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### SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF MODERN TECHNIQUES IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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**Abstract.** According to Mayan (2009), being a qualitative researcher entails various activities “It is a pleasure to share life and learning with others to make sense of our reality jointly. Non-experimental qualitative research is not only conducted with people but also performed through people.” According to its many definitions, qualitative research entails significant interpersonal contact. Throughout the process of qualitative research, from strategy to implementation, effective communication is essential. While numerous new qualitative research tools have emerged over the last several decades, those linked to communication technology have emerged as the most important and impactful. Because there is little information available regarding communication technologies in qualitative research, this article aims to produce an overview of the new developing technologies currently being used. For that, the writer has reviewed several pieces of literature on qualitative research. As surfaced from the literature, qualitative research has transformed to new heights using modern techniques. Therefore, qualitative researchers must keep up to date with the latest technological advances to get maximum productivity.

**Keywords:** hybrid methods, management research, qualitative research, skype, social mobile devices (SMD), VOIP, teleconferencing.

**JEL Classification:** A10, A12.

## INTRODUCTION

Ongoing changes in the technological context and society overall continually pose new methodological challenges for managerial research (Pettigrew, 1990). However, facing such challenges can be aided by technological and societal developments that have brought them about, as they offer new tools and possible approaches. Any new approach must undergo a process of refinement and standardisation to become a concrete solution. This is precisely the aim underlying the conception, proposal, and final making of this special issue of Management Decision: to contribute to clarifying, formalising, and eventually standardising new methods for management research currently in the early stages of their maturation, beginning with those based on qualitative approaches (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Myers, 2013).

Qualitative research follows an approach that does not dissociate the analysis from the researcher’s experience (Mills, 1959, pp. 195-226). Such an approach is common to the methods of

data collection and interpretation of all qualitative research fields, thereby uniting management studies to other social sciences such as sociology, anthropology (Sanday, 1979; Van Maanen, 1988; Vidich and Lyman, 1994), linguistics (Manning, 1979) and history (Tuchman, 1994), at least on the methodological plane. Such "transdisciplinary contamination" is revealed by the fact that work such as Yin's (1981, 1984, 1993), which is linked to research in the field of pedagogy (Yin, 2005), is among the most often cited in management case study research as well.

Given these transdisciplinary associations, management literature has long contained a vast body of work on the use of case studies, ethnography, and so-called action research (Van Maanen, 1979; Mintzberg et al., 1976; Mintzberg, 1979; Gill and Johnson, 1991). This special issue aims to offer the opportunity to discuss some new qualitative research methodologies that have emerged only recently, not only in response to changes in today's business environment but also thanks to the creativity of management researchers.

Traditional research methodologies have been under considerable strain by the potentialities associated with new high-tech tools for producing, acquiring, and sharing information, particularly the internet. Exploiting these new tools has prompted a sort of "hybridisation" between different qualitative methodologies and even between qualitative and quantitative ones, resulting in methods that are clearly distinct from those used in the past, at least in terms of applications (Harrison and Reilly, 2011).

The following section addresses some aspects of the change in context that has favoured the emergence of some new qualitative research methodologies. At the same time, the subsequent one examines the processes of methodological hybridisation that have been associated with such change. Finally, the conclusions propose some keys for reading the papers presented in this special issue.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### ***Change in context and new qualitative research methods***

Current ongoing changes in the (technological, sociological, and anthropological) settings in which producers and consumers are called upon to act nowadays have been providing strong impetus to developing new research approaches to management. The new global digital setting in which business decision-makers and practitioners operate has been accompanied by a transition to more complex research methodologies, which seems to favour recourse to qualitative methods of investigation (Gummesson, 2006, pp. 170-171). In short, such changes have led to greater complexity, and in addressing such complexity, the qualitative dimension is essential. This new complexity is also connected to modern means to create more widely disseminated knowledge, which in turn calls for access to know-how and skill on the part of all actors in the spheres of consumption and production, who may be therefore called upon to carry out ever-more active and important roles (Sridhar and Srinivasan, 2012).

This is especially true regarding creating that enormous (quantitative and qualitative) database offered by the internet. The fact that the contents of the internet, above and beyond their interactive aspects (particularly accentuated in social networks), are multimedial, consisting of texts, images, audio, and video (Belk and Kozinets, 2005), offers substantial opportunities for qualitative research (Kozinets, 2010). In addition, the widespread availability of quantitative data (analytics) offers unprecedented possibilities for conducting contemporaneously qualitative and quantitative research (Jick, 1979; Mingers and Gill, 1997).

