



23E80101 Qualitative Business Research Methods

What is qualitative research?

Ilona Mikkonen, DSc.

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Agenda

- Comparing qualitative and quantitative research
- Philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research
 - Basic terminology of philosophy of science
 - Basic paradigms in qualitative research
- Three major methodological approaches
 - Grounded theory
 - Ethnography
 - Phenomenology

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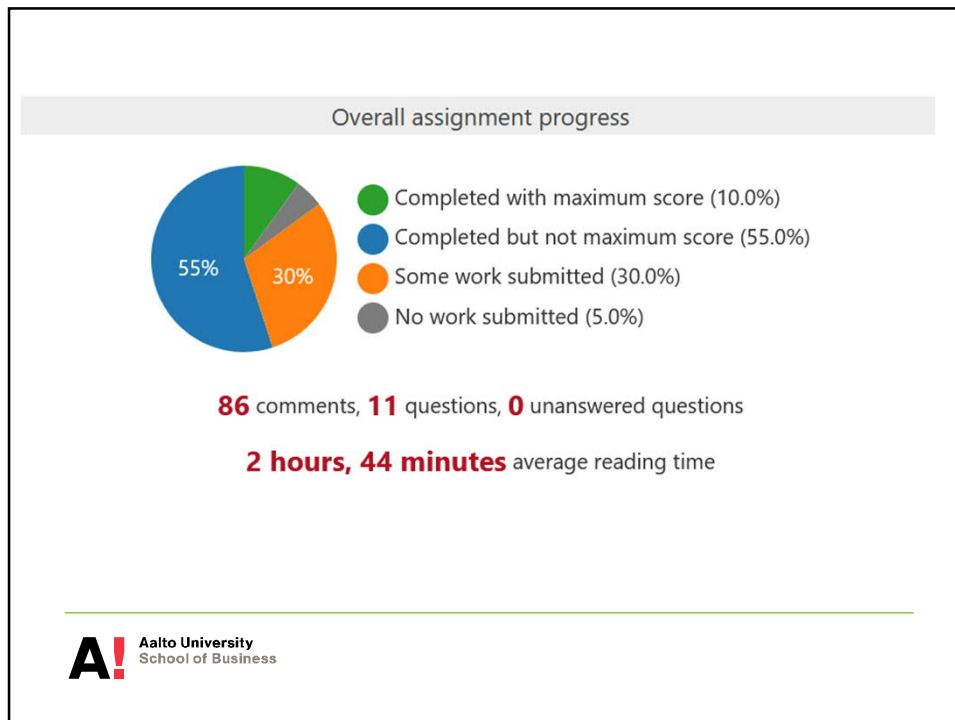
Any questions regarding the practicalities?



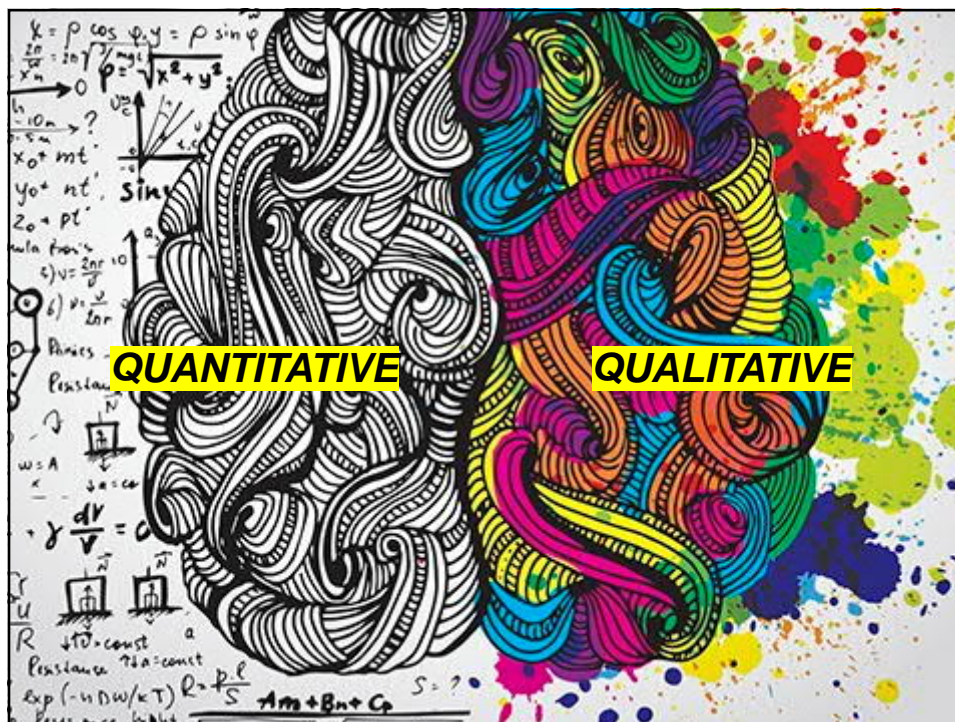
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Thoughts about the first reading?

