

Enhancing Management Research through Qualitative Methods

Impulsar la investigación en management mediante métodos cualitativos

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Abstract: Considering the changes and uncertainties of the current environment that affect management in organizations, the use of qualitative methods in business research facilitates the study of organizational phenomena from a different perspective while acknowledging their complexity. The objective of this special issue is to offer greater exposure to empirical studies that thoroughly employ qualitative methods to solving business and management problems. We have attempted to showcase how diverse qualitative methodologies, from classic case-based strategies to more novel ones such as action research, provide new visions for approaching the study of organizational realities. Also, we have briefly reflected on the application of new tools as visual techniques or AI to business and management research. Therefore, this special issue offers five papers that, from different methodological perspectives and content, seek to contribute to this objective. We hope that this special issue represents a significant advancement in the visibility and appreciation of qualitative methods within the field of business and management research.

Keywords: Qualitative research, qualitative methods, case study, action research.

Resumen: Considerando los cambios e incertidumbres del entorno actual que afectan a la dirección de las organizaciones, la utilización de métodos cualitativos en la investigación relacionada con la empresa permite estudiar este fenómeno desde una perspectiva diferente y en toda su complejidad. En este sentido, el objetivo de este número especial ha sido ofrecer una mayor exposición de los estudios empíricos que emplean con profundidad los métodos cualitativos para resolver problemas de investigación en el campo de los negocios y la dirección de empresas. Hemos tratado de mostrar cómo diversas metodologías cualitativas, desde estrategias clásicas como los estudios de casos hasta más novedosas como la investigación acción, aportan nuevas visiones sobre cómo abordar el estudio de realidades organizativas. También, hemos hecho una breve reflexión sobre la aplicación de nuevas herramientas como las técnicas visuales o la IA a la investigación en el área de los negocios y la dirección de la empresa. Así, este número especial ofrece cinco artículos que, desde diferentes perspectivas metodológicas y contenidos, tratan de contribuir a este objetivo. Esperamos que este número especial represente un avance significativo en la visibilidad y valoración de los métodos cualitativos dentro del campo de la investigación de los negocios y la dirección de la empresa.

Palabras clave: Investigación cualitativa, métodos cualitativos, estudio de caso, investigación-acción.

1. Introduction

The complexity of today's world, marked by diverse interactions among people, organizations, institutions, communities, norms, and values, poses significant challenges for management research. Addressing these challenges necessitates a blend of various research methodologies, approaches, methods and/or techniques (we will use the generic word 'methods' to encompass all these terms) to better comprehend organizational and social realities. From this perspective, the set of methods a researcher has at his/her disposal may be assimilated to a toolbox, from which academics choose the specific combination that best allows them to solve research problems. As a result, "we are witnessing the emergence of an innovative trend towards the mixing of methodologies" (Cameron, 2024, p. 2).

Though our initial position is clearly related to the absence of overly predefined or restricted categories when we refer to research methods, we assume and share that some kind of classification is needed. In this respect, dividing research methods into quantitative and qualitative has been present in the scientific literature from a long time (Bryman, 1988; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017; Flick, 2023). The management field is not an exception, but this special issue is only focused on highlighting the critical role that qualitative research methods have to approach organizational problems and realities.

Under the great umbrella that qualitative methods offer to researchers and practitioners, we may find a myriad of classic approaches such as narrative inquiry, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, case study and action research (Cassell et al., 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019; Yin, 2014). The application of these methods has a long tradition in the field of management, and the case study approach is the dominant analytical approach (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Runfola et al., 2017; Yin, 2014). We can find multiple recent examples of case study application in business and management research journals (Athanasopoulou et al., 2024; Contreras-Pacheco et al., 2024; Franzè et al., 2024; Köhn et al., 2023; Nazir & Doni, 2024). However, other qualitative research strategies remain relatively unexplored. It is of particular relevance the case of action research, an approach that originates in the seminal management work by Kurt Lewin and colleagues (Coghlan & Brannick, 2003), and turned out to be of a great value for organization development in the 1990s (Coghlan, 2005).

