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Values at Work: Mapping the Field Through the Lens of Methodological Approaches

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Introduction

Although values are not directly observable and often difficult to research, they play an important role in guiding action and in providing meaning and purpose (Kraatz et al., 2020). Values are also considered a central source of personal and institutional identities. The growing interest in values among organisational scholars has increased attention on how to research values. Given the significance of values in everyday practices in organisations, it is important to consider how values can be researched.

The first aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of how different methods for studying values have been applied. By mapping the field of work-related values or values in relation to work (in other words, values at work), this chapter presents the various methods that have been used in research on values in modern work organisations. A distinction is made between explicit and implicit values, and the following question is

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addressed: *How are studies on explicit and implicit values in organisations and leadership conducted?*

Explicit values refer to values as captured by verbal expressions; they are conscious valuations expressed by individuals, groups or organisations. The explicit values of an organisation, such as those expressed in core values or mission statements, are officially expected to guide actions. In this way, explicit values, also called ‘values for practice’, are intentional (Aadland & Askeland, 2017). When someone is asked how they would behave in a certain situation, the answer is usually their explicit or espoused values (Argyris & Schön, 1978). However, explicit values may or may not be expressed in actual practices, as other values may govern the actions of an individual or organisation. An example of an explicit value study is one concerning how and to what extent core values are practised and expressed in an organisation.

Implicit values are nonverbal and embedded in actions. They are tacit and may be hidden from the conscious mind. In order to make implicit values explicit, reflections upon practices can serve as an entry point to make values plausible from actions through sense-making processes (Aadland, 2010). Most likely, such reflections will reveal the ambiguous nature of values and the plurality of interpretations of both a given action and the value that it expresses (Sirris, 2020). As such, it is important for researchers to remember that values are in the eyes of the beholder. Research intended to identify values from actions that are more or less unconsciously expressed is an example of an implicit value study.

Implicit values embedded in actions may or may not be compatible with the explicit values an organisation expresses in its core values or mission statements, as members of an organisation may have their own values that do not necessarily coincide with those of the organisation. When implicit values unconsciously expressed through actions are not congruent with the explicit values of an organisation, reflection may inspire the organisation to adjust its practices and to re-enforce or redefine its explicit values. Thus, if the purpose of a research project is to adjust or improve practices, what research methods are suitable? Selecting appropriate methods for a given research aim or a specific research question is an important competence for researchers. In order to investigate how studies of explicit and implicit values in organisations are conducted—from the

perspective of the organisation and its members—this chapter goes ‘behind the scenes’ by exploring when, why and in which settings specific designs and methods are used.

The second aim of this chapter is, therefore, to investigate the link between the purpose of the research and the methodological choices made at the different stages of research, such as choices of research design, research methods for collecting data and research methods for analysing data. Thus, the chapter focuses on empirical research. Reflection refers to, in short, paying ‘serious attention’ (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, p. 9). Reflection on methodological choices is crucial for providing valid and reliable knowledge, which is the overall goal of research. Furthermore, conducting research is about making *choices* throughout the research process, as well as doing *systematic* work and analyses. Findings and conclusions in research rely heavily on the methodological decisions made by the researchers. By linking the aim of research with research methods, the chapter seeks to equip researchers with the information necessary to select suitable methods for data collection and data analysis. Such a discussion can help in the development of a diverse set of research methods that, in turn, will influence research findings and nurture different ways of theorising, thus widening and deepening our understanding of the world (Zilber, 2020).

The chapter is divided into three parts. First, an overview of values research through the lens of methodological approaches is presented. The different conceptual understandings of values are not explored (see Chap. 3 in this volume by Leis-Peters for an elaboration on different understandings of value constructs) nor are the functions of values investigated, such as how values guide action or provide meaning and purpose. An underlying assumption is that values play an important role in guiding action (Kraatz et al., 2020). Rather, in order to fulfil the first aim of the chapter, the focus is on the variety of research methods that have been used when researching values, with an emphasis on empirical research. Second, attention is given to linking the purpose of a research project with the methodological choices made at different levels, thus fulfilling the second aim of this chapter. Third, reflections are offered on the future direction of research on values in organisations, and the possible use of mixed methods approaches is discussed.