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What is Qualitative in Qualitative Research

Patrik Aspers^{1,2} · Ugo Corte³

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Abstract

... definition that tries to capture its core elements. We define qualitative research as an iterative process in which improved understanding to the scientific community is achieved by making new significant distinctions resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon studied. This formulation is developed work, and based on Becker's classic study of marijuana consumption, we formulate and illustrate a definition that tries to capture its core elements. We define qualitative research as an iterative process in which improved understanding to the scientific community is achieved by making new significant distinctions resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon studied. This formulation is developed as a tool to help improve research designs while stressing that a qualitative dimension is present in quantitative work as well. Additionally, it can facilitate teaching, communication between researchers, diminish the gap between qualitative and quantitative researchers, help to address critiques of qualitative methods, and be used as a standard of evaluation of qualitative research.

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Table 1.1 Qualitative versus quantitative research differences

	Qualitative	Quantitative
Nature of data	Visual and verbal recordings in rich detail	Responses distilled into numeric scores
Relevance of context	Results are generally assumed to be specific to time, place, people, and culture studied	Results are generally assumed to be generalisable across contexts and cultures
Nature and control of potential causes	Ideally naturalistic with multiple factors shaping the behaviours observed and discussed	Ideally settings are controlled and variables are manipulated or measured to allow simple causal inferences
Key research instrument	The researcher is the instrument and uses skills and rapport to gain insights based on trust	Researcher tries to be invisible and relies on responses to structured measures or choices



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What does that mean?

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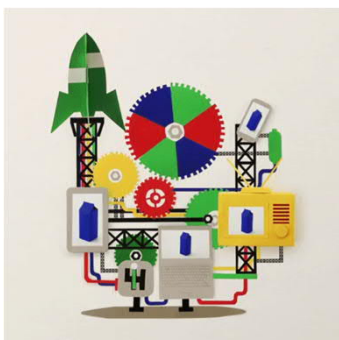
"Quantitative techniques are mostly used to try to pinpoint causality, usually between two or a few variables where the independent and dependent variables are defined. Qualitative methodology is primarily directed to understanding the complex and the elusive in a systemic perspective more than to establish unambiguous cause and effect relationships between single variables. It is built on the notion that life cannot be broken down into well-defined constituent components. Reality is more than the sum of its parts; there are also synergy effects." (Gummesson 2005, p. 312)

"The word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency" (Denzin & Lincoln 2003)

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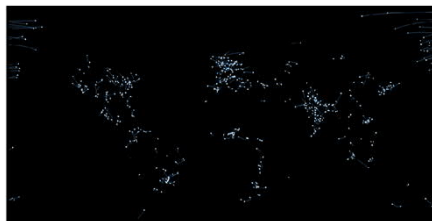
Metaphors of quantitative and qualitative