As a research approach, action research aims at both taking action and creating knowledge together (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Erro-Garcés & Alfaro-Tanco, 2020; Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Shani & Coghlan, 2021). It is applied in all fields of social action (e.g. organizational change, business and management, education, nursing and health care, social work and community development) (Coghlan & Shani, 2018). Particularly, within business and management it is used across multiple sectors (e.g. banking, automotive, mining, healthcare, electronics, food, etc.) and disciplines (e.g. general management, marketing, operations, information technology, human resources, quality management, etc.) (Coghlan & Shani, 2016). However, its application in the academy has become a troubled history and is frequently marginalized (Coghlan, 2011; Greenwood, 2002), what may contribute to explain the scarce application of this approach in business management research. Fortunately, this trend seems to have changed recently. As Bleijenbergh et al. (2021) claim, in the beginning of the 21st century action research became a more common approach, with the publication of the *Sage Handbook of Action Research* (Reason & Bradbury, 2001) and the introduction of the journal *Action Research* in 2002. Today, "the business and management literature" provides many examples of action research implementation" (Shani & Coghlan, 2021, p. 522) and the increased interest for this approach among scholars is noteworthy (Erro-Garcés & Alfaro-Tanco, 2020).

Also, the business and management context is rapidly and constantly changing. Various factors, such as the impact of digital technologies, social media, and social tools; the emergence of new alternative work settings as well as more flexible and agile organizational designs; the increasing emphasis on innovation leadership and leadership capabilities; the global emphasis on sustainable development and sustainable organizations; and the emerging role of collaborative communities of inquiry (Shani & Coghlan, 2018), are offering diverse and attractive opportunities for the application of qualitative research methods (Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014).

These changes pave the way for the use of new tools that complement traditional qualitative methods. In this vein, the use of visual tools in the development of interviews becomes a clear example. [Olmo-Extremera et al. \(2024\)](#), in the field of education, point out that it is necessary to expand data collection tools (e.g. photo-elicitation, the biogram-based timeline) so that the data gathered through interviews can be better complemented. [Glegg \(2019\)](#) points out the importance of using visual tools to improve communication, facilitate the relationship between the interviewee and the researcher, and represent the data in an aggregate or summarized manner when conducting interviews. Finally, [Comi et al. \(2014\)](#) suggest employing visual techniques in interviewing not only with projective purpose to elicit answers but also as facilitation techniques during the whole process.

Another issue related to the application of new technologies to qualitative research has to do with the use of artificial intelligence (AI) models. Increasingly, the most important software packages (e.g. Atlas.ti, NVivo, MAXQDA) employed by researchers in the development of qualitative work are incorporating AI-based tools. This inclusion has already provoked reactions in the scientific community and, recently (mainly in 2023 and 2024), different works on the subject have been published. Some studies (e.g., [Hamilton et al., 2023](#); [Jalali & Akhavan, 2024](#); [Lee et al., 2020](#); [Morgan, 2023](#)) compare traditional qualitative analysis tools and qualitative analysis based on AI with respect to efficiency and validity. In addition, most research acknowledges that AI is a useful tool that complements, but does not replace, the researcher's analysis. These studies show that complementary, but not identical, results can be achieved through both routes. For example, [Morgan \(2023, p. 1\)](#) established that AI “was less successful at locating subtle, interpretive themes”, but more efficient with the descriptive topics.

Other scientific studies focus on the ethical questions regarding the use of AI in qualitative data analysis, from a more critical perspective ([Christou, 2023](#); [Davison et al., 2024](#); [Paulus & Marone, 2024](#)). Particularly, [Davison et al. \(2024\)](#) highlight the existence of some dilemmas or relevant questions that affect the use of AI when analyzing qualitative data. The authors reveal the issues around data privacy or confidentiality rights and suggest that researchers should request the consent of the interviewees if they transfer data to a generative AI software. Also, they reflect on the possible biases in the analysis with AI tools and the role and responsibility of academics in the development of the research process.

[Paulus and Marone \(2024\)](#) discuss the advantages and disadvantages of applying AI in qualitative analysis. Though the application of AI during qualitative analysis may help some researchers to do the analysis faster and in a less tedious way, these authors advocate carrying out qualitative analysis in the traditional way. These authors emphasize that “no matter how shocking it may sound to future readers, some qualitative researcher actually enjoy doing the heavy lifting, finding thought-provoking and meaningful what others consider a headache” (p.7). In addition, the words, the narrative, the discourse and the gesture, become real representations of the experiences of the subjects and, therefore, the very essence of interpretation; however, interpretation belongs to the realm of the researcher ([Creswell & Creswell, 2023](#)), and not to the AI algorithm.

