

*Original Paper*

## Analysis of Research Approaches Integration in Marketing—Methodological and Empirical Aspects

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### **Abstract**

*In social studies, including marketing studies, proposals for applications of an integrated methodology appear, based on the so-called third methodological path, which is also referred to as the mixed methods. In the article, an attempt is made to outline the cognitive orientation in marketing and picture the ways of connecting approaches in the social sciences as the inspiration for marketing. The aim of the article is to propose a methodology of researching forms and degrees of methodological integration in marketing studies along with diagnosing the scale and forms of methodological integration in marketing studies. Studies of analyses on the application of integrated approaches in marketing research and the author's own analysis have helped to determine that attempts to research along the third methodological path are being made, however, such studies are rare. Methodological integration is used most often as a research support for the positivist interpretative research.*

### **Keywords**

*mixed methods, third methodological path, marketing research*

### **1. Introduction**

The problem of combining methodological approaches in the study of marketing is relevant and important. In the context of the study of the literature, a niche should be pointed out in the integration of methodological approaches in the sphere of studying marketing. In the world literature, a few methodological works on the simultaneous use of two or more methodological approaches in the study of marketing can be found (Prince et al., 2013; Hewege & Roshani, 2013; Weinreich, 1996; Mott-Stenerson, 2008).

The very problem of connecting methodological approaches has been widely described in the methodologies of social research. Over the past three decades, more than a dozen books and numerous articles about the so-called mixed methods, a third methodological path or a third methodological paradigm can be found (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010; Plano Clark & Creswell, 2008; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009).

Integration of methodological issues in the discipline of marketing studies can be considered both methodological and empirical in terms. This is the way they are discussed in this article. Methodological integration is highly useful in the creation of marketing knowledge. It is worth drawing inspiration from other social sciences, for example, sociology, which to a greater extent use the research procedures based on combining different methodologies. Two issues seem cognitively

interesting:

- What are the scale and form of use of an integrated methodology in the study of the discipline of marketing? An attempt at a diagnosis was based on the results of analyzes of the content of articles presented in the literature and the author's own analysis.
- How to investigate the scope and form of the application of the methodological orientation in research in the field of marketing? Below, an overview of the developed approaches is presented along with some suggestions proposed for their development.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Marketing as a Subject of Cognition

Since the beginning of the 20th century, marketing has remained in the sphere of interest of researchers and academics (Shaw, 1912; Weld, 1941; Litman, 1950). As an object of scientific cognition, marketing can be viewed in a historical perspective, through the prism of its development and the modern concepts and areas of research. By synthesizing the different published studies, one can distinguish some stages of the development of marketing (Egan, 2008; Wilkie & Moore, 2003, 2012). They include the following: shaping of ideas (1900-1910), crystallization of the concept (1911-1920), formalizing the scope (1921-1950), developing the marketing paradigm (1951-1980) and the division of the mainstream (after 1980).

At the stage of development of the idea, concepts of market distribution, advertising and marketing of agricultural products developed. After the emergence of the idea of marketing, there was a period of crystallization. At that time, the marketing ideas were popularized in scientific journals and developed in academic centers. It was then that different marketing approaches arose (functional, institutional, systemic), which later gave rise to marketing schools. In the following thirty years of marketing development, starting in the 1920s, detailed theories were constructed. A particular subject of interest is the consumer and consumer research. They developed the concept of mass marketing based on the instrumental concepts, mainly 4P. This phase of evolution was characterized by the elaboration of consensus on the objectives and the main assumptions of the discipline. At the time, the broad aspect of the scientific status of marketing was raised.

Starting from the 1950s, there was a phase of development of marketing which created its paradigmatic basis. The concepts of marketing were developed and popularized, mainly in the field of tools and processes. It was the time of a dynamic growth of marketing knowledge focused in the field of research in the positivist vein. Marketing ideas began to be used in nonprofit organizations, too. After 1980, the stage of fragmentation of marketing stands out, referred to as the division of the mainstream. It is a manifestation of the changing external conditions and search for the concept of market activities by companies adapted to contemporary conditions. A derivative from this has been a growing specialization, focusing on specific areas of marketing. Concepts of strategic marketing concepts, services, values, relationships, and social marketing were formed, corresponding to the challenges posed by the changing environment of companies.

The development of the services sector and the relationships on the business-to-business market became the basis for criticism by representatives of the Nordic School of the traditional paradigm based on the 4P approach and a source of a new, different perspective on marketing (Grönroos, 1989; Grönroos, 1994a), as for years, the dominant paradigm of 4P, which still forms the backbone of many books and university lectures, according to A. C. Holden and L. Holden (1998), has shaped erroneous thinking in marketing. The authors of the article considered the position and achievements of marketing,

while noting that simplifications such as in the concept of R. J. Keith, considering are preventing it from being considered a science. They also drew attention to the problem of blurring the boundaries of marketing and, consequently, its common interests with other sciences (economics, psychology), particularly in certain aspects of consumer behavior. The authors stressed problems the science of marketing, noting that many scientists do not recognize sources of marketing: its main assumptions are derived from the practice, and that the marketing of sources accounted for more meaningful, observable knowledge and did not provide (still does not provide) reliable data. They noted that in marketing too little space is devoted to the theory. A schematic, simplified approach to marketing masks its depth and achievements.