Qualitative research offers some well-known advantages. Miles and Huberman (1994) maintain that properly gathered qualitative data provide a "focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings so that we have a strong handle on what 'real life is like [y] that confidence is buttressed by local groundedness, the fact that the data were collected near a specific situation, rather than through the mail or over the phone" (p. 10).

With the emergence of new methods in qualitative management research, the creativity of individual researchers can contribute greatly to formulating new research designs, as well as to developing new instruments of research (e.g., software) (Zhang and Segall, 2010). New research methods can exploit the study of internet communities, as in digital ethnography or net-ethnography (Hine, 2000; Kozinets, 2002; Bowler, 2010). In brief, changes in business contexts may regard the followings aspects:

- **Technological** - The internet offers new possibilities for research in terms of amassing vast quantities of data and developing tools for processing and disseminating such data.
- **Sociological** - Changing social roles alter the usefulness of traditionally adopted classifications, such as “consumer” or “worker/producer,” with a consequent need to rethink their significance.
- **Anthropological** - These stem from the adoption of new methodological tools (and resulting classifications) for studying the “culture” and “communities” of the internet (ethnography), as well as from the transnational nature of modern contexts (ethno-methodologies).

The management studies of recent years furnish many examples of the “blooming” of new methodological possibilities and solutions, which have been made not only possible but even necessary by the new settings in which businesses operate. Such evolutionary trends involve management as well as marketing and the study of consumption behaviour (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994), a field in which increasing attention has been focused, for example, on “consumer skills” (Caru` and Cova`, 2008, 2011). The study entails modifying current research methodologies and defining new, at times non-standard, ones, with particular attention to those based on a qualitative, sociological, or anthropological framework (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Cayla and Arnould, 2013).

The research methodology problem has been framed in terms of language (Manning, 1979); qualitative methods provide different answers from specific quantitative methods. In management studies, the issue of research methodologies is particularly noteworthy in that it has significant effects on the possibilities for communication between researchers and business policymakers in collecting data and disseminating results. In this sense, adopting new qualitative research methodologies can contribute to reducing the gap between theory and practice in management (Guercini, 2004).

Qualitative research and its answers are particularly relevant to management issues, for which recourse to hybrid solutions and mixed methods seems justifiable. Qualitative methods do not adopt a simplifying approach; they do not focus on any single aspect; they do not attempt to break complex problems down into several simpler specific issues. The issue, or problem, is viewed in its entirety with respect to one or a small number of subjects of the analysis. Moreover, qualitative research can help establish a different relationship between observer and observed and hence aid in overcoming the so-called “Cartesian dualism” since the relationship between observer and observed appears somewhat more direct and multifaceted (Mintzberg, 1979) and, therefore, not amenable to measurement via the techniques of the “hard sciences” (Bonomo, 1985, p. 200; Woodside, 2010).

The various facets of, and the relations between, different qualitative research methods can be represented by the so-called “tree of qualitative methodologies” proposed by Harry Wolcott (1992), which describes the “qualitative strategies in educational research” as a tree rooted in the “everyday life” activities of “experiencing,” “enquiring” and “examining,” whose trunk gives rise to the following different main branches of qualitative research:

- “Nonparticipant observation strategies,” from which stem the secondary branches of “nonreactive/unobtrusive research,” “human ethnology,” and “observer study,” this last giving rise to “connoisseurship.”
- “Participant observation strategies,” which branches off into “ethnography” and “field studies,” the former in turn giving rise to “community study,” “ethnology,” “anthropological

life history," "micro-ethnography," and "ethnography of communication," and the latter to "ethnomethodology," "conversation analysis," "phenomenology," and "post-structuralism."

- "Interview strategies," which divides into "detective journalism," "biography," and "oral history."
- "Archival strategies," branching out into "history," "literary criticism," "philosophy," and "content analysis."

