

Assignment 1: Blog Posts 1-3

Applied Qualitative Business Research

BMDM7002

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Blog 1: An Evaluation of Qualitative Approaches to the Future Topic

(word count 1222)

1. Introduction

The purpose of this blog is to evaluate approaches for culture strategic management of folk music in Chinese rural area. Due to my prolonged enthusiasm for recording folk music in the field, I often feel the dilemma with my participants together in survival and development of rural theatre. Hair et al (2020) pointed out that the research problems often meant the most challenging parts in my study process. Thus, these confusions from my long-term fieldwork need to be specify.

In the part of products, what is the valuable culture for a theatre in modern market? In the perspective of sounds as a brand (Saussure, 1966), comparing with pop festival and intangible cultural heritage, how can rural theatre do to present their outstanding folk music a part of the rural vitalization strategy (Xi, 2017)? Considering trends of digital industry (Hutchison, 2008), whether does the folk music still exist separating from cultural context? Hence, my research aims at exploring cultural value chain of folk music in a rural theatre impacted by “digital village” policy (CPC Central Committee and State Council, 2019). In the perspective of stakeholder, my research will explore the development strategy of folk music in the context of rural policy.

Crotty (1998) pointed out that the choices of methodologies and methods depend on types and characteristics of knowledge that we were pursuing. Guba and Lincoln (1994) mentioned the approaches to discuss questions needed to think about the methods of choices, epistemology

and ontology (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, pp. 105-117). Creswell (2018) highlighted the understanding of differences in philosophical underpinning, research design and research methods basing on nature of specific problems. A growing structure of literature has investigated research methodologies, this blog plans to evaluates approaches following three parts based on topic context: philosophical underpinning, research methodologies and validity.

2. Philosophical underpinning

The information about philosophical underpinning will support the choice of research methods (Creswell, 2018, p. 44), although it is potential existence in the process of exploration for knowledge (Slife and Williams, 1995). The role of theory brings my research the logical and systematic thinking (Babbie, 2014, p. 10). As a cultural explorer, I investigate stakeholder theory in the perspective of cultural and market relevancy (Banfield, 2015, p. 13) to explore a proper cultural strategy.

2.1 Ontology and epistemology

Guba and Lincoln (1994) showed that ontology revealed the nature of reality. Ontologically, my research aims at understanding the culture value chain in different perspectives of social lives to pursue relevancy between folk music and business society. Although inheritance is important, the core of market value in folk music tends to grasp the demands of generation transfer under modern cultural context (Banfield, 2015, p. 9). Thus, the reality of my research focuses on subjective understanding cultural transformation of society. The epistemology is broadly defined the system of knowledge (Babbie, 2014, p. 6) to reveal the relationship between researcher and possible discovery (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) based on specific ontology. In the

ethnomusicology and music business, the researcher with multiple identities to understand rural folkways context where Fujian opera performed, is a process discovering diverse layers of culture and strategies for business administration.

2.2 Methodology

According to ontology and epistemology, my research tends to explore non-statistical meanings and subjective reality in the process of investigation, although numeric data also can assist clear analysis of the cultural industry. Methodologically, the representativeness of a wider population by quantitative research is not enough for the objectives of my research to understand and describe folk music in social lives.

2.3 Paradigms

Constructivism believes that the reality is multiple and equal constructed by interaction and convergence of individual minds (Jason, and Glenwick, 2016, p. 14). Creswell (2018) demonstrated researcher should construct complex worldviews based on the understanding of subjective meanings which people are experiencing. Based on ontology, epistemology and methodology, the stance of constructivism is appropriate for my research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

3. Evaluation of approaches

In order to receive my aims, the industry analysis by quantitative approach as important sources is useful to the complicated relevancy in stakeholders and cultural industry chain. However, facing the current situation in which folk music lacks modern cultural relevancy, these approaches, such as ethnography, case study, will be more helpful. So, in this part I want to

analyse the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative approaches comparing with quantitative research.

