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NPGA, School of Management
Federal University of Bahia

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Deconstructing the Glaser-Strauss Dilemma: Integrative Discussion about the Grounded Theory in Management

Maria Carolina Conejero ^a

Maria Laura Ferranty MacLennan^a

^a Centro Universitário FEI, São Bernardo do Campo, Brazil

Abstract

The Grounded Theory was developed in the 1960s by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss as methodological or research style. New investigative paths have emerged from Grounded Theory application. The aim of the present study is to highlight the antagonism between Glaser and Strauss from a conceptual complementary perspective that opened room for a highly structured and inherently flexible methodology based on the integrative approach. The goal of the Grounded Theory is to develop theories based on systematically collected and analyzed empirical data. The classical approach proved to be excessively subjective to meet empirical research demands in management, overtime. Accordingly, several authors advocate for Strauss and Corbin's (1990) ideas. The current essay-style study focuses on proposing and assessing an integrative approach framework for the Grounded Theory. Emphasis is given to the complementary qualities suggested by these authors, which are treated as non-exclusionary, despite being influenced by both Strauss and Corbin's (1998) positivist style and Glaser and Strauss' (1967) interpretive style. Furthermore, this theory adheres to the fundamental principle of the classical approach, although it emerged from the research process. This methodology's application can be a promising option for scientific development, since it can disclose potentialities that give researchers flexibility and freedom to create. Thus, ontological and methodological assumptions are choices made by researchers, themselves, since they can gather research methods (mixed-methodology) and follow the combined and sequential use of quantitative and qualitative techniques to create well-founded theories.

Keywords: integrative approach; positivist style; interpretive style; grounded theory.

Introduction

New investigative paths can emerge from the application of the Grounded Theory research methodology and lead to updates in scientific research focused on the management field (Uhlmann & Erdmann, 2014). This methodology is suitable for assessing human-related issues given stakeholders' relevant role. According to Sithambaram, Nasir and Ahmad (2021), the Grounded Theory is helpful when researchers seek a theory based on data (Parry, 1998) or when they are assessing real phenomena in the field.

The Grounded Theory was developed in the 1960s by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, and defined as strategy (Wells, 1995), methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) or research style (Locke, 2001). The work "The Discovery of Grounded Theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is the milestone of the Grounded Theory as classical approach; its creators had consensual ideas about this methodology's features, but without designing its research processes. Glaser and Strauss expressed contrasting thoughts about the research processes over the years, and it gave birth to a new Grounded Theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Few studies on Grounded Theory application in the management field have shown misunderstandings, or methodological inconsistencies, in its research processes in the 1990s, but it is a limited justification for divergent conceptions by its creators. (Bandeira-de-Mello & Cunha, 2006; Uhlmann & Erdmann, 2014) Medeiros et al. (2019) pointed out declining trends in this method's application in the field, as observed through the devaluation of coexisting thoughts between sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, since they shone light on almost all studies on Grounded Theory, in the management field. The Grounded Theory is a research methodology less commonly used in studies in the management field and more often applied in the Sociology, Psychology and Nursing fields.

The aim of the present study was to highlight the likely antagonism in Glaser and Strauss's ideas, although their contributions to some misunderstandings about the Grounded Theory research processes could be stressed within a complementary conceptual context. This scenario resulted in an integrative approach that values this highly structured research methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and its inherently flexible nature. (Glaser, 2004) Different theoretical Grounded Theory paths are herein introduced, as well as Glaser-Strauss' dilemma, the research process as integrative approach, and the validity and reliability of quality criteria are discussed; finally, the multi-paradigmatic view of the Integrative Grounded Theory is addressed. The aim of the present essay was to contribute to researchers in the management field who seek to use the Grounded Theory to broaden scientific knowledge by highlighting alternatives added to a continuum of paradigms and by enabling choices to be made about the available options depending on their research style.

Several Grounded Theory pathways

The Grounded Theory is a research methodology to help creating theories grounded in systematically collected and analyzed empirical data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Goulding, 2001).