QUANTITATIVE



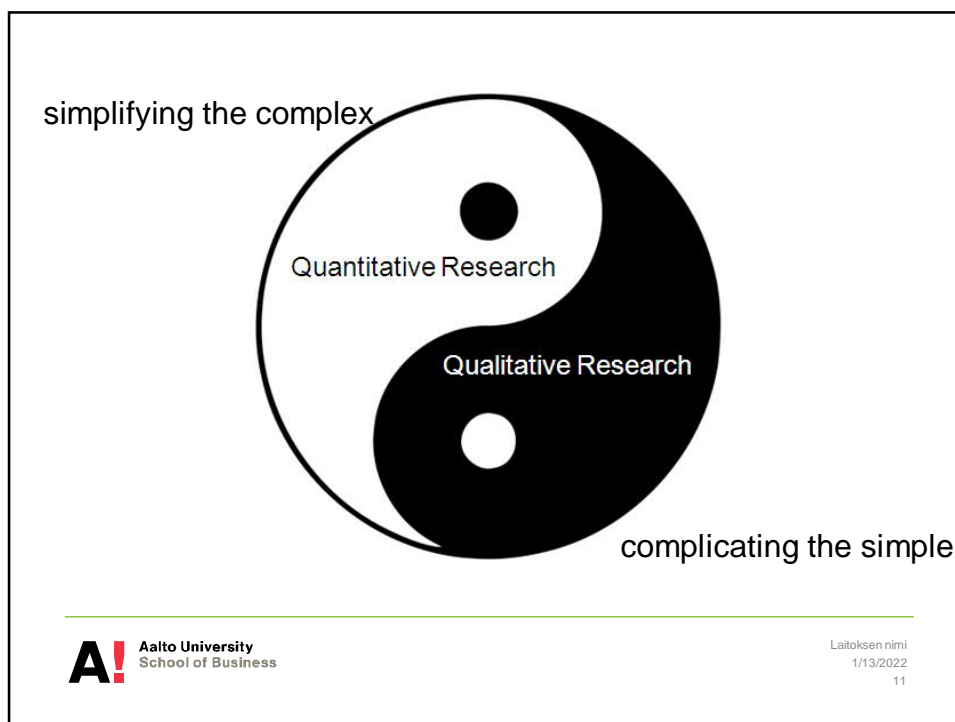
The world as a machine

QUALITATIVE



The world as a network

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Qualitative research is the **systematic use** of curiosity and intuition in a creative process

Good qualitative research **creates new concepts or "thinking tools" that change our view of things, sometimes even blow our minds**

Valerie J. Jonesick

The Marketing Review, 2001, 2, 89-119 www.themarketingreview.com

MARKETING CLASSICS'

Stephen Brown'

University of Ulster

Art or Science? Fifty Years of Marketing Debate

Fifty years after Converse's (1945) classic statement on the "art or science of marketing", the debate has come full circle. The holy grail of Science has not been attained and its pursuit has not only served to alienate practitioners from academics, but it has also done enormous damage to our discipline. This paper traces the development of the great debate, discusses the damaging postmodern critique of western Science and concludes that, as an Art, marketing should be judged by appropriately aesthetic criteria.

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Quantitative Research

Qualitative Research

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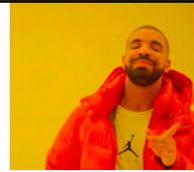
"One third of the interviewees mentioned sustainable consumption... Half of the interviewees had bought organic products... The word climate change was mentioned in all interviews and several times."

Don't count the qualitative!

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Try to pick up the most salient meanings, metaphors, connections etc.



"The interviewees strongly linked sustainability to a sense of moral duty and sacrifice, like 'doing the right thing' (Heli) or 'thinking about future generations' (Tuomas). For some, such moralization was taxing, like for Kristian how worried about 'making the wrong product choice' and Tina who said worrying about the planet 'can be so exhausting sometimes.'"

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THESIS TIP:

If you do a qualitative thesis, do not "count the qualitative"; focus instead on identifying shared meanings (through their strongest manifestations), and their boundaries!



