

# Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Research in Sociological Studies : "Conceptual and Analytical Reading of Methodological Pluralism Between Problematization and Integration"

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## Abstract

*This article aims to shed light on the debate surrounding quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research through an epistemological and conceptual approach, based on the intellectual foundations of these three types of research within the fields of scientific inquiry in general and sociological studies in particular. It seeks to highlight the methodological problem faced by sociology researchers when studying social phenomena, namely, how to reconcile the nature of the phenomenon under investigation with the paradigm adopted in formulating the research problem in sociology. This would thus overcome the biases and subjectivity that may affect the construction of a research object, whether it be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed.*

**Keywords:** *Quantitative Research, Qualitative Research, Mixed Research, Sociological Studies.*

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## Introduction

The issue of scientific research in sociology is among the most debated and extensively examined questions. This stems from the specificity and nature of the social phenomenon, which is characterized by permanent and continuous movement, complexity, interconnectedness, and being simultaneously the product of both subjective and objective human interaction. This dynamism and constant change in its nature across time and space have, in turn, imposed a major challenge on sociological knowledge concerning how to study, understand, interpret, and explain the phenomenon. Arising from this epistemological problem, intellectual frameworks have diversified within sociological studies regarding the mechanism for studying social phenomena, oscillating between quantitative research rooted in the natural sciences and qualitative research formed from the synthesis of research in phenomenological studies.

This debate, which has accompanied the sociological studies of researchers such as **Talcott Parsons, Pierre Bourdieu, Raymond Boudon, Michel Crozier, Alain Touraine, Anthony Giddens**, and other theorists in America and Europe, has driven these thinkers and researchers in sociology to search for the optimal paradigm for studying social phenomena in order to achieve objectivity and neutrality in the process of understanding, interpreting, and explaining the studied phenomenon. This sociological research, which has multiplied over time, has created fierce competition among researchers to establish the research methodology in sociology on the American and European continents. Indeed, the process of scientifically establishing any sociological research, whether quantitative or qualitative, requires precision in readings related to the nature of the research adopted for studying the phenomenon.

These sociological works, which originated from philosophical and social foundations, have led to the emergence of a third movement that attempts to transcend the dichotomy (quantitative vs. qualitative), which became evident in the competition among sociological researchers over determining the superiority of either quantitative or qualitative research. This third wave has founded the emergence of a new approach aiming to achieve epistemic and methodological integration by relying on what is known as mixed methods research in approaching social phenomena. This foundational overcoming has indicated that a phenomenon cannot be studied solely through quantitative research, which relies on observing phenomena as statistically measurable objects assuming the existence of an objective truth independent of the researching subject. In contrast, qualitative research proceeds from the hypothesis that constructive and social reality can be

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understood by delving into the components of the study, extracting their meanings, and understanding the nature of their actions and interactions. Rather, it is a matter of moving towards a third, mixed path in the field of social and human sciences, integrating both the postulates of quantitative research and the foundations of qualitative research, thereby allowing a single sociological study based on the integration of the three approaches to benefit from the advantages of quantitative and qualitative methods while overcoming their shortcomings in approaching the social phenomenon.

This work has not stopped at the philosophical approach and intellectual conception of the three approaches, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed; it has extended to deconstructing the components of each research individually, referring to the field aspect in studying the social phenomenon through these research types. Quantitative research is linked to large, random, representative samples of the study population in order to generalize the results obtained. In contrast, qualitative research follows a path opposite to quantitative research, relying on a flexible methodology that translates into the researcher's immersion in the studied phenomenon, analyzing and interpreting it based on determining study components with a smaller size than quantitative research, known as non-random samples. This model of qualitative research appears in many sociological and anthropological studies, represented by research based on case studies, ethnographic analysis, and other classical and contemporary theoretical currents related to sociology and anthropology. All these epistemic stages, mentioned above, lead us to delve into a pivotal detail concerning the problem raised regarding the superiority of methodological research in sociological studies between quantitative and qualitative approaches. This detail in contemporary sociological practice has been articulated, as previously indicated, around what is known as mixed methods research, which itself has various designs : sequential explanatory design, sequential exploratory design, or complex design. These designs are linked to the priorities of the sociological researcher and the objectives of their research.