Based on classical approach, Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 32-33) advocated for the existence of formal and substantive theories; the formal ones concern broader conceptual frameworks, whereas the substantive theories explain specific, simple and accessible phenomena. Thus, they have argued that the Grounded Theory should be employed in scientific research to generate theories applicable to substantive fields. Glaser and Strauss (1967) criticized the existing theories in Sociology available at their time, because, according to them, they were too abstract and often developed to avoid testing procedures. These authors sought to provide an inductively driven scientific method in response to the prevailing paradigm of hypothetic-deductive methods; therefore, they unveiled an innovative strategy to develop well-reasoned theories based on empirical data. (Wells, 1995; Uhlmann & Erdmann, 2014)

Bandeira-de-Mello and Cunha (2006) believe that this research methodology could be widely employed in scientific research specific to the management field, due to its focus on interrelationships among individuals aimed at better understanding social and/or organizational phenomena. Although its scope is limited to generating theories for specific groups or situations, and its unlikely extrapolation to fields beyond the substantive ones, the possibility of generating well-reasoned theories often emerge when the existing theories are proved insufficient to explain a specific phenomenon in empirical research. Figure 1 shows different theoretical adaptations of the Grounded Theory, and highlights the Glaser-Strauss dilemma (which remained real until 2008), as well as opens room for new theoretical approaches based on the Quantitative Grounded Theory.

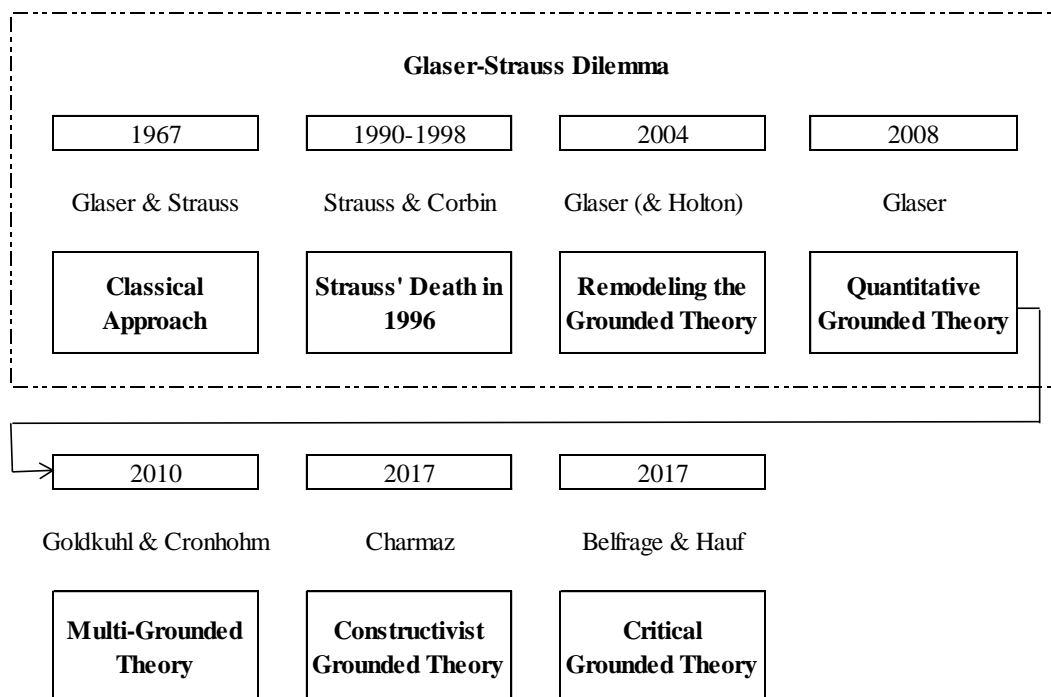


Figure 1. Chronological Evolution of Grounded Theory

Source: Research data.

The classical approach of the Grounded Theory has proven to be too subjective to meet empirical research demands in the management field, overtime. Therefore, Bandeira-de-Mello (2008) and Hopfer and Maciel-Lima (2008) advocated for Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) ideas about

the Grounded Theory's adaptation to research processes to make it more objective and help researchers to formulate their research protocols. Layder (1998) and Hopfer and Maciel-Lima (2008) applied the Grounded Theory adapted to other research methods, or associated with the use of certain stages that were previously proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Therefore, in addition to generating well-reasoned theories and to working as data analysis methodology, the Grounded Theory is used in the management field to "adapt" or "update" existing theories (adaptive theory) to generate adaptive-substantive theories.