### ***The hybridisation between different qualitative methods***

The works presented in this special issue demonstrate that newly available technologies can make quantitative data more accessible, standardised, and obtainable at a low cost (Germann et al., 2013). This is clearly evinced by the easy accessibility of Google Adwords "Analytics," or other indicators (number of visits, comments, "likes" and "dislikes," etc.) associated with social network users (Naylor et al., 2012), which appear as service "commodities," in that they are standardised and easily available thanks to technology (Branthwaite and Patterson, 2011). The qualitative components of research (sentiment analysis, psychological judgments, taste, irony, etc.) may be more challenging to obtain, specific, and endowed with greater added value, even in managerial and marketing research. At the same time, however, some aspects of quantitative research are by now undeniable necessities, and hence all that remains is to see just how qualitative and quantitative methodologies can be integrated (Harrison and Reilly, 2011; Davis et al., 2011).

However, this integration process is not free of cognitive cost for the researcher because it involves the contemporaneous evaluation and side-by-side application of different paradigms (Brocklesby, 1997). Integrating different methodologies is also a focus of current attention for the "research economy," so to speak. Indeed, if we take, for example, the methodologies based on the collection and analysis of original online texts, whose investigation may profit from both quantitative and qualitative analyses, such databases (e.g., "linguistic corpora") entail the costs of collection and selection, which may be exploited to the fullest by using the material for both quantitative and qualitative analysis (Ludwig et al., 2013). Another good reason to integrate different methodologies is the relationship between the researcher and economic actors, whether managers, entrepreneurs, or consumers. The development of action research (Gummesson, 2000, p. 178; Pihlanto, 1994) and its integration with other methods, or the involvement of practitioners as "witnesses," who can be considered co-researchers (Gummesson, 2000, p. 21), also heads in the direction of the economy of research effort, in the sense that it reveals otherwise obscure content, often linked to the tacit knowledge (if not unconscious perceptions) of consumers and entrepreneurs. Indeed, such content research results do not emerge without the involvement of the managers, entrepreneurs, or consumers themselves as co-researchers, in that such involvement can improve the communication processes between the practitioners' setting and the research context (Guercini, 2004).

The authors of the papers in this special issue speak of "hybridisation," "integration," or "combination," proposing "both the expected and serendipitous synergies obtained through the particular blend of methods" to produce more effective research results (Leonard-Barton, 1990, p. 248). The works herein address new methodologies and ways to use existing ones (such as case studies and ethnographical research) in their conceptual and empirical applications. Research strategies become integrated, while data collection and processing methods may also change considerably. New qualitative methods are often viewed considering their "hybridisation" with other qualitative or quantitative methods, thereby providing:

- New perspectives in case study research.
- New ethnography and participant observation forms are applied to new settings and topics.
- New techniques in content analysis, text analysis software, and applications, and new software for analysing texts and website content.

- New forms and applications of historical methods in management research.
- New forms of hybridisation between qualitative and quantitative techniques in management research; and
- Other new methods stem from qualitative research techniques and new ways to apply traditional qualitative methods to management research.

From the summary of the various contributions to this issue, what emerges is a strict relation between the research topic and the qualitative methods adopted. For instance, the case study method (Yin, 1984; Woodside, 2010) has been widely applied to industrial marketing research (Hakansson, 1982; Borghini et al., 2010; Easton, 2010), for which much empirical data analysis has been conducted based on this method, while the methodological questions have only been addressed more recently. Case research has been the object of increasing attention, giving rise to a specialised body of literature focussing on its role as a management methodology. Despite its limitations and the criticisms levelled at it, case research has been viewed as a prime source of “grounded theory” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Eisenhardt, 1989) and a “systematic combining” of theory and empirical research (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). In a “glass is half full” perspective, given its many merits, case research is to be considered a consistently useful method (Yin, 1981).

The contribution of qualitative methodologies is fundamental to “fixing” the knowledge of enterprise decision makers (managers and entrepreneurs). The relationship between method and topic also finds a defining framework within the reference scientific community since the subject of knowledge is linked to that of the community (Von Glaserfeld, 1981). Scientific knowledge obviously regards the scientific community (Kuhn, 1962; Paul, 2009), just as managerial and entrepreneurial knowledge regards the community of researchers and scholars; it also pertains to managers and entrepreneurs. New qualitative methodologies help build bridges between the research community and practitioners, favouring the development of shared language and context.