The classic paradigm, in spite of changes in the environment and conditions for the functioning of enterprises, was recognized as the leading one. It is difficult to look at modern marketing in an instrumental way. Rather, according to the representatives of the Nordic school, one should emphasize the functional aspect. Marketing should be focused on meeting the needs and desires of consumers and creating relationships. In this way, the marketing helps the company to efficiently operate in the economy, in which physical goods are no longer are the main value (Grönroos, 1994b). The concept of 4P does not fit into the contemporary market; it is difficult, therefore, to explain its leading position in the theory and education of marketing (Gummesson & Grönroos, 2012). The new environment requires a different view on the essence of marketing.

## *2.2 Fundamentals of Marketing Research Methodology*

Research on marketing may be of historical nature. Then, it constitutes a reflection on its evolution and development. It may also relate to the current state of knowledge of the field or its components. Marketing studies should serve the shaping of paradigms and theoretical concepts, providing knowledge about marketing. Knowing marketing is a prerequisite for shaping its academic status; it is an integral component of its identity as a branch of science, therefore it is important to look at the methodological approaches used in marketing. Three basic methodological paths for seeking knowledge in marketing and about marketing: critical, positivist, and interpretative are indicated (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988; Sagan, 2013).

The critical current is a methodological proposal that allows verification of the theory by means of deep reflection. It is derived from Poper's falsifiability; it consists of subjecting the acquis of the science to criticism in order to assess the validity of individual models and theories. In the world literature, critical marketing is rather a margin current although starting from the 1970s, it has found its followers (Burton, 2001; Shankar, 2009). Tadjewski (2010) referred to the many authors, such as Alvesson, Willmott, and Saren, who believe that among the social sciences, the critical current is the least developed in marketing. At the same time, however, the author cites numerous articles and monographs developed on the basis of critical studies that have been published in the years 1940-1990 (Tadjewski, 2010).

The critical approach is an essential element contributing to the development of the science and raising its academic rank. The critical methodology is important for the effective implementation of certain functions of marketing. For example, Bettany and Wodruffe-Burton (2009) indicated that in the consumer research, criticism is needed regarding ontological assumptions (the nature of reality) and the degree of researcher's control. The critical methodology can be an alternative to other methodological approaches to create or verify the theory of marketing, but it can also be used to reflect on the effectiveness of other methodologies in marketing. The critical methodology is a complement to the two main methodologies used in the marketing studies, that are presented in Table 1. They are characterized by different research procedures, different approaches to research and to the role of the

researcher. The knowledge accumulated in both methodological approaches has distinct specificities.

**Table 1. The Positivist and Interpretive Approaches in Social Research—Main Features Differentiating Them**

Cross-section of the analysis	Interpretative approach	Positivist approach
Dominant paradigm, assumptions about reality	Constructivist, interpretative The reality is complex, difficult to identify and holistic	Positivist The reality is simple and subjective to fragmentation
The researcher's role, the relationship between researcher and subject of research	Personal participation in the procedure of collecting information, the pursuit of deep interaction with the respondents, adoption of their perspective	The researcher develops tools and coordinates the work of the research team, validates the correctness of the data collection procedures, the adoption of a theoretical perspective—the supremacy of the established concepts and categories
The ability to determine the relationships of causality	It is impossible to distinguish causes from effects, because the studied units are constantly changing	One can identify the causes of events that, in the long or short term, produce specific effects
The possibility of a generalization	Only time- and context-dependent knowledge (idiographic)	Knowledge independent of time and context
Research problem	Overall concept of research	Clearly defined, carefully operationalized
Research questions	Open, cognitive, explanatory (how? why?)	Categorized, alternative, often dichotomous
Research design	Plans allowing derogations and changes of problem research	Adoption of preconceptions and schedule
Initial organization of research	Making contacts “in the field”, to test ways of gathering knowledge, initial, experimental interpretation	Pilot studies that verify the quality of the research tools and possibilities for future analysis of the research material
Research methods and tools	Scenario methods, observation, in-depth interviews, semiotic and textual analyses; recording the material in the observation log, transcripts	Questionnaires—survey, interview (telephone or in person), the basis of measurement is nominal, ordinal, interval or relative scales
Research sample	Purposeful selection, studying small samples and even units	Aiming for representativeness of the sample, large research samples
Analysis and interpretation of data	Qualitative, descriptive, contextual, without statistical analysis, the search for explanations	Statistical, objective, searching for rules and regularities to make forecasts
Communicating the	Dense description (expressive,	Cumulative results, data distributions,

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results	naturalistic, explaining, interpretive, contextual); ethnographic, anthropological texts	comparison of data, dependence on factors, result-based models
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*Source:* own study based on: Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Babbie, 2013; Sagan, 2004; M. Kostera, 2007.

Studies in positivist vein often separate the researcher from the process of collecting information, focused on the management of the research project and the organization of individual tasks. At the design stage of the studies the research problem is defined, a detailed categorization of items of research is formed, and a hypothesis is formulated. In this type of research one seeks objective knowledge of reality, and the researcher separates research material from their beliefs and values.

In interpretative studies, the researcher is obliged to come into direct and personal relationship with studied area. In interpretative studies at the problem is defined at the outset and creates the overall concept of the proceedings. This approach allows one to pose open, cognitive questions and leaves room for making subsequent changes to the direction of the research, and even adjust the main research problem. In the interpretative research process, arises knowledge that did not give rise to the creation of generalizations, rights and rules, but allows one to understand the phenomena examined.

