

Chapter 10

Qualitative Techniques in Action: Practical Example

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ABSTRACT

The chapter delves into a qualitative analysis of research data focusing on the discourse exchanged during a sales transaction between a Moroccan intern and a native French client. The aim is to explore the linguistic and cultural dynamics inherent in intercultural business interactions, particularly in the context of sales operations. The analysis homes in on how the Moroccan intern navigates linguistic subtleties and cultural disparities while engaging with a French client. It scrutinizes verbal exchanges, language preferences, communication strategies, and cultural nuances to uncover pivotal factors that influence the success of such interactions. The research seeks to pinpoint the strengths and challenges encountered by the Moroccan intern when selling to a French-speaking clientele. The objective is to extract practical insights to augment the linguistic and intercultural competencies of interns enrolled in commerce and management programs, underscoring the significance of these skills in an increasingly globalized business landscape.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the book is dedicated to the analysis of qualitative research data, shedding light on the discourse exchanged during a sales operation between a Moroccan intern enrolled in the Commerce and Management program at OFPPT and a native French client. This study is situated within the complex context of intercultural commercial transactions, where linguistic and cultural dynamics play a central role.

The primary objective of this research is to deepen our understanding of the specific linguistic and cultural interactions in this context, closely examining how the Moroccan intern navigates through linguistic nuances and cultural differences during interactions with a French client. To achieve this, we will delve into verbal interactions, language choices, communication strategies, as well as cultural variations that emerge during these exchanges.

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Furthermore, this study aims to identify the strengths and challenges the Moroccan intern may face when selling to a native French-speaking audience. By highlighting these aspects, we seek to draw practical insights to enhance the linguistic and intercultural skills of commerce and management interns at OFPPT. It also aims to underscore the importance of such skills in an increasingly globalized business world, where the ability to successfully navigate intercultural environments is essential for professional success.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Intercultural Communication Theories

Intercultural communication is a multidisciplinary field that focuses on human interactions in contexts characterized by cultural diversity. This subchapter examines the key theories underlying intercultural communication and their relevance in the context of commercial transactions between a Moroccan intern and a native French client.

- Intercultural Adjustment Theory: This theory emphasizes individuals' ability to effectively adapt to cultural differences during intercultural interactions. We will analyze how the Moroccan intern can implement adjustment strategies to navigate the commercial context with a French client. In her work, Kim (2005) develops a theory of adaptation to a new culture, also known as the integrative intercultural adaptation theory. This theory proposes that when individuals find themselves in a new cultural environment, they may adopt different adaptation strategies, including assimilation, maintaining their own culture, or adopting certain aspects of the new culture while retaining elements of their original culture. Kim argues that optimal intercultural adaptation occurs when individuals adopt an integrative approach, integrating aspects of their original culture with those of the new culture, thereby creating a hybrid cultural identity. This theory highlights the importance of flexibility and open-mindedness in the process of intercultural adaptation.
- Cultural Identity Management Theory: This theory explores how individuals manage their cultural identity during intercultural interactions by adjusting their behavior according to the context. Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012) offer valuable insights into the intercultural dynamics underlying cultural identity management. By examining the patterns and skills necessary to navigate intercultural interactions effectively, this work sheds light on the strategies individuals use to adjust their behavior according to the cultural context. This approach resonates with the theory of cultural identity management, emphasizing the importance for the Moroccan intern to negotiate his cultural identity while interacting with a French client. By exploring these concepts in the specific context of intercultural commercial transactions, we can better understand how these processes influence communication and sales outcomes.
- Social Exchange Theory: This theory examines the processes of social exchange and cooperation among individuals from different cultures. Molm, Takahashi, and Peterson's (2000) research focuses on the dynamics of risk and trust in social exchanges, proposing experimental tests to verify certain classical propositions of social exchange theory. Their work explores how individuals evaluate risks and trust in social interactions, and how these perceptions influence their participation in social exchanges. They have conducted empirical studies to test hypotheses of social exchange theory, particularly focusing on the relationship between perceived risk and trust in interpersonal exchanges.

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