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QUANTITATIVE VERSUS QUALITATIVE TOURISM RESEARCH

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Abstract: In order to examine the importance of "quantitative" vs. "qualitative" tourism research, similar developments in anthropology are examined. In addition, the impact of such thought upon marketing is discussed. The tradeoffs of choosing "qualitative" or "scientific" techniques are overtly considered, "science" and "art" in research are operationally defined, and the strength of each method is juxtaposed and justified. Such an analysis is vital since tourism seeks to build its own distinct research tradition. An eclectic approach of choosing research methods is recommended in light of the fact that tourism scholars and practitioners deal with complex phenomena and, as a result, rigorous, scientific methods are not always appropriate for the problems encountered. **Keywords:** quantitative research, qualitative research, humanism, anthropology, marketing, research tradeoffs. © 1997 Elsevier Science Ltd

Résumé: Recherche quantitative et qualitative. Pour comparer l'importance de la recherche qualitative et quantitative, on examine des développements similaires dans l'anthropologie. On discute l'impact des deux approches sur le marketing, et on évalue les avantages et les difficultés de chaque méthode. On définit opérationnellement la science et l'art de la recherche, puis on justifie l'importance de ces deux aspects de la recherche. Une telle analyse est essentielle, puisque le tourisme cherche à construire sa propre tradition de recherche. L'article recommande une approche éclectique dans le choix de méthodologie, tenant compte du fait que les érudits et les practiciens du tourisme s'occupent de phénomènes complexes, et donc les méthodes scientifiques rigoureuses ne conviennent pas toujours aux problèmes que nous rencontrons. **Mots-clés:** recherche quantitative, recherche qualitative, humanisme, anthropologie, marketing, avantages et difficultés de recherche. © 1997 Elsevier Science Ltd

INTRODUCTION

Social researchers are familiar with the concepts of qualitative vs. quantitative research; both methods are generally regarded as useful and legitimate. Nonetheless, since World War II, scientific (or quantitative) methods have dominated. As a result, the main role of qualitative research has typically been reduced to helping create and pose hypotheses which can then be tested and refined using scientific and/or statistical research methods and models. This general trend reflects theoretical fields, such as sociology, and practitioner disciplines (including management and marketing) which transform theoretical knowledge in practical ways. Much tourism scholarship, working within such a cross-disciplinary context, reflects this bias in favor of rigorous, quantitative, and scientific methods. Discussing the hospitality industry, for example, Lewis, Chambers and Chacko observe the purpose of qualitative research is usually "to provide information for developing further quantitative research" (1995:171).

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At the same time, however, scholars in various disciplines have simultaneously attempted to reconcile the Achilles Heel of science with the heroic flaws of art. Nonetheless, techniques which bear the imprints of logical positivism, statistical investigation, and the scientific method continue to dominate. High on the list of priorities of such methods is the dehumanization of research in order to reduce bias and increase "rigor". A truism of the scientific method asserts that the phenomenon under consideration must be empirically verifiable and observable by both the researcher and the larger scientific community. In this regard, tourism researchers Hunt and Layne argue that as tourism became more important economically, the terminology used to describe it became increasingly precise: "People probably cared little about terminology and definitions for travel and tourism until it became an activity of significant economic and social importance" (1991:7). Economic importance, they seem to assert, led to the eclipse of fuzzy-minded thinking.

Although such scientific techniques are powerful tools which often channel thought in productive ways, the unwary scholar can easily fall prey to methodological pitfalls which potentially destroy the significance of such "scientific" research. One potentially fatal trap is the temptation to adopt formal techniques in situations where understanding does not result from applying scientific rigor in an intellectual vacuum. For example, for the term "cannibalism" is the empirically verifiable definition "to eat human flesh" adequate? Although the criterion is precise, objective, and can be unerringly articulated to the scientific community, these very traits tend to prevent a meaningful consideration of the social context which accompanies such behavior. Eating human flesh as an emergency ration is different from ritualistic cannibalism and both are distinct from eating human flesh on the merits of taste. How should eating human flesh by accident be classified? What if people believe they are eating human flesh but the researcher disagrees? In Christian ritual, for example, worshipers symbolically eat Christ's body and some Christian sects believe they actually are eating human flesh. If the researcher empirically concludes otherwise, should the ceremony still be defined as ritualistic cannibalism?