Based on the preceding conceptual, epistemological, and methodological approach, this research paper aims to examine the problem existing between the three types of research facing the sociological researcher in approaching any social phenomenon: is quantitative research better than qualitative research, or is it necessary to combine them by relying on the designs and types of mixed methods research, in order to establish sociological knowledge based on epistemic and functional integration? From this standpoint, we pose the following questions: How can the researcher in sociological studies achieve theoretical (epistemological) and applied (methodological) adequacy in approaching the social phenomenon, given the methodological pluralism existing between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods? How can the sociological researcher overcome the slippage in the detail of combining contradictory knowledge, paradigms, and philosophical backgrounds, such as positivism and its antithesis, in the process of understanding, interpreting, and explaining the studied phenomenon?

Based on the foregoing, and to provide further detail on the epistemic and methodological problem we have previously addressed, this research paper is divided into :

- **First Axis: Quantitative Approaches**
- **Second Axis: Qualitative Approaches**
- **Third Axis: Mixed Methods Approaches**
- **Fourth Axis: Integration between Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Research in Sociological Studies**

Understanding and interpreting the social phenomenon according to quantitative or qualitative structures, or integrating the two approaches by following a third movement known as mixed methods, urges us to deconstruct this problem to include the axes defined in this research paper, by progressively detailing each axis and mentioning the most important related elements, until reaching an approach to methodological and research pluralism between problem and integration, thereby contributing to the production of

sociological knowledge that approaches the social phenomenon with objective, epistemological, and interpretive depth.

*First Axis: Quantitative Research :*

Research methods in the field of social and human studies were initially derived from research methods in the natural and physical sciences, and their focus was on verifying measurable things. Scientists have called this method the quantitative approach. This approach relies on assumptions based on the positivist tendency in science, and its language is the language of variables. In this regard, researchers indicate that the quantitative approach starts from the intellectual background that treating social phenomena quantitatively has scientific legitimacy, as the quantitative approach possesses scientific rigor such as objectivity and credibility, relying on empirical positivism inspired by the natural sciences, which brings it close to the natural sciences in their treatment of natural phenomena (Makhlouf, 2023, pp. 1341-1342). Hence, we cannot answer the raised problem except by addressing the nature of quantitative research, its main characteristics, and the methodological tools associated with it.

*Definition of Quantitative Research:*

\* It is a type of survey research; it is research concerned with collecting data using quantitative measurement tools that are developed and subject to conditions of validity and reliability. Their data is processed statistically, and their results can be generalized.

\* It is research that aims to collect data on a specific phenomenon using quantitative measurement tools applied to a sample that represents the population. The collected data is processed statistically to arrive at scientific results generalizable to the entire research population (Al-Qassem, 2021, p. 336).

\* It is research that emanates from the empirical positivist philosophy and views reality through observation and measurement, seeking to study the phenomenon and generalize its results using the language of calculation and mathematics, with questions and indicators related to the quantification of the phenomenon (Deliou, 2014, p. 84).

Based on the previous definitions of quantitative research, we can indicate the characteristics of quantitative research as follows :

- Quantitative research tests theories and prepares conditions for controlling variables.
- It attempts to explain phenomena as a result of theoretical assumptions.
- The quantitative method is characterized as being suitable for a large number of sciences and fields, such as psychology, humanities, economics, and other fields.
- Quantitative research tests experimental variables to generalize research results to other cases.
- The quantitative method is the most used by researchers in human and social sciences, when abundant information is available on the subject being studied by the researcher (Boumediene, 2022, p. 266).

*Methodological Tools Associated with Quantitative Research:*

Quantitative research relies on a set of methodological tools in sociological studies. The essential condition for applying quantitative methods in sociology is that observation be directed towards a set of elements that are comparable in a certain way. These elements are often individuals, but can also be groups, institutions, societies, or other types of units. Accordingly, **Raymond Boudon** considers that studies starting from a "why" type of question, for example: Why does suicide vary according to crises and places?

Why do we repeatedly vote for this candidate? What are the factors of professional absenteeism? Why are the conditions of a certain project almost good? All these types of questions fall within quantitative research.

We also find in quantitative research the use of random or probability samples to represent the study population with an appropriate and fairly large number. Furthermore, the quantitative researcher uses data collection tools to measure their research variables. The data collection tool serves to assemble data to find an answer to the predetermined question. Among the data collection tools, we find forms or questionnaires designed with scales according to quantitative methods (Al-Ayeb, 2013, pp. 35-36).

