My Paradigm is Stronger than Yours: Critical Approach to Historical Attitudes and Behaviors Promoting Intellectual Stagnation and Loss of Multivocality within the Marketing Discipline

Bernard Korai
Souiden Nizar
FSA Laval, Laval University, Québec, Canada

Introduction
Today, many scholars consider qualitative research as a “sub-research” whose usefulness is only to come into support of quantitative research which is perceived as more structured, objective, formal and better developed. Although in recent years, qualitative research forums (of expression) have grown (e.g., Qualitative Market Research, Journal of Consumer Culture, Consumption, Markets and Culture), the reality remains that some behaviours within the discipline still continue to perpetuate the idea of an “undisputed” supremacy of positivist paradigm. This article main contributions lie precisely in the willingness to 1) aware marketing researchers about the danger our discipline is exposed to (by promoting imperialist traditions such as the supremacy of quantitative over qualitative) and 2) highlight ideologies, mechanisms and power structures that have helped to build, develop and maintain a positivist identity to marketing discipline. It is also a means to elucidate historical biases and inequities in the way quantitative mainstream proponents have treated qualitative research over time by institutionalizing some exclusionist and oppressive practices. By identifying these practices, we could easily contribute to destabilize their “regimes of governality” and to anticipate their future actions.

Design/methodology/approach
This current paper uses Foucauldian’s genealogy to examine “discourses” in marketing research communities and practices of self-disciplinarization carried out by qualitative researchers seeking legitimacy with positivist mainstream proponents. Discourses are a set of languages, systems of thinking and governality techniques that determine how individuals or organizations come to be disciplined, and are embedded and shaped to reproduce a given identity (Anderson and Grinberg, 1998). According to Foucault (1988), the importance of studying discourses in social sciences is twofold. On the one hand, they are mechanisms of social regulation by which mainstream paradigms (e.g., quantitative paradigm) establish “normality” by identifying the individuals who are “deviants” from orthodoxy surrounding the discipline. By fostering this social demarcation, discourses enable to exercise a control over individuals in order to render them ready for complying their bodies, souls, conducts, habits and attitudes with the dominant way of thinking (Lukes, 1974). On the other hand, discourses are the main vehicles of power flow. Through them, power disciplinarization techniques operate over individuals’ identity by creating normalized judgment like self-regulation, exclusion, marginalization, penalties and rewards.

Research implications
The main contribution of this article lies precisely in the willingness to aware marketing researchers about the danger our discipline is exposed to (by promoting imperialist traditions such as the supremacy of quantitative over qualitative). These practices tend to promote stagnation of knowledge, restriction of intellectual innovation (e.g., scarcity of new emerging ideas) and loss of multivocality within the discipline. We also make a plea for a greater openness to critical research perspectives (e.g. Foucauldian studies) in marketing.
Selected References