2. Qualitative methods in the business and management literature

The debate over the significance and acceptance of qualitative methods in top-tier journals is open. While some progress has been made, qualitative methods still lag behind quantitative methods in terms of prevalence in academic publications ([Cassell et al., 2018](#); [Johnson, 2015](#); [Runfola et al., 2017](#)). The question of the knowledge area is also worth mentioning. As [Pratt et al. \(2020\)](#) state, qualitative studies are still quite scarce in the field of management in general, but this tendency is particularly evident in the domain of strategic management ([Graebner, 2021](#)). This disparity underscores the need for greater visibility and rigor in the application of qualitative research methods in the field of management.

These arguments motivate this special issue whose objective is to offer greater exposure to empirical research that thoroughly employs qualitative methods to business management research. At this point we considered to what extent

top tier journals included articles using qualitative methodologies. A search was carried out in the ‘topic’ field of the Web of Science (WoS) for the period between January 2022 and July 2024. The analyzed research areas were ‘Business’ and ‘Management’. Specifically, we employed terms related to different qualitative approaches or strategies as case study, ethnography, narrative/life story, phenomenology, grounded theory and action research. Our results showed that most of the articles published in WoS journals within ‘Business’ and ‘Management’ categories applied the case study strategy, being the rest of approaches less used (see table 1). Also, we observed a general trend showing a decrease in the use of qualitative methods in the three years considered (2022 - July 2024).

To see what happens with top tier journals, we focused on journals in the top decile of the WoS ranking simultaneously in the fields of ‘Business’ and ‘Management’ (in total, 15 top journals). Again, ‘Case study’ is the most common approach (see table 2), followed in a long distance by other approaches like ‘Narrative / Life story’ or ‘Grounded theory’. In addition, it is remarkable that approaches that are now more common in the management literature, as ‘Action Research’ or ‘Ethnography’, are barely employed in the works published in top tier journals of the area. According to our analysis, 221 articles have employed ‘Case study’ compared to just 1 with ‘Action research’ or 13 with ‘Ethnography’.

Table 1: Number of published articles with qualitative approaches in the WoS Journals

APPROACH	WoS CATEGORY							
	BUSINESS				MANAGEMENT			
	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
CASE STUDY	643	557	249	1449	1029	886	420	2335
ACTION RESEARCH	22	11	8	41	71	56	29	156
NARRATIVE / LIFE STORY	105	128	45	278	135	126	75	336
ETHNOGRAPHY	34	43	19	96	70	77	35	182
GROUNDED THEORY	58	61	39	158	94	108	41	243
PHENOMENOLOGY	10	15	7	32	17	16	14	47

Table 2: Number of published articles with qualitative approaches in the first decile of WoS journals belonging to ‘Business’ and ‘Management’ categories

	2022	2023	July 2024	TOTAL
CASE STUDY	102	84	35	221
ACTION RESEARCH	1	0	0	1
NARRATIVE / LIFE STORY	6	13	4	23
GROUNDED THEORY	6	9	7	22
ETHNOGRAPHY	3	7	3	13
TOTAL	118	113	49	

3. Contributions to this special issue

Although relevant publications in business and management include articles applying qualitative methodologies, most are reduced to a particular approach, namely the case study. In part, this Special Issue was developed to give visibility to other strategies that, in our opinion, can approach organizational problems from diverse perspectives and observe organizational realities with a different lens. Thus, this Special Issue aims to open new possibilities for the field. Such a focus may allow researchers to envision new ways of engaging qualitative methods and, in so doing, advance knowledge and practice.

The election of the journal to host this Special Issue was also of utmost importance. Several reasons lead us to propose the launching of the Special Issue to the TEC Empresarial journal. Firstly, TEC Empresarial joined the selected group of JCR journals in 2022 (JIF = 0,3; 5-year JIF = 0,5; JCI = 0,12) and it has experienced a substantial improvement in 2023 (JIF = 1,1; 5-year JIF = 0,8; JCI = 0,24). This evolution represents a significant indicator of how well managed the journal is, and the quality of the articles recently published in the journal. Secondly, this journal, owned and published by the School of Business at Costa Rica Institute of Technology (TEC), targets an international audience and is widely accepted in Latin America. And thirdly, the journal has a fairly multidisciplinary approach in the field of business and management, covering a broad scope of topics, and follows a rigorous selection process which is supported by a large international scientific committee. With these reasons in mind, our objective was to approach the topic of this Special Issue (i.e. qualitative methods in business studies) within the scope of a high-quality journal, open it to a wide and diverse audience, but without losing the global focus. We thank the journal for its disposition to spread the use of qualitative methods in business studies as a Special Issue and, we hope to contribute to sensitize researchers to the application of qualitative methods in those areas towards which the journal is oriented.