### *2.3 Ways of Combining Methodological Approaches in the Social Sciences*

Combining methodologies is a proposal aimed at improving the efficiency of research processes. The idea of integrating research approaches assumes that since there are no perfect ways and methods of cognition, each methodology has some limitations, therefore, one should use the possibilities of different approaches. This allows one to gather a more complete methodological knowledge than in a single path and better create and verify theories. Combining methodological approaches is difficult, however, the solution of the difficulties significantly expands the cognitive perspective. Methodological integration is an interesting prospect for marketing research. It is worth drawing from proposals submitted by the representatives of various social sciences, especially sociology, but also economics and management sciences.

One of the manifestations of methodology integration in various areas of social research is triangulation. It concerns the combination of approaches, orientation, or methods in various stages of research. The essence of triangulation is to look at issues from different, at least two points of view (Flick, 2011). Conducting research from different perspectives frequently requires the use of a few methodological approaches within one research project, although it is also possible to use the idea of triangulation on a smaller scale, within the same research methodology. The use of different research methods combines many research techniques. Integration may refer to different stages of the research process: design of research (e.g., confrontation of the researchers, presenting various positions), collecting information (e.g., observations by different scholars), analysis of the results (e.g., use of statistical methods and qualitative analysis in the processing of responses). Therefore, from the point of view of the research project, triangulation applies to many issues, while the scale of its application is different, but always behind it there is the idea of comparing different perspectives, confronting the various positions and methodological views.

The concept of triangulation was taken from navigation and military strategies, where it applied to using many points to accurately determine the position of an object (Jick, 2008). Triangulation is a method used in astronomy and geodesy, used in setting coordinate of points. It uses the properties of the triangle-knowledge on the sides of the triangle and of its angles allows one to measure the whole

figure. The term *triangulation* captures the essence of multiple approaches or cognitive methods for the specified problem. One can look from many perspectives in order to build a more complete picture and help measure, verify the data, and ensure the reliability of the data collected. It should be noted, however, that the concept of triangulation used in social studies is quite different from the triangulation used in navigation. In the first case, double or multiple measurements to verify the quality of the data, in the second, they determine the correct location. Triangulation should be treated as a metaphor. The importance of this concept is not fully identical with its original meaning (Blaikie, 2008; Hammersley, 2008).

Today, triangulation is a very broad and multi-faceted concept, related to the research strategy, research procedures, methods and research techniques, sources of information and general concepts, paradigms and approaches (Perlesz & Lindsay, 2003). Each type of triangulation that goes beyond one methodological orientation in the research project can be thought of as an illustration of the methodological integration in research. This form of integration is indicated by Hammersley (2008) as a triangulation method called the epistemological dialog.

The aim of this type of triangulation is expanding and supplementing knowledge by transcending the epistemological limitations of each method of research. It is assumed that these methods reflect the studied reality in a different light, because they belong to different methodological paths, and are therefore characterized by the difference of assumptions about the nature of reality, being, and value. This type of triangulation is commonly identified with the concept of a mixed method involving the integration of quantitative research and qualitative research. In fact, however, it concerns the problem of combining different methodological paths in one research project, coming from two dominant paradigms of social studies (in particular economics and management): positivist and interpretive or constructivist.

The concept of mixed methods is a proposal founded on the basis of methodological criticism most commonly used in studies of social trends: quantitative and qualitative research. In the history of social research, can point out clear orientations in groups of researchers in one of these two research methodologies. When narrowed down to one current and individual assumptions, methods of data collection and analysis, one can at best mitigate the limitations, as they cannot be completely eliminated. The idea of a “mixed method” assumes that the research process can be used by both research approaches, thus methodological flaws of one path can be mitigated by the advantages of the other.

Orientation described as mixed method is called the third methodological path, and constitutes the third research paradigm, providing a third methodological movement (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The concept of an integrated methodology, with the aim, as emphasized by the sense of orientation, to reduce the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research, is also applied (Plowright, 2011). In many works devoted to the issues presented, the term integrated or mixed methods is used. Studies of articles and chapters of monographs containing integrated method or synonyms for this concept allow one to note that much the issues of integration of methodologies are considered more often than the problems of integration of research methods. If attention is already given to connecting social research methods, it is to be noted that the essence of this integration is combining the methods used in separate methodological currents.

Within the third methodological path, no new methods of knowing have been created, however, it was attempted to combine extreme, opposing views on the creation of a research project, collect information, analyze, interpret and present data. It is an attempt to base research on entirely different

methodological currents. It is not, as has been presented in the next section, an easy task, but one possible to achieve. What is more, it seems particularly useful in the exploration of complex, problematic, multifaceted and contextual social realities. Its methodical examination within one path creates limitations in building a comprehensive knowledge. The advantage of mixed methods is the ability to create diverse knowledge, wide and deep, although it should be remembered that not every type of approach and data integration broadens the perspective of research and knowledge.

The mixed methodology involves combining procedures at the design stage and during the processing of results. Integration concerns the researchers, but also the research objects. In the research procedure, its theoretical and methodical aspects are subject to it. Despite the diverse nomenclature, the presented approach means joining (at different levels) the methodology of qualitative research with quantitative research. Understood in this way, the methodology is an alternative for research according to the assumptions of one methodological approach: positivism or interpretationism.

