

Qual+ Newsletter

Issue 6: May 2025



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Welcome!

Welcome to the sixth issue of the Qual+ Newsletter! As spring progresses, we've continued to foster engaging discussions around the evolving landscape of qualitative research. Recently, we had the pleasure of hosting Professor Dennis Jancsary (University of Liverpool Management School) for an insightful session on multimodal data analysis, exploring how we can move beyond textual materials. We also welcomed Professors Mikko Ketokivi (IE Business School) and Saku Mantere (McGill University), who challenged conventional thinking with their work on hypothetico-abductive research design. We're pleased to share some reflections from our community within this issue.

Looking ahead, Qual+ remains committed to exploring the frontiers of qualitative inquiry. Our upcoming program explores diverse areas, from advancing comparative methodologies and examining the intricate relationship between researchers and artificial intelligence, to harnessing the power of visual design in theorizing. We also continue to connect our community with valuable external opportunities that broaden perspectives on research relationships and address the methodological challenges posed by AI and big data. We hope the upcoming activities offer stimulating avenues for engagement and methodological development that benefit everyone involved.

Qual+ Team

Event Spotlights

1. Qual+ Workshop: Multimodal Data Analysis with Professor Dennis Jancsary

On Friday, April 11th, Qual+ hosted an insightful workshop focused on the growing field of multimodal data analysis. Facilitated by Professor Dennis Jancsary from the University of Liverpool Management School, known for his pioneering work in the field, the session explored ways to combine textual, visual, and other sensory data sources for a richer understanding of complex phenomena. The morning session included a keynote from Professor Jancsary, followed by an engaging interactive session. This interactive segment offered participants a chance to present their own multimodal data via short pitches, sparking collaborative discussions and allowing for valuable peer feedback.

Editor's note: The discussion on spatial layout and architecture as a visual mode draws upon the work of Louise Ravelli and colleagues. You can find more on this perspective here: [Multimodality in the Built Environment](#).



Photo by Bernadetta A. Ginting-Szczesny

Reflections by Bernadetta A. Ginting-Szczesny

What does it mean to do multimodal research, and how can we meaningfully incorporate non-verbal data into our research design?

These questions were at the centre of the keynote by Professor Dennis Jancsary (University of Liverpool Management School), which kicked off the Multimodal Data Analysis Workshop organised by Qual+ on 11 April 2025.

His starting point was that we, as researchers, risk missing out on important insights if we focus only on verbal materials. He then introduced the five different approaches for studying multimodality in organisations: archaeological, practice, strategic, dialogical, and documenting. Each approach, as Dennis emphasises, considers different questions and may involve different kinds of materials and tools (if you're interested in reading more, please check Meyer et al. (2013) and Höllerer et al. (2019)). The research examples he provided for each approach were really fascinating. The study on how meanings are embedded into spaces through practice was especially intriguing, where spatial layout and architecture are understood as a visual mode.

The keynote also touched on current and emerging trends in multimodal research, such as the intertwining of multiple modes and combining of different approaches (e.g. dialogical and archaeological) within a single research design. Yet one recurring challenge, which was brought up during the Q&A, lies in publishing multimodal papers. How can we present our multimodal findings in a convincing way? How do we navigate a review process when reviewers may be unfamiliar with assessing the quality of non-verbal data or alternative forms of presentation? Which journals are open to publishing videos or other forms of research output? Breaking established conventions is never easy, but on the bright side, a growing number of journals are becoming more open to multimodal research outputs.

As someone deeply interested in visual methodologies, this keynote was a breath of fresh air. There is indeed so much to discover when we move beyond the verbal mode! Not only visuals, but there are other modes to explore as well; think of sound and smell. I'm really excited to see the diversity of multimodal research that will emerge in the near future. I'm also grateful to Qual+ for creating the space for this important conversation. Looking forward to more events that embrace the visual dimensions of organising!

Bernadetta A. Ginting-Szczesny is a Postdoctoral Researcher in Entrepreneurship at Aalto University School of Business, Finland. Her research draws from social psychology and sociology to study how entrepreneurship can contribute to more equitable, accessible, and inclusive societies. She also seeks to develop innovative visual methodological approaches for entrepreneurship research.

2. Qual+ Seminar: The Hypothetico-Abductive Research Design for Organization Science: A Model-Based Approach

On April 24th, Qual+ welcomed Professors Mikko Ketokivi (IE Business School) and Saku Mantere (McGill University) for a thought-provoking seminar based on their work-in-progress, *"The Hypothetico-Abductive Research Design for Organization Science: A Model-Based Approach."* Professor Ketokivi is the first Qual+ Visiting Fellow. The presenters discussed how the conventional hypothetico-deductive model might encourage questionable research practices and presented their hypothetico-abductive alternative as a potentially more realistic and beneficial approach for knowledge accumulation in the field. Their framework also aims to facilitate the testing of multiple theories simultaneously.