The Multi-Grounded Theory (Goldkuhl & Cronhonn, 2010) is not only based on data, but on theoretical, empirical and external fundamentals; it goes beyond pure inductive approaches, since it explicitly embodies the use of external theories. It is important having in mind the analysis context, including elements, such as research objects within a given context, cultural objects, and other situations deriving from human action (Ássimos & Pinto, 2022).

Charmaz (2017) defended greater flexibility in data coding processes. According to the Constructivist Grounded Theory, flexibility in data coding processes would allow researchers to create conceptual categories, as well as to allow literature reviews, after data analysis, without hindering researchers' creative process. Belfrage and Hauf (2017) suggested an open and fluid reality analysis, based on the Critical Grounded Theory. The categorization process foresees the construction of meanings (open coding) from an interpretive perspective. The construction of meanings is shaped by the way individuals understand central concepts during the research, until theoretical saturation. Finally, Timonem Foley and Conlon (2018) grounded the Critical Grounded Theory from human perspectives, as well as from structures, social relationships, and organizational processes to comply with events and scientific outcomes. It may be done by combining conceptual induction, deduction, and abduction to achieve conceptual clarity about the assessed phenomena.

The Grounded Theory's integrative approach suggests complementary research processes based on seminal authors; these processes are non-exclusionary and biased towards positivist (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and interpretative (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) styles. They do not impose the fundamental principle of the classical approach the theory emerges from during the research process, particularly through the researcher's fieldwork skills and analytical interpretation. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

The Glaser-Strauss dilemma

The Grounded Theory has been a controversial research methodology since its emergence, back in 1967. It posed a challenge to the quantitative paradigm, which derived from the natural sciences and assessed objects to get to universal conclusions (Fernandes & Maia, 2001). The qualitative paradigm evolved amidst uncertainty and shone light on the initiatives of some social scientists to shift their focus to study objects to be analyzed through the actions and behaviors generated in the human mind (Collins & Hussey, 2005). However, the qualitative approach disclosed questionable study methods, mainly when it comes to research process requirements, non-universality of results, and the subjective nature of the data analysis phase (Bianchi & Ikeda, 2008).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) made important assumptions about the development of the Grounded Theory: the researcher should continuously and intrinsically interact with reality to generate a substantive theory during the research process (Fernandes & Maia, 2001); this theory

would evolve over the research process as the result of continuous data collection and analysis (Goulding, 1999). Furthermore, the aforementioned researchers are known for having significant ideological differences regarding Grounded Theory research processes; these differences are herein referred to as the Glaser-Strauss dilemma.

Glaser believed that researchers should go to the field without any theoretical fundamental or predefined research question. In this case, the research process aimed at generating a substantive theory would be extremely subjective (Uhlmann & Erdmann, 2014). This inflexible position taken by Glaser contradicted the principle of flexibility inherent to the Grounded Theory research methodology. However, Strauss had a more flexible approach; he believed that the Grounded Theory could be adapted to a more prescriptive character. He argued that prior theoretical knowledge and a predefined research question would be essential for researchers to enter the field with a defined research protocol. In this case, the research process to generate a substantive theory would be more objective (Uhlmann & Erdmann, 2014). Table 1 presents comparisons on Grounded Theory research methodology profiles by highlighting Glaser-Strauss dilemma's logic.

Table 1
Grounded Theory comparisons

Stage	Glaser and Strauss (1967)	Strauss and Corbin (1990)
Research problem	Going to the field without a predefined research question, without theoretical reflection.	Going to the field with a predefined research question, after theoretical reflection.
Formality in data structure coding	General analytical method without theoretical structuring.	Analytical method with structured steps.
Operationalization	Subjective features; it can be difficult to operationalize.	Objective features, it can be easier to operationalize.
Assessing and testing	It generates concepts for theoretical formulations or sets of conceptual hypotheses. The test must be made by other researchers, in future research.	It generates inductively derived theories to deal with constant checking and with tests to validate concepts.

Source: adapted from Parker and Roffey (1997), and Bianchi and Ikeda (2008).

Researchers can face difficulties to understand the methodology's research processes when they apply the Ground Theory to social and applied sciences. Tensions between claims are linked to both scientific status and empirical reality, as well as to attention to details, context and meanings (Bryant, 2000).

