



Information Technology and Quantitative Management (ITQM 2017)

Methodology for Studying Agreement and Disagreements of Divergent Social Groups

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is upon developing a comparative methodology that establishes if there are any statistical commonalities in divergent groups. The methodology developed employees a three tiered data collection approach that integrates a range of methods such as questionnaires, interviews and Q matrices; along with combining multiple methodologies, the main two being Delphi Convergence Approach and Q Methodology. Furthermore this paper will discuss the use of the IBM SPSS Software as a program that offers flexible analysis of the data collected, weather this is for individual factors or the data as a whole. The methodology discussed was created to analyze if minority groups, (Case Study: LGBT+, disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities within Durham University), have shared experiences. The individuals with in these groups are vastly different which is what lead to the need to develop a flexible methodology which can simultaneously evaluate the commonalities between multiple varying groups. This multi-tiered methodology yielded statistically sound results showing the areas of strong correlation and disagreements between the different groups thus proposing a method for investigating potentially massive data through analyzing samples of representatives of key profiles.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the scientific committee of the 5th International Conference on Information Technology and Quantitative Management, ITQM 2017.

Keywords: diverse social groups analysis, multi-tiered methodology for data analysis

1. Introduction

The objective of the paper is to present key results from a recent study whose purpose was to develop a methodology which could analyze divergent social groups and to determine if these groups possessed shared experiences. This paper presents key results based on the authors BSs Dissertation, (Alexandrova, 2017) which are further enriched and analysed. As such the author's project explored the shared experiences of minority groups, (LGBT+, Disabilities, Ethnic and Religious minorities) within Durham University. The core element to

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the foundation of developing this comparative methodology came from the need to compare such divergent individuals, each with their own parameters and to provide viable statistical data. Through the initial research committed, the author discovered that from the aforementioned minority groups the comparisons were typically of just two of them, or more commonly in analysis with either age, gender or class. Which is what instigated the need to create a data analysis process which permits an investigation of individualistic groups and their points of cohesion. During the project the author theorized that once these minority groups are viewed in a larger social environment, in this case Durham University, their overall experience will objectively show high levels of similarity. The extent of commonality between the groups are assessed through the aforementioned developed methodology to determine strong points of correlation and as such agreed viewpoints.

The methodology detailed within this paper was developed from a phenomenological perspective so that the direct comparison of the aforementioned minority groups would focus upon their individual experiences. This was to ensure that the view points from the varying groups which were analyzed would truthfully reflect their perspective while gauging the commonalities between them. To focus the analysis on the shared experiences of these minority groups they were accessed through Durham University as it provided a group of individuals from across the aforesaid minority groups whom all were hypothetically exposed to the same external factors. The methodology created provided the flexibility needed to assess where the areas of strong correlation were and whether they were in agreement or contention. The filtering through the multi perspective opinions of different individual viewpoints required the development of the following methodology to unify a cross-section of analysis tools, theories and methodologies to provide multi-layered analysis that could draw upon the individual experience and search for any connections or overlay.

This paper is divided into five main sections, the first being the introduction detailing the objectives of the project. The second section is a background that briefly covers the relevant major theories that initially inspired the methodology as well as a more detailed account of research used for developing said methodology. Section three is an account of how the methodology was created, altered to produce its final iteration presented below. This includes: Delphi Convergence Approach, element of Herzberg's Motivation and Hygiene Factors and Q Methodology. The fourth section covers relevant results that show the areas of high correlation and if there are any points of contention. The final section concludes upon the developed methodology, presents key results of the study, and discusses the potential for future work with this methodology and its possible applications and benefits.

2. Background

For the project the initial research focused on establishing an integrated perspective of the varying elements that could impact the individual experiences of the minority groups. It covers the areas of: belonging and otherness, the relevance of representation and visible and invisible identities. As well as covering relevant sociological research in Critical Social Theory and Social Exclusion, this overview highlighted the need in creating a data collection process that was able to establish the key areas of inquiry based upon the individual experiences and on top of that analysis and evaluate parts of commonality. After which this informed the base on which the methodological theories were blended to create the three tiered data collection process:

Relevant Social Theories. Critical Social Theory and Social Exclusion provided the foundation of research in the perspectives of the minority groups researched, LGBT+, Disabilities, Ethnic and Religious minorities, and have extensively detailed the individualization of these groups within society. In the compilation books; Critical Social Theory by Nick Crossley, (Crossley, 2005), and Social Exclusion by David Byrne, (Byrne, 2008), a cohesive comprehension of the interconnection between the identification of minority groups and their experiences in addition to the parameters of said groups is established. Through Critical Social Theory racism is established as by the means which one may “identify or categorize and thereby differentiate a group a distinct ‘race’ [...] thereby contribute to the exclusion or domination of that group.” (Crossley, 2005, p235). This sense

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