Photo by Emrecan Gulay

Reflections by Noora Vääntinen

At the latest Qual+ Seminar, Mikko Ketokivi and Saku Mantere presented a very interesting topic – The Hypothetico-Abductive Research Design for Organization Science: A Model-Based Approach. For me, a first year PhD student, discussions between different methodological approaches to research are highly valued, and the seminar gave me a lot to think about.

It was especially important to understand the limitations and assumptions of the hypothetico-deductive approach, as those assumptions can lead e.g. to HARKing. In addition, the discussion about the methodological transparency that the hypothetico-abductive approach would allow is important in my opinion, and I hope that this topic will be discussed further in many forums to come.

Noora Vääntinen is a Doctoral Researcher at the Department of Strategy and Venturing, Aalto University School of Business.

Upcoming Qual+ Events

1. Qual+ Workshop: Theorizing through Visual Design

Facilitated by Prof. Saku Mantere (McGill University, Chair of Qual+ International Advisory Board) and Dr. Emrecan Gülay

We invite you to a half-day workshop hosted by Qual+: Theorizing through Visual Design. In this interactive session, Prof. Saku Mantere and Dr. Emrecan Gülay bring together two complementary perspectives on visualizing theory in business research.

Date: Monday, 2 June 2025

Time: 09:00–13:00

Location: Väre, Room L102 (Aalto University)

Saku draws on his expertise in theorizing and reasoning, exploring how visual forms can support conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and the communication of complex ideas. Emrecan shares key visual design principles that help make research diagrams more expressive, visually pleasing, and legible.

The second half of the workshop opens space for collaborative exploration. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with visual thinking more hands-on, with room for discussion, experimentation, and feedback.

All disciplines are welcome. No design experience needed—just curiosity and an open mind to rethink how we structure and show ideas.

2. Qual+ Interactive Session: Human-AI Relationships in Qualitative Research (Session #3)



Facilitated by Dr. Emrecan Gulay (human-computer interaction expert) and Dr. Eleonora Picco (organizational psychologist)

Date: 23 May 2025

Time: 10:00 - 12:00

Location: Marsio / 2420 Video and Graphics Classroom

Please confirm your attendance by e-mailing emrecan.gulay@aalto.fi

We invite you to our third interactive session to explore the relationships between you and AI! These systems increasingly shape research processes,

yet we know very little about our interactions with them and how they, in turn, influence our thinking and feelings.

Imagine how your perspective might shift if one AI responds warmly, another feels more distant, or one consistently validates your thoughts. How do these differences in tone and behavior shape our interpretive choices?

Through interactive engagement with AI, group discussions, and creative exercises, we will explore the roles, personalities, and intentions we unconsciously assign to these systems. By the end, you will gain a deeper understanding of how you and AI co-construct meanings in often-unnoticed ways.

3. Research Seminar: Thinking Comparatively (*Hosted at Hanken in collaboration with Qual+*)

- **Title:** Thinking comparatively: Advancing theory through ‘thick’ comparative designs in qualitative management research
- **Speakers:** Hanna Gajewska-De Mattos, Catherine Welch, and Rebecca Piekkari (with Sergi Casals)
- **Date:** Wednesday 21 May 2025
- **Time:** 10:00 – 12:00
- **Location:** Hanken main building, Teachers’ Lounge (A516) & Microsoft Teams (link provided via calendar invite)

Abstract

Comparison is a fundamental form of scientific reasoning but it is rarely discussed in these terms in management research. A narrow range of comparative designs are used in qualitative management research, potentially limiting the theoretical advances that can be made. We introduce an alternative approach to comparisons – ‘thick comparisons’ – and identify possible research designs for these kinds of studies. We argue that this is a missed opportunity for theorizing and propose a new agenda for the use of comparative reasoning in qualitative management research. We problematize the nature of comparisons and critique the dominant logic of comparison in management. Our alternative logic of comparison is based on an analysis of multidisciplinary dialogue on new ways of approaching comparisons from anthropology, sociology, political science, literature and education. Thick comparison generates theory by means of a dynamic interplay between the differences as well as similarities of comparative units. This stands in sharp contrast to the dominant logic termed ‘controlled comparison’, which focuses on establishing regularities and similarities between units. We do not argue for abandoning the dominant logic altogether but rather advocate

greater plurality of approaches to comparison. Thickening comparisons is a powerful tool for theorizing about change, context and differences.

Presenter biographies

Hanna Gajewska-De Mattos is Associate Professor in International Management at the University of Leeds and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Her research focuses on the human dimension of international business, including intercultural interaction, communication and emotions. She serves on the Governing Board of the Academy of International Business-CIBER Doctoral Academy and she is the Leeds representative at NORD-IB. She received the 2018 Emerging Markets Inspiration Conference Distinguished Scholar Award from the Stockholm Business School, Danny Van Den Bulcke Best Paper Prize at the European International Business Academy (EIBA) Conference in 2023 and Best Track Paper Awards at both EIBA 2023 and 2024.

