One Bank Coverage Development and Support’ serving all Corporate and Investment Banking coverages to enhance marketing and sales capabilities and to foster cross selling and cross referral across all poles (CIB, Investment Solutions, Retail and Personal Finance) of BNP Paribas Group in Germany.

With the help of this new unit, BNP Paribas will be strengthening its capacity to bring differentiating and value-adding content to clients to achieve leading positions with its ‘One Bank’ approach and to overcome its sometimes ‘me too’ mindset. Working across the various coverage units, product lines and poles will accelerate the “breaking silos” mission where and when needed and ensure that resources are client focused and optimally utilized.

The "One Bank Coverage Development and Support" unit will focus, inter alia, on:

Enabling the move from a 'product-centric' into a 'client-centric organization'

Help to further integrate IBE and CBE coverage models and up-skilling of the coverage team

Facilitate and support client segmentation, prioritization and account planning

Promote idea generation and ensure systematic rollout across relevant coverages

Implement tools and processes to improve marketing and sales effectiveness including cross-selling and cross referral; i.e. provision of research and marketing materials, knowledge database (SharePoint) across products, poles and regions, support of CAP sessions and client service teams

Organization of workshops and trainings

Provision of KPIs and reports

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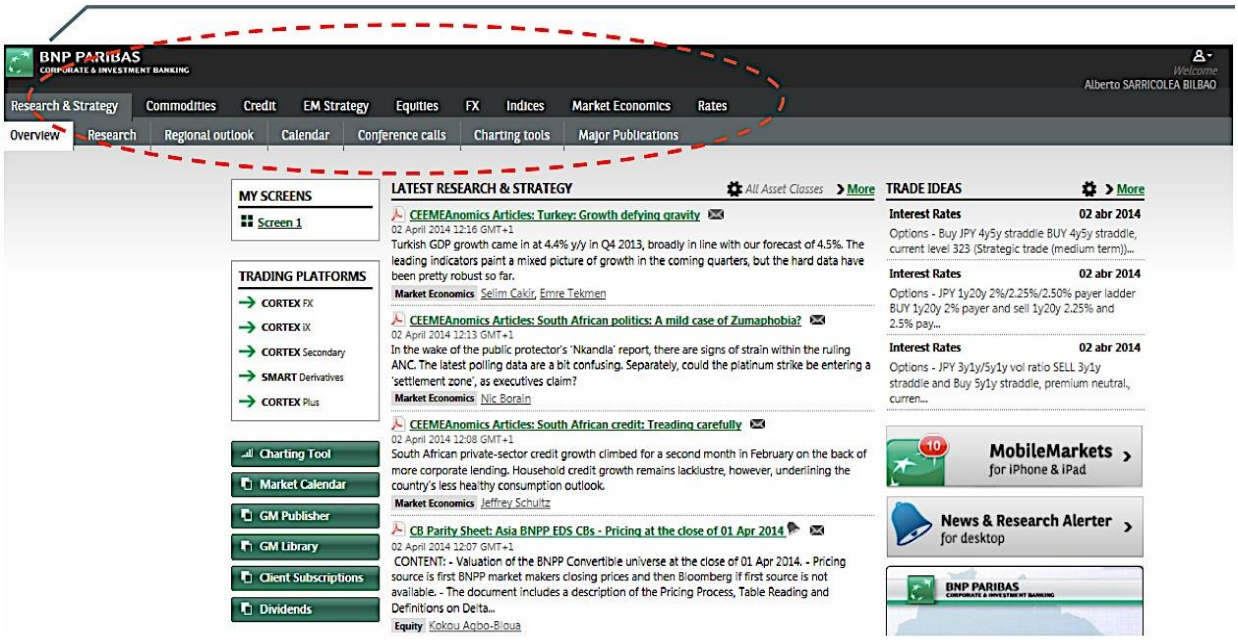
Attachements