The field of tourism, likewise, has suffered because various scholars have embraced shallow and counterproductive typologies. Thus, Lowych, van Langenhave and Bollaert ask, when examining typologies which exist in the tourism literature, "Do they [the typologies] explain tourists' recreative behavior or are they, rather, a creation of the author?"(1992:13). Answering their own rhetorical query, the authors depict much existing tourism research as "simple and sterile" (1992:30).

As can be seen, one of the drawbacks of employing rigorous, scientifically acceptable definitions lies in the nature of society and humankind; strict guidelines for research often require the scholar to refrain from using insight, intuition, and other non-rigorous knowledge. This is a critical dilemma facing researchers—including those in tourism—who often need to utilize diverse forms of evidence and information when the feelings of people are being studied and researched.

A BROADENING OF RESEARCH DESIGNS

Such concerns have resulted in a willingness on the part of many scholars and practitioners to broaden the list of legitimate research techniques in order to better pursue important research questions. To better cope with a multiplicity of research problems and issues, the discipline of marketing, for example, is becoming increasingly eclectic in its toolkit of legitimate research methods and strategies. After World War II, business disciplines such as marketing embraced a "scientific" orientation in order to establish themselves on a par with other academic disciplines. Such tactics, however, led to a loss of relevance among practitioners (Walle 1996a). Today, many such scholars are re-embracing other techniques in order to cope with the problems practitioners face; as a result, a broader variety of research strategies are being employed. Thus, purely statistical tools are being supplemented with more qualitative methods; quantitative/rigorous methods are being augmented because they are often incapable of dealing with vital problems facing marketing and tourism scholars. As a result, in the past 20 years, a variety of qualitative techniques have gained prestige within marketing research, as well as in tourism research.

Consumer behaviorists, furthermore, are increasingly embracing qualitative techniques and models (such as those which come from literary criticism) in order to deal with relevant topics in meaningful and pragmatic ways. Such an expansion of the methodological toolkit of legitimate research can and should be applied to tourism scholarship (Walle, 1996b). Intuitive "artistic" disciplines such as literary criticism are significantly impacting "consumer behavior, a discipline closely allied with marketing (a discipline which is profoundly important to tourism scholarship)" (Walle 1996b:876–877). These tactics "are now at the cutting edge of consumer behavior: a sister social science [of tourism]" (Walle 1996b:878). Such examples are not exhaustive, of course, but are merely an area with which the author has special expertise.

While *ad hoc* justifications like these are useful and necessary, tourism scholars need more general perspectives which will permit and encourage the evolution and utilization of appropriate methodologies and research strategies. One fruitful means of doing so is to recognize that disciplines close to tourism (such as marketing) have had to deal with similar issues. In order to demonstrate this trend, a similar struggle which has taken place in social anthropology will be discussed. In providing this background, an investigation of the research problems and remedies by other disciplines will also be presented.

Science and Non-Science as Tradeoffs

Although it might seem obvious that research should respond to the problems faced and not be shackled by a misplaced sense of methodological purity, in actual practice the manipulation of data in

inappropriate and counterproductive ways can emerge as a seductive trap. Consider, for example, the evolution of the term "exchange" as used by marketers Wroe Alderson and Richard Bagozzi. When Alderson used the term exchange (1965:84), he was willing to employ intuition and make implicit assumptions regarding the personal opinions of those involved in an exchange. Because Alderson was willing to investigate the inner workings of the human mind, his model reflected the subjective opinions and feelings of social actors (1965:132). Admittedly, it is impossible to "prove" what goes on within a human mind and since Alderson's definition of exchange is inevitably linked to such unverifiable phenomena, his model appears weak when judged by the yardstick of methodological rigor, quantifiability, or replication. Alderson's decision to deal with subjective feelings cannot be viewed as inherently "bad", however, because it led to the embrace of functionalist theory which (although often dismissed as being teleological) possesses great explanatory power.