The Call for Papers intended to attract the variety of types of qualitative methodologies and methods used by business and management scholars. The Call for Papers generated 16 submissions from around the world, an important number of submissions to the Special Issue on qualitative methods published in TEC Empresarial. Out of this set of submissions, we accepted five manuscripts for publication in the Special Issue. Each paper was reviewed by at least two expert referees from different countries and disciplines. The guest editors would like to thank all the reviewers that kindly collaborated with us in the process. We also thank the authors that submitted their papers to this Special Issue.

In total, these 16 papers show a range of approaches including ethnography (1 paper), case study (7 papers), grounded theory (1 paper) and action research (2 papers), diverse methods as semi-structured interviews (2 papers), unstructured interviews (1 paper) and content analysis (2 papers), and different theorizing modes from analytical induction and interpretive analysis to the development of meta-analysis.

Regarding their content, the most recurrent themes were those related to entrepreneurship (3 papers), knowledge management and/or intellectual capital (mixed with other topics, 4 papers) and innovation, often related to small businesses or family businesses (2 papers). Other topics considered in the submissions were internationalization (2 papers), strategy (one paper on risk in management and results and another on the strategic process) and, finally, one paper related to culture and negotiation, another to digitalization and human resource management (HRM), and another one on organizational change from a feminist perspective.

The articles selected for this Special Issue reflect a diverse range of qualitative research methods and their application in business and management studies. Each contribution provides a unique perspective and showcase the richness and depth that qualitative methods bring to understanding complex organizational phenomena. Selected papers use case study and action research as research approaches to analyze the different phenomena. But each paper does it from a different perspective or adding particular elements to the analysis. In sum, the selected articles offer us a deeper understanding of how qualitative methods can be suitable and applicable to management research. [Table 3](#) summarizes the contributions.

The article by Caicedo-Leitón, Villanueva and Garcés-Galdeano entitled “Nurturing seeds of innovation: the entrepreneurial orientation’s role in enriching socio-emotional wealth and its implications for family business innovation” approaches the issue of innovation within family enterprises, analyzing the joint effect of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and socio-emotional wealth (SEW) on this innovation process. The research is developed through a single case study of a family business in the wine and agricultural sector located in Spain. It is a firm pioneer in the Spanish market that has also opened to the international market. The study has a twofold purpose as it is descriptive and exploratory. Semi-structured interviews have been the mainly used data source. Researchers have also employed direct observation and extensive analysis of secondary sources. NVIVO software was utilized to analyze data, allowing for the organization and coding of information.

Authors have applied thematic analysis and the critical incident technique to investigate the innovative practices of this family business across generations. The main contribution of this work has to do with the relevance of EO as the driving force behind the positive impact of SEW on innovation. In particular, the reciprocal relationship between EO and SEW is what really fosters innovation in the context of a family business. Similarly, authors point out that family businesses can benefit from leveraging their unique family values and history to foster a culture of innovation. The main strength of the paper is the detailed and broad analysis of the phenomena, using heterogeneous information sources. Aspects such as the transmission of values, the passion for the company, and the preservation of the family legacy, which are often intrinsic to the family business, cannot be fully captured through quantitative data. Conversely, qualitative studies are essential and adequate for analyzing soft, cultural and intangible characteristics of the firm, as the studied case in this work has revealed. Contrary to the notion that family businesses may be limited in their innovative endeavors, this work brings to light that those firms that effectively transmit entrepreneurial values and foster a culture of long-term orientation pave the way for achieving outstanding innovation success and longevity.