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An introductory exercise

Suppose that you wanted to understand the changing meanings of the greeting cards in twenty-first-century London. You are particularly concerned with these meanings and uses among young single adults aged 18–30 who are more likely to be online, socially active, and looking for work or embarking on careers and advanced education. You know that e-cards are increasingly popular, but wonder whether both e-cards and traditional paper cards are likely to be seen as old fashioned by this target group. You also know that Greater London is culturally diverse and composed of many ethnicities and subcultures. And you know that the answer to your question is likely to differ over various card-giving occasions and non-occasions as well as over different types of relationships. How might you go about answering your question? See if you can think of at least one study using each of the following methods:

- survey research administered online;
- focus group discussions;
- observational research;
- individual depth interviews;
- a study of online material in forums, discussion groups, and social media;
- archives of the records of a subscription service offering online greeting cards and gifts.

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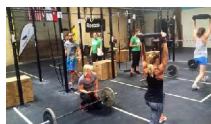
Isn't it interesting how...

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Location: warehouses and basements
- what do these primitive locations signify?



Social media



Communal aspects

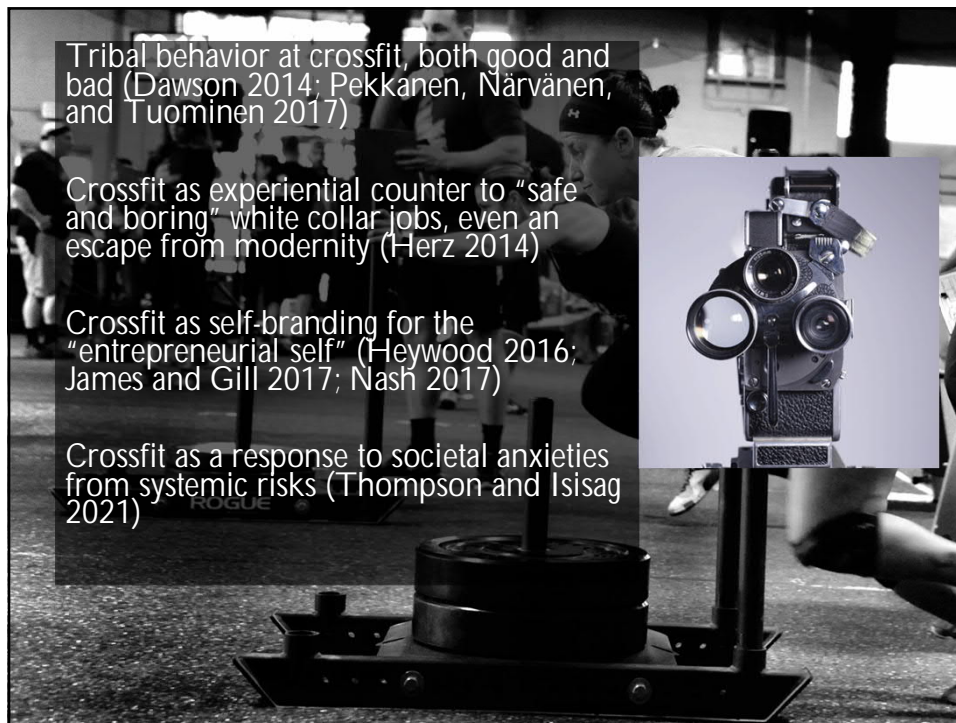


Why are modern consumers drawn to this kind of "bare-bones" activity?

