

MOVING BEYOND NUMERALS: A META-ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH METHODS AND THEORETICAL APPLICATION IN MEDIA GATEKEEPING STUDIES

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Abstract

This study investigates trends in media gatekeeping research, specifically in terms of research methods and theoretical application. Through a meta-analysis, 128 media gatekeeping-related studies purposively drawn from communication-based journals (published between 2000 and 2008) were content analysed. The findings reveal a progressive drift from quantitative method (38.3%) towards qualitative method (57.0%): a deviation from previous submissions that communication researchers prefer quantitative method to qualitative approach (Berg, 2001; Abawi, 2008). However, results confirm the previous findings that majority of communication studies are not theory-driven (Kim and Weaver, 2002) as only 44(34.4%) of the articles examined had theoretical frameworks. The study encourages more theoretical applications and synthesis of methods in media gatekeeping research.

Keywords: quantitative method, qualitative approach, content analysis, theoretical frameworks.

Introduction and Background

In the modern society, communication via the mass media, occupies the heart of social, economic, political and cultural activities. The mass media maintain some evident and underlying relationship with the key forces in the social system. They are used as agents of social mobilisation, economic development, propaganda, and social reality-definition (Watson, 2003). This all-important nature of the mass media has attracted attention of

communication scholars and inspired them to carry out empirical studies of the media. The discipline of communication research has helped scholars to explore new grounds, study the existing phenomena, test and develop new hypotheses that would ultimately improve and expand the knowledge base for current practices and further research activities (Kim and Weaver, 2002; Onekutu and Ojebode, 2007).

Media gatekeeping research is one of the core segments of communication media studies that have greatly endeared communication scholars. Empirical investigations into the process of news production, selection and social reality construction by communication researchers (Holz and Wright, 1979; Lester, 1980; Clayman and Reisner, 1998; Donohew, 2001; Reese and Ballinger, 2001; Acord, 2006) have enabled the research community and the society at large to identify the structure and outcome of media gatekeeping process as well as explore the sundry forces that influence the gatekeepers' decisions and general newsroom behaviours (Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim and Wrigley, 2001).

Depending on their objectives or the focus and nature of their studies, different researchers employ different research methodologies, either qualitative or quantitative social scientific methods, as they best suit their studies. It has been argued that since research in journalism is not a natural science, but falls into the categories of humanities and the social sciences, communication researchers are compelled to employ research methodologies that can effectively address the defining human capability to think, to query and to react to societal problems (Williams, 2004). Therefore, in some instances, communication researchers combine both the qualitative and the quantitative methods in one study (e.g. Kaplan and Duchon, 1988; Blake, 2003; Sang, 2008). Apparently, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods in a study usually allows the researcher to have better in-depth understanding of the issue being investigated as well as to achieve sharper data reduction and verification than what is achievable using only one research approach (García-Álvarez and López-Sintas, 2002). However, some communication researchers, naturally, because of their ideological proclivity, would prefer to adhere to one particular methodology where the alternative, or combination of both, would have been more effective. For instance, Dabbs, cited by Berg (2001:2), remarks that "qualitative and quantitative are not distinct", yet, in many social sciences, researchers give more respect to quantitative orientations.

Apart from research methods, another core component of academic research is the theoretical framework, that is, pragmatic application of relevant theories or models to pilot the generation of hypotheses, framing of research questions or substantiation of research findings. This is what Cooper et al., cited by Kim and Weaver (2002:524), described as a ‘theory-driven...hypothetico-deductive sense.’ Indeed, appropriate application of theories, model, hypotheses and concepts that have been generated by other scholars would enable the researcher to display awareness of those that have tread the space of inquiry before, and demonstrate his willingness or ability to speak to others in the area of specialisation, in a universally understandable language (Olorunnisola, 2007). However, not all communication studies are theory-guided. A good number of communication researchers do not anchor their studies on any known communication theories or models, either explicitly or implicitly. Comparing the findings of their study to that of Cooper et al. (1994) that, based on eight US-based highly circulated communication journals, only 27.6% of communication research attempted to test theories or hypotheses, Kim and Weaver (2002:529), reported that going by their analysis, the test of a theory was relatively rare as only 96 (17.1%) out of a total 561 internet-related studies “tested a specific communication theory or relied on communication theories for their primary arguments.” They, therefore, submitted that generally, communication researchers rarely consider theoretical application in their studies, irrespective of research methods—either quantitative or qualitative.