So, what do we mean by “hybrid” methodology in management? Recourse to mixed qualitative and quantitative methodologies comes to be viewed as an empowering (at times even necessary) element, not so much because it satisfies the positivistic requisites of “scientificity,” that is to say, it produces knowledge that is “true” (in that it regards reality) and “certain” (in that it is a “homomorph” of reality) (von Glaserfeld, 1981), but instead because in management studies the sought-for knowledge is not “certain truth,” but “useful knowledge.” In this way, hybrid research using both qualitative and quantitative methods can be proposed as a heuristic solution for obtaining useful knowledge by exploiting both processes of knowledge creation, that is, analytical as well as heuristic (Plebe and Emanuele, 2006).

One essential aspect of qualitative research, in particular forms such as “action research,” is that it enables the researcher to share the context of management practitioners (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 10ff.). Management researchers who adopt quantitative methodologies can study a managerial phenomenon without sharing the business context: they can acquire some data and, armed with a variety of mathematical and statistical tools, write studies on production activities without ever having seen a production facility or write about distribution networks without ever having talked to a supplier about a client or a client about a supplier. The remoteness of the analytical setting from the context of the object of study seems confirmed by quantitative research’s very instruments. Instead, in qualitative research, based on case studies, the research setting and the management context overlap, enabling methodologies such as ethnography or participant observation to achieve results unattainable by other methods (for instance, formulating a theory or a research hypothesis). The advocates of quantitative methods view the separation of research from direct contact with the actors in the studied phenomena as necessary to guarantee “objectivity,” while exponents of qualitative research, to the contrary, believe that the absence of experience and contact with the complexity of the phenomena prevents them from capturing a number of “global” or overall aspects (Gummesson, 2006, p. 170; Capra, 2002, p. 36). Exponents of hybrid forms of research have gone beyond such ideological stances to espouse a pragmatic attitude, often focused

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on the specificity of the problem at hand and aimed at seizing the more significant opportunities afforded by the available fact-finding elements.

### ***Communication Technologies in Qualitative Research***

Most qualitative inquiry is grounded in the information collected from observation, text, talk, and interviews (Mayan, 2009). At a very basic level, qualitative researchers then engage in the process of studying communicative practices in context. Data collection is the main task in qualitative research after choosing a methodology and methods. Data collection in qualitative research is commonly accomplished through three components (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002):

1. Interviews
2. Observations
3. Documents

Among these three components, interviews dominate. For many years traditional/ classical interviews were performed through face-to-face interaction, which allowed researchers to delve deeper into the participant's condition using such cues as "non-verbal" communication. Researchers doing phenomenological, grounded theory, and narrative research derive their data from individual face-to-face interviews. This form was considered for many years to be the "gold standard" for obtaining data in qualitative research (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006) with the view that other methods are a compromise rather than valid techniques in themselves. However, in the 80s, researchers started to slowly integrate telephone media into their research methods and found it to be a productive and valid methodological tool (Stephens, 2007).

#### ***Telephone***

Holt (2010) suggested that the lack of non-verbal communication during telephone interviews meant that, unlike in face-to-face interactions, everything had to be articulated by both the participant(s) and the researcher. This need for full articulation meant that a much richer text might be produced to begin an analysis. This insight suggests that the relationship between the mode of data production and the method of data analysis is a further avenue for methodological debate. One of the features of using a telephone for research interviewing is the need to explicitly direct the conversation because of an absence of non-visual cues and the reduced concern about low response rates. Telephone interviewing further implies that the researcher should be the one to choose whether to use the telephone for interviews. By contrast, during their qualitative interview study of jail corrections officers and visitors, Sturges and Hanrahan (2004) found that allowing participants to choose the medium (face-to-face or telephone) increased participation.

The telephone interview can allow the participant more flexibility during the interview. For example, it allows the participant the possibility of walking and moving around his/her house during the interview and to feel more comfortable sharing when one of the family members comes home (Holt, 2010). Many conversations in Holt's experience were interspersed with comments such as "Oh, my son has just come in [; ] I am just going upstairs. . ." (p. 117).

In contrast, during face-to-face interviewing, participants must be stable in one setting, and the entrance of a family member may be a distraction. Using telephone interviewing enables the participant to control the privacy of the conversation. This flexibility can be beneficial when young children are present because the use of the telephone seems to provide parents with a legitimate reason to resist interacting with their children in a way that face-to-face encounters may not. Holt (2010) provides the example that during a face-to-face interview with a mother, her 4-year-old son's presence and demands for attention were increasingly distracting as the interview progressed. In contrast, a telephone interview with a mother who was overheard telling her young daughter, "Ssshhh, I am on the phone. . ." at the beginning of the interview seemed sufficient to enable the interview to progress uninterrupted (p. 117). Thus, using the telephone could provide participants with a resource to control their social space and protect them from being interrupted by other family

members—a resource that would not have been available in face-to-face interview encounters (Holt, 2010).