It is worth noticing that the classical approach by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was created in response to lack of theory generated in the Sociology field, rather than as the proposition of applications focused on the management field (Locke, 2001). Accordingly, Grounded Theory creators initially were not likely concerned with outlining research processes; however, given the difficulties faced overtime and other academic collaborations, their research styles became likely sources of disagreement, even in their own scientific publications.

Glaser (1992) criticized Strauss and Corbin's (1990) viewpoint; he considered that it disregarded the principle of "emergence" of substantive theory, since their research processes

"forced" researchers to go through the data collection and analysis phases. Strauss and Corbin (1990) justified their work processes as the natural consequence of the hard time using excessively subjective methodologies, which were mainly experienced by Strauss as researcher. In addition, the same authors spread the idea that the Grounded Theory could also be applied to help researchers interpret quantitative data, a fact that would allow them to make in-depth analysis in their studies.

The Glaser-Strauss dilemma emerges as philosophical discourse because it shows the preferences of each of the aforementioned authors for non-identical research-conduction styles; they prioritize the theory's central goal: generating theory based on empirical data, regardless of the chosen approach. Glaser introduced the quantitative use of the Grounded Theory by showing the likely preference for research processes developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), due to the ease justification for scientific work procedures (Bianchi & Ikeda, 2008). Therefore, the book "Doing Quantitative Grounded Theory" (Glaser, 2008) closed the Glaser-Strauss dilemma and opened room for discussions about the Grounded Theory and about and its applicability in other knowledge fields, from different theoretical perspectives.

Grounded Theory application in management

The Grounded Theory, as research methodology, should not be understood as a purely inductive process. (Suddaby, 2006) In other words, it can also integrate the abductive logic of research, which goes beyond induction and/or deduction. The path to substantive and adaptive-substantive theories focused on the management field demands the data collection phase (induction), which leads to one or more imaginative processes (abduction) to form a hypothesis (deduction) to be tested and/or validated through a new cycle of primary data collection (induction) - it just goes on until theoretical saturation is achieved, and a new theory emerges. (Peirce, 1965; Pinto & Santos, 2012)

Strauss and Corbin (1998) pointed out that pure induction and pure deduction are sterile; new theories result from the combination of induction (inducing concepts and properties based on primary data), deduction (effort to propose hypotheses and/or construct propositions about relationships between concepts extracted by researchers through induction) and assessment and/or validation (assessing whether new primary data can be explained by the theory). (Pinto & Santos, 2012)

The steps to apply the Grounded Theory research methodology are described in Table 2.

Table 2
Grounded Theory Research Process

Phase	Stage	Integrative Approach
1 ^a	Theoretical sensitization	Conceptual pre-categorization: "immersion" in a theoretical-analytical structure. Researchers' insight phase.
2 ^a	Assessing elements and research question	Researchers predetermine the study elements and the research question, and develop a research protocol to induce data collection and analysis options' flexibility. The research problem evolves and (re)configures itself throughout the research process. It is up to researchers to conduct the interpretation process and the understanding of the research problem.
3 ^a	Data collection and analysis	Combination of quantitative and/or qualitative research techniques. Inductive-abductive process phase: collecting and analyzing data (induction) to open room for one (or more) "imaginative" creations (abduction).
4 ^a	Open coding	Conceptual categorization: choosing the keywords to generate concepts by continuously and successively partitioning the compared data. It is the first data analysis process phase; if necessary, researchers can return to the field to make new collections.
5 ^a	Axial coding	Central ideas: reorganizing previous phase concepts by extracting central categories. If necessary, researchers can, once more, return to the field. Deductive-inductive process phase: deducing the coding and seeking validation (or not).
6 ^a	Selective coding	Abstraction phase when one finds theoretical saturation; no additional data can change the conceptual categorization process.
7 ^a	Theory assessment and/or validation	"Emergence" of substantive or adaptive-substantive theories based on central categories; a process to assess and/or validate the theories may happen by checking new primary data that could be explained by the theory.

Source: adapted from Strauss and Corbin (1990); Gouding (2001; 2002); Bianchi and Ikeda (2008); Glaser (2008); Pinto and Santos (2012).

The proposal to present an adapted framework of the Grounded Theory research methodology, which is herein referred to as Integrative Grounded Theory, became necessary to help researchers better understand all research processes and stages, in a categorical manner, as shown in Figure 2.