3.1 Strengths

The strengths in qualitative and quantitative research are different completely. The important literature of Bryman (2004) concluded that qualitative approaches focused on the processes, but quantitative research paid more attention to structural regularities. As Dawson (2009) mentioned, qualitative methods tended to investigate ‘attitudes, behaviour and experiences’ by participant observation, interview in-depth, and fieldwork. For the cultural strategies, qualitative approaches have strengths to present rich descriptions, personal views, ‘postmodern perspectives’, and real-life experiences (Denzin, and Lincoln, 2000). In understanding the cultural value in market, it is difficult to clarify variables clearly in a specific region and ethnic group. And qualitative research has obvious benefits in those themes that have never been addressed with a specific region, group, or social circle (Creswell, 2018).

3.2 weaknesses

Although qualitative research allows plenty of latitudes and triangulated language, the quantitative methods with directional expression and a clear relationship between different variables (Leavy, 2017) are especially useful for conducting complicated hypotheses. When the research focuses on the business perspective, how can we let our research to be time-efficient, reproducible partly, and accepted by the industry? And qualitative research presents its weaknesses in these points. If I interview one participant for the whole investigation, it is not easy that the subjective process can be used in industrial development adequately. These

weaknesses will bring huge challenges for qualitative approaches to obtain high quality of data collection and analysis.

4. The viability for approaches

This research focuses on rural cultural relevancy of folk music in the perspective of stakeholder theory to explore the combining mode of business and cultural heritage in one rural cultural organization, such as a rural theatre. The core of cultural value originates from creation and real-life (Banfield, 2015), which is difficult to express by number and probability. The statistical validity is limited in the folk music, although good construct validity is a way of defining internal consistency with stakeholder theory (Garson, 2013, p. 10). Obviously, more factors in the cultural market cannot save poor convergent validity completely, but linearity and correlation are useful to solve certain problems in business (Waters, 2011, p. 284).

In the perspective of external validity, can the views from wider population express representativeness of trend which will be loved by musical consumers? I think audiences do not really know which kind of folk music they will like in the future. In the commercial validity, folk music business needs more professional experience and feelings, although analytics is also important (Allen, 2018, p. 19). Thus, the bias from quantitative methods may be difficult to overcome by changing samples in cultural context (Garson, 2013, p. 27). And qualitative research with good trustworthiness often can address the dilemma from quantitative approaches to obtain higher validity and reliability (Marshall and Rossman, 2014).

5. Conclusion

According to the evaluation of methodologies, although there are so many distinctive characteristics in qualitative and quantitative approaches, I think qualitative methods will be more appropriate to my future research in the discussion of cultural market relevancy in folk music.

Blog 2: Identification of the topic in various qualitative approaches, designs and techniques

(word count 1150)

1. Introduction

This blog aims at identifying the distinction of different qualitative approaches to explore a viable research design for future study. My research focuses on folk music and the cultural industry which express music in the past and present (Bohlman, 2015, p. 27). With the evolution of the internet and digital distribution, the music business is developing into a landscape with complex subcultures (Baskerville and Baskerville, 2017). Harrison (2015) suggested '***the field methodology***' is useful for ethnomusicologic research to support culture theory. Thus, in cultural strategic of my folk music research, the methods I choose need to have benefits to investigate, verify, and understand the truth which is experienced in the field (Rice, 2017).

However, the exploration of Chinese market in folk music is not an easy work, which needs to consider ***the history and contemporary*** (Harrison, 2015, p. 507). Folk music has dilemma to adapt to web market, especially in China, due to unevenly developed rural market and high development of reform and opening up (Lu, 2015, p. 20). And the distinctive characteristic of inheriting by mouth and heart, and playing in informal settings, such as ancestral hall due to demands of folkways (Lau, 2008) is difficult to develop continuingly in the modern cultural industry, because the folkways (Sumner, 1906) has replaced by laws and rules step by step. On the other hand, the multiple culture shock from globalization brings huge confusion for musical

customers to choose the music which has cultural identity. So, the methods to explore folk music in rural areas need to overcome these dilemmas in the process of interview or collecting oral materials.