Researching Values: A Brief Overview

This overview maps the field of values research in organisations through the lens of methodological approaches. The large and diverse body of literature on values is grounded in the fields of sociology, psychology and ethics, as well as in leadership research and organisational studies, among others. As values operate at multiple levels in society, they are studied at different levels, such as at the individual, group, organisational and societal levels. Cross-level links are also studied, for example, between personal values and organisational or professional values.

Studying Explicit Values Using Quantitative Approaches

Quantitative approaches are well established as useful for researching explicit values, and they have a long tradition of being used in values studies. Quantitative research is often distinguished from qualitative research by the fact that quantitative research uses numbers rather than words (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative approaches to studying values at an individual level typically try to understand what is important to people (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). Personal values are often measured using self-reported surveys in which values are ranked according to their importance using Likert scales. Individual work values can also be measured and then clustered into groups (Dose, 1997; McDonald & Gandz, 1992). To establish value systems or value orientations, the Competing Values Framework (Cameron et al., 2014) separates values into four quadrants using the dimensions of flexibility versus stability and external versus internal focus. The four dimensions of leadership orientations in this framework are create, collaborate, control and compete. The World Value Survey measures aggregated values along the two dimensions of traditional versus secular–rational values and survival versus self-expression values (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). There have also been large-scale studies comparing cultures at the societal level (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). For example, the dimensions used in the GLOBE project (House

et al., 2004) measure cultures and value orientations across societies and are used in cross-cultural management studies.

Organisational values research has also relied upon the value theory by Schwartz (1994), which consists of ten value types: achievement, benevolence, conformity, hedonism, power, security, self-direction, stimulation, tradition and universalism (Quaquebeke et al., 2013). These ten value types form four higher-order value types: self-transcendence, conservation, self-enhancement and openness to change. These higher-order types, in turn, represent two dimensions of value conflict: One dimension contrasts conservation with openness to change and the other contrasts self-enhancement with self-transcendence. This structure has been studied extensively and shares similarities with the Competing Values Framework mentioned above.

Cross-level links between the values of individuals and organisations are researched by measuring value congruence (Edwards & Cable, 2009). The effect of these links on, for example, organisational commitment and performance have also been investigated (Finegan, 2000).

So far, this brief overview has given attention to the study of explicit or espoused values using quantitative approaches, noting that explicit values are measured as individual or collective preferences and that the values can be ranked or grouped into clusters. There have also been mentions of studies measuring the fit between personal and organisational values.

While quantitative studies can help assess and map people's preferences and values individually or collectively, qualitative research can give deeper insight into people's individual or collective experiences and their actions. In the 1990s, fewer qualitative value studies in organisations were done compared to the number of quantitative studies on the subject, but the number of qualitative value studies has increased in recent years (Aadland & Skjørshammer, 2017).

Studying Implicit Values Using Qualitative Approaches

When researching *implicit values*, qualitative approaches are considered appropriate because they can capture tacit and subtle aspects of values

(e.g., Brigstocke et al., 2017). Therefore, in order to identify values from action, implicit values are typically studied qualitatively.