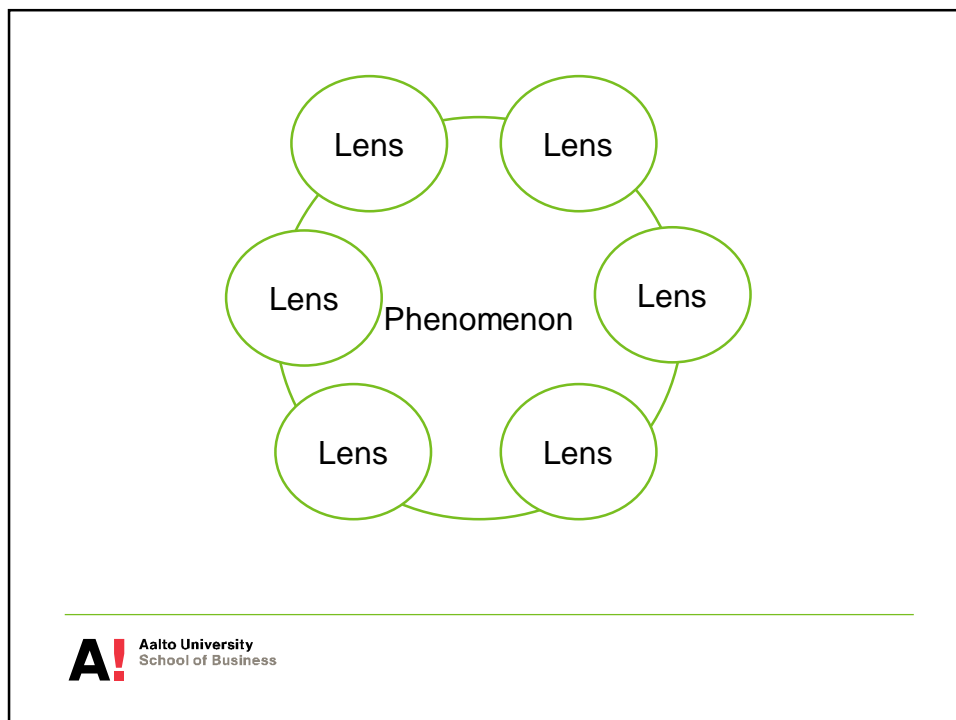


Why are people drawn to an activity that is potentially dangerous and fetishizes that danger?

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THESIS TIP:

A context can be qualitatively explained through multiple perspectives, and your thesis will provide just *one*, even if you have data for several perspectives, focus on just the one! (i.e., don't tell the reader everything you learned in interviews)



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What is the qualitative researcher looking for?

1. What is something *like*?
2. What are its *constituting parts*?
3. Where did it come *from*?
4. How are the things it is made of *connected*?
5. How does it *work*?
6. Can we find different *variations* of it?
7. What are the *boundaries* (i.e., what is it *not*)?

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When is it best to do qualitative research (in a business context)?

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RED ASSOCIATES
THE PRACTICE OF SENSEMAKING
The sense making sessions

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- Quantitative research requires a lot of “bracketing” away variables; hides a lot of contextual richness that might be important
 - For example, do people buy under strong emotions, do they buy as a parent or a single person
- “What counts can’t always be counted”
 - For example, buying flowers as a measure of love
- Because things change or need to be discovered in the first place!
 - For example, gas mileage from the perspective of sustainability

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Technology

When Machine Learning Goes Off the Rails

A guide to managing the risks by Boris Babic, J. Glenn Cohen, Rishabh Iyer, and Ben Shneiderman



Artificial intelligence / Machine learning

Our weird behavior during the pandemic is messing with AI models


Machine-learning models trained on normal behavior are showing cracks — forcing humans to step in to set them straight.