The prime objective of this study is, therefore, to investigate the trends in media gatekeeping research. Specifically, the study attempts to examine research methods and theoretical applications employed by researchers in media gatekeeping studies. Selection of these variables for analysis is relevant because they serve as the basis for identification of the core components of research methodology (Onekutu and Ojebode, 2007). We hold this focus to be of some significance. For instance, unless we examine trends in researchers’ methodological choices, we would not know if the field of gatekeeping research is benefitting as it should from the fruitfulness that occurs when methodologies straddle the traditional ‘quant-qual’ divide. And unless we examine researchers’ applications of theory we would not know if gatekeeping research is enriching and challenging existing theories and evolving new ones. In Olorunnisola’s (2007) words, we would not know if gatekeeping researchers are partaking in ongoing scholarly conversations. Without studies of meta-analytic nature like this, in short, the field of gatekeeping studies may wither.

Various researchers have conducted similar studies on trends in research methods in different areas of arts and the social sciences including communication. For instance, a study conducted by Ambert, Adler, Adler and Detzner (1995) reveals that from 1989-1994, the *Journal of Marriage and the Family* had published 527 articles out of which only 10(1.9%) were qualitative, either entirely(4) or partly(1), or in a combination of quantitative and qualitative data(5). Perfloff, cited by Kim and Weaver (2002), reported that in his analysis of communication research between 1955 and 1974, the fraction of quantitative research had increased from 51% during 1955-1964 in the next 10 years. Also, Cooper et al. cited by Kim and Weaver (2002), reported that since the 1970s, quantitative research articles (57.8%) had outstripped qualitative articles (35.1%). In a recent study by Onekutu and Ojebode (2007), findings reveal that out of the six health communication-based journal articles published between 1987 and 1989, and analysed by the researchers, 4(66.7%) are content analysis(quantitative method), while in 1995, 1996 and 1997, 5(71.4%) out of the 7 abstracts studied by the researchers use content analysis. The trend, according to the study, was that majority of the studies analysed were quantitative, while only very few were qualitative in nature. Contrarily, in a thematic meta-analysis on communication research about the Internet, Kim and Weaver (2002) reported that non-quantitative research methods (72.9%) were more frequently used than quantitative methods (26.7%) in internet-related studies.

Evidently, communication researchers have made good attempts at analysing the trends of research methods and findings in different aspects of communication (e.g. D'Alessio and Allen, 2000; Kim and Weaver, 2002; Onekutu and Ojebode, 2007). However, much remains to be done in the aspect of media gatekeeping. It is, therefore, not out of place to further make a theoretical and methodological review of communication research on gatekeeping studies. An attempt at exploring research patterns across media (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000) and analysing past and current research patterns would definitely stimulate researchers and provide more pragmatic and constructive directions for further communication research (Kim and Weaver, 2002). Thus, it is on this premise that the study attempts to investigate the trends in media gatekeeping studies in terms of communication research methods, and the major theoretical applications the researchers employ while conducting studies on media gatekeeping.

Quantitative vs Qualitative Research Methods

The ideological gulf between quantitative and qualitative research methods would be appreciated by dissecting the research paradigms—positivist and interpretive—on which the advocates of the two research approaches have, over time, based their differing perspectives. On the one hand, the positivist paradigm, which most social science scholars employ in mass communication research (Berg, 2001), came as a modification of the paradigm (positivism) most used in the natural sciences. The social science researchers later adapted the paradigm for their research purposes. The basic concepts that underscore the positivist paradigm are “quantification, hypotheses, and objective measures” (Wimmer and Dominick, 2001:103). According to positivist researchers (also called quantitative purists), reality is objective; it is independent of researcher and can be distinctively seen by all. In essence, positivists believe that time- and context-free generalisations are fundamental and feasible, and real causes of social effects can be subjected to proper reliability and validity; researchers should empirically substantiate their findings, eliminate personal biases and remain emotionally separated from the issues or objects being studied. Research here is anchored solely on deductive forms of reasoning, and hypotheses are validated in a cause-effect order employing statistical techniques to analyse identified variables (Abawi, 2008). The paradigm advocates rhetorical neutrality where the researcher employs a formal presentation style that permits the impersonal passive voice and technical terminology (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000; Johnson and Owuegbuzie, 2004).