2. Various qualitative approaches

2.1 Narrative and Hierarchy

In my field, narrative approach can tell many good stories into a chronology (Creswell, 2013, p. 71), and reconstruct individual experiences by understanding my participants (Clandinin, 2007). Hence, this is a useful way when I need to collect stories about strategic problems in a rural theatre, and managers, actors or audience will tell their experiences during my prolonged fieldwork. Nevertheless, massive notes written by narrative way bring challenge to highlight evidences supporting theories, aims and objectives. Phenomenology aims to grasp the essence of experience (Moustakas, 1994), which fills up that limitation of lacking clusters when I collect data. In the specific village of southeast China, I try to narrate what happens in local theatres, and how the phenomenon in rural areas interacts musical business development? In weaknesses, many types of folk music in Chinese villages are programs for public good for the long-term, rather than private business organizations. So, the unknown reality in rural musical industry is a huge challenge that makes me reshape nature of the phenomenon constantly to meet my curiosity (LeVasseur, 2003).

2.2 Success of “Deyun Crosstalk Association”

Case study obtains high credibility to investigate particular phenomenon in cultural context (Harrison, al et, 2017). This method is a complementary (Bhatta, 2018) in folk music research

to analyse successful experience in music business, although “the subject of critique and confusion” (Rule and John, 2015) may become another problem.

In rural areas of southeast China, the case about folk music is often related to the cultural heritage, rather than business. However, Deyun Crosstalk Association (德云社) is an excellent case for rural revitalization. Distinguishing from Talk Show, crosstalk (相声) in China combines many folk music, techniques and local language (Lau, 2008), and Deyun Crosstalk Association points out the mission ‘Let crosstalk return to the theatre’ (DeYun, 2021). As a rural theatre, it is no doubt that the success of Deyun crosstalk brings hope for other rural theatres. Unfortunately, I have little contacts of folk music in northern field, so that this case just can be a secondary source in my research.

2.3 the Challenge of “Go Native”

My research focuses on cultural theory and stakeholder theory to construct developing strategies of one rural theatre. Obviously, grounded theory is not suitable for this research, but the tool of reflectivity which is used to reduce confusion from ignoring prior theory (Jason and Glenwick, 2016) is useful in my data collection to construct validity. Due to the importance of cultural analysis in my research, ethnography is a good method to interpret and understand meanings (Greeze, 2008). The culture-shared group (Harris, 1968) focuses on those individuals and organizations who are relevant with rural theatre and folk music industries in the specific field. The distinctive strengths of interpreting socialcultural evolution (Harris, 1968) discover cultural value in folk music industry, especially for the rural context. However, ‘go native’ (Atkinson, 2007) means the concern about history and contemporary. If we think

about modern market, it is a challenge for ethnography to meet the demands of web business and globalization faster.

3. Research design and techniques

3.1 Research Framework

My research will be constructed by following framework (see figure 1), which embraces the theme of cultural strategic management to conduct fieldwork in rural folkways context, and discover evidence to support theories.