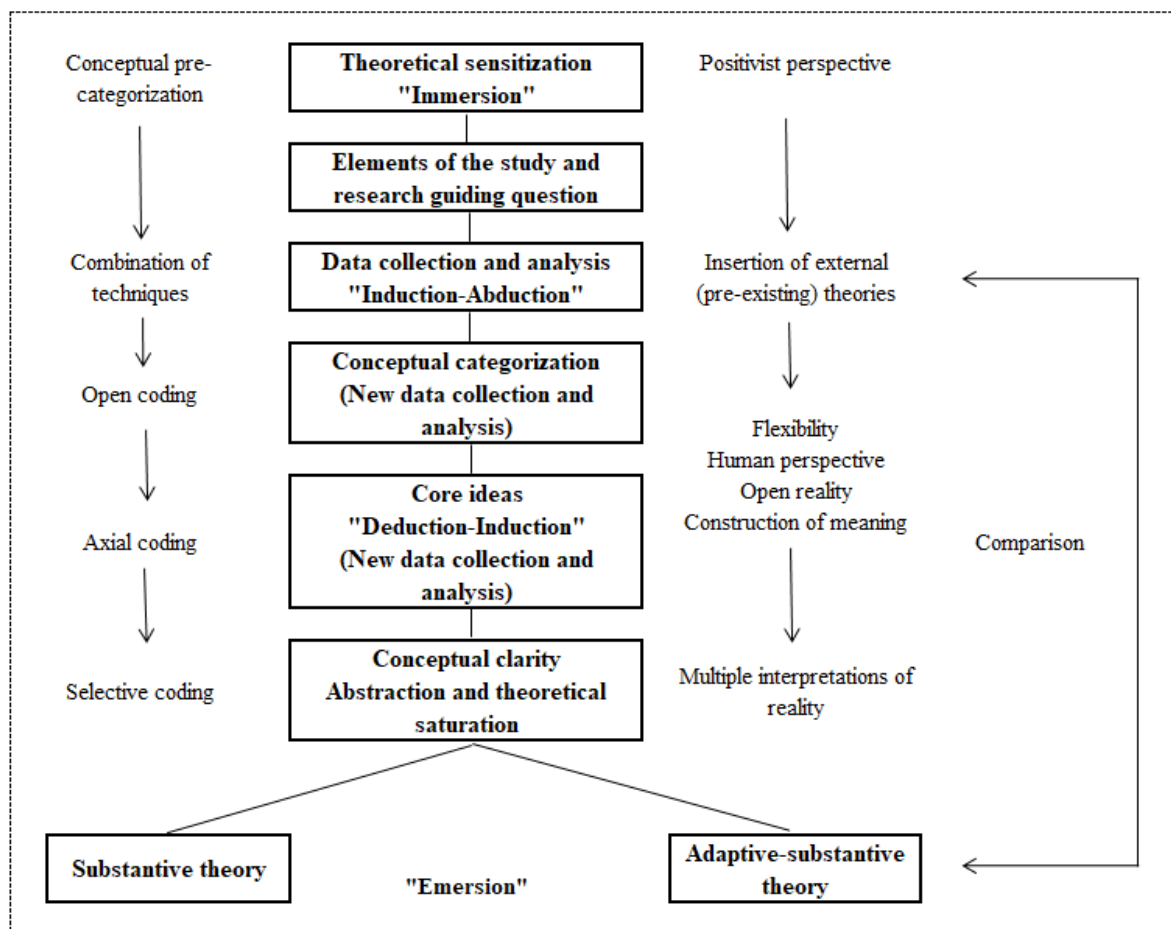


Figure 2. Grounded Theory Framework for the management field.
 Source: Elaborated by the authors.