On the other hand, the interpretive paradigm attempts to comprehend—through multiple perspectives—how people in their daily natural environment construct meaning and interpret the phenomena of interest that always surround them (Abawi, 2008). According to the interpretivists, (also called qualitative purists or constructivists), there is no single reality. Each researcher creates reality as a fundamental component of his study. What he considers or presents as reality ultimately becomes reality. That is, reality is “subjective and exists only in reference to the observer” (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000:104). The interpretivists contend that time- and context-free generalisations are neither desirable nor achievable; causes and effects are not entirely distinctive because research is both value- and context-bound, and explanations are inductive products of the narrative data emanating from informants (subjects). The interpretive paradigm opposes a detached and passive style of presentation. It

rather prefers a kind of writing that permits direct, detailed, rich and empathic description of findings (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Abawi, 2008).

Most communication researchers believe that one research method is exclusively ideal for research, thus they develop a sort of obsessive preference for that technique at the expense of the other (Berg, 2001). Some scholars also advocate what Howe, cited by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), describes as *incompatibility thesis*. That is, both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms, including their variants, cannot and should not be combined. Both sets of purists have established unique cultures, which they think are incompatible: qualitative purists proclaim the superiority of exploratory, empathic, multi-dimensional, deep and rich observational information that can proffer answers to the questions of why, how, and in what way, whereas quantitative purists acknowledge the merits of objective, hard, measurable, precise, scientific, generalisable data that can address the questions about how much, how many, how often, and to what extent (Sieber, 1973; Abawi, 2004).

Nonetheless, combination of the two seemingly exclusive research paradigms would ultimately produce better and more valid results (Kaplan and Duchon, 1988). In the views of Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), both quantitative and qualitative research methods are valuable, and when the two are combined in a single research study, the researcher draws from their strengths and minimises their weaknesses. When a researcher combines multiple methodological techniques and sources, other factors being equal, the findings would be richer, better, more valid and present more substantive picture of reality as well as more complete body of symbols and theoretical concepts. This is called triangulation (Berg, 2001). This position is also substantiated by Maxwell (1998:3), when he argues that:

The complementary use of qualitative and quantitative methods provides a greater range of insights and perspectives and permits a greater triangulation—the confirmation of findings by different methods—of findings, which improves the overall validity of results...and makes the study of greater use to the constituencies to which it was intended to be addressed.

This is not to say that triangulation will obscure the impact of design flaws. When research designs are inherently flawed, the multiplicity of sources and approaches can do little to prevent the research from producing results whose validity is severely compromised.

The Study

In this study, our focus is not evaluative. Put differently, we do not intend to examine the process or product of research in gatekeeping. Rather, we intend to examine researcher's use of theory and preference for qualitative or quantitative approach. Specifically, we are asking: what is the trend, in gatekeeping research, with reference to choice of research methodology? How often are gatekeeping studies framed by existing or new theories – including gatekeeping theory itself?

Methodology

In order to investigate the current trends in media gatekeeping research, this study specifically employed a meta-analytic approach. According to Hunter, Schmidt and Jackson, cited by D'Alessio and Allen (2000), meta-analysis is an approach developed to allow the combination of the findings of numerous studies purposely to make a knowledge claim. That is, it permits quantitative findings of a variety of studies on the same topic or study area, which are converted to a common metric for the purpose of generalisation or replication. However, unlike some previous meta-analysis studies (e.g. D'Alessio and Allen, 2000) that analysed empirical findings of various studies on a given subject, this study primarily focused on research trends in terms of methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks in recent media gatekeeping-related studies. The focus of this study was prompted by the claims of communication scholars that most communication researchers traditionally have fanatical penchant for certain research method at the expense of another (Berg, 2001), while most scholars do not bother to anchor their studies on communication theories, models or concepts (Kim and Weaver, 2002).