The researcher who relies on quantitative research in their study does not stop at these methodological tools alone; the researcher in quantitative research can also use the interview tool to collect information from people who possess it. Often, they begin by conducting interviews with the sample representing the original population (Boumediene, 2022, p. 266).

### *Second Axis : Qualitative Research :*

The beginning of qualitative research dates back to the method used by sociologists and ethnographers in their studies of certain social phenomena to explain and interpret them. Its use has increased in recent decades in psychological and educational research as a reaction to quantitative educational research. Some researchers believe that quantitative research is unable to provide in-depth knowledge and interpretations in the psychological and educational field because it focuses on methods and procedures rather than results, on one hand. On the other hand, the philosophy of qualitative research is based on the idea that the human being is a social being by nature and cannot be separated from the environment in which they live, which is called the ontological philosophical existence. Nor can their behavior be separated from their customs and traditions, which is called the axiological philosophical values. The researcher is a central element in the research process and is considered one of its tools, which is called the epistemological philosophical knowledge (Issa Touati, 2023, pp. 153-154). Qualitative research uses qualitative methods to study social phenomena in their natural context, analyze and interpret them, and attempt to understand them by relying on the point of view of social actors. According to **Denzin** and **Lincoln**, this interpretive and naturalistic methodological research approach relies on qualitative research methods with multiple characteristics, and its concept differs according to the historical stages of its application (Deliou, 2026, p. 23). Through this intellectual background of qualitative research, we will detail the nature of qualitative research, its characteristics, and its tools in sociological studies.

### *Definition of Qualitative Research:*

Before indicating the definition of the concept of qualitative research, it is necessary to address the meaning of the two words. The word "research" refers to a method of collecting accurate and reliable information to form knowledge. The English term "Research" is composed of two parts ("re" and "search"): the first means "again" or "multiple times," and the second means the action of searching, i.e., examining closely and carefully to attempt, test, verify, or construct knowledge (Deliou, 2026, p. 23).

As for the word "qualitative," according to its English origin "Qualitative," there is the word "qualitas" which means nature and quality, referring to knowledge that questions the essence, nature, and characteristics of phenomena based on human perception rather than quantification or measurement. Therefore, some translate the word "Qualitative" as "qualitative" (Deliou, 2026, p. 24).

Regarding the definition of the concept of qualitative research terminologically, when browsing the definitions of qualitative research in various references and studies dealing with this type of research, we find a large number of them:

\* Some define qualitative research based on definitions of quantitative research and its characteristics, including the definition of Anselm Strauss, where he defines qualitative research as a type of research that is not obtained by statistical procedures or by other quantitative means.

\* **Clifford Christians** and **James W. Carey** define it as a subjective and conscious attempt to restore the critical and free spirit of scientific research. It does not consider social sciences as identical to natural sciences, but as separate sciences for the study of human beings. It does not consider society as a set of neutral facts to be categorized and classified, but as an active creation of its members (Yanoun, 2023, p. 4).

\* **Al-Abdulkarim** defines it as a research methodology in social sciences that focuses on describing phenomena and seeking to achieve a deeper understanding of them, through an inductive, interpretive approach to information collected in the natural context of the phenomenon (Issa Touati, 2023, p. 154).

Based on the previous definitions, there is a set of common hypotheses and characteristics of qualitative research, which **Herbert Blumer** summarized in the following points :

- Qualitative research understands social reality as a common product of meanings and associations generated by social interaction. Human beings act, as **Blumer** says, based on the shared meanings they attribute to subjects, events, situations, and people.
- Qualitative research relies on the analysis of the interaction and communication process using observation and text analysis methods.
- Human beings live different life conditions, determined objectively by measures such as income, education, profession, and housing conditions. Understanding their life conditions through meaning in a comprehensive and synthetic way gives these measures an interpretive sense (Al-Ayeb, 2013, p. 39).

These characteristics of qualitative research identified by **Blumer** are not the only ones in the literature and scientific references; there are other characteristics as well :

- Qualitative research has an inductive view of the relationship between theory and research, with the former being inspired by the latter.
- The epistemological position describes it as interpretive, meaning that, unlike adopting the natural scientific model in quantitative research, the emphasis is on understanding the social world by examining the interpretation of that world by participants.
- The ontological position describes it as constructivist, which means that social properties are the product of interaction between individuals and not an external phenomenon separate from those who contributed to its construction (Khalafa, 2020, p. 107).