1. Direct access to Capital Markets and FI web, market information & research

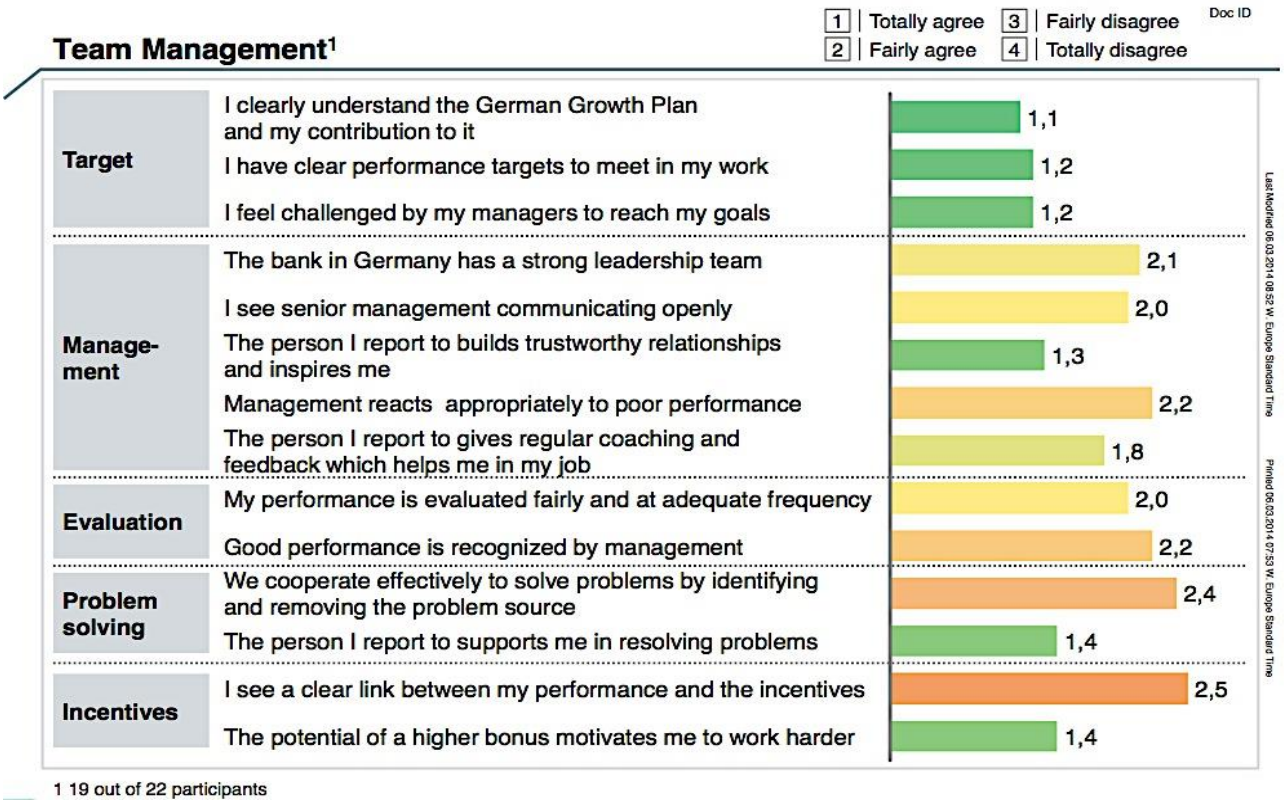


2. Client interviews – Rating scale questionnaire

Client interviews: question list — Total interview time: 30 min

	Question How satisfied are you regarding the following categories?	Rating 1 2 3 4 5	Specific Example
Client mgmt	▪ Rapid response to enquiries	☐☐☐☐☐	▪ …
	▪ Quality of Back-Office service	☐☐☐☐☐	▪ …
	▪ Clarity of contact with your interlocutors	☐☐☐☐☐	▪ …
	▪ Proactive communication from the bank	☐☐☐☐☐	▪ …
Insight/ addressing needs	▪ Understands my needs and address them	☐☐☐☐☐	▪ …
	▪ Provides added-value solutions	☐☐☐☐☐	▪ …
	▪ Relevance/Breadth of product range vs. needs	☐☐☐☐☐	▪ …
Products	▪ Competitive pricing	☐☐☐☐☐	▪ …
	▪ What products have you been introduced to?	☐	▪ …
	▪ On specialized banking products (eg…), how well is BNPP doing on:		▪ …
	▪ Timing: bringing the right solution at the right time	☐☐☐☐☐	▪ …
	▪ Customization of products: providing tailor made solutions	☐☐☐☐☐	▪ …
Execution	▪ Turn-around time for new credit lines/product requests	☐☐☐☐☐	▪ …
Open-ended questions	▪ What aspect of BNP Paribas service do you value most highly?	☐	▪ …
	▪ What aspect most irritates you?	☐	▪ …
	▪ What would it take for you to increase business done with BNP Paribas?	☐	▪ …
Final	▪ How would you rate BNP Paribas overall performance?	☐☐☐☐☐	▪ …
	▪ How likely are you to recommend BNP Paribas to another company?	☐☐☐☐☐	▪ …

3. Internal interviews – Likert scale questionnaire



1 19 out of 22 participants

4. Data collection – time spent by coverage bankers

Analysis of time spent by coverage bankers, in percent[1]