Topics that are addressed in the large and diverse body of qualitative value studies include value conflicts (De Graaf & Paanakker, 2015; De Graaf, 2021), values related to individual identities (Sirris, 2019) and organisational identities (Wæraas, 2010), as well as how values emerge (Espedal, 2019) and how values are maintained (Wright et al., 2017). Taking a practice perspective, researchers have begun to explore values work, which involves value-related actions in everyday work (Askeland et al., 2020; Gehman et al., 2013; Vaccaro & Palazzo, 2015). Methods such as observation and interviews are favoured for studying value practices. For example, a process study on how professional values are maintained in an organisation combined observation as the main primary data source with interviews and archival data (Wright et al., 2017). A qualitative leadership study investigating how leaders contribute to the articulation of the identity and profile of the organisation also applied a combination of methods: observation, interviews and analysis of policy documents (Askeland, 2014). Furthermore, studies on leadership in practice have undertaken various case study designs using a combination of qualitative approaches (e.g., Askeland, 2015), and a study on individual identities utilised a combination of interviews and observation (Sirris, 2019). A new trajectory within the domain of values research in organisations focuses on the processes whereby values emerge (Espedal, 2019, 2020; Gehman et al., 2013), in which a combination of qualitative approaches has also been applied.

Studying Explicit and Implicit Values Using Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

As described above, explicit values are mainly studied quantitatively in order to measure individual or collective preferences. However, at an organisational level, previous studies have investigated explicit values with qualitative approaches in terms of core value statements in the public sector (e.g., Wæraas, 2010) and the for-profit sector (Falkenberg, 2006). Another example is a study exploring how core values are

interpreted and translated into specific guidelines (Wæraas, 2020), which is an example of a qualitatively study investigating explicit values.

When studying implicit values, qualitative approaches are usually applied. Since values are embedded in things such as thinking, talking and acting, they cannot be researched on their own. Thus, action and practices serve as access points for studying values. Van Deth and Scarbrough (1995), however, questioned the possibility of identifying values through action: “As we cannot presume a direct relationship between values and behaviour, we cannot use behavioural data to infer values” (p. 31). However, Aadland (2010) developed a participatory method for determining values from actions through group reflection and sense-making processes.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the different research methods used in organisation and leadership values research. The empirical studies included in the table were selected in order to ensure the inclusion of a variety of research designs and research methods used for collecting and analysing data.

The table shows that a combination of different qualitative data sources is used in values research, such as combining observation with interviews. Furthermore, the table shows that questionnaires are applied when mapping people’s preferences or measuring the person–job fit of values (quantitative approach). However, studies combining qualitative and quantitative approaches in values research have been given less attention. In line with a recent literature review of values research in health organisations (Aadland & Skjørshammer, 2017), only 5 out of 154 studies combined quantitative and qualitative approaches, action research was rarely applied, and only 2 out of the 154 studies applied an experimental design.

Based on Table 2.1, Fig. 2.1 shows how explicit and implicit values are studied by applying quantitative and qualitative approaches. Each of the four quadrants provides examples of different types of values research.

Explicit values are mainly studied quantitatively in order to map individual or collective values or to measure the degree of value congruence (see the lower left quadrant of Fig. 2.1). Studies on explicit values with qualitative approaches (upper left quadrant) involve exploring how the core values of an organisation are practised or expressed in actions or, for

Table 2.1 Types of methods used for collecting and analysing data in values research

Reference	Aim of research/ research questions	Approach	Methods for collecting data	Methods for analysing data	Type of study/ research design	Type of values research	Level of analysis
Gehman et al. (2013)	How do values practices emerge, and how are they performed over time?	Qualitative	Observation Interviews Archival sources	Process of synthesis, narrative	Longitudinal design/ process study	Values work	Organisational practices
Askeland (2015)	Compared managerial roles and practice in faith-based welfare organisations	Qualitative	Observation Interviews Archival data	Thematic analysis Analysis of policy documents	Case study design	Values work	Individual
Aadland and Skjørshammer (2012)	Investigated how to sustain institutional identity in a context of change	Qualitative	Critical group reflection and observation	Critical discourse analysis	Participatory action research	Implicit values	Organisational

Løvaas and Vråle (2020)	What is the significance of group reflection?	Qualitative	Focus group interviews	Thematic analysis	Intervention study	Values work	Individual
Finegan (2000)	Explored the relationship between personal values, organisational values and organisational commitment	