Bagozzi, on the other hand, apparently more interested in scientific rigor and a definitive "smallest unit of marketing", asserted Alderson merely "specifies the conditions under which exchange may occur" (1974:77). Bagozzi then went on to formulate the study of exchange around criteria based upon opinions, definitions, and measurements created by the scientist/observer, not the social actor. Although this method is more "scientific" than Alderson's subjective approach, Bagozzi's techniques are not a universal improvement. Consider this incident: "A telemarketer gets on the phone and using slight of mouth and winning ways sells Widow Jones a tour of Europe at an inequitable and unfair price". According to Bagozzi's model (1974:78), this exchange would involve the benefit of one party through the injury of the other. Presumably, the net profit and loss to both parties is rigorously measurable in ways which can be clearly and objectively articulated to the larger scientific community. (He, ultimately, would deny the activity constitutes marketing at all since the exchange was not equitable.) Such orientations have their uses.

Nonetheless, the Bagozzi approach can cause problems where non-rigorous information is needed or sought, since it hinders the investigation of the innerworkings of Widow Jones' mind, her perceptions of the situation, and the impacts which they have upon her behavior. To consider these aspects of the exchange, models such as Alderson's, which make use of subjective feelings, are more appropriate. Although Bagozzi's attempt to crystalize and possibly formalize marketing is to be commended, on the one hand, one should simultaneously acknowledge that situations exist where such methods are counterproductive, inappropriate, or at least limited.

Such an observation is meaningful within the context of this article because, as Ritchie and Goeldner have pointed out, "marketing... [is] by far the most active discipline in tourism" (Ritchie and Goeldner 1989:6). As a result of comparing Alderson and Bagozzi, however, it is possible to distinguish at least two distinct trends in research styles within that influential field. One is the rigorous scientific method which has dominated in recent years; the other, more traditional orientation, argues that the methods of science might stifle legitimate

investigations, and it is willing to employ less rigorous, but more flexible, tools of investigation.

Likewise, as tourism develops as a scholarly discipline, it must, one, systemically explore the variety of tools and techniques available and, two, acknowledge that all the methods of social science are, in essence, tradeoffs allowing one option by abandoning other alternatives; and, three, establish situations where scientific tools and subjective interpretations can best be employed (and vice versa). Until these issues have been addressed, it will be difficult to judge the true value of "science" and "art" within the maturing discipline of tourism.

Social Anthropology

For the last 30 years, the field of social anthropology has debated the pros and cons of what has been referred to as "scientific" vs. "artistic" research; tourism researchers can profit by examining the results of that debate. Like many tourism researchers, anthropologists have traditionally felt that understanding mankind is an intuitive "art" (humanistic enterprise). So strong is that tradition within anthropology that until recently a Ph.D. in anthropology was not granted until the candidate had interacted with an alien culture long enough to be able to "intuitively" comprehend the "world view" of the group under investigation. Divorcing themselves from the positivistic/statistical discipline of sociology, anthropologists historically dealt with many of the same issues as other social scientists, but they pursued research from a distinctively humanistic, "artistic", and non-positivistic perspective. In the 60s and 70s, however, the statistical school of anthropological research and proponents of other rigorous techniques began to attack the humanists on methodological grounds. The result has been a significant intellectual debate and one which places "science" and "art" into meaningful perspectives.

The seeds of this debate go back at least to 1954 when linguist Kenneth Pike published *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior*. Pike's major thesis asserted that all social research could be characterized in relation to two linguistic terms, phonetic and phonemic. Phonetics is the branch of linguistics in which scholars, using clearly defined criteria, objectively and scientifically record sounds and then study them in rigorous ways. Phonemics, on the other hand, does not concentrate upon observable phenomena (sound patterns), but upon categories which exist within the mind of the informant and cannot be empirically verified. A quick example will demonstrate the difference. Phonetically, a person suffering from a severe speech impediment would possess an unusual speech pattern, since the actual utterances would not fit the statistical norms of typical pronunciation. Phonemically, on the other hand, the linguist would realize that although the person's speech was distorted, other people could still understand what was being said because the underlying structure of the language exists in the minds of both the speaker and the listener. The existence of these structures, however, is not observable in "scientific" ways (as specific utterances are).