by Will Douglas Heaven May 11, 2020

Psychology

The Dangers of Categorical Thinking


By Bart de Lange and Philip Poehlmann



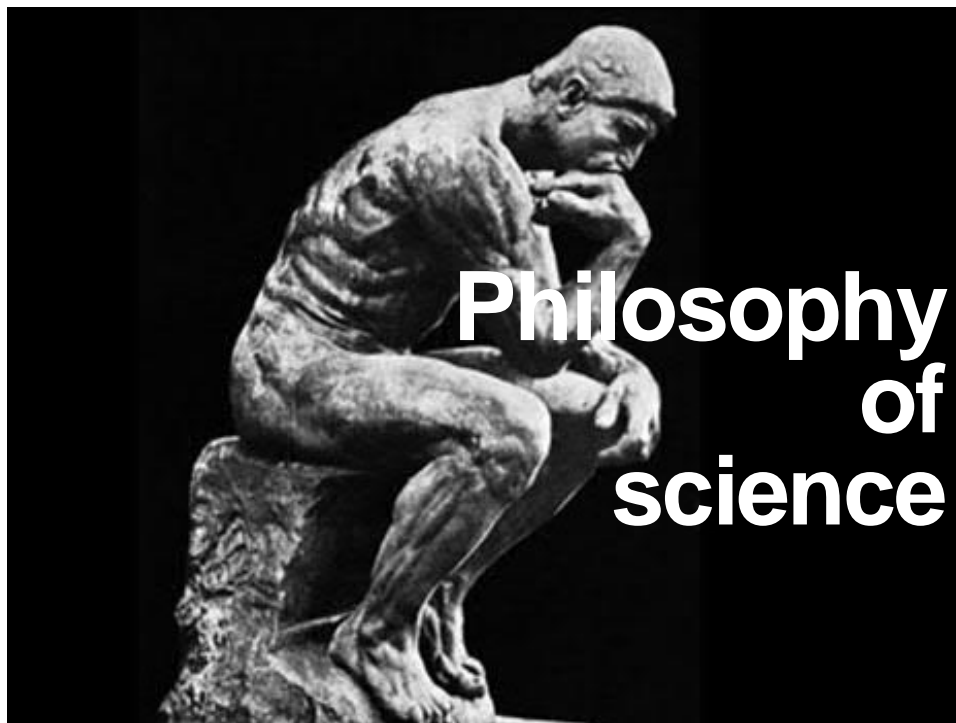
Marketing

Why Marketing Analytics Hasn't Lived Up to Its Promise

By Scott Brinker and Christine Heitsch



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Philosophy

IN GENERAL LANGUAGE

Equals roughly to a person's beliefs or worldview

IN ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

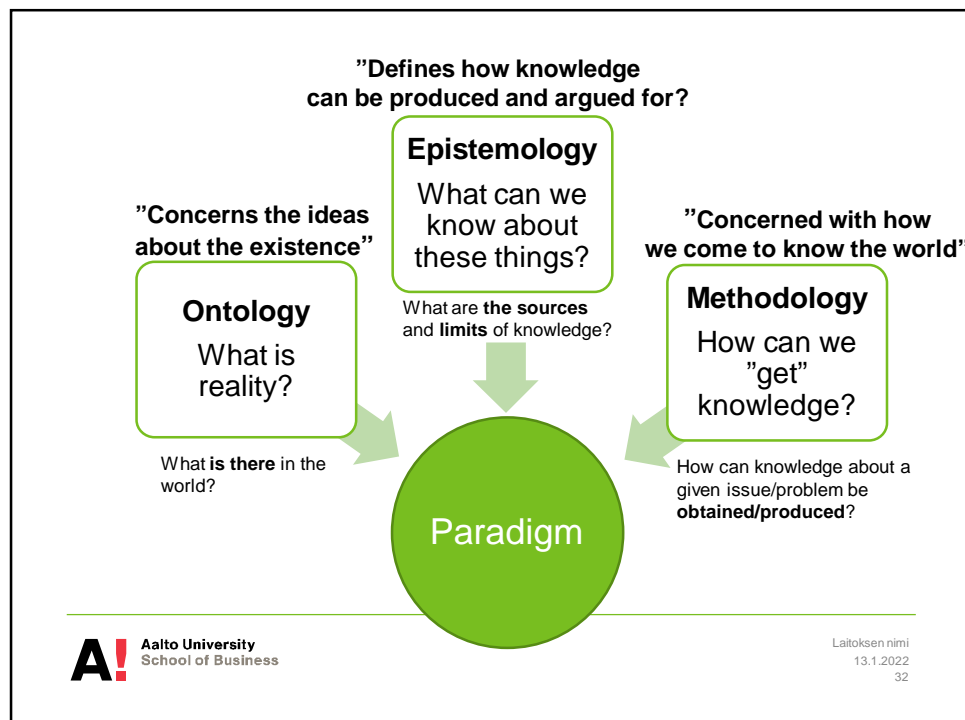
“The study of general and fundamental problems concerning matters such as existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language.”