#### *Stages and Types of Qualitative Research:*

The researcher can only undertake the study of a social phenomenon according to qualitative steps by determining the types and classifications of qualitative research. Before indicating the various classifications related to qualitative research, it is necessary to address its stages and phases.

#### ■ **Stages of Qualitative Research:**

To design a qualitative study on a given phenomenon, it is necessary to follow a set of steps and rely on a plan or roadmap enabling the researcher to achieve the desired objectives. They describe the methodological procedures followed, the phases of information collection and analysis, leading to the presentation of results. In this regard, many researchers indicate that the stages of qualitative research do not differ from the stages of conducting and completing research in general. Some summarize them in the following phases:

- Research design phase
- Research plan development phase
- Data collection phase
- Final data analysis and research report writing phase (Khalafa, 2020, pp. 110-111)

*Regarding The Types of Qualitative Research:*

The specialized literature on research methodologies presents several classifications of qualitative research that can be summarized as follows:

❖ **Denzin and Lincoln's Classification:** The researchers limited the types of qualitative research to a list of research strategies combining what can be considered qualitative research, methods, tools, or theories: case studies (based on in-depth interviews, observation), ethnography (based on participant observation and ethnographic performance), the phenomenological approach (using ethnomethodology), grounded theory, life history (narrative research using testimonies), the historical method, action research, and clinical research.

❖ **Marshall and Rossman's Classification:** The researchers summarized the types mentioned in the literature into three important categories: personal life experiences (phenomenological approach, life stories), society and culture (ethnography, study of social action), and language and oral/written communication (sociolinguistic approaches, discourse analysis).

❖ **-Abu Zina, Al-Ibrahim, and Addas' Classification:** These researchers classified qualitative research into two types: interactive (audience study) and non-interactive (document analysis). What distinguishes each is the type of data and collection strategies. Interactive research relies on field data collection through direct interaction with research participants, while non-interactive research is considered analytical documentary or historical research (Deliou, 2026, pp. 68-69).

*Methodological Tools Associated with Qualitative Research:*

**Raymond Boudon** considers that studies starting from a "how" question (e.g., **Crozier's study** on the bureaucratic phenomenon and **Talcott Parsons' study** on the social system) are qualitative studies dominated by qualitative analysis. The objective of social research in qualitative research is not to test hypotheses but to generate hypotheses and theories. Qualitative research is also useful in the absence of defined variables, when the researcher simply wants to explore. Moreover, qualitative research is more concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the perspective of the participants themselves, through the researcher's immersion in the participants' daily lives. The interpretation of the opinions, ideas, and attitudes of the study sample is achieved through data collection and analysis.

Qualitative research does not aim for generalization of results but rather for the transferability of case results, which often lead to similar situations and cases. Qualitative research also uses purposive, intentional, or snowball samples. Qualitative research often begins with case analysis, then proceeds to comparison and transferability of these cases, relying on the collection of qualitative data through observations, interviews, case studies, document analysis, images, film, and content analysis (Al-Ayeb, 2013, pp. 38-39).

*Third Axis : Mixed Methods Research :*

Mixed methods research emerged as a product of blending quantitative and qualitative research, following the appearance of many problems and obstacles affecting both quantitative and qualitative research. This has pushed researchers in the social sciences to integrate quantitative and qualitative methods to benefit from their advantages and avoid their disadvantages, through the integration of multiple data to understand

the social phenomenon in society. Thus, from this approach, we will indicate in the following elements the nature of mixed methods research, the main patterns and designs in this type of research, related to the study of social phenomena.

#### *Definition of Mixed Methods Research:*

\* It is a category of research in which researchers mix and integrate the techniques, methods, approaches, and concepts of quantitative and qualitative research within a single study. This type of research is philosophically defined as the third wave or third research movement in scientific research (Boualfefel, 2018, p. 318).

\* It refers to research and methods that indicate in their concept the process of mixing and combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study, to the point that they become inseparable as they initially appear. The researcher may begin in the first phase by attempting to discover participants' opinions, then proceed to collect the necessary data and information, which will be analyzed in a later phase using appropriate tools after determining the variables to be studied, relying on one or both types of methods to verify data accuracy. The researcher must remain open to all possibilities and reformulate their results in a way that accurately reflects reality (Khelifi, 2022, p. 1114).

\* It is defined as balancing the efficient collection and analysis of data through data that provides context. Quantitative data can be collected from a relatively large sample of the study population, while qualitative data provides contextual information and facilitates the process of understanding and interpreting quantitative data. Through this two-dimensional work, mixed methods research is formed (Souane, 2017, p. 44).