The article entitled “Breaking Barriers: Unleashing the Power of Feminist Action Research to Transform Organisational Inequalities—A Case Study of XEAS País Valencià” by Maicas-Pérez and Ortega-Colomer focuses on those internal organizational mechanisms that hinder equality between men and women, assuming that organizations are not neutral environments. Firms often internally replicate those mechanisms that generate inequality in society. Using the theory of organizational change, together with the adoption of a feminist action research approach, the work aims at implementing a change process in XEAS País Valencià that turns it into a more liveable and egalitarian place. One of the strengths of this paper is the adoption of a feminist perspective to analyse and solve the problem of discriminatory practices and barriers to access and career advancement for women. Together with the application of a participatory action research, this work assumes that investigation has not only to do with observing the phenomenon from the outside but engaging in it, understanding research as a way to change and improve the reality of organizations. Participatory workshops, participant observation, interviews, and documentary review were used as information sources, and NVIVO software was employed for data analysis. After the diagnosis of the problem, an action plan with different action lines was designed. These lines had to do with the implementation of technical changes to mobilize resources to increase the actions of the process and feminist projects, the change in the structure and redistribution of tasks and responsibilities, and the creation or renewal of internal protocols and procedures. From a political point of view, authors perceived that feminism gained a greater presence in the projects and activities and became part of the organizational identity more consciously. From a cultural point of view, some changes as a greater importance and recognition of emotions, a lower focus on tangible results and a greater consideration of feminism as a path to transformation, were observed. In sum, the work shows how participatory feminist methodologies facilitate a more inclusive and empowering organizational change experience.

The article presented by Bonaque Rodríguez, Flor-Peris and Vallet-Bellmunt entitled “Co-creation with customers to innovate in a service SME: a study using action research methodology” focuses on the challenge of improving innovation performance in a service SME through the adoption of co-creation practices with customers and the application of design thinking and action research. The research has been conducted in a knowledge-intensive service SME that offers innovative and customized services with high added value. The context has been crucial for the analysis, as it influences the adoption and effectiveness of co-creation practices. The study employs action research (1 iteration) as its primary methodology, complemented by design thinking. Action research is utilized for its iterative problem-solving approach, while design thinking provides a human-centred framework for innovation. The study identifies various co-creation practices and assesses their adoption levels within the SME. It prioritizes these practices based on their potential impact on the innovation process. The main contribution of the article lies in its illustration of how co-creation and action research can be effectively combined to enhance innovation in service SMEs, providing a practical and theoretical framework for future research and application. The study fills research gaps related to co-creation in SMEs and offers practical insights for practitioners on incorporating co-creation practices to improve innovation results.

Table 3: Overview of articles included in this Special Issue

Authors	Title	Methodology or method of focus	Distinct feature(s)
Maicas-Pérez & Ortega-Colomer	Breaking Barriers: Unleashing the Power of Feminist Action Research to Transform Organisational Inequalities—A Case Study of XEAS País Valencià	Action Research	Shows how the application of action research from a feminist perspective facilitates organizational change and contributes to the transition towards more egalitarian organizations
Bonaque- Rodríguez et al.	Co-creation with customers to innovate in a service SME: a study using action research methodology	Action Research	Illustrates how co-creation and action research can be effectively combined to enhance innovation in service SMEs
Caicedo-Leitón et al.	Nurturing seeds of innovation: the entrepreneurial orientation's role in enriching socio-emotional wealth and its implications for family business innovation	Case study	Illustrates how a single case study might be used to deeply analyze intrinsic family business issues as the transmission of values, the passion for the company, and the preservation of the family legacy
Hübler et al.	Strategizing and organizational routines in sustainability strategies in the port sector	Case study	Adds a new point of view when analysing the strategy formation process, including institutional economics and organizational routines as key elements in the process of strategizing
Escribá-Carda et al.	Firms' digital transformation and e-Human Resource Management. A qualitative approach	Case study Semi-structured interviews	Provides an in-depth analysis of a very complex phenomena through a multiple case-study, revealing some antecedents and consequences affecting digitalization of HRM

The article by Hübler, Barbosa-Lavarda and Kopp-Leite entitled “Strategizing and organizational routines in sustainability strategies in the port sector” conducts qualitative research in order to understand the interrelation between the strategizing process and the constitutive aspects of organizational routines. The work approaches this phenomenon through the analysis of organizational routines and the strategic formation process in the case of Port Authority Valencia (PAV). The development of a single case becomes ideal for investigating aspects related to Strategy as Practice and to examine specific strategic situations that occur in the context of organizations. Data collection took place through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and document analysis, and data analysis was based on narrative analysis and pattern matching. Particularly, researchers have developed their work around the organizational routines inherent to PAV’s Environmental Policies area, which is responsible for maintaining environmental certifications and implementing the environmental strategy outlined by the organization. Results reveal that strategizing, arising from the intersection of practices, praxis and practitioners, is manifested through the notion of organizational routines. It is the skills and abilities of the professionals who formulate the strategy, based on their previous experience, what conditions the way of understanding the principles, values and habits embedded in the organization and, ultimately, make the finally implemented strategy more beyond that initially formulated. The results confirmed empirically the permeability between both concepts, strategy-as-practice and organizational routines. In this respect, the article adds a new point of view when analyzing the strategy formation process, including institutional economics and organizational routines as key aspects of the strategizing process.