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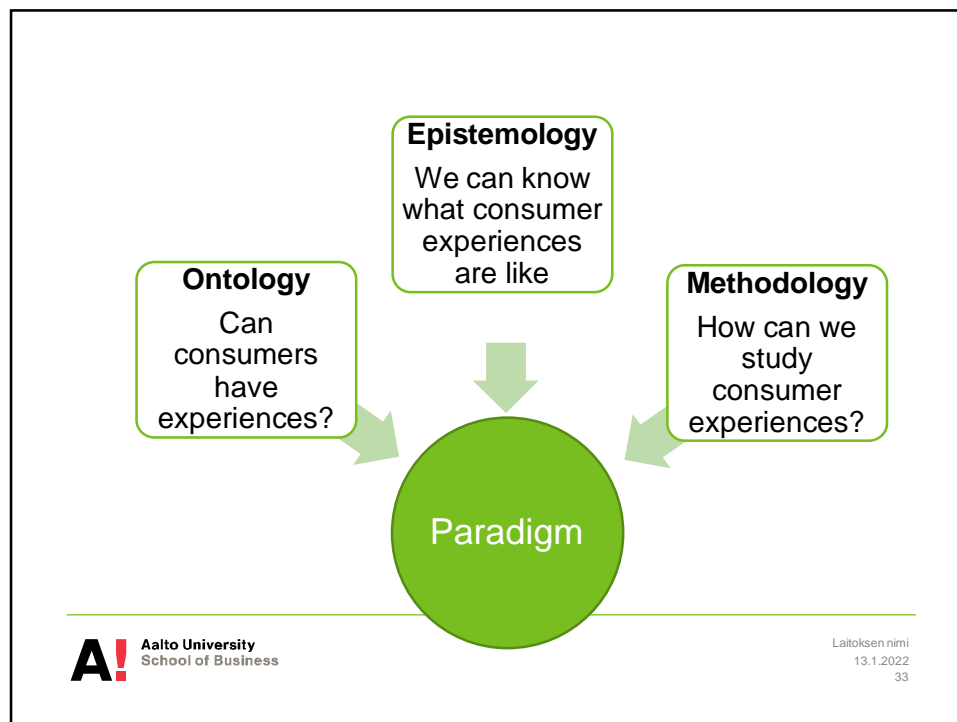
Philosophy of science

- In the **context of science**, philosophy refers to systematic critical evaluation
 - Descriptively → what science *is* and
 - Normatively → what science *should* be

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Research philosophy

- Together these form **research paradigms**
 - a **coherent set of assumptions** about ontology, epistemology, and methodology → They are usually **interdependent** – when you “pick one”, you get the others
 - **You always have one**, regardless of whether you are explicit about it or not

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ETHNOGRAPHY PHENOMENOLOGY
 ETHNOMETHODOLOGY SOCIOGRAPHY
 GROUNDED THEORY FOUCAULDIAN
 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS NARRATIVE
 ANALYSIS SUBJECTIVIST APPROACHES
 OBJECTIVIST APPROACHES POSITIVISM
 POST-POSITIVISM INTERPRETIVISM
 CONSTRUCTIONISM HERMENEUTICS
 POSTMODERNISM POST-POST-
 MODERNISM STRUCTURALISM POST-
 STRUCTURALISM SCIENTISM
 EMPIRICISM ROMANTICISM
 CONSTRUCTIVISM INTERPRETIVISM
 PRACTICE THEORY ASSEMBLAGE
 THEORY CRITICAL REALISM SYMBOLIC
 INTERACTIONISM TEXTUAL ANALYSIS
 NON-REPRESENTATIONAL THEORY
 PSYCHOANALYSIS FEMINIST THEORY
 POST-COLONIAL THEORY RADICAL
 ALTERITY ACTION RESEARCH



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THESIS TIP

Don't try to play "bingo" with complex social science concepts; first, figure out where your research roughly "lands" on the subjectivist-objectivist scale, and go from there



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**THE ABILITY TO ANALYZE
QUALITATIVE DATA**

**PHILOSOPHICAL
UNDERPINNINGS OF
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**



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Grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology

A comparative analysis of three qualitative strategies for marketing research

Christina Goulding

*Department of Marketing and Economics, Wolverhampton Business School,
Wolverhampton University, Wolverhampton, UK*

"However, there is increasing acknowledgement, not only in academic circles, but also among marketing practitioners, of the need for **the application of qualitative methodologies in their truest and most fundamental sense** in order to gain valid insights, develop theory and aid effective decision making."