Applying the dichotomy outside linguistics, Pike generalized phonetics and phonemics into etics (rigorous research) and emics (research which may lack rigor but which views cultures and people on their own terms). Although Pike (1954) acknowledged that the emic method led to unverifiable conclusions, he observed it helps researchers to not only appreciate the culture or language in holistic ways, but also explain the life, attitudes, motives, interests, responses, conflict, and personality of specific actors. Pike went on to observe that the etic/scientific approach, in contrast, hinders the ability to deal with these basic considerations because such phenomena cannot be rigorously investigated.

Initially enjoying wide popularity among anthropologists who had long been utilizing an emic-like approach and found it to be an intellectual justification of their methods, Pike was widely lauded as a convincing and convenient defender of humanistic, artistic research. Eventually, however, advocates of scientific rigor marshalled their forces and, led by Marvin Harris, the etic approach received a strong defense. Harris' The Nature of Cultural Things (1964), the seminal defense of the etic approach, convincingly debunked the emic method by suggesting that since emic researchers assume what goes on in another person's mind, the results of such research is not valid. Harris went on to suggest that the system is merely a deductive exercise, and Harris favored the etic method because:

> The empiricist position demands a willingness to pare down one's primitives to a minimum. In the usual actor-oriented approach...one is obliged to accept the primitive that the actor himself knows the "purpose" or "meaning" of his behavior. In traditional ethnography, it is the actor himself who in affect established...and emphasized some chains [of behavior] at the expense of others. Yet the assumptions implicit in this approach are totally alien to the spirit of science. The actor cannot join the community of observers unless he is capable of stating the operations by which he has been led to the knowledge of his purpose (1964:91).

The etic approach, on the other hand, is geared to eliminating these methodological shortcomings and "attempts to achieve intersubjectivity regardless of whether the natives' sense is violated" (Harris 1964:137). By eliminating unnecessary assumptions, the etic approach adopts a strategy for gathering evidence without the use of the subjective feelings of the informants. In Harris' words:

> Etic statements depend upon phenomenal distinctions judged appropriate by the community of scientific observers. Etic statements cannot be falsified if they do not conform to the actors' notion of what is significant, real, meaningful, or appropriate. Etic statements are verified when independent observers using similar operations agree that a given event has occurred (1968:575).

Although Harris' logic is tight, his attempt to create a scientific anthropology was largely resisted; this resulted in a major debate which explored the nature of social research and the philosophies

underlying it. Although space does not permit a detailed examination of these polemics, they largely reflect the various "science vs. art" debates common to many social sciences, including tourism. The etic position champions rigorous research even if certain types of questions cannot be addressed, because rigorous methodologies cannot meaningfully deal with them. The emic school, on the other hand, recognizes that researchers must be willing to utilize all available evidence and must not eliminate topics from the lens of investigation merely because they cannot be researched according to "acceptable" scientific guidelines.

Today, after 30 years of heated debate, anthropologists appear to have embarked on a pervasive "fence mending" effort and proponents of both camps have begun to realize the relevance of the other. Surprisingly, even the polemical Marvin Harris has softened his critique and is quick to acknowledge the value of both the emic and etic approaches, observing it "was in error" (Harris 1980:42) to totally reject such methods. He then goes on to champion an eclectic approach, concluding that research strategies which limit themselves to either emic or ethic methods possess profound limitations. After a generation of infighting, anthropologists made peace, having realized that both "science" and "non-science" must work hand in hand if their discipline is to reach maturity and remain a vital force. They have also operationally defined science and art via the emic–etic dichotomy and considered the tradeoffs involved in the choice of a methodology.