Sample

Larger proportions of the data for this study were electronically collected by searching SAGE Journals Online (<http://online.sagepub.com/cgi/searchresults>), and JSTOR Archives Online (<http://www.jstor.org>). Also, some sites on the World Wide Web were searched using search engines: Google Scholar (<http://www.scholar.google.com>), and Yahoo Search (<http://us.yhs.search.yahoo.com>). The phrase (key words) “journal articles media gatekeeping” was used. Through the websites, communication-based journals such as *European Journal of communication*; *Harvard International Journal of Press*; *Journalism*; *Convergence*; *Communication Research*; *International Communication Gazette*; *Media culture & Society*; *Newspaper Research*; and *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*

were accessed. Where accesses to full texts were not permitted, only the abstracts were studied. The electronically gathered data were complemented by manually consulted copies of *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* in the SCCCUDD Library, Department of Communication and Language Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Only media gatekeeping-related articles published between 2000 and 2008 were purposively content analysed.

A total of 128 articles were examined for this study. Articles examined were not discriminated using the criteria of full-text articles, abstracts, year of publication or journal types. They were all reviewed and measured together. However, abstracts that did not provide clues to the specific research methods employed by the authors were skipped.

Content Categorization and Operationalization

Each publication examined for this study was the unit of analysis. The following categories, which guided the coding, are operationally explained as follows:

Research Methods: Research method is the precise strategy employed for investigating the relationship among variables of a study (Onekutu and Ojebode, 2007). The two broad categories for research methods here are quantitative method and qualitative method. A study that combined both quantitative and qualitative methods was coded under ‘mixed methods’ category.

Specific Methodological Approaches: These are sub-categories created for the major categories under research methods—quantitative and qualitative methods. Because the sub-categories (specific methodological approaches) examined were generated inductively, they did not represent a comprehensive list of methodological approaches in communication research. For quantitative method, survey; content analysis; experiment; longitudinal and multi-quantitative methods study were generated, while under qualitative method, the sub-categories generated are discourse (textual) analysis; observation; Focus Group Discussion (FGD); in-depth interviews; and Q-methodology (Q-methodology is a research design employed to carry out a systematic exploration of people’s subjectivity. It is a method used in qualitative studies. The respondent is asked to state his personal views by ranking a set of statements about some issue).

Theoretical Application: This was used to represent the exact communication theories or models the authors employed to generate hypotheses, form research questions or support their findings in the articles studied for this review. The specific theories (e.g. economic /rational choice theory of journalism, uses and gratification, gatekeeping, newsworthiness, and agenda-setting theories) were identified and coded under appropriate sub-categories.

Coding of Data and Analysis

Each publication was coded for (1) research methods (2) specific methodological approaches, and (3) theoretical application (if any) employed in the study. Some entries of the category system (especially theories and sub-categories of research methods) were generated inductively as the analysis progressed. For publication with more than one theory, dual or multiple entries were made. Only 6 of 128 articles examined used mixed methods while 5 articles had multiple theoretical frameworks. Frequency count and percentages were used to analyse the coded data.

Results and Discussion

Research Methods

The results (see table 1) show the frequency of the use of the research methods in media gatekeeping studies. Majority of the 128 articles examined used qualitative research method (57.0%, n=73). Articles that used quantitative method accounted for 38.3% (n=49), while only 4.7% (n=6) articles employed mixed methods.

Previous studies have established that generally in communication research, scholars have employed quantitative research method more frequently than non-quantitative method. For instance, a study conducted by Ambert et al. (1995), revealed that between 1989 and 1994, the *Journal of Marriage and the Family* had published 527 articles out of which only 10 (1.9%) were qualitative. Also, Perfloff, cited by Kim and Weaver (2002), reported that in his analysis of communication research between 1955 and 1974, the fraction of quantitative research had increased from 51% during 1955-1964 in the next 10 years. This present study deviates from various claims (Berg, 2001), and previous findings (Cooper, Potter and Dupagne, 1994; Onekutu and Ojebode, 2007), that most communication researchers have fixated proclivity for and more frequently employ quantitative research method than non-quantitative method.