			Min[2], %	Max[2], %
Total time	100,0%			
Advise client in personal meeting	10,4%	23,1%	0	20
Advise client through phone or email	10,2%		2	14
Contact prospect clients	2,4%		0	6
Develop presentations for client meeting	4,3%	16,4%	0	12
Work on product offer with product lines	4,4%		0	11
Internal coordination with product lines	7,8%		1	14
Credit Proposal	5,5%	8,9%	0	12
Credit committee	0,5%		0	3
Documentation (Contracting/Legal, CRC)	2,6%		0	8
Signing and Closing	0%		0	0
Post-mortem & deal sharing	0,4%		0	1
Update Client 1st	6,8%	15,0%	2	13
Prepare internal presentation	0,7%		0	3
Internal meetings/ coordination with other RMs	7,5%		0	15
Coordinate with backoffice staff	3,4%	7,3%	0	8
Answer internal queries regarding deal	3,9%		0	14
Identify prospect clients	0,9%	3,4%	0	3
Gather information regarding products/processes	2,5%		0	7
Project work	5,7%		0	14
Travel	6,9%		0	21
Answer ad-hoc client questions (phone/ email)	2,3%		0	9
Training personnel, e.g. Associates	3,8%		0	34
Other tasks (please specify)	7,0%		0	12

5. Greenwich Associate Survey 2012

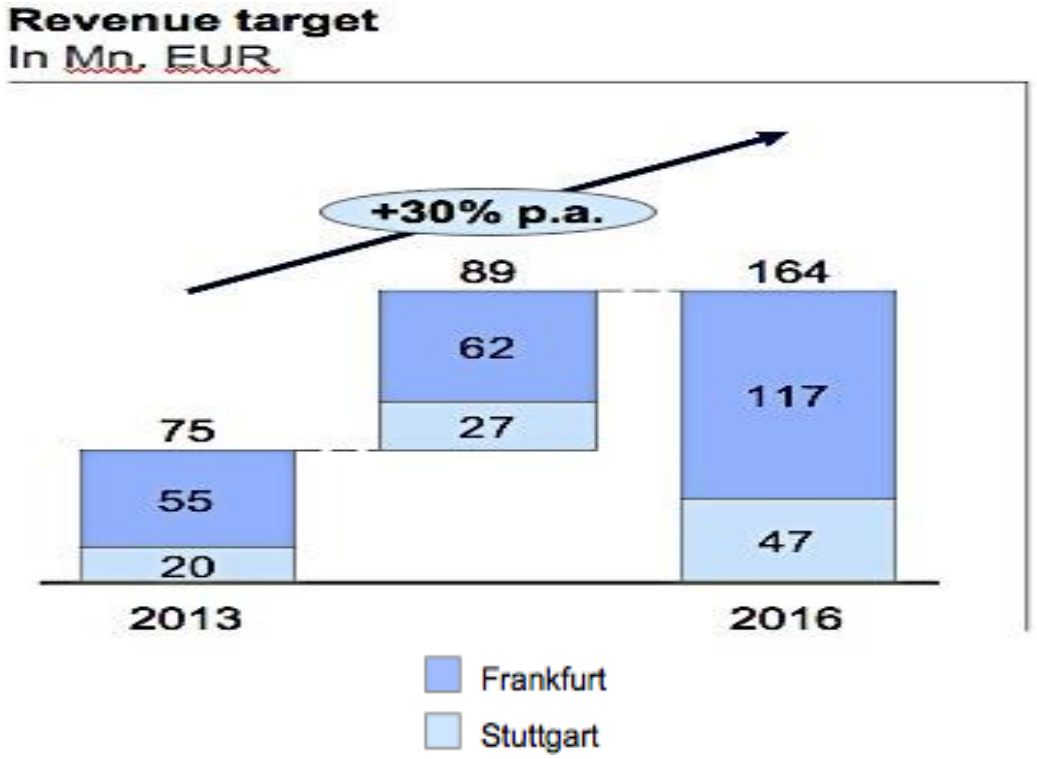
Large corporate banking (above EUR 500m), 2012, 237 respondents

Factors	Correlation strength in large corporate banking[2]	Player performance[3]	BNPP's rank[3]
Lead Credit Provider	94	0 **2** 27	11
RM knows cash management needs	85	0 **11** 52	15
RM knows company's industry	82	8 **25** 51	10
Effective coordination among product specialists	80	0 **11** 46	10
Prompt follow-up by the RMs	78	4 **16** 48	16
RM visits most frequently	75	7 **16** 48	14
RM provides creative ideas and solutions	74	4 **14** 43	12
RM advice on use of derivatives	62	0 **7** 25	14
RM knows international needs	55	0 **11** 51	11
Overall Client Satisfaction	31	32 **42** 55	17

1 Lead relationships are defined as the 1 or 2 most important or house bank(s) used for domestic and/or international services
2 Calculated based on single variable correlation analysis between the lead penetration of top 20 players (in terms of total relationships) and the factor
3 Based on the Top 20 players in terms of total relationships