An Analogy Applied to Tourism

As specific examples of the "art" vs. "science" debate took place in disciplines which influence tourism (such as marketing), very loose definitions of science and art have emerged largely by default; typical of these formulations are intuitive definitions such as the science/knowing vs. art/doing dichotomy. These conceptualizations may have helped to heal intellectual wounds and salve professional egos, but they left the essence of the issue unresolved: What is art in research? What is science? How are they related? And most importantly, where can each technique be most fruitfully utilized? These questions are especially significant due to a debate regarding methods which is emerging within tourism once again. Consider, for example, the application of the techniques of literary criticism within consumer behavior and the application to such methods within tourism research (Walle 1996b).

It is time for tourism scholars to reformulate the art/science dichotomy using concrete terms, not convenient "catchphrases". Emic and etic are closely defined categories which anthropologists have found useful and which may suffice (if only temporarily) until tourism evolves terms more relevant for its unique needs. Using them, it may be possible to define and view the plurality of intellectual traditions within tourism and discuss the resulting options in meaningful ways. By doing so, tourism scholars can strive to develop an adequate frame-

work for determining why specific research strategies are especially useful in certain situations while simultaneously being aware of the "tradeoffs" involved in adopting a specific research mode.

A first step in this process is to tentatively adopt the emic/etic terminology and apply it to the strategies of tourism research. An overview of this perspective is provided in Table 1. This matrix draws attention to three of the more relevant implications of the science/art dichotomy: each method possesses specific characteristics; each is especially useful for certain purposes; and the decision to use a specific research strategy involves tradeoffs of some sort. These are crucial issues which should be recognized and accepted.

Science/etics in tourism research is characterized by placing a high priority upon methodological exactness and a tendency to quantify. It is especially useful when adequate data can be gathered which possesses the rigor and exactness demanded, especially when the issues at hand can be meaningfully and expediently analyzed using such techniques. Since much of the research of science can be routinized, these studies are not dependent upon the insight, or intuition of each research associate (although all meaningful research requires an insightful director to plan and coordinate activities). Certainly all researchers have some flexibility in deciding who will actually perform the "frontline" investigations. Simple surveys can be performed by people with a minimum of training; when research is more qualitative, however, the skills, training, and insights of the frontline researcher must usually be increased.

Table 1. Science and Art Compared

Tourism Term:	Scientific Method	Qualitative Research
Anthropology Term:	Etic (Science)	Emic (Art)
Characteristics:	Formality Rigor emphasized Mathematical tools prominent	Insight/intuition employed Qualitative data employed
Especially Useful When:	Appropriate data can be gathered Questions can be attacked via the scientific method Many informants needed Adequate time for research available	Formal/scientific methods will not result in needed data Formal models are not useful Few informants are available Time pressures do not permit formal research
Net Result of Tradeoffs:	A sacrifice of possible important data and/or abandoning certain research topics is accepted in order that research is placed upon a firms scientific foundation	Rigor is sacrificed for the sake of attacking questions which formal methods cannot easily pursue Insights/intuition of skilled researchers are allowed a free need Possible time savings

Science provides a powerful methodology, however, it tends to eliminate the investigation of topics which are not easily attacked using its techniques. In addition, where time is of the essence, the machinery of science may grind too slowly. While the value of scientific research often offsets the tradeoffs involved, in many situations "artistic" or qualitative research provides a more viable alternative. Using intuition, insight, and non-verifiable knowledge, artistic researchers can shorten the time required for a project, use any or all information available from whatever source, and examine any question—even those which cannot be explored in a rigorous manner.

The cost of such benefits, however, may be heavy. Credibility might be sacrificed. In addition, delegating authority and research tasks to low level associates becomes more difficult. Although scientific methods can be routinized and taught, the "artistic instinct" is unteachable and unscheduleable (when, why, or if "artistic" insight will arrive is hard to determine). In reality, of course, most research lies somewhere on the continuum between the bipolar opposites of strict art and strict science. Still, when research decisions are made, a cost–benefit analysis of the tradeoffs involved, intuitive though it may be, should be employed.