As the internet evolved in the 80s and 90s, telephone technology changed and was gradually replaced by internet communication. As we will see later, all the relative advantages of the telephone methods remain valid and expand when using the internet.

### ***Internet***

The internet has become widely used in developed and developing countries (see Figure 2). The internet is one of the most useful technologies in modern times. It helps us not only in our personal but also professional lives. Various internet platforms are available for communication with two main categories: synchronous communication and asynchronous communication. Synchronous communication occurs in real time, including in chat rooms and instant messages. On the other hand, asynchronous communication, such as emails and blogs, allows people to respond to communications at their convenience.

Technical communication has become a way of life in today's global society, and connecting with others has never been easier. Wherever people go, staying connected is merely a click away. Some people still maintain their technological base on the home computer, but many carry it everywhere they go on their smartphones. Communication technology has advanced so that face-to-face contact is no longer necessary to stay updated and involved.

The recent Internet domains that have gained much popularity are social media sites like Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter, and social media devices such as Smartphones and Tablets, which make staying updated easy. People share photos with family, gossip about their favourite topics, or check out what everyone's plans are for the day by following them on a social networking site.

The advances on the internet have not skipped qualitative research. The internet is frequently used in the research process to review literature, compile bibliographic databases, and analyse data. Computerised databases are used to source information; bibliographic database programs are commonly used to organise references, and many qualitative researchers use data analysis programs. Waskul and Douglas (1996) suggested that the Internet “presents conceptual, theoretical and methodological challenges, which represents the seeds of academic advancement” (p. 130).

The most affected area of qualitative research has been the collection of data. Data collection methods have fast evolved along similar Internet platforms. Thus, Internet interviews can be asynchronous or synchronous, public or semi-private (Mann & Stewart, 2002). Internet interviews often include text, which is rare in face-to-face interviews and can change many aspects of data collection and analysis. Computer-mediated administration of questionnaires became commonplace in the second half of the 1990s (Witmer, Colman, & Katzman, 1999), as did the covert observation and collection of naturally occurring online discussions, which offers a speedy and viable way of collecting rich data, although not without significant ethical obstacles which will be discussed later. The initial Internet technologies used for collecting data during interviews were email and instant messaging.

### ***Email interview***

Email interviews are asynchronous and are considered semi-private (Mann & Stewart 2002). Email interviews succeed most when the interviewer and participant are both comfortable communicating via email (Young, Persichitte, & Tharp, 1998). Researchers who need facial and body language expressions to be part of their interview data may find that Email interviews cannot address this need.).

Cook (2012) recently described the advantages of email interviewing as a method when face-to-face interviewing is difficult. The author suggests that email interviews enable one to recruit people who would otherwise be excluded from research because of geographical distance, different time zones, or want to keep their anonymity for various reasons. The benefits of this method are particularly evident in the recruitment of people who are vulnerable and marginalised. Because of the asynchronous nature of this method, researchers need to become aware of the speed at which they should reply and at which they can expect replies from respondents (Gibbs, Friese, & Mangabeira, 2002).

Holge Hazelton (2002) used email for two years to understand how a chronic illness such as diabetes is expressed in the everyday lives of youth. The study was performed over a decade ago, long before social media evolved. The author developed very intimate relationships with the participants through this asynchronous technique. She describes that some of her participants would not have shared their experiences if it were not through the internet. According to her findings, the participants did not experience any personal or technical difficulties. However, she emphasised the importance of being sensitive and empathic to the issues raised, trying to answer each email within 24 hours.

### ***Instant messaging interview***

Instant messaging (or instant messenger; in either case, IM.) can be used for interviewing and, like email, has some features that affect the research process (Luders, 2004; Opdenakker, 2006; Steiger & Goritz, 2006). For example, IM allows synchronous and semi-private interaction and can automatically record the interaction text. The ad hoc conversational nature of IM interviews lets them resemble oral interviews. Callaghan, Barber, Cusik, & Buchanan (2010) argue that IM offers an exciting opportunity to explore what happens when research participants can express themselves in writing while at the same time engaging in real-time dialogue.