### 3. State of Research on Methodological Integration in Marketing

An attempt to diagnosis the use mixed approaches in studies of marketing is based on the available literature analysis (Table 2). The time frame and subjects of each of the analyses are different, and so the results are not fully comparable. Each team of authors applied a different analytical key. However, the analyses build a picture of the application of the integrated methodology in contemporary marketing. The results of these analyses are valuable because the methodological integration represents a new trend in the study of marketing issues. So far, little space has been devoted to the analysis of ways and ranges of methodology integration in the study of marketing.

**Table 2. Analysis of the Integration of Methodological Approaches in the Study of Marketing**

Authors	Temporal scope of analysis	Journal analyzed	Number of articles analyzed
D. Hanson, M. Grimmer	1993-2002	<i>“Journal of Marketing”</i> , <i>“European Journal of Marketing”</i> , <i>“Journal of Services Marketing”</i> .	1,195
R. L. Harrison, T. M. Reilly	2003-2009	<i>“Journal of Consumer Research”</i> , <i>“Journal of Marketing”</i> , <i>“Journal of Marketing Research”</i> , <i>“Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science”</i> , <i>“Journal of Retailing”</i> , <i>“Journal of Consumer Psychology”</i> , <i>“Marketing Science”</i> , <i>“International Journal of Research in Marketing”</i> , <i>“European Journal of Marketing”</i> .	2,166

Source: Hanson & Grimmer, 2007; Harrison & Reilly, 2011.

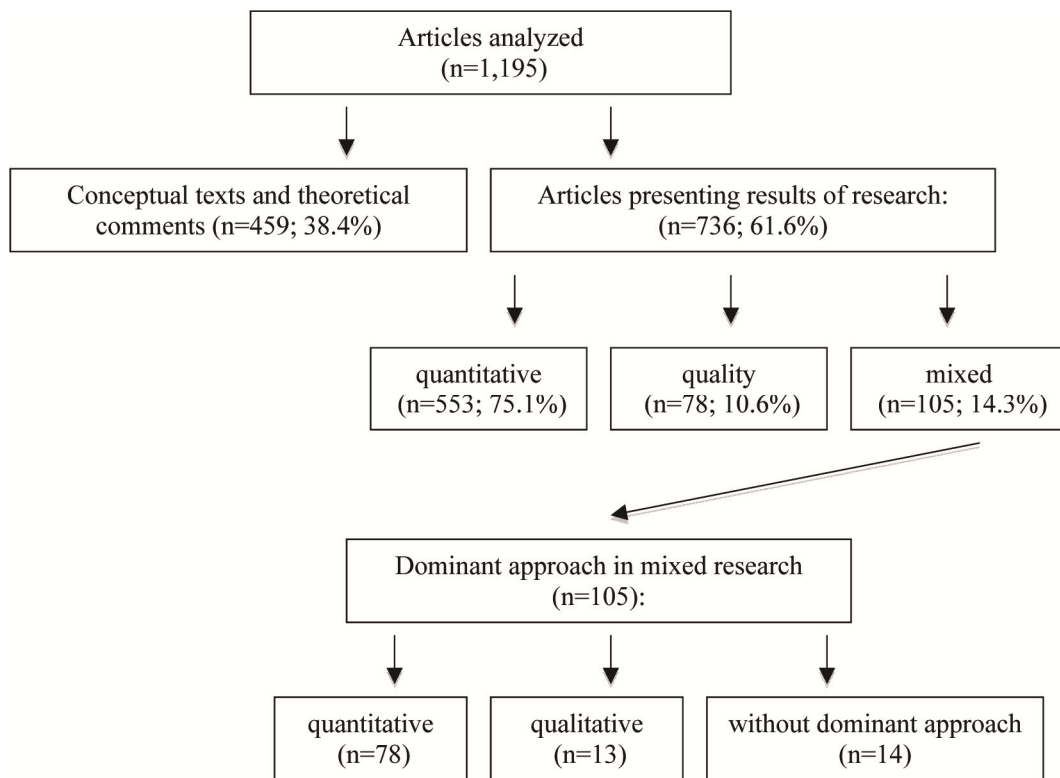
The analysis made by Hanson and Grimmer (2007) was a pioneering one. It is the first available analytical study in the literature on the subject of connecting methodological approaches in the study of marketing issues. The authors intentionally selected research units: articles posted in leading marketing journals. The selection was guided by the quality of magazines. The highest-rated journals, with high standards of qualifications were selected. In addition, the selected magazines came from the U.S. and Europe, to make a comparison of the scope and scale of the methodological integration in marketing studies on different continents.

Hanson and Grimmer (2007) analyzed articles published in the journals which appeared in the years 2003-2009. The articles were divided into four groups:

- conceptual, theoretical and comments,
- reports presenting the results of quantitative studies,
- texts describing the results of qualitative research,
- articles showing the results of mixed research.

The last group was differentiated based on the following criteria:

- in the studies, integration of the research methods took place; both significant methods for quantitative research (e.g., direct survey) and methods specific to qualitative research (e.g., in-depth and unstructured interviews) were used.
- the authors of the studies clearly declared in which methodological trends their research was set in.



