

The Power of Qualitative Research

Dr. Mike Saunders

Bayou Culture Collaborative Program Director, Visiting Researcher/Nicholls State University

September 12, 2022

Abstract

While qualitative research is sometimes undervalued in ecological research settings, not only should it be recognized as vital data, but for its capacity to convey key contextual information that helps clarify quantitative data sets. Moreover, important themes that can guide future work – including quantitative data collection – often emerge through analysis of qualitative data. As well, qualitative work allows the communities in which research is being undertaken to foreground their own concerns and emphasize the issues they feel to be most important, allowing us to see the research questions through local eyes and putting a ‘human face’ on the data. As a cultural and environmental anthropologist who works to integrate quantitative data into my ethnographic research, in this discussion I will offer my perspective on the synergistic relationship between qualitative and quantitative research.