#### *Types of Mixed Methods Design*

Several models have been proposed to classify and determine the types of mixed methods strategies that researchers can use in their study. In this regard, **Creswell and Plano Clark** have identified a set of types related to mixed methods research :

**1. Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design:** This type assumes that qualitative and quantitative data provide different types of information. This design is the most well-known among basic and advanced mixed methods strategies. The researcher in this type collects quantitative and qualitative data, analyzes each separately, then compares the results to see if they confirm or refute each other (Souane, 2017, pp. 197-199).

**2. Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design:** This is a mixed methods design that appeals to individuals with a strong quantitative background or to researchers relatively new to the qualitative approach. This design comprises a two-phase project where the researcher collects quantitative data in the first phase and analyzes the results, then uses them to plan or build upon the second, qualitative phase. This design also relies on using quantitative results to determine the types of participants to be selected for a specific purpose in the qualitative phase.

**3. Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design:** If we reverse the explanatory sequential approach and begin with the qualitative phase first, then follow it with the quantitative phase, we have an exploratory sequential approach. It is a design where the researcher begins with exploration through qualitative data and analyzes it, then uses the results in the second quantitative phase to develop better measurements with specific samples of the study population, to see if data from a small number of individuals in the qualitative phase can be generalized to a large sample of the study population in the quantitative phase (Souane, 2017, pp. 202-205).

**4. Complex Mixed Methods Design:** This design consists of integrating the three previous designs into a more complex strategy, where this complex mixed model includes one or more forms of quantitative

or qualitative data, or both, within a broader framework such as ethnographic studies (Souane, 2017, p. 208).

*Fourth Axis : Integration between Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Research in Sociological Studies :*

Addressing the question of research and methodological superiority in sociological studies between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, in the introduction of this paper and through its axes, leads us to answer it with the approach indicated by **Albert Einstein** regarding which is better in scientific studies. **Einstein** answers this problem by saying : "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." The relationship between the qualitative nature of things and their degree of importance does not depend on their quantifiability. There are questions that require numerical answers and others that do not. On this basis, the researcher must consider precise criteria in choosing the research method for their study, criteria essentially linked to the research objectives, which have a close relationship with the problem or problems posed (Fezza & Ahjj, 2019, p. 50). Based on this approach, the opposition between quantitative and qualitative approaches, methods, or data seems to be without solid theoretical foundation. Far from opposition, the quantitative and the qualitative complement each other. Another researcher answers the problem by stating that the quantitative is merely one characteristic of the qualitative, namely its measurement (Boualfefel, 2018, p. 313).

These epistemic answers provided by researchers, arising from fundamental questions about the superiority of quantitative or qualitative research in addressing social phenomena, have not stopped at the previous epistemic contributions. This problem continues to confront any sociological researcher seeking to study the social phenomenon. The first thing the researcher encounters in their research topic is the philosophical question about the best way to conduct scientific research : is it quantitative, mixed, or qualitative methods? Everyone hesitates to answer that one is best, which has sparked much debate in the fields of scientific research in general and in sociological studies in particular. Many researchers lean towards the quantitative type for its precision, ease of analysis, high credibility, and because anyone can do it. In contrast, some researchers prefer qualitative research and studies because they address various details and aspects of the research and give indicators and results closer to reality than numbers and quantities. Sociological researchers demonstrate their answers here by affirming that qualitative research deals with the essence and content of the problem or research question, while quantitative research requires transforming the problem into abstract numbers, which may cause some details of the research subject to be lost.

This contradiction among sociological researchers regarding the legitimacy and superiority of one research type over another, whether quantitative or qualitative, leads us to answer this problem based on the preponderant opinion between quantitative and qualitative research, which is their integration, known in the intellectual literature as mixed methods research. This allows benefiting from the advantages of both so that the researcher obtains as many details as possible for their research and study, while being able to overcome the subjectivity that characterizes qualitative research. In this case, the qualitative research would be conducted before the quantitative research, so that the results of the qualitative research contribute to the development and improvement of the quantitative research tools, which will naturally help answer the research questions with greater objectivity (Souane, 2017, p. 51).

From this approach, there are **two types** of contexts in the research process where methodological considerations related to the application of mixed methods research strategies are based on :

**First : The research context or design phase:** Here, the researcher struggles in this phase of the research process to frame researchable questions. For example, do we want to know the frequency of a particular social phenomenon according to certain predefined variables ? Do we want to generalize these indicators and their relationships to the whole society ? Do we want to explore what people think about a particular social phenomenon ?