**Figure 1. Distribution of Analysis Results Concerning the Integration of Methodological Approaches in the Study of Marketing Issues by Hanson and Grimmer**

Source: own study based on: Hanson & Grimmer, 2007.



At least one of the above two criteria had to be met in order for the study to be classified as mixed approach. The study noted that research on marketing issues is part of the continuum whose poles are quantitative and qualitative research. Placing research on different places on the axis of the continuum, as Hanson and Grimmer (2007) stressed, can cause some difficulty in classification. Generally, extracting quantitative research is not a problem, conducted in a positivist vein, while there are qualitative studies which have different goals and objectives, and therefore can be implemented in the interpretative current, but they can adopt assumptions closer to the positivist orientation. The authors drew attention to the certain degree of subjectivity in making final decisions in the ambiguous cases qualification. At the same time, it was attempted to resolve the difficulties of classification using dual coding to distinguish qualitative research from mixed studies. In the case of studies that used the mixed approaches, attempts were made to determine if any of the approaches were dominant, and if so, which ones. Results of the analysis are presented in Figure 1.

The analysis by Hanson and Grimmer (2007) showed that the dominant current in research in the field of marketing is quantitative research. Integrated research was reported in 105 cases, which constituted 14.3% of all the empirical research. This factor indicates the scale of integration, however, one should keep in mind that it does not specify the extent of this integration. In the study, only 13 (1.8% of all studies analyzed), treated the two currents of research equally. In most cases, positivist approach dominated, qualitative research was conducted as a supplement to the results obtained from quantitative research or it was implemented before the appropriate research phase, during the design of research tools. The analysis did not indicate significant differences in the dynamics of the publication of research results produced with the use of mixed methods in the years 1993-2002. Also, no important differences were noted between the European and the North American continent.

A meaningful analysis of the use of mixed methods in marketing research was made by Harrison & Reilly (2011). Nine leading, highly assessed marketing journals were chosen for the analysis. Compared to the analysis by Hanson and Grimmer (2007), the research was less focused on presenting the scale of the use of mixed methods to other types of research, while analyzing a wide variety of forms and methods of the integration of research.

Models of methodological integration in the analysis by Harrison and Reilly (2011) are presented in Table 3. The models were developed based on several criteria. The first of them was time. In this way, integration referred to as sequential and parallel (concurrent) was distinguished. In the sequential integration method, research is conducted within one methodological path, and after its completion, planning and execution of research in the second path is carried out. In parallel studies, research carries out in two currents at once.

**Table 3. Major Mixed Methods Design Types**

Design type	Variants	Timing	Weighting	Mixing	Notation
Concurrent	Convergence	Concurrent: quantitative and qualitative at the same time	Usually equal	Merging the data during interpretation and analysis	QUAN + QUAL
Embedded	Embedded experimental Embedded correlation	Concurrent or sequential	Unequal	Embedded one type of data within the larger design using the other type of data	QUAN (qual) or QUAL (quan)

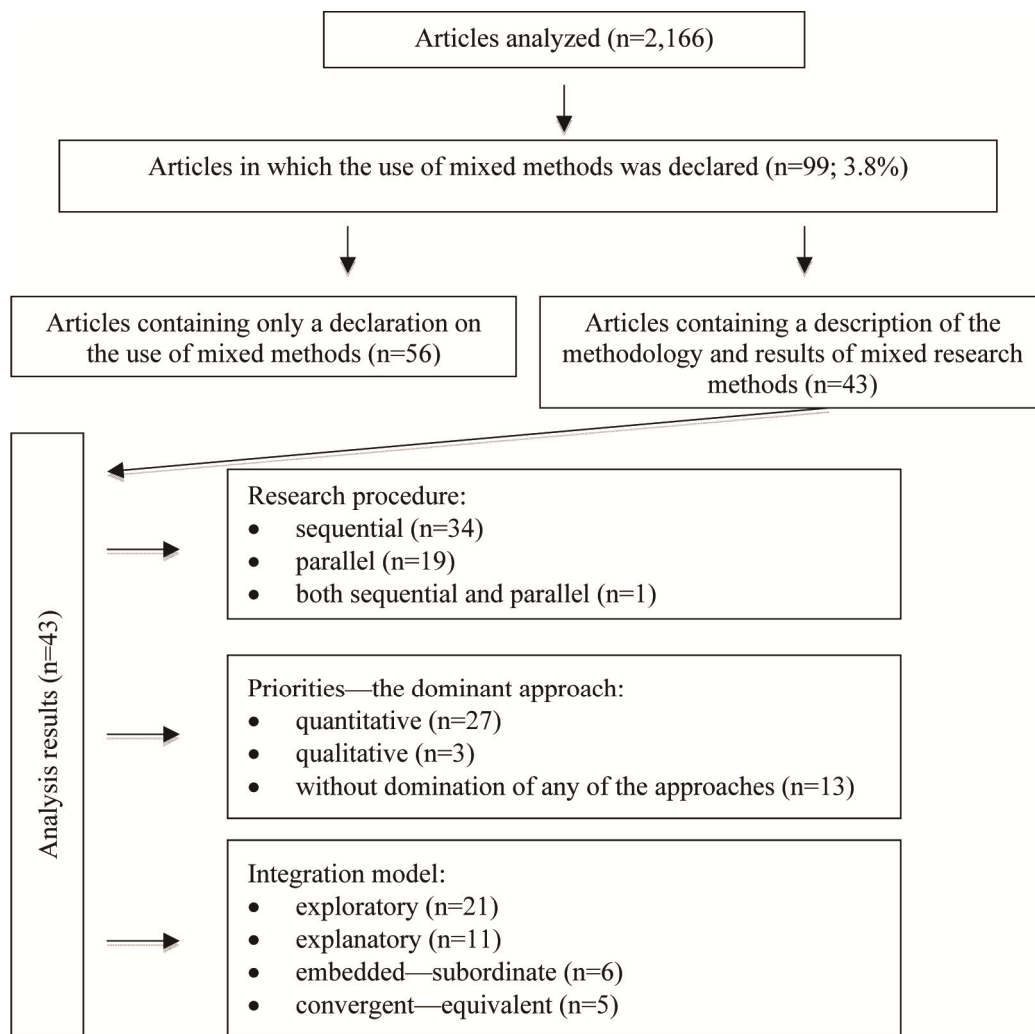
Explanatory	Follow-up explanations	Sequential: quantitative followed by a qualitative	Usually quantitative	Connect the data between the two phases	QUAN→qual
Exploratory	Instrument development Taxonomy	Sequential: qualitative followed by a quantitative	Usually qualitative	Connect the data between the two phases	QUAL→quan