### ***Online focus groups and forums***

Traditional focus groups are characterised as an organised group discussion around a given topic, monitored, guided if necessary, and recorded by a researcher. They are distinguished by their explicit use of group interaction to produce data. While most traditional, face-to-face research methods developed telephone equivalents before the development of computer-mediated communications, the "technologisation" of the focus group evaded the inherently one-to-one nature of the telephone and, therefore, may seem an innately "terrestrial" method (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001). Robson and Robson's (1999) early attempts with online focus groups, studying the employment experiences of inflammatory bowel disease sufferers, exemplify the use of asynchronous (non-real-time) online focus groups, identifying critical practical issues such as online moderation and the analysis of digital data. In contrast, Williams's (2012) study of deviance within online communities provides examples of how synchronous (real-time) forms of online focus groups using 3D graphical environments further challenge researchers, highlighting the unique ethical considerations of online fieldwork. Asynchronous online forums have been reported to be observable, relatively easy to use, accessible, and safe (Anderson & Kanuka, 1997).

Im and Chee (2006) described the practical issues encountered in implementing an online forum as a qualitative component of a more extensive study on cancer pain experience. They reviewed the practical issues that emerge both technically and ethically. They discuss various aspects of rigour in qualitative research using the internet. For example, they point out that some participants were not consistent in their scheduled forum discussion because they frequently forgot their passwords and usernames. The participants ascribed this "forgetfulness" to their chemotherapy. This shed doubts on the credibility of the data. The asynchronous nature of the study over six months further interfered with achieving saturation, another component of study rigour.

During forum interactions, people often use many symbols, signs, and abbreviations. The authors raised concerns that if there is no pre-determined agreement about language and jargon used in such forums, this may result in misunderstanding among participants and researchers, which is another threat to the study's rigour.

### ***Voice over internet protocol (VoIP) and social media***

One of the most recent internet applications in qualitative research is using VoIP to conduct interviews. Modern technologies of VoIP further advance the internet as a medium to create the most feasible alternative to face-to-face interviews. Among these newer technologies, we can find

- Skype - Videoconferencing and text messaging with time response in real-time
- Facebook - Text chatting and posting of images or media
- Twitter chat - Text messaging

These newer technologies provide synchronous interaction between the researcher and their participants. Furthermore, they overcome the problems of losing the visual and interpersonal aspects of the interaction (Evans, Elford, & Wiggins, 2008). Using these technologies, the researcher can easily record both the visual and audio interactions of the interview through simple software downloaded onto their computer. This overcomes the often-impractical use of battery-powered Dictaphones, through which recordings were often difficult to hear during later transcriptions, and the researcher was constantly worried about battery life. In addition, the researcher and the participants can remain in a "safe location" without imposing personal space on each other. For example, the interviewee can remain in a comfortable location of his/her home while being interviewed without the sense that the researcher is encroaching on his/her personal space, and the researcher avoids the feeling of imposing himself/herself physically on the participant's personal space. Thus, a neutral yet personal location is maintained for both parties throughout the process.

Here, it is suggested that the previously mentioned Holt's (2010) argument for the use of telephone interviews can be expanded to the use of VoIP as a new research medium with the additional benefit of enabling the visual in the interview setting. Through this additional visual element offered by Skype (and alternative Webchat software), the interview can remain, to a certain extent at least, a "face-to-face" experience while preserving the flexibility and private space elements offered via telephone interviews. We have outlined below some advantages and disadvantages of these new technologies as cited by various authors describing their own experiences.

Pretto and Pocknee (2008) found advantages for these new technologies with their expense (no-cost use with both conferences and chat calls), the good quality of the audio, video, and chat methods, and the ease of adding callers to conferences. Disadvantages included slowing the interview by video, reduced quality with too many worldwide participants, occasional microphone and/or headset problems, and differences in time zones between participants. Hay-Gibson (2009) used VoIP to connect with businesses during her doctoral research and claims the following advantages.

- Expense: Calls made PC-to-PC were free.
- Time: The time taken to set up the VoIP interview was considerably less than the travel time to reach the business location.
- Availability and flexibility in scheduling the interview (i.e., the flexibility of choosing to take the call at home or one's business).
- Practicality: The Skype VoIP system was already available within the business setting, required no training on the part of the researcher or participant, and provided good quality audio for recording and later transcription.

