



QCA is a Cross-Case Comparative Method: Research Designs in Management Research

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Configurational Thinking and Complex Causality

- Configurational approach views organizations as
 - “multidimensional constellation of conceptually distinct characteristics that commonly occur together” (Meyer, Tsui, & Hinings, 1993: 1175)
- Inherently a study of complex causality:
 - *Conjunction* (multiple interdependent explanatory conditions)
 - *Equifinality* (more than one path to the outcome)
 - *Asymmetry* (explanatory condition related to outcome in one configuration may be unrelated or inversely related in another)
- Direct contrast to “General Linear Reality” (Abbot, 1998)
 - Independent effects, one best path, symmetrical



Some Definitional Issues....

- Inductive vs. Deductive vs. Abductive
 - *Induction*: derive theory/propositions from the data
 - *Deduction*: derive hypotheses from theory and test them on data
 - *Abduction*: exploration of “hunches”, “ideas”, or “theoretical elements” based upon past “unmet expectations” or findings (Locke et al., 2008; Van Maanen et al., 2007)
- Theory Generation vs. Elaboration vs. Testing (Lee et al., 1999)
 - *Generation*: design produces formal propositions/theory
 - *Elaboration*: design is driven by pre-existing concepts/ideas
 - *Testing*: design is determined by hypotheses/formal theory
- Qualitative vs. Quantitative
 - A distinction about data; not so much about method (Edmonson & McManus, 2007)



Case Study Designs and Sampling

- Yin (1984):
 - Case studies can be used for generation, elaboration, or testing
 - “Replication logic” to sampling: cases serve as “multiple experiments” across which relationships are replicated or tested
- Eisenhardt Method (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007):
 - Focus here is on theory generation (or “building”)
 - Theoretical Sampling: cases chosen to replicate emergent theory in previous cases; to fill theoretical categories/ideal types.
- QCA (Ragin, 2000; 2008)
 - Can be used as part of generation, for elaboration, or for testing
 - Requires *a priori* specification of attributes
 - Theoretical or random sampling, **but** replication logic
 - Not mean tendencies/central limit theorem: Doesn’t generalize

QCA and Theory Generation

- QCA supplements other inductive. Two approaches:
 1. Inductive inquiry, then QCA to examine (O'Neil, 2008)
 2. QCA to examine emergent bundles, then inductive (Aversa et al., 2015; Dwivedi et al., 2018)

Examples:

1. O'Neil (2008)

- 63 interviews of artists and galleries
- QCA used to examine emergent bundles affecting pricing

2. Aversa et al. (2015)/Dwivedi et al. (2018)

- 28 Formula 1 racing cases / S&P 1500 Female CEOs
- QCA to examine emergent configurations
- In-depth analysis of cases to dig further into mechanisms



QCA and Theory Elaboration

- QCA used to elaborate existing theory that is underdeveloped or puzzles exist

Examples:

- Crilly et al. (2012)
 - 17 MNCs; 359 interviews
 - Decoupling and stakeholder involvement
- Misangyi & Acharya (2014)
 - 1,135 S&P 1500 firms
 - Governance mechanisms as substitutes or complements?
- Others: Campbell et al. (2015); Greckhamer et al. (2008); Muer (2014)

QCA and Theory Testing

- QCA used to test hypotheses. Currently two designs:
 1. Used to test configurational hypotheses
 2. Used as a complementary method to regression-oriented

Examples:

1. Bell et al. (2014)
 - 198 firms; 36 countries
 - National governance regimes and investor IPO perceptions
2. e.g., Fiss et al. (2013); Garcia-Castro et al. (2013); Meuer et al. (2015)



Thank You!

Questions?

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