The Rationale for Qualitative Research Methods in the Era of Fake News

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Abstract
This is a review of the onto-epistemological assumptions that undergird what a communication researcher unknowingly upholds the moment the researcher decides to investigate a communication problem with either the quantitative or the qualitative research methods. In the introductory paragraphs, we discuss how those who have been over-trained in methodology disdain efforts that question implicit social research methodological assumptions. After that, the ontology of the quantitative research method is reviewed to underscore how its mechanistic tenets spawn fake news. This leads to the discourse on the "weaponization" of social media and how fake news thrive in current global journalism and mass communication thus highlighting the need for qualitative research methods as alternative to helping researchers discern the difference. Beyond this, we present the major corpus of the paper where we marshalled the various eclectic and onto-epistemological tenets that give the qualitative research approach its character of methodological pluralism. In doing this, the paper detoured into why concepts such as science, university education, data, data analysis, research design, objectivity, subjectivity, human beings, and so on mean different things in qualitative and quantitative research designs. We argue, therefore, that

fake news, pollster errors, disinformation and the likes will continue to thrive in a system that elevates quantitative over qualitative designs as the valid "science" in scientific enquiries; hence, our conviction of the capacity of qualitative research methods in addressing current media worries with regard to disinformation or fake news.