- Acceptability: Participants conversed with VoIP technology, and the Skype system was a conventional and familiar program in frequent daily use within the business.

On the other hand, she also points out some disadvantages, such as when the participants are not familiar with holding a conversation over VoIP services, when the participants show an aversion to technology, and when participants are visually or hearing impaired. The process may be more stressful than a telephone interview for elderly or infirm participants unfamiliar with these technologies.

Guldberg and Mackness (2009), studying the online learning experience, found that their participants' learning experiences were affected by the mix of technologies employed, access issues, the complexity of the online environment, and navigation. Their study employed various technologies, including the Webcrossing platform, discussion forums, teleconferences (Skype and Phone Bridge), email, and instant messaging. The different technologies affected learning and participation in different ways, with synchronous teleconferencing discussion (VoIP) being highly valued for enabling a greater sense of connection with others. "I also liked that we had periodic teleconferencing. It is the closest we could come to a face-to-face, and that just brings a whole new level to understanding" (Participant S, p. 532).

Guldberg and Mackness (2009) participants needed a degree of technical competence to use these technologies. "I feel for beginners this was far too advanced. I think a basic technology workshop—even a couple of hours—is needed" (Participant J, p. 532). Some participants indicated that it took 3 to 4 weeks to become comfortable with the technology. One participant had problems with Skype, which made it challenging to participate in teleconferences and led to a negative learning experience. Another participant was affected by international time differences, which made it impossible for him to participate in teleconferences.

Saumure and Given (n.d., p. 2) provide another valuable list of advantages and disadvantages of Skype. Advantages include low cost; geographic flexibility; user-friendly and easy to install; instant messaging function, helpful in managing data collection problems and sharing information among participants; and easy audio-recording of conversations. Disadvantages cited include time lags in conversation, which can break the flow of an interview; lack of non-verbal cues in audio-only mode; potential failure; and disconnections and data loss.

### **Getting Mobile**

Mobile devices have become multifunctional tools integrating many functions that previously required several separate devices. These functions include digital cameras to capture visual media, audio recorders and players, laptops for processing data and reading emails, and so forth. Now, these functions and others are being integrated into social mobile devices (SMDs) such as Smartphones and Tablets. The introduction of SMDs has created a whole new dimension to qualitative research. Participants can now talk, text, and send videos while commuting to work, making dinner in the kitchen, or shopping. SMDs provide an easy way to capture thoughts that can be followed up later using personal or online methods to capture deeper insight. While the mobile device may be a solitary research tool for primary data collection (e.g., interview), it can also serve as a secondary tool due to the wide range of functionality of Smartphones and tablets (e.g., diary for further discussion or as part of a community or bulletin board and maybe a home assignment prior to a focus group meeting). Researchers are beginning to consider the promise of their own SMDs as research tools; due to their portability and affordability, SMDs are appealing for the storage and development of research, mainly outdoor and on-the-move research.

Van't Hooft (2007) suggests that mobile devices can be used to collect information on different learning research data, such as spatial and temporal data, patterns of use, learner data (such as context-created or accessed), and connectivity data (e.g., whom the learners share and connect with). Authors of a recent ethnographic study (Beddall-Hill, Jabbar, & Al Shehri, 2011) described the use of a head-mounted internet camera with a voice recorder and GPS tracker to stay in touch

with participants and their field notes. Later, during the study, all these devices were replaced by an iPhone, which proved to be a much more valuable tool. The iPhone's camera captured photos and video and was much easier to handle than the digital camera. Field notes were also captured by audio recording, which was quicker and easier than typing them later, given the nature and length of the observations (spanning the whole day). As quoted recently by Kuhagen (2013), "Information gathered at the spur of the moment provides the researcher with the emotions as experienced and not memorised. Take advantage of it" (para. 8).

SMDs allow for the capture of multiple data types, provide access to wider networks, and can make a backup of data easier and faster. This helps preserve research data in an efficient and timely manner. To facilitate the use of SMDs, many special software programs (Apps) have been developed. Among the popular apps, Safari, or Google Chrome, for example, can assist researchers in literature searches. Mendeley can be used to manage references and quickly review portable document format (pdf) files.