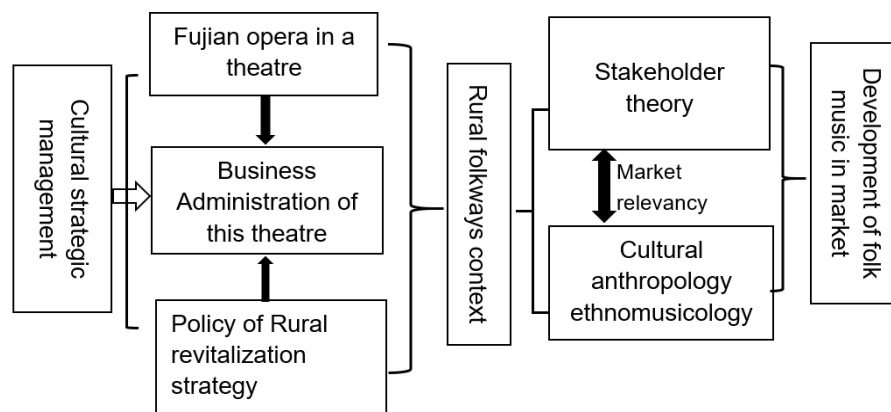


Figure 1: Research Framework

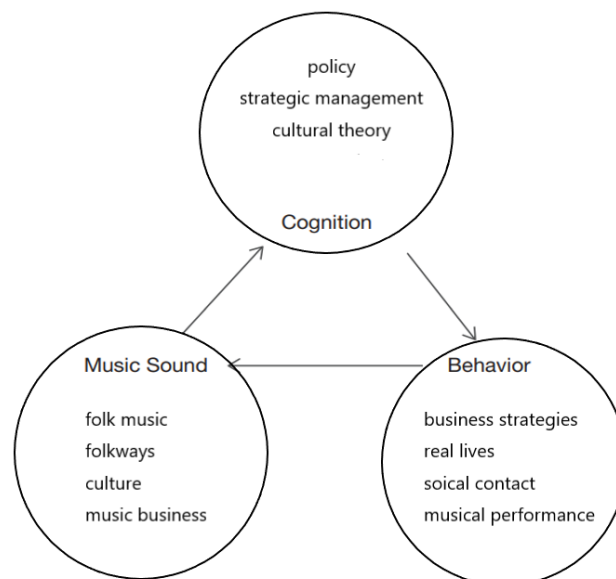


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework adapted from The Merriam model (Merriam, 1980)

And the concept of this research adapts from the three dimensions of the Merriam model (Merriam, 1980), encompassing cognition, music sound, and behaviour. The multiple views in the three dimensions will be observed and described by participant observation (see figure 2).

Characteristics of qualitative approaches which I need					
Characteristic	Narrative approach	Phenomenology	Case study	Grounded theory	Ethnography
Telling a good story.	✓				✓
Finding the essence in complicated phenomenon.		✓			✓
Studying Successful experiences.			✓		
I always reflect my process of research.				✓	✓
I am confused about unknown folk music market.				✓	
A method is used to explore cultural context.					✓
I try to interpret events in my field.					✓
I can understand this circle in my field.					✓

Table 1: Characteristics of qualitative approaches which I need

3.2 Research Phases

According to the results of visiting five approaches, ethnography is an appropriate method as the main tool to explore folk music research, although the belief of ‘*methodological congruence*’ (Morse and Richards, 2002) lets me combine strengths of other approaches (see

table 1). These characteristics will be used in my future research. I really love the ideals to combine ethnography with other approaches and techniques (Atkinson, et al, 2007). Hence, my research will embrace the concepts of congruence, and divide processes into following phases (see table 2).

Phase	Approaches	Aims
Foundation phase	Discourse Analysis	1. Research problem 2. Philosophy underpinning 3. Methodology discussion 4. Literature review
Prefield phase	Narrative method Interview Observation	1. finding the gatekeepers and participants 2. collecting key information 3. ethical consideration
Field phase	Field notes Interview Participant observation Audiovisual methods	1. Collecting data 2. Analysis data 3. Construct knowledge from field 4. Finding evidences to support my theory
Reporting phase	Hermeneutics Content analysis	Writing reports for my research

Table 2: The Phases of My Research

The purpose of the study is to examine and review cultural anthropology and stakeholder theory that describe and shape cultural values of rural music market. So, the processes of my research focus on prolonged fieldwork to collect participants' voices and details of the theatre (Creswell, 2007, p. 44). And I emphasis different approaches in every phase to construct my research. The details look at table 3.

Phase	Description
Foundation phase	I plan to think about research problems, philosophy, methodologies. Do adequate literature review to prepare for future research.
Prefield phase	I plan to prepare for my fieldwork, so I need to contact with my friends who works in the rural theatre, and investigate more information about my research. Also, consider the ethical problems in advance.
Field phase	1. participant observation: this is a prolonged fieldwork continuing in the whole data collection to understand details in this rural theatre and examine validity of other data. 2. interview in depth: I choose several participants, including manager, audience, employee, local people, and expert to do interview. 3. recording important scenes by videos, images and notes.
Reporting phase	1. analyze cultural value chain in rural theatre. 2. analyze cultural value in stakeholder perspective. 3. construct relationships between folk music and business.