Tourism Evolves beyond Marketing

As Ritchie and Goeldner observed in 1989, marketing was long the most active and important discipline within tourism scholarship. They continue by observing that "marketing research follows generally the scientific method" (1989:6). Since those words were written, however, two distinct, but equally important, trends have impacted the tourism discipline.

First, marketing is rapidly transcending its earlier scientific focus; the recent developments in consumer behavior, which point to the increased eclecticism in the field, demonstrate this trend. Second, even more important is the observation by various marketers that the scientific bent of marketing in the post World War II era was, perhaps, an inappropriate artifact of academic gamesmanship and power politics within the university. Walle, for example, building upon the work of William Muse, argues:

> For many years business schools were viewed as second class citizens of the academic establishment. Understandably, business scholars strove to gain respectability among their peers and did so by pursuing research which other scholars found legitimate...business scholars shopped around for an acknowledged research technique and eventually focused on the scientific method as inspired by the "hard" or natural sciences. By and large, this strategy...was effective...But there's a dark side to this seemingly happy story. While embracing an "acceptable" methodology led to respect for business within academe, such tactics diverted the attention of many business scholars away from the vital questions with which practitioners grapple (1991:4).

Tourism?
Hospitality?

Today, these battles of credibility within academe have been won and avant garde marketers are increasingly eager to embrace an eclectic toolkit in order to respond to the needs of the practitioner world. This, of course, is not to say that researchers should only be concerned with "bread and butter" issues, but merely that, in general, knowledge usually needs to be focused around specific goals. Developments within subdisciplines such as consumer behavior which, as already noted, are infusing their studies with humanistic tools (e.g., literary criticism) present an illustrative example of this trend.

While the stranglehold of "scientific" orientations in marketing is being relaxed, tourism is simultaneously transcending marketing. Increasingly, the scope of tourism (as both a scholarly field and a practitioner activity) is viewed as broader than the patron/client relationship crystallized in marketing thought and practice. On the one hand, tourism professionals are recognizing that they must increasingly interact with others who transcend marketing. Walle, for example, documents how tourism scholars and practitioners must interact with counterparts who seek to "help decisionmakers assess the needs and vulnerabilities of traditional people when development strategies are being formulated" (1992:14). People such as cultural conservationists and ecologists have priorities which transcend marketing strategies and do not simply revolve around the patron/client relationship of the supplier of services targeted toward the traveler:

> [Such advocates] believe marketing [can under certain circumstances] undercut otherwise viable traditions. Not primarily concerned with the needs of customers...but they [local hosts] look at the "4Ps" [of marketing] both as strategic tools...and as impacts (Walle 1992:16).

True, marketing theorists such as Phil Kotler have attempted to broaden marketing by addressing concepts like "social marketing" which deal with various issues. Such formulations, laudable though they are, have been superficially embraced by the profession and, therefore, their potential has not been achieved. As a result, tourism professionals, not marketing theorists, must exert a leadership role in this regard.

In the current era, such advocates for traditional people and the environment are gaining prestige and clout. Grants (like those provided by the World Bank), for example, are often linked to strategies which eliminate the negative impacts of development or at least mitigate their more dubious side effects. As a result of this focus, tourism scholars and practitioners must increasingly interact with both marketers (a traditional set of colleagues) and advocates for the local hosts and the environment; such advocates are often critical of proposed marketing strategies. Because the focus of the tourism industry is transcending the patron/client relationship typically examined by marketing, contemporary tourism scholars and practitioners increasingly must learn to feel comfortable with and be able to professionally evaluate research conducted by colleagues whose vision transcends marketing (and who may be ambivalent towards it).

In addition, besides merely interacting with advocates who champion local hosts, their environment, and the resulting qualitative research, many tourism scholars and practitioners are, themselves, actively and equally concerned with these issues. As a result, tourism is not simply interacting with advocates of hosts and the environment; increasingly, tourism professionals are embracing such causes. When this happens, tourism research needs to employ the same kind of qualitative research in order to pursue its projects. As a result, there has been an increased focusing upon qualitative, emic phenomena such as the perspectives held by local populations regarding tourism and the development it causes (Johnson and Snepenger 1994). More specifically, tourism scholars are increasingly investigating the impact of resort development upon local labor and land markets (Hammes 1994). Perhaps the issue was made particularly clear by Simpson, who has examined development and its impact upon cultural traditions. He observes:

> Tourism impacts on indigenous populations at many levels. Some of these can be researched and documented in purely quantitative terms. Others, such as the changes in the conceptualization and meaning of cultures and objects, can only be understood by an awareness of the "fine grain" of local experience (1993:164).