*Source:* Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Harrison & Reilly, 2011.

Another criterion of typology of methodological integration in research is the status of integrated approaches. In the case of many models one dominant approach occurs, while the second is the supplementing approach.

The last of the criteria of the typology of methodological integration is the way of combining data. Combining of results, and so data collected independently in qualitative and quantitative studies can be distinguished, at the stage of data analysis and interpretation. Such a method of integration takes place in the convergent method. Another way to combine data is including information from a complementary research procedure to data collected using the dominant research procedure. This kind of merging occurs in embedded integration. Another way to combine data is to use the information gained in one methodological approach to plan research in the second approach. Such data combinations are characteristic for sequential integration.

The authors embraced only those articles in the analysis of the methodological integration of approaches in marketing studies that in addition to the declaration of using different methodological paths presented results of research specific to both procedures. 43 such articles were identified, which represents 1.7% of all analyzed articles (Figure 2). Thus, the mixed studies are found very rarely in marketing. In terms of the research procedure, sequential studies have a definite advantage. In this way, the results of research gathered in one methodology current serve designing research in a different path. Among the 34 cases in which sequential studies were conducted, qualitative and quantitative research were granted equivalent status in only 7 of them. In other studies, qualitative research constituted quantitative research. Such a trend can be clearly seen in the assessment of the priorities of the analyzed studies. In most cases, a quantitative approach dominated. Thirteen research projects represented a balanced approach, as shown by the lack of dominance of one of the methodological approaches.



**Figure 2. Distribution of the Analysis Results on the Integration of Methodological Approaches in the Study of Marketing according to Harrison and Reilly**

Source: own study based on: Harrison & Reilly, 2011.

The most commonly identified model in the analysis of Harrison and Reilly (2011) was the exploratory model of integration. It was used in 21 studies, thus, in almost half of the cases analyzed. The interpretation of this indicator without linking it with other data could be wrong. This result suggests that the dominant approach in the study was qualitative which is characteristic of exploratory research. In fact, such a situation has occurred only once, in other situations, studies were conducted in the quantitative current and qualitative research preceded them, to find categories for the operationalization of research problems.

The analysis allowed the identification of the most common types of integration. In 19 studies instrumental integration was used, therefore, one methodological approach was applied, usually qualitative studies were carried out in the development of research tools for quantitative research. In 11 cases, the authors identified the explanatory integration.

#### 4. Method

Below, the methodological ground is characterized and results of the analysis of the integration of methodological approaches in marketing studies in Poland are presented. It is an attempt to make up the state of knowledge about the integration of methodologies of marketing studies performed by the above mentioned authors. For the analysis, publications printed in the *Marketing i Rynek* journal were chosen. It was assumed that it was the leading marketing themed journal in Poland. It is recognized in the scientific community and the profile of the articles posted there relates to the most important marketing problems from the point of view of creating and verifying the theory of marketing.

The analysis included all articles published in *Marketing i Rynek* from January 2011 to December 2015, and so in 60 paper editions. From 2014, the journal has adopted the formula of additional publications attached to selected issues, published in electronic form on CDs. In 2014, 10 such publications were issued, in 2015-2016. The publications have a different thematic scope, volume and character. The ability to analyze the contents of all texts would be too extensive a task, so it was decided on the selection of articles published on 4 discs. Using the simple draw with the use of a random number table for analysis Issue 4/2014CD, Issue 6/2014CD, Issue 2/2015CD and Issue 8/2015CD were selected. In total, the content of 616 articles was analyzed.

