

Chapter 21

Application of Multi- Methods in Understanding Knowledge Retention in the Cross-Border Mergers of the Telecommunications Industry in Lesotho

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ABSTRACT

The chapter is about the adoption of a multi-methods in a quantitative case study of retaining knowledge in the cross-border mergers of the telecommunications industry of Lesotho. The chapter explains how multi-method was applied in the study and also provides reasons for that. This study triangulated questionnaires and interviews as the instruments of data collection, and the aim was ensure validity and reliability. Using multi-methods study is advantageous because of its ability to counterbalance the weaknesses of a single method. The limitations of a single method are usually the strengths of another method.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The chapter is based on the research methodology used in the study by (Tseole, 2020), which was a quantitative case study design that adopted the multi-methods approach with the aim of improving the reliability and validity of the study. The origin of multi-methods research can be traced as far back as Campbell and Fiske's (1959) cutting-edge article on measurement validation (Creamer, 2018; Ngulube, 2019; Romm & Ngulube, 2015; Yawson, 2016). This research approach seeks to systematically adopt

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different types of methods in one study. Multi-methods should not be confused with mixed methods research, as they are not the same, even though several researchers use them interchangeably (Creamer, 2018; Creswell, 2016; Romm & Ngulube, 2015; Marutha, 2020). The quantitative nature of this study was also inherent in the positive paradigm or worldview that the study followed. The study triangulated questionnaires and interviews as the data collection instruments. The adoption of multiple qualitative-quantitative (Romm & Ngulube 2015; Creamer, 2018) methods or a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods (Ngulube, 2019) can contribute to a better understanding of a research problem compared to research that is based on only one methodological approach (Creswell, 2015).

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the adoption of the multi-methods approach in a study. Firstly, this chapter discusses the research paradigm on which the study was anchored, including the ontological and epistemological positions that the researcher subscribed to. Secondly, the chapter discusses the three popular research methodologies, which are qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods (MMR), including the advantages and disadvantages of mixing different methodologies in a single study. The chapter further discusses the multi-methods approach, which the study employed, including how and why it was used as well how the multi-methods approach is different from MMR. The chapter concludes by suggesting a framework that may be used in information sciences.

Research Problem

This chapter was necessitated by the challenges that social researchers face in the application of multi-methods in research. Several researchers still use mixed methods research and multi-methods interchangeably, as if they are the same thing (Marutha, 2020; Ngulube, 2019). Some researchers claim to be using a single research method, yet, when one examines the application, it appears to be either mixed or multi-methods (Marutha, 2020). Based on this, it is clear that more research is required to clarify the distinction in the application of the two concepts. According to Ngulube (2019), multi-methods has to do with using multiple data sources while mixed methods research has to do with employing two methodologies and two paradigms (worldviews).

Study Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to show the application of multi-methods in a quantitative case study of knowledge retention in the cross-border mergers of the telecommunications industry of Lesotho. The study had the following specific objectives:

- To show the methodology applied to the study of knowledge retention in the cross-border mergers of the telecommunications industry of Lesotho.
- To provide an explanation of how and why the multi-methods approach was applied based on the lesson learnt.
- To suggest a framework that may be used in the application of the multi-methods approach in a study.

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