Table 3: Description of Research Phases

3.3 Research techniques

Atkinson (2007) pointed out the methods and analysis should be syncretic with wider fields and theoretical frameworks. Thus, the strategies of techniques refer to the validity and reliability of my data construction. Due to the characteristic of music, the recording archives and diverse field notes will provide more clear contents to be analyzed.

4. Conclusion

This blog has identified that ethnography owns the most advantage to conduct my research. And I believe the linear analysis and five approaches in qualitative research are also perceived in future research.

Blog 3: A Qualitative Research to Cultural Strategic Management of Fujian

opera troupe in the Rural Folkways Context

(Word count 1118)

1. Introduction

This blog presents a qualitative inquiry to explore cultural relevancy of folk music based on the situation of a Fujian opera troupe in rural context. The objectives of my research search for cultural meanings of folk music in market, record performance scene in rural areas, and investigate relevancy between spirit-soul of music and rural lives. In historical law, country music in America (Malone and Laird, 2018) and cross talk in northern China as well experience dilemma of *generational cultural transfer* (Banfield, 2015, p. 15), but they are adapted to business environment faster. In the digital village context of southeast China, the series of questions, ‘what are stakeholders for folk music industry?’, ‘what are the social issue which affect market relevancy in this context?’, will be the key to open the exploring door.

The core theoretical framework is constructed by stakeholder theory and cultural anthropology. Linden and Freeman (2017) highlighted stakeholder value pluralism in strategic management. And cultural value chain (Hsu and Huang, 2016) of folk music focuses on cultural relevancy between tradition and business. The views of interpreting culture suggested by Geertz (1977) construct the relationship between stakeholder conflicts and cultural value chain.

2. Viable approach

The worldviews of this research concern the relationship between music and business society, which can be constructed by approaches from *music anthropology* (Merriam, 1964). The ethnography has its distinctive characteristics in cultural theory of anthropology (Atkinson, 2007), and is extended to more social disciplines to understand cultural diversity. Although ethnography is the main approach to construct future study, the fusion of pluralistic methods also helps to deal with complex problems in the field.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

I plan to choose a Fujian opera troupe in a Chinese village to collect data by fieldwork. This gatekeeper who is my father's classmate works in the Fujian opera theatre as the leader for many years. This theatre locates in Lianjiang where is a village in coastal southeast China (see figure 2). Also, the larger field can be investigated if I have adequate time to complete a more macroscopical research of context near southeast coast.



Figure 3: the possible territorial scope of my field (lbs, 2021)

In order to write culture better (Clifford and Marcus, 1992) for this special organization, the period of fieldwork often follows local folkways and festivals to realize the aims of *artistic appreciation and thanking gods*. Hence, it is an interesting phenomenon that the audiences of Fujian opera encompass *the elder and different gods* (Haili, 2015). Due to multiple social functions, such as public benefits, folkways, business celebration, this organization exists by themselves in this digital commercial era. In the stakeholder perspective, the related groups also need to be investigated, especially in culture parts. In the choice of participants, the leader in that theatre is an important one to be interview in-depth, and the others will be selected in the process of fieldwork according to *comparison methods* (Glaser and Strauss, 2006, p. 49).

3.1 Participant observation

As a local, it is not too difficult for me to '*go native*' and be an '*active participant*' (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011, p. 25). In micro-level, due to differences of region and culture, I am still a *familiar strange* (Atkinson, 2007, p.121) for this field. As a participant, I will be a performer for this theatre to join some activities to feel and observe phenomenon as an insider. On the other hand, as an outsider, everything in theatre and rural context is record logically (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011). Considering complicated situation of field, the prefield and fieldwork phase have different targets to narrow core problems and write distinctive layers of culture-group. From musical culture to theatre administration, the transformation of roles in field will also be a difficulty for future research.