SOURCE: Greenwich Associates LCB -2012- Germany, McKinsey analysis

6. German Groth Plan revenue target 2013-2016

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One may write or paint as much as one likes, but this place, the shore, the gulf, Vesuvius, the citadels, the villas, everything, defies description ... Now I can forgive anyone for going off his head about Naples
(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Italienische Reise, 1816)


TOPICS & TRACKS
The themes of the individual tracks of the conference will be defined after the selection of the papers. However there will be tracks specifically dedicated to the theme of the conference (New Frontiers for Management and Marketing), that are:
Future of Management
Future of Marketing
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Empirical and theoretical papers are equally welcome.
The subject range is broad. We invite papers, including but not limited to the following topics:
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Quality Assurance,
Tourism, Hospitality and Events,
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Consumer Behaviour,
Culture and Consumption Innovation,
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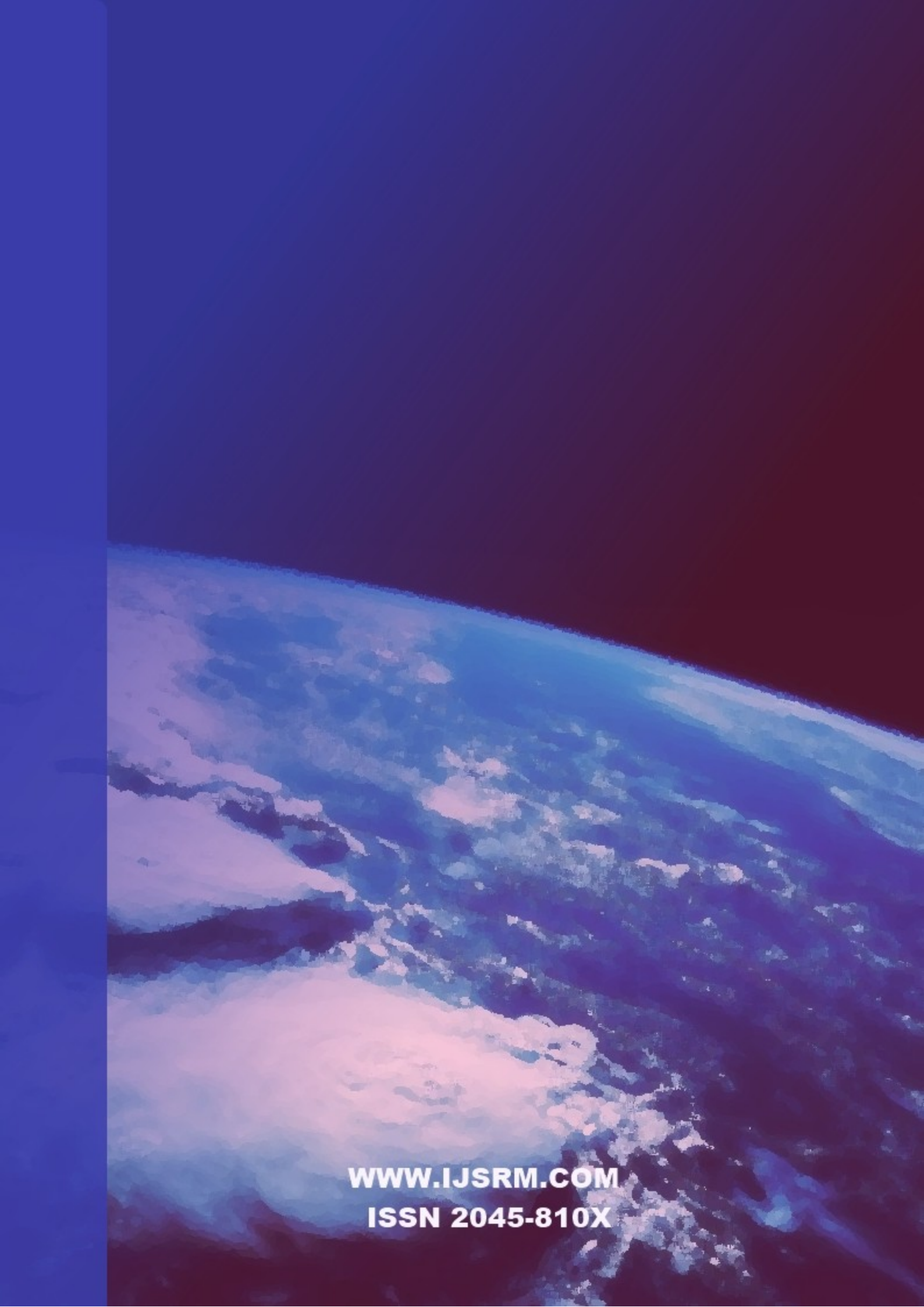

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