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What is the difference between method and methodology?

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METHOD

a particular means for gathering and analyzing data to solve a problem

METHODOLOGY

a contextual framework that explains how and why data was gathered and analyzed the way it was—including new method development

"We began our inquiry with non-participating netnographic observation to familiarize ourselves with... We then conducted in-depth interview with influential community members to deepen our understanding of... We then expanded our netnographic inquiry to outside the community to broaden our perspective on the phenomenon ... We also developed a new method using computational analysis that we call supercool qualitative computing. This allowed us to... "

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THESIS TIP:

When writing your method section, think more in terms of *methodology*—describe your method selection process and explain why the method was right for your research aims!



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GROUNDING THEORY

ETHNOGRAPHY

PHENOMENOLOGY

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THESIS TIP:

The majority of qualitative marketing theses are (more or less) grounded theory with only interviews, the rest are phenomenological or ethnographic (usually netnographic); grounded theory is therefore the safest choice and easiest to grasp



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GROUNDING THEORY**ETHNOGRAPHY****PHENOMENOLOGY**

"Grounded" here means that theorization is grounded "in the words and actions of those individuals under study."

Big influence on the "from open coding to axial coding" analysis order (Spiggle 1994) and negative sampling techniques

The researcher does NOT start a project with a theoretical lens in mind; literature is part of an iterative process of data collection, analysis, interpretation with the ultimate goal of achieving saturation

This premise is often misunderstood: "An open mind does not mean an empty head"

Highly pluralistic in what methods can be added into the mix! (including quant stuff)

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GROUNDING THEORY**ETHNOGRAPHY****PHENOMENOLOGY**

Ethnography originates from anthropology, but today is used in a lot of social sciences

Participant observation; prolonged interaction in research setting and group; interviews preferably in context

Important goal of rich description of context *in addition to* theory building ("doing ethnography" and "writing an ethnography")

Supports a plurality of methods

Ethnographic methods can be used in grounded theory approached, but ethnographies can also depart from grounded principles

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What is it to experience things?

"Essentially, the goal of phenomenology is to enlarge and deepen understanding of the range of immediate experiences (Spiegelberg, 1982)."

Popular in consumer research, especially in studies of consumption experiences

Focus on language as an expression of meaning; meaning stands for something in the real world

"... the phenomenologist has only one legitimate source of data, and that is the views and experiences of the participants themselves."

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The Times of Their Lives: Phenomenological and Metaphorical Characteristics of Consumer Timestyles

JUNE COTTE
S. RATNESHWAR
DAVID GLEN MICK*

Timestyles are the customary ways in which people perceive and use time. We propose that individual timestyles can be categorized in terms of social, temporal, planning, and psychosocial orientations. We examine timestyle in a phenomenological investigation of a sample of American women and identify five emergent timestyle metaphors for time (pressure cooker, map, mirror, river, and river). We then holistically synthesize informants' multidimensional timestyles. We discuss the theoretical and substantive implications of our findings for understanding the role of timestyles in consumer behavior and in the ongoing conflicts that consumers experience in deciding what they should do with their discretionary time.

PHENOMENOLOGY

Time Is a Pressure Cooker
Time Is a Map
Time Is a Mirror
Time Is a River

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Next steps

- 3-2-1 quiz 1 due on Sunday, January 16 @ 23.55
- Perusall 2 due on Tuesday, January 18 @ 14.00
 - Belk, R., Fischer, E., & Kozinets, R. V. (2012). Getting started: how to begin a qualitative research project. *Qualitative consumer and marketing research* (pp 16 - 30). Sage.

(Suggested reading: Arnould, E. J., Price, L., & Moisio, R. (2006). Making contexts matter: Selecting research contexts for theoretical insights. Chapter in Belk, Russell W. "Handbook of qualitative research methods in marketing", 106-125.)