3.2 Interview

In the process of participant observation, interview is often an unawareness conversation (Spradley, 1979, p. 58). It is my advantage to join their group and find surprising answer

naturally by local language. For another interview in-depth method, the questions and questionnaire will be designed after the prefield phase or the process of fieldwork. The flexible strategy improves efficiency and accuracy (Glaser and Strauss, 2006, p. 224), when I plan to solve the puzzle in a more specific perspective for the cultural strategies of this troupe. Just like Barz and Cooley (2008) said, “we were *chasing shadow in the field*”.

3.3 Field notes

Due to the demands of recording music and writing culture, field notes are the core technique to capture data by *multiple tools* (Pole and Hillyard, 2016), such as documents, cameras, smartphones, and so on (see figure 3). The category and recording Apps include Nvivo 12, Cubase 10, mapping, and other office software. Marshall and Rossman (2014) thought that diverse sources of data can reduce bias in the process of collection. I try to describe what happens in this theatre and rural context from different roles so that the research can have comprehensive views. Multiple understandings of action meanings focus on *narrative views and hermeneutic phenomenology* (Pole and Hillyard, 2016).

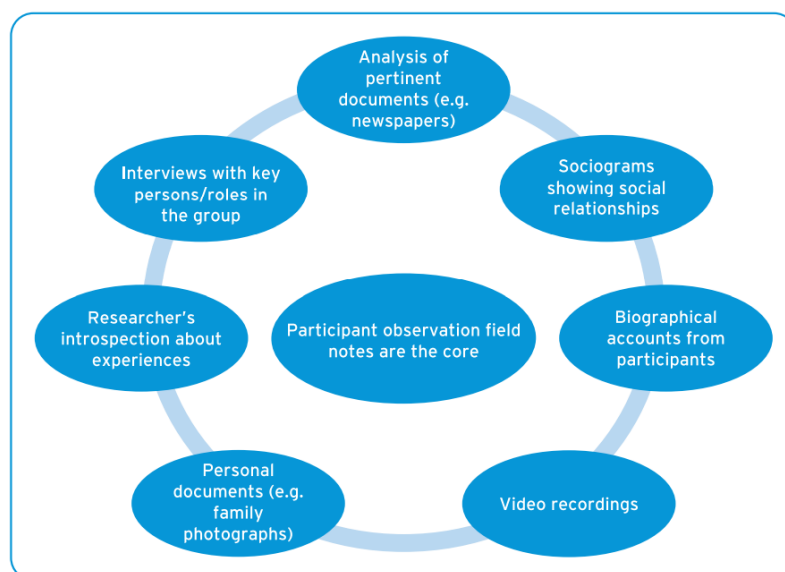


Figure 4: Possible elements of a participant observation (Howitt, 2016, p. 111)

4. Validity and Reliability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) pointed out credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to judge validity and reliability of data process. I believe diverse methods above and prolonged fieldwork by participant observation can test validity and reliability for different data (Padgett, 2016). Music and words are different languages, so the sound archives play an important role in ethnomusicology research (Seeger, 1986). Meantime, the concern about music performance in ritual (Brabec de Mori and Seeger, 2013) constructs more trustworthiness consistency and accuracy (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) for theoretical framework. In relevancy perspective, the linkage between theory and data expanse generalisation of research. For the complicated musical and business phenomenon, content analysis must base on insight category and find the hided meanings (Krippendorff, 2013, p. 82).

5. Ethical risk

There is no doubt that respect privacy for every participant and group is really important, especially in interview and recording (Kalu and Bwalya, 2017). In the part of data analysis, it is inevitable to describe knowledge in subjective points, thus I will try to be a collector, rather than an arbiter (Seeger, 1986). In rural folkways context, the problems of environment, culture, power and right has been concerned by ecomusicological ethnographer (Gautier, 2016). As an explorer of business administration, the CSR of theatre also needs to consider in the process of investigation.

6. Conclusion

The blog has showed the viability of qualitative research in my future research. Although ethnography has been designed to use in the process of data collection and analysis, the critical thought of methodology is still in the road, waiting a more insight results.

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