The analysis of scale and ways of combining methodological approaches in today's marketing in Poland had two sources of inspiration. The first were the analyses by Hanson and Grimmer (2007), and Harrison and Reilly (2011). The division of the analyzed articles was taken from the first pair of authors (into theoretical, conceptual and empirical, presenting the outcome of research). As in the analyses by these authors, it was attempted to identify integrated studies (based on mixed methods) in contrast to qualitative and quantitative research. However, the terms "qualitative research" and "quantitative research" were abandoned, even if the authors of the texts used them. Instead, positivist, interpretative or mixed approach was identified according to the research carried out. The reason for the dropping of the classification of the analyzed studies into qualitative or quantitative was the fact that there were cases in which some degree of integration of the research was detected. These studies were neither 100% quantitative nor 100% qualitative. An example of this can be the research realized in the positivist current, using a questionnaire, which was based largely on standardized, categorized questions, but also included an open question.

As in the research of Harrison and Reilly (2011), the author identified methodological integration procedures in the published research projects, distinguishing sequential, parallel and mixed studies. The model of integration: exploratory, explanatory, embedded or convergent (concurrent) was determined. During the analysis of the empirical content in the *Marketing i Rynek* journal, two categories of analysis beyond these prototypes were added. The place of the methodological integration in a research project was identified, highlighting its standard stages: planning and design of research tools, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results and presentation of results. Another additional category of the analysis was the integration of the subject. The following types were distinguished: data integration, integration of methods assigned to different methodological paths, and integration of theories, referred to the theoretical triangulation.

The second inspiration for these analyzes were the author's own, previous experience with the study of methodological triangulation, also on the basis of publications in *Marketing i Rynek* (Chlipała, 2014). The analysis sought so-called methodological triangulation based on variables reflecting epistemological, ontological and axiological aspects.

The developed schema (Table 4) should be regarded as a methodological proposal. It is worthwhile discussing the ways to verify whether the research project is already integrated or not, and when can it be ascribed to one methodology. Once again, it is worth noting that, according to the author of the monograph, it is determined by the orientation of the researcher, his or her beliefs and the methodology she or he was trying to carry out the research.

**Table 4. Variables Determining the Orientation of Research—Epistemological, Ontological and Axiological Aspects**

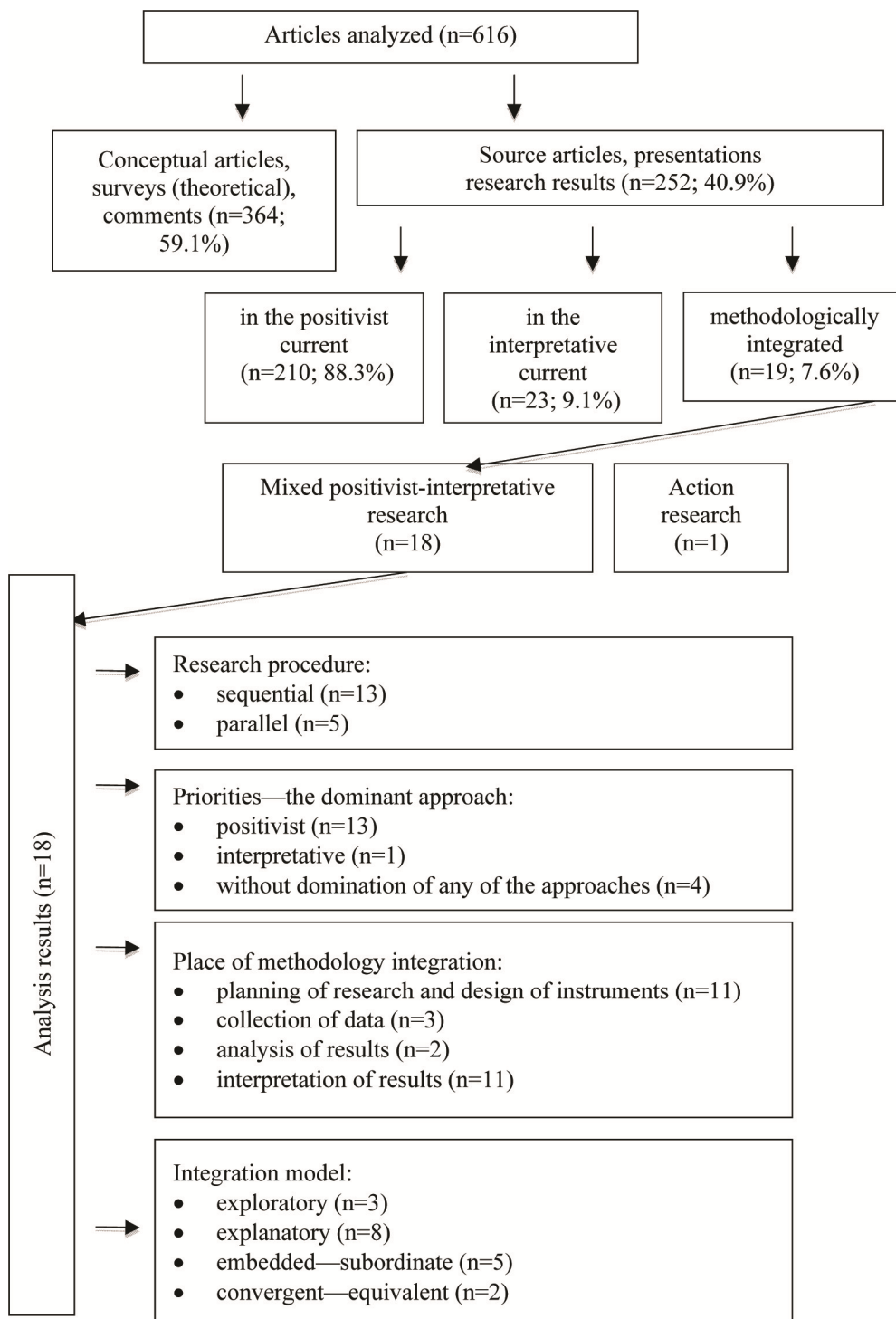
Variable	Characteristics of the variable (K—constructivist orientation, P—positivist orientation)	Method of verification—text components analyzed
V1—researcher interaction with the subject of research	The researcher makes direct contact with the respondents and conducts in-depth interviews (K), the researcher has a shallow interact with the respondents or is separated from the research procedure or collection of data (P)	Description of methodology Characteristics of the course of studies Nature of results
V2—formed on the basis of scientific knowledge	Idiographic knowledge, time and context-dependent (K), nomothetic, independent of time and context (P)	Objectives of research, research problem Hypotheses and method of verification How results are presented. Conclusions from research
V3—value in the process of cognition	Diverse, received as a studied system or set of standards and values (K), Uniform set or system of standards and values adopted by the researcher (P)	Research assumptions How results are presented.
V4—views about the reality studied	The reality is holistic and compound (K), the reality can be easily subjected to fragmentation (P)	Research assumptions The nature of the results Drawing conclusions
V5—relationships of causality	Lack of exploration of the cause-effect between elements studied (K) Determining causality relationships between elements studied (P)	Objective of research and research problem How results are presented Conclusions from research