**Second : Regarding the choice of method in the field :** The second type refers to the methods the researcher follows to complete their studies or research. The researcher asks several questions about the methods used in the research. For example, do we want to use the method of a single field to find a certain

group and use the method of another field to study a subgroup of this group? Thus, in this type, the choice of method is partly linked to the nature of the sociological research questions in the most appropriate way for a specific purpose, rather than being linked only to a philosophical position.

Based on this detailed examination of the three approaches, we can say that not all research projects require study measures. Some research simply involves observing the outcomes of events in the field and drawing conclusions based on a theoretical framework. In contrast, other research may require analyzing data from universities, schools, hospitals, and other institutions, using statistics and logic to find patterns that may have important implications. However, many projects involve direct contact with participants through the use of an operational definition of the phenomenon, and these projects require well-designed measures to be considered valid. From this perspective, these three broad categories of research (quantitative, qualitative, mixed), although there are points of integration that bring them together, this does not negate the existence of a set of differences between them (Souane, 2017, pp. 40-192). These can be summarized in the following table :

**Table No. (01) : Illustrates the Difference Between Quantitative, Qualitative, And Mixed Research**

<b>Quantitative Research</b>	<b>Qualitative Research</b>	<b>Mixed Methods Research</b>
<b>Post-positivist assumptions</b>	Constructivist and/or advocacy/participatory assumptions	Pragmatism / Realism
<b>Predetermined tools revealing statistical data</b>	Open-ended questions, interview data, observation data, documentary data, visual and auditory data, with the aim of developing themes from them	Use of both predetermined and emerging tools and methods

In this regard, and through the preceding approach and the answer to the research problem via the set of conceptions proposed by researchers and thinkers in the field of social and human sciences, we can affirm that the requirements of sociological scientific research impose on the researcher not to stop at the process of data analysis using this or that technique. What we obtain from analysis is usually dominated by the statistical, calculative aspect, which is essentially abstract data with a predominantly descriptive character. No matter how much data analysis techniques develop and no matter how precise they become, they remain merely techniques that assist in inference or sociological interpretation, but they are not sociological interpretation itself. The idea that quantitative data analysis is simply about using a machine or statistical techniques and then automatically commenting on the numerical results produced by the machine must be abandoned. The use of statistical methods and tools should not make us forget the important thing: sociological analysis, whether qualitative or quantitative, presupposes a sociological imagination, thinking about the problem, and progressively carrying out genuine interpretation. Computer programs, regardless of their power, do not replace this intellectual work of the researcher (Saboune & Djradi, 2012, p. 267).

Moreover, the integration process between quantitative and qualitative research and the use of mixed methods makes sociological research based on the pluralism of methods, tools, and techniques, allowing the multiple use of different approaches in scientific research. This enables researchers in sociological studies to obtain answers to their research questions, reduce some of the problems faced by each type of research, whether quantitative or qualitative, and unite the strengths of both research types. This makes the treatment, analysis, explanation, and interpretation of the social phenomenon a methodical task through interconnected steps, using the tools specific to each of the three research types to achieve objective and scientific results that reflect the reality of the studied phenomenon.

## **Conclusion**

The issue of methodological pluralism and research pathways in approaching phenomena in the human and social sciences is of paramount importance, due to the specificity of the social phenomenon and its difference from the natural phenomenon. This pushes the researcher in studies related to the field of social and human sciences to think and determine the research pathways between quantitative, qualitative, or to turn towards the third movement, known as mixed methods research in sociological studies. This helps the

sociological researcher employ different types of information and methodological tools according to a research strategy linked to the problem of the subject and the scientific research plan that the researcher has previously prepared to complete their research trajectory. This leads us to emphasize in this research paper that the sociological researcher should not think in terms of the quantitative/qualitative dichotomy and the search for research superiority, whether in terms of paradigm or methodological aspect. Rather, it is necessary to think that this dichotomy is no longer an epistemological conflict, but has become an integrative construction in many contemporary research practices, embodied in the emergence of the third tendency to overcome the shortcomings that accompany both the quantitative and the qualitative simultaneously, thus offering a methodological way out for the sociological researcher in approaching the social phenomenon, based on the epistemic integration of approaches within a single study.

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