Starting from this perspective, Simpson gathered qualitative data using the emic techniques associated with "participant observation" and went on to conclude that "local voices are often hardly audible above...the clamor of methodological and theoretical discussions" (1993:179). To counter what Simpson calls the methodological clamor of rigorous science, tourism increasingly employs the insights and methods of disciplines such as social anthropology and focuses upon the effect of tourism activity upon people and regions. In order to deal with such phenomena, scholars and practitioners often employ intuitive and subjective evidence which is emic, not etic, in nature.

Tourism strategies, for example, increasingly consider and cope with the personal feelings of hosts and the impact of tourism activity upon them. Since this type of evaluation is typically most effectively carried out using anthropological methods which are subjective, the field of tourism is supplementing scientific (etic) with humanistic (emic) tools and orientations. Thus, not only is marketing transcending science; tourism is increasingly transcending marketing. This is in an era when tourism scholarship and research needs to expand its toolkit to embrace a wider variety of techniques.

CONCLUSION

The decision to engage in social research, in general, and tourism research, in specific, involves a series of tradeoffs. On the one hand, tourism researchers can be etic/scientists and deal with verifiable facts using rigorous methods. This choice, however, limits the areas of inquiry to those for which ample "facts" can be gathered and leads to the possibility of oversimplifying reality by only examining

phenomena in ways which reflect rigorous data gathering. As a result of employing such strategies, it becomes impossible to examine "reality" in all its complexity. Emic/humanistic/artistic investigation, precisely because it is not hobbled by exacting research techniques, is free to ask questions which the rigorous researcher cannot easily pursue. The scientists' retort to such an approach may be "fools rush in where angels fear to tread", but the emic "fool" has a viable retort: throughout history fools have often been the harborers of great wisdom precisely because they were able to transcend the conventions of their era and strike at the heart of the issue.

Philosopher of science A. R. Louch put these points somewhat differently in his polemical attack of the scientific investigation of human behavior:

> To put it in a form acceptable to sociologists: methodological soundness is inversely proportional to factual significance. Triviality, redundancy, and tautology are the epithets which I think can properly be applied to the behavioral scientist (1966:9).

Although Louch points to grave weaknesses in the scientific method, tourism exists in an era in which the prevailing paradigms and tools of research have long bolstered, justified, and added credibility to scientific and quantitative methods. As a result, it has been easy for many researchers (in and out of tourism) to write off qualitative research as the absence of scientific/quantitative methods in a way which is analogous to defining darkness as the absence of light. In this scientific age, it is often assumed that those using methodologically vulnerable methods will eventually gain "enlightenment" just as modern medical techniques replaced witchdoctors in "primitive" tribes.

This paper, rejecting such assertions, suggests that in the quest for human understanding two distinct and equally respectable paths exist. Both possess distinct limitations and grave weaknesses, but both have redeeming characteristics. Although some writers, such as Koestler (1964), would argue that all creative work is essentially similar, these two approaches appear to exist largely independent of each other. As a result, one cannot be viewed as merely the absence of the other.

The field of tourism needs to embrace a general recognition of the legitimacy of a variety of research tools. Already, there has been a tendency to justify non-scientific research designs in tourism on an ad hoc case-by-case basis (Walle 1996b). Although such specific justifications are valid and necessary, tourism needs to forcefully articulate, in a general and universal way, that it is a broad and distinct field and that it embraces a variety of appropriate research strategies. Such observations lead to the realization that a plurality of equally valid research strategies exist within tourism. The choice of emics/art or etics/science must be determined by the situation in which research takes place, not be some misguided search for rigor simply for its own sake. □ □

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