Variables 1 and 2 presented in the table relate to the epistemological orientation of the researcher. They refer to the research procedures and assumptions about knowledge built in the cognitive process. The third variable specifies the axiological orientation pointing out the manner and the involvement of the researcher in the assessment of the research material. Variable 4 and 5 are characterized by the ontological orientation of the researcher, their views on the studied reality and the causality relationships between the studied elements.

## 5. Results

The analyzed publications in the *Marketing i Rynek* journal are theoretical; reviews and conceptual texts included there. The group also included editorial comments and book reviews. They accounted for nearly 60% of all texts. Slightly more than 40% in the journal's content was taken up by texts representing empirical methodologies and showing the results of completed research projects. These texts also included the analyses based on secondary sources of information, but only in the case where the text stated goals and objectives of methodological analysis. If secondary data accounted only for exemplification of the problems discussed, then they were included in the first category.

Detailed analyzes were performed on all texts containing descriptions of empirical methodology and research results: a total of 252 articles. The vast majority (nearly 90%) present the results of research carried out in line with the positivist methodology. This result confirms the dominance of the positivist approach in studies of marketing issues emphasized by Hunt, 1991; Shankar and Patterson, 2001; Chung and Alagaratnam, 2001. Less than 8% of the publications on empirical research presented integrated results, using more than one methodological approach. One research project was implemented based on the methodology of research in operation, 18 articles concerned connecting the positivist and interpretative methodology.



**Figure 3. Distribution of the Results of the Methodological Approach Integration Analysis in the Study Marketing in Poland on the Basis of the *Marketing i Rynek* Journal**

Source: own research.

Figure 3 summarizes the most important sections of the analysis of the integration of methodological approaches in the study of marketing in Poland. To say that the methodology used in the study was integrated, at least one of two conditions needed to be fulfilled: 1) in the description of the methodology there was a mention about combining methodological approaches, 2) they presented results of mixed research.

Connecting methodological approaches signifies the application of at least two methodological paths, while the share of each methodology throughout the research project depends on the researcher's decision. Among the mixed methods, the positivist approach dominated (13 out of 18). Just as in the world research, in Poland the sequential approach dominated. It is manifested in two ways. In some projects, one of the methodologies was used to develop research tools to be used by a different methodology; other studies were based on a dominant path, for example, a direct survey, and then supplemented by (individual or group) qualitative interviews.

In the light of the analysis, the dominant places of methodology integration in the research procedures were the research planning stages, research tools and interpretation of the results. The procedure of data collection and their processing remained separate in each of the methodologies.

## 6. Discussion

The issue of methodological approach integration in the study of marketing both in terms of methodology and research practice is a rather minor trend. Only a few studies were designed and carried out with the use of integrated approaches within the so-called third methodological path. In the studies on marketing, the positivist orientation is dominant. Integration based on the converging methodology emerged even more rarely, with a balance between the positivist and interpretative approaches. Also in mixed forms, positivist orientation prevails in the researchers.

At the same time, as is apparent from the considerations and analyses, methodological integration broadens and deepens the perspective of the researcher, and is a valuable tool for building knowledge and scientific theory. The implementation of integrated research has significant limitations that prevent them from being massively used by researchers. One of them is time. Such studies are extended in time, primarily due to the inclusion of the interpretative path in the study. Integrated studies raise costs. Methodological integration requires a wide knowledge and skills of the researcher concerning extremely different methodological approaches.

The analyses by the two research teams referred to in the article and the author's own study are not fully comparable, since they were carried out on different research units and at different time periods. They all relate to a pioneering subject matter, therefore, they should be treated as pilot studies, however, the results of these analyses are convergent. The analyses used different methodologies; certainly, they can constitute a contribution to discussion and future improvements. In the future, it shall be worthwhile to undertake research on a larger scale using the same research units, for example, journals analyzed by Harrison & Reilly.

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