The article by Escribá-Carda, Redondo-Cano and Escribá-Moreno entitled “Firms’ digital transformation and e-Human Resource Management. A qualitative approach” addresses the issue of barriers and enablers of the digital transformation process within firms and how those affect human resource management (HRM) practices. A multiple case-study approach was developed (three cases), applying semi-structured interviews with key informants from all the studied companies. Data analysis was conducted using ATLAS.ti, through the application of an abductive process, allowing for an in-depth understanding of the digital transformation processes and their impacts on human resource management. The research context includes three diverse companies from the Valencian Region, spanning different sizes and sectors (digital business solutions and automotive industries), digitalized in a great extent. The study provides a comprehensive view of digital transformation across different organizational landscapes. An important strength of the article is that it provides an in-depth analysis of a very complex phenomena through a multiple case-study methodology, broadening the possible antecedents and consequences affecting digitalization. Findings indicate that the extent of digital transformation is significantly influenced by company size and industry. Also, some factors (financial support, technological advances, suppliers or customers influence) boost this process whilst others block it (lack of human, technological and financial resources). From a HR perspective, results show also that digitalization brings notable benefits as enhanced efficiency and flexibility in HR practices, but also poses risks as depersonalization and isolation, which can undermine talent retention. Considering the impact of digital transformation on HRM becomes vital to improve organizational efficiency and employee well-being for the cases studied. In summary, this work contributes to the literature by showcasing the effectiveness of qualitative methods in exploring the links between digital transformation and HRM. It offers a nuanced understanding of how digitalization shapes organizational practices, thereby enhancing the broader discourse on digital transformation in business environments.

4. Conclusions

The main objective of this special issue was to highlight the important role of qualitative research methods in business studies and offer the academy the opportunity to make contributions based on diverse qualitative methods. With that purpose in mind, we selected a set of papers that covered relevant topics in the discipline of business and management and, at the same time, adopted qualitative methods. Summarizing, the content of the articles varies in a great extent (digital

transformation and human resource management, strategy formation process and organizational routines, innovation in SME or in family firms, and organizational change through participatory feminism). Also, the qualitative approaches and methods employed have been diverse. Two of the articles apply action research as their fundamental strategy, though do it from a different theoretical viewpoint (one uses the feminist perspective and the other uses the design thinking approach). The other three selected papers are based on a more common research approach in business and management, combining single case designs (two papers) with one multiple case study. As for the methods, all of them have combined different sources of information as interviews, observation and corporate documentation. Any of the selected papers employs visual tools or uses AI applications in their study. Neither none of these works uses phenomenology, ethnography or grounded theory, three approaches that are scarcely adopted by researchers in business studies. However, the special issue has become a platform for the dissemination of the results of two works that use a relatively novel methodology (i.e. action research) in business studies. We hope that this special issue becomes an inspiration for other researchers in the field of business and management to approach their research problems through qualitative methods, either using novel methods (e.g. visual tools or AI) or employing classical methods but applied from a more contemporary perspective.

In conclusion, the special issue “Enhancing Management Research through Qualitative Methods” represents a significant advancement in the visibility and appreciation of qualitative methodologies within the field of business and management research. By showcasing different approaches such as case studies or action research, this issue underscores the rich potential of qualitative methods to unravel complex organizational phenomena.

Furthermore, the thematic relevance of the articles in addressing contemporary issues such as digital transformation, knowledge management, strategy as practice, innovation in SMEs, and gender equity in organizations, highlights the practical implications and immediate applicability of qualitative research findings. This special issue not only contributes to the academic discourse but also bridges the gap between theory and practice, offering valuable insights for practitioners. By disseminating these studies through a multidisciplinary and international journal, the issue fosters a broader dialogue and collaboration among scholars and professionals, ultimately enriching the collective understanding and application of qualitative methods in business and management.

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