According to Figure 2, researchers immerse in theoretical sensitization during the pre-conceptual categorization phase, by taking the positivist perspective and pre-identifying study elements and research guiding questions. Researchers can combine techniques and incorporate new external theories (pre-existing) to make the opening-code process more flexible at the data collection and analysis phase (induction-abduction) (Kenny & Foirier, 2015; Charmaz, 2017), at the time to redefine the conceptual categorization (Birks, Hoare, & Mills, 2019). It is possible introducing the axial coding stage, which regards developing central ideas (deduction-induction), as many times as necessary, until there is conceptual clarity (Timonen, Foley, & Conlon, 2018) after successive data collection and analysis phases. It happens through the abstraction and theoretical saturation process, according to multiple interpretations of reality (Charmaz, 2017; Rakhmawati, 2019). At this point, research development is marked by the human perspective of structures, social relationships and processes that combine induction-abduction-deduction-induction methods to construct meanings for the phenomena observed in the field (Belfrage & Hauf, 2017). The multiple interpretations of reality (Charmaz, 2017; Rakhmawati, 2019) enable the emergence of new substantive theories or of adaptive-substantive ones, due to the comparison and explicit use of external theories in the successive reviews of data collection stages. (Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2010)

Integrative Grounded Theory validity and reliability

The Integrative Grounded Theory research methodology framework can broaden new possibilities for scientific development, for meeting the demand for objectivity in studies in the management field. Therefore, researchers must abandon the idea of adopting implicit criteria that can be misunderstood and adopt explicit investigative processes as indicative of good practices that, in their turn, enable the study to be better understood and replicated; most importantly, they must give external credibility and legitimacy for scientific research. (Clegg & Hardy, 1999)

Table 3 presents the development phases applied to research protocols to be applied to the Integrative Grounded Theory methodology.

Table 3
Steps to elaborate a research protocol

Steps	Description
1 ^a	Research project title.
2 ^a	Name, telephone, institutional affiliation, mailing address, link to Lattes curriculum, Main Investigator and Research Advisor.
3 ^a	Description of research's general and specific objectives.
4 ^a	Research justification with scientific background and historical data to explain the scientific development proposition.
5 ^a	Description of data collection procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Materials and resources to be used. - Procedures to be adopted at the pre-collection phase. - Details on sending out the Free and Informed Consent Form – ICF. - Definition of collection date, time and place. - Details about research preparation phase, before going to the field. - Details about instruments and data sources: interview, questionnaire, observation, measurement tests and others.
6 ^a	Information about research subject(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describing the features of the organization to be assessed. - Describing the features of individuals to be assessed; explaining the reasons for the participation of vulnerable groups (children, elderly, physically or mentally disabled individuals, and others). - Describing recruitment and selection plans applicable to individuals to be assessed and the specific procedures to be followed. - Providing the inclusion and/or exclusion criteria applicable to research subjects.
7 ^a	Free and Informed Consent Form – ICF: Organization, individuals and legal representatives (in case there is the participation of vulnerable groups) must express consent to participate in the research, guarantee the right to refuse to participate at any research stage; publication of research results and guarantee confidentiality to ensure the privacy of subject(s) involved in the research, whenever necessary, in case of disclosure of secret and/or confidential information.
8 ^a	Presenting the complete roadmaps of instruments and data sources.
9 ^a	Describing the expected results.
10 ^a	Research timeline.
11 ^a	Place where research was conducted.
12 ^a	Detailed research budget; it must specify the source resources and destinations, the forms and amounts of the remuneration to the main researcher and other relevant information, whenever necessary.
13 ^a	Statement that research results will be published, whether favorable or not.

Source: adapted from Barros (2016).

The concept of objectivity in scientific research can be firstly assessed in terms of research validity and reliability. Validity concepts in qualitative research should be analyzed based on three dimensions (Kirk & Miller, 1986): apparent validity (whether the research method produces desired or expected information), instrumental validity (combination of data provided by one research method to data generated by an alternative method accepted as valid) and theoretical validity (legitimacy of research procedures in terms of established theoretical frameworks). Ollaik and Ziller (2012) presented a new validity approach to qualitative research based on prior (research formulation phase), internal (research development phase) and external (research results phase) validity aspects.

Reliability concept in qualitative research can be observed from quixotic (one single observation method maintains a continuous measure), diachronic (stability of an observation, overtime) and synchronic (similarity among different observations within the same period-of-time) reliability aspects (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Validity concepts within the quantitative research context refer to how a test can measure an intended outcome and how it can be analyzed in terms of external (choosing methods to ensure results' generalization and representativeness degree) and internal (accuracy of chosen methods to infer causal relationships between variables) validity (Cooper & Schindler, 2003).