Catherine Welch is Chair of Strategic Management at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland and Distinguished Visiting Professor at Aalto University, Finland. Catherine's research has concentrated on approaches to context in international business research, particularly the use of qualitative research methodology and process approaches to studying firm internationalization. She has a track record of launching new disciplinary conversations and advocating methodological and theoretical pluralism. Catherine is the current Book Review Editor of the Journal of International Business Studies and is a member of the journal's Research Methods Advisory Committee 2023-2025. She is an Associate Editor of Organizational Research Methods. She was a founding member of the Academy of International Business (AIB) Research Methods Shared Interest Group.

Rebecca Piekkari is Marcus Wallenberg Chair of International Business at Aalto University, School of Business. Her recent research focuses on diversity and inclusion, especially from a language and gender perspective. She has a long-standing interest in qualitative research methods and the use of multilingual datasets for theorizing. She is a Fellow of the Academy of International Business (AIB) and the European International Business Academy (EIBA). She is also the founding Director of the Aalto Center for Qualitative Management Research (Qual+ for short).

Sergi Casals is a faculty member in the Global Management area at Universidad EAFIT, Colombia. His areas of research include language-sensitive research in international business and qualitative research methods. He is a member of the Research Group in Language and Management (Group d'Études Langage et Management, GEM&L), Academy of International Business, and European International Business Academy.

Other Upcoming Events

1. EIBA Methods Summer School 2025

- **Dates:** 01.09.2025 – 05.09.2025
- **Location:** WU-Vienna
- **Organizers:** Jonas Puck (Jonas.Puck@wu.ac.at), Jakob Müllner (Jakob.Muellner@wu.ac.at)
- **Topic:** “Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and Big Data: Opportunities and Challenges for International Business Research”

Workshops:

- Pitfalls in quantitative research - B. Nielsen, U. Sydney
- Pitfalls in qualitative research - C. Welch, Trinity Dublin
- Innovative Data Sources for IB – J. Müllner, WU-Vienna
- Innovation AI in quantitative Methods in IB (AI, ML) – H. Puhr, U. Innsbruck
- Innovation in qualitative Methods in IB - Miko-Schefzig, WU-Vienna
- Text processing in IB – G.Recski, TU Vienna

Additional Activities: Social activities (city tour, campus tours, networking dinners...), 1-1 Coaching sessions, Panels on publishing in IB

Key Information:

- Application deadline: May 16, 2025 (23:59 CET)
- Fee: 550 EUR for EIBA members (includes tuition, materials, and select meals)
- Travel subsidies are available for eligible participants

2. Thinking Qualitatively: Research Relationships (TQ 2R) Online Conference

- **Host:** International Institute for Qualitative Methodology (IIQM), University of Alberta
- **Dates:** Monday 9 June – Thursday 12 June 2025 (Online)
- **Theme:** Focuses on how relationships shape qualitative research (with participants, communities, collaborators, ideas).
- **Format:** A four-day online conference featuring interactive workshops, skill-building sessions, webinars, a keynote, and networking events led by over twenty international facilitators.

TQ 2R focuses on how relationships shape qualitative research—whether that’s with participants, communities, collaborators or ideas. Across four days, over twenty international

facilitators will lead interactive workshops, short skill-building sessions, webinars, a public keynote, and informal networking events.

- **Time Zone Note:** All sessions stream live in Mountain Daylight Time (UTC-6), which is 9 hours behind Finland (UTC+3).
- **Registration:** Open now, with scaled fees. Includes access to live events, recordings (where available), and a digital badge.
- **More Information:** [Thinking Qualitatively: Research Relationships \(TQ:2R\)](#)
- **Questions:** Contact tqevent@ualberta.ca

Upcoming Qual+ Courses

Learning to See: A Course in Ethnography and Discourse Analysis by Prof. Jo Angouri

Taught by esteemed Professor Jo Angouri, this course will run on-campus at Aalto University School of Business from 12–16 May 2025. It offers doctoral students a blend of theoretical and practical insights into ethnography and discourse analysis.

The course provides an overview of theory and method for discourse research. It is structured in two parts, a theoretical and an empirical one; for the latter, the students design and carry out a research project. Through class meetings and independent learning, the course familiarizes students with the principles and practices of designing a discourse project, collecting data, analysing interaction, and presenting and writing up findings.

Please note that registration for this course is now closed.

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Qual+ newsletter is published quarterly. If you come across new interesting articles or books, calls for special issues or edited volumes, or are organizing an event or course related to qualitative, mixed, or merged methods, please contact [Emre Can Gulay](#), Qual+ Coordinator. We would happily include this information in future issues and share it with the international Qual+ community.

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