Table 1: Research Methods Employed by Media Gatekeeping Researchers (N=128)

| Research Method | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Quantitative method | 49 | 38.3 |
| Qualitative method | 73 | 57.0 |
| Mixed methods | 6 | 4.7 |
| Total | 128 | 100 |

As our findings show, media gatekeeper researchers, on the contrary, make use of qualitative research method (57%, n=73) more frequently than quantitative method (38.3%, n=49). This is consistent with the findings of Kim and Weaver (2002), that in internet-related studies, non- quantitative methods (72.9%, n=409) were more frequently employed than quantitative methods (26.7%). Also, the study reveals that media gatekeeper researchers employ mixed methods research (4.7%, n=6) in their studies, however, not as frequently as they use qualitative and quantitative methods. This combination of quantitative and non-quantitative methods in a study—triangulation—is capable of producing superior and more valid research, compared to mono-method research (Maxwell, 1998; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie , 2004).

Specific Methodological Approaches

As shown in table two, survey, under quantitative method, was the most frequently used methodological approach (75%, n=39). This is followed by content analysis (11.5%, n=6),

multi-quantitative methods (7.7%, n=4), longitudinal study (3.8%, n=2), and experiment (1.9%, n=1) in that order. In-depth interview (53.9%, n=41) was most employed while Q-methodology (5.3%, n=4) was least used as methodological approaches under qualitative method. Focus Group Discussion (22.4%, n=17) was the next most frequently employed methodological approach, followed by discourse (textual) analysis (10.5%, n=8), and observation (7.9%, n=6).

Table 2: Specific Methodological Approaches Used by Media Gatekeeping Researchers (N=128)

| QUALITATIVE METHOD | | | QUANTITATIVE METHOD | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------|------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Methodological approach | Frequency | Percentage | Methodological Approach | Frequency | Percentage |
| Survey | 39 | 75.0 | Discourse (textual) analysis | 8 | 10.5 |
| Content analysis | 6 | 11.5 | Observation | 6 | 7.9 |
| Experiment | 1 | 1.9 | FGD | 17 | 22.4 |
| Longitudinal study | 2 | 3.8 | In-depth interviews | 41 | 53.9 |
| Multi-quantitative methods | 4 | 7.7 | Q-methodology | 4 | 5.3 |
| Total | 52 (40.6%) | 100 | Total | 76 (59.4%) | 100 |

The implication of this finding is that in media gatekeeping research, survey (75%, n=39) is the most frequently used quantitative methodological approach, while in-depth

interview (53%, n=41) is the most often employed non-quantitative approach. In all, qualitative methodological approaches accounted for 59.4% (n=76), while quantitative approaches accounted for 40.6% (n=52).

Communication Theories

Table 3 shows that 63.3% (n=31), out of the 49 studies that employed quantitative methods, applied communication theories, while 36.7% (n=18) studies in the same category did not apply any communication theory. On the other hand, only 15.1% (n=11) out of the 73 studies that used non-quantitative methods applied communication theories as against the predominant 84.9% (n=62) non-quantitative studies that did not apply any communication theory. Out of the 6 studies that used mixed methods approach, only 33.3% (n=2) were theory-driven, while 66.7% (n=4) did not have theoretical framework.

Table 3: Classification of Media Gatekeeping Studies by Communication Theories (N=128)

| Application of Theory | QUANTITATIVE METHOD | | QUALITATIVE METHOD | | MIXED METHODS | | CUMULATIVE | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------|--------------------|------|---------------|------|------------|------|
| | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % |
| Applied theory | 31 | 63.3 | 11 | 15.1 | 2 | 33.3 | 44 | 34.4 |
| Did not apply theory | 18 | 36.7 | 62 | 84.9 | 4 | 66.7 | 84 | 65.6 |
| Total | 49 | 100 | 73 | 100 | 6 | 100 | 128 | 100 |

Among the communication theories that were used by the theory-driven studies, Gatekeeping Theory (63.3%, n=31) was the most predominantly applied communication theory, followed by Newsworthiness Theory and Agenda-Setting Theory which accounted for 16.3% (n=8) and 10.2% (n=5) respectively. Economic (Rational Choice) Theory of journalism accounted for 4.1% (n=2).