Furthermore, reliability concepts are related to the accuracy and relevance of measurement procedures, whether they can be analyzed for stability (making sure that results will be consistent when the same researcher uses the same measurement instrument), equivalence (when different researchers measure the same phenomenon and get to equivalent results) and internal consistency (homogeneity among items within the same instrument) (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). It is crucial to understand that in quantitative research reliability is prerequisite for results' validity, since tests with low reliability are automatically invalid.

The positivist approach does not guarantee the complete validity of a given research if one considers the validity and reliability concepts in scientific research. The idea of going to the field with a research protocol (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) also does not imply that the research problem and theory have been previously defined. Thus, a well-structured research protocol can primarily assist in ensuring prior data validity, as earlier shown in Table 3. Researchers must present their creative skills to ensure internal and external data validity, as well as their scientific skills in research development and in results' discussion. Therefore, it is up to researchers to interpret and extract the central concepts (or constructs) that will give rise to a theory, regardless of their option for qualitative and/or quantitative techniques to be used for data collection and/or analysis purposes.

There are relevant quality criteria to ensure the validity and reliability of qualitative research when the Integrative Grounded Theory is applied, as outlined in Table 4.

Table 4
Quality criteria in qualitative research

	Reliability	Validity	Reliability
Triangulation (convergent validation of both multiple methods and multi-treatment of data to asses a given phenomenon).		Yes	Yes
Reflexivity (before and after generating researcher transformation to avoid interpretive bias).		No	Yes
Procedure clarity and transparency (documentation quality in data collection and analysis procedures).		No	Yes
Research corpus construction (functional equivalent to representative samples for data saturation).		Yes	Yes
Detailed description (objective analysis of social and/or organizational facts to allow subjective findings to be transferable).		Yes	Yes
Element of surprise (discovery of inspiring evidence and of new ways to think about a given topic).		Yes	No
<i>Feedback (communicative validation of participants through signed agreement and/or consent).</i>		Yes	Yes
Audit (constant documentation in research progress to make the work of other researchers in rescuing the recorded results easier due to the creation of scripts with key questions for the research process, at the time to assess and/or validate a substantive or adaptive-substantive theory).		Yes	Yes

Source: adapted from Paiva Jr. et al. (2007).

Alreck and Settle (1995) adopted a metaphor of a set of darts thrown at a central target to illustrate the concepts of validity and reliability in quantitative research. The analysis of the Reliability versus Validity diagram (Figure 3) - first quadrant - shows that individuals consistently hit the same point (high reliability); they keep the throws precise (concentrated), but they do not hit the central target (low validity). Accordingly, there is precision and relevance in measurement procedures adopted for the test, but there is also inconsistency towards the proposed reality - this finding justifies deviations in research objective results (central target). Furthermore, individuals neither consistently hit the same point (low reliability) nor hit the central target (low validity) in the third quadrant. This understanding is important for researchers when they are willing to define the measurement instruments applicable for a population and/or sample, to consider the existence of external factors that may influence study variables and tend to lead to result deviations.

The scenario in the fourth quadrant (Figure 3) is presented where individuals do not consistently hit the same point (low reliability), despite positioning the throws in a central area (high validity). According to this scenario, there is no precision and relevance in the measurement procedure adopted for the tests, although it complies with the proposed assessed reality.

Finally, individuals consistently hit the same point (high reliability) and the central target (high validity) in the second quadrant, and it highlights an ideal scenario where there is precision and relevance in measurement procedures adopted for the tests and coherence to the proposed assessed reality.

The reliability versus validity diagram is shown in Figure 3.

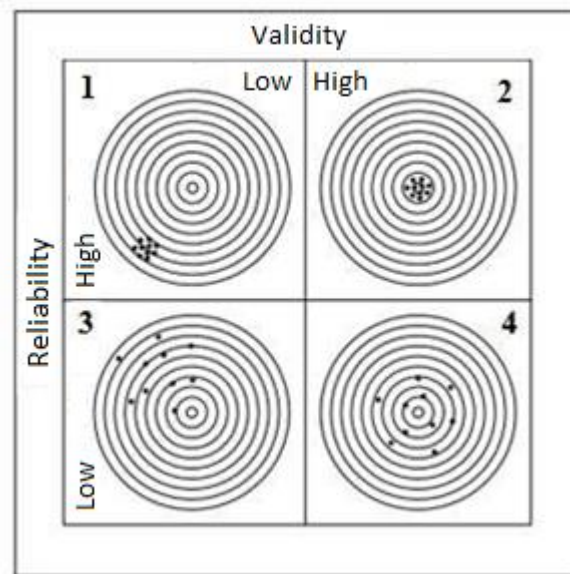


Figure 3. Reliability versus Validity Diagram

Source: adapted from Alreck and Settle (1995).