Employing these Apps in qualitative research was recently described in an article on a study of real-life experiences of academics working in higher education and how these experiences may have an effect on pedagogy for ethnic minorities (Beddall-Hill, Jabbar & Al Shehri, 2011). The authors used an iPhone 3GS to record the interviews and an iPad for memoing and collecting non-standard data such as body language and eye contact. Both technologies were underpinned by Apps like Dropbox for cloud storage and Evernote for digital writing and automatic synchronisation on multiple devices. The use of Evernote in this study facilitated flexible storage of multiple data types, which could then be tagged and stored for convenient searching later. Cloud storage eliminated the problem of relying on the physical device's storage capacity. Using Evernote and Dropbox alongside the devices significantly reduced backup and confidentiality issues.

## DISCUSSION

The pace of new technologies may find us, as qualitative researchers lagging. However, there is a strong suggestion that the qualitative research community adequately responds and adjusts appropriately. The new technologies open the way for new innovative approaches to qualitative research, for example, in data collection. It may be possible for future research participants to select the most appropriate data collection tool for themselves (e.g., SMDs, Skype, email) without decreasing the quality of the research. Furthermore, using multiple and simultaneous methods for different participants addressing a similar research question is an exciting new possibility to be studied.

Most importantly, changes in context and new qualitative research methods have reduced the gap between theories and practices, especially in management. The hybridisation of the research methodologies has further enriched this. The use of modern communication technologies in qualitative research has advantages over disadvantages. Some significant advantages are real-time responses, low cost, availability, and flexibility. However, there are limited disadvantages too. The requirement of technical know-how, data loss, and disconnection can be highlighted as the main drawbacks. This analysis has further revealed that the most affected area of qualitative research is data collection, and the same data collection methods have fast evolved along with using new techniques.

There are still some critical questions that will need to be addressed in future qualitative research. For example, what is the relationship between these technologies and the various theoretical perspectives of qualitative research? Do these relationships differ between the data collection and analysis stages of the research? Can the existing (and newer) data analysis software programs (e.g., ATLAS.ti) adequately analyse data obtained through these new technologies? Because of the rapid growth in new technologies, it may be challenging for qualitative researchers to be fully aware of all the qualitative data tools available. In the case of a single device, challenges may be encountered in recognising and developing expertise in the full range of functionality. All

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these emerging technologies introduce a whole new continent, culture, and language to the qualitative research community and call upon us to respect the many places we still do not know.

## CONCLUSION

With the evolution of humankind, society has been transformed by new technology. So, the studies also did not have any exceptions. As a result, there are new ways researchers could collect and analyse data. This paper examined the contributions of modern techniques in qualitative research. Further, the writer tried to identify the advantages and disadvantages of modern techniques, specifically communication. The spread of images and video technology means that images can use as data sources and tools for data collection. The digital form of audio and video data has made new ways of creating, processing, and analysing data. The corresponding growth of the internet also makes new ways of collecting qualitative data and new settings available. However, such developments raise issues about how researchers collect, process, and publish data and produce high-quality analyses. It is pertinent to mention that this article has achieved its primary objective by opening new windows that researchers could think of in their subsequent qualitative research. However, there is still much debate about the degree to which modern techniques can produce qualitative analysis or purely contribute to its development by human researchers.

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## СИСТЕМНИЙ ОГЛЯД СУЧАСНИХ МЕТОДІК ЯКІСНИХ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ

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Згідно з багатьма визначеннями, якісне дослідження передбачає значний міжособистісний контакт. Протягом усього процесу якісного дослідження, від стратегії до впровадження, ефективна комунікація є важливою. Незважаючи на те, що за останні кілька десятиліть з'явилися численні нові якісні дослідницькі інструменти, ті, що пов'язані з комунікаційними технологіями, виявилися найбільш важливими та впливовими. Оскільки доступної інформації про комунікаційні технології в якісних дослідженнях мало, ця стаття має на меті зробити огляд нових технологій, які зараз використовуються. Для цього автор проаналізував кілька літературних джерел з якісних досліджень. Як стало відомо з літератури, якісні дослідження досягли нових висот за допомогою сучасних методів. Тому якісні дослідники повинні бути в курсі останніх технологічних досягнень, щоб отримати максимальну продуктивність.

**Ключові слова:** гібридні методи, дослідження менеджменту, якісні дослідження, Skype, соціальні мобільні пристрої (SMD), VOIP, телеконференції.