Theoretical and Empirical Comparative Analysis on Quantitative and Qualitative Marketing Researches

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ABSTRACT
This chapter focuses on the similarities and differences between quantitative and qualitative marketing research projects and the possibilities of combining them in triangulation. The comparative analysis of both types of the research was conducted on the basis of literature review and the empirical research results, which were obtained from the evaluation of usability of Polish bank website. In the following sections, the authors discuss issues such as: 1) specificity of quantitative vs. qualitative marketing research, with regards to the implemented research projects; 2) methodological aspects of quantitative and qualitative research. They compare the selected research and sampling methods. Also, the problems which may occur with reference to quantitative and qualitative marketing research triangulation on different stages of the research project are discussed. Moreover, strengths and weaknesses of triangulation are analyzed. At the end, the example of quantitative and qualitative triangulation in the research project investigating the usability of websites is presented.

QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE MARKETING RESEARCH: IDEA AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN RESEARCH DESIGN

Comparing quantitative with qualitative marketing research is not always successful, among others, because of the nomenclature used. For example, the term “qualitative research” is often associated with “qualitative data analysis,” used in sociology and psychology, as well as with the term “analysis of qualitative data,” which is used in statistics. Similar situation occurs in quantitative research, where overlapping, ambiguous terms can be found. For example, on the one hand, we have the term: “analysis of quantitative data,” but on
Apart from the above comparison, we may refer to the research, in the view of the project planning, under which the researcher is looking for the answer to such questions as (Tarka, 2014):

- On what level of detail and generalization should our knowledge be?
- Should the knowledge result from the information on objective or subjective level?
- What detail methods, data collection and analysis techniques should be applied to solve our research problem?

When looking for the answers to such questions, both on the grounds of quantitative, as well as qualitative research, the researcher should, first of all, realize the purpose and the aim of the conducted research project and the final form of the collected data (Mertens, 1998; Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Neuman, 2000).

Under the quantitative approach, the researcher describes the phenomena on grounds of the objective criteria of evaluation. However, in qualitative approach, the researcher, so to say, “is portraying” the environment and its phenomena, using the subjective criteria of description. The quantitative approach comes down to the precision of defining operational variables and formulating research hypotheses, as well as allows for reliable measurements and result testing. On the other hand, in qualitative approach, it is assumed from the very beginning that the researcher is a “person-side” of the research, because of overlapping personal experience or giving meanings and interpreting facts occurring in the research project. The reason for this is that the researchers move in the culture of a particular society, in which they live and they give the sense and the meaning to the observed phenomena. As a result, the researchers can’t be unbiased and impose their views, for instance, by choosing the research issues or subjectively interpreting the existing reality.