The validity of scientific research that have followed the Grounded Theory methodology is linked to confidence in decisions related to formulation (research protocol development), development (collection, treatment and analysis of empirical data based on qualitative and/or quantitative techniques) and research results (central concepts' extraction for theory emergence purposes). It also involves researchers' need of explaining how they understand the reality of the investigated social and/or organizational phenomenon by providing detailed definitions of their constructs for theory emergence aims. According to Ikeda (2009), validity represents an interpreted truth equivalent to a documentary report ability to represent the investigated social and/or organizational phenomenon. With respect to reliability, one should often assess the relevance and precision of processes to conduct scientific research, as well as the consistency of assessing a social and/or organizational phenomenon in the same, or in different, contexts of realities experienced by other researchers. (Gaskell & Bauer, 2002)

While the traditional quantitative paradigm links reliability to the assumption of study replicability by the same or different researchers (Maclennan & Avrighir, 2012), the qualitative approach associate dependability with the need of researchers to thoroughly explain all steps of their research process. According to Flick (2009), dependability is enhanced when the research process is extensively documented.

interpretation phase when one aims at extracting central concepts to objectively explain a social and/or organizational phenomenon. Therefore, researchers must be prepared for intensive and prolonged fieldwork of complex and conflicting nature (Bryant, 2002).

The process of interpreting empirical data can give birth to numerous doubts to be faced by researchers and it highlights their critical and challenging role throughout the research process. They must interact with their subjects' reality to provide plausible explanations for the social and/or organizational phenomenon, without forcing or distorting the interpretation of reality. Such technical-scientific skills can only be acquired with maturity and experience; in this sense, the present study's contribution lies on pointing out similarities and distinctions between the two seminal Grounded Theory strands. Researchers who choose to use this methodology must be attentive to the ontological and procedural foundations of their chosen approach. In addition, the text presents some ramifications of the herein assessed method, and it may provide alternative forms for its use.

It is important emphasizing that the proposed application of the Integrative Grounded Theory research methodology aims at developing a theory based on empirical data. If, for any reason, researchers fail to extract central concepts during the axial coding phase, their efforts throughout the research process may not lead to the expected results regarding the theory's emergence. Furthermore, if they attempt to force this emergence, ethical concerns regarding their approach may arise (Bianchi & Ikeda, 2008).

The discussion about the Integrative Grounded Theory research methodology in management seeks to address some recurring criticism regarding Grounded Theory application, mainly when it regards researchers who go to the field without theoretical sensitivity to structure a research protocol. This application can become a promising option in the scientific development field given its potential to provide greater flexibility and freedom for researchers to create new theories. The ontological and methodological assumptions are left to researchers' choice; they can even blend research methods for data collection and/or analysis (mixed methodology) purposes by proposing the combined and sequential use of quantitative and qualitative techniques (vice-versa). Thus, this methodology proved to be a robust option for generating substantive and/or adaptive-substantive theories in management. Hopefully, future studies will emerge and use the Integrative Grounded Theory framework to show a new scientific path for the emergence of theories that can incorporate creative and innovative solutions to the organizational world.

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Authorship

Maria Carolina Conejero

Ph.D. in Science (management) at the Economics, Management and Accounting School of University of São Paulo (FEA-USP). Lecturer at the FEI University Center in Management courses. Coordinator and lecturer of the Unusual Youth Project of the Advertising and Marketing School (ESPM) linked to the Pedagogical Innovation Center.

E-mail: mcconejero@fei.edu.br

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7082-3545>

Maria Laura Ferranty MacLennan

Ph.D. in Science (management) at the Economics, Management and Accounting School of University of São Paulo (FEA-USP). Professor at the FEI University Center in Management and Computer Science courses.

E-mail: mferranty@fei.edu.br

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5019-7492>

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Second author: conception (support), data curation (support), formal analysis (equal), investigation (support), methodology (equal), validation (equal), visualization (support), writing - original draft (support), writing - review and editing (equal).

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