This finding reveals that generally in media gatekeeping studies, researchers do not frequently hinge their studies on theoretical frameworks. Evidently, only 34.4% (n=44) out of

128 studies examined were theory-driven, while a predominant 65.6% (n=84) were not theory-driven. However, more media gatekeeping studies that employed quantitative methods were theory-driven (i.e. 63.3% theory-driven against 36.7% non-theory-driven), while non-quantitative studies were predominantly non-theory-driven (i.e. 84.9% non-theory-driven against 15.1% theory-driven).

The finding implies that predominantly, communication researchers do not frequently hinge their studies on theoretical frameworks. This is consistent with the finding of Kim and Weaver (2002), which revealed that the test of a communication theory was relatively rare as only 96 out of total 561 Internet-related studies (17.1%) tested a specific communication theory or relied on communication theories for their basic arguments. This present finding also corroborates the submission of Olorunnisola (2007) who argues that most Nigerian post-graduate students, and even a good number of their counterparts in the United States of America (USA), because of their 'weak' backgrounds in communication theories, submit theses and dissertations that are not theory-driven. These are unable to identify a theoretical framework for their chosen fields of research; or lack the skill to convert theoretical assumptions and concept into research questions.

The Trends

According to the data presented in this study, out of total 128 studies examined, 57.0% employed qualitative method, 38.3% used quantitative method, while the remaining 4.7% combined both quantitative and qualitative methods—what Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) describe as *mixed methods*. Under quantitative research methods, survey (75.0%) was the most frequently employed methodological approach, while in-depth interview (53.9) was the most often used qualitative approach. Generally, 40.6% articles employed quantitative methodological approaches against 59.4% articles that used qualitative approaches between 2000 and 2008—the period covered by the study. The data further revealed that more quantitative studies are theory-driven (63.3%) than qualitative ones (15.1%). However, only 34.4% out of 128 articles examined in this study had theoretical frameworks. The most applied communication theory, according to findings in this study, is Gatekeeping Theory (63.3%), followed by Newsworthiness Theory (16.3%); Agenda-Setting Theory (10.2%); Economic (Rational Choice) Theory (6.1%); and Uses and Gratification Theory (4.1%) in that order.

It is evident from the data presented in this study that in the period (2000-2008) covered by this study, there is an appreciable shift towards the use of non-quantitative methods in media gatekeeping research. Unlike what seems to be the convention in communication research that most communication scholars prefer to anchor their studies on quantifiable, measurable statistics (Berg, 2001; Abawi, 2008), the trends in media gatekeeping studies indicate that researchers are gradually moving beyond mere quantification to multi-dimensional, in-depth exploration of the 'why', 'what', and 'how' of newsroom behaviours. However, like the general trend in communication research, pragmatic application of communication theories is also still scanty in media gatekeeping studies.

Conclusion

The gradual shift in media gatekeeping research from quantitative research to qualitative methodology may be the result of the upsurge in the number of scholars from traditionally qualitative backgrounds coming into media studies. A notable example of this is the growing interest in media studies by anthropologists known as media anthropologists. It may also be the result of the increasing contestation of the meaning of objectivity and the limits of numerals as a measurement of objective reality (Berg, 2009). The rarity of the use of mixed methods implies that individual studies are likely to be less rounded than they should have been while also raising questions about the willingness or competence of researchers to straddle methodological divides.

We also noted that few gatekeeping studies are theory-framed. This suggests, in part, that the field is not experiencing theoretical growth and new findings are not being integrated into old ones. This portends some omen for the organised growth of the field of gatekeeping research. However, the shift from the quantitative to the qualitative approaches, as revealed by this study, is encouraging. The trend suggests that media gatekeeping scholars are no longer restricting their studies to the confines of quantitative assessment which, according to Abawi (2008), is not exclusively ideal for exploring—through diverse perspectives—how people construct meaning and interpret the phenomena of interest that always surround them and guide their decisions and actions. We, therefore, recommend a complementary use of both the quantitative and the qualitative methods, and adequate use of relevant theories in media gatekeeping studies. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods are expedient, and when the two are used complementarily in a single study, the researcher exploits their

strengths and minimises their limitations. Besides, the use of mixed methods in a single study provides diverse insights and perspectives, and improves the general authenticity of findings (Kaplan and Duchon, 1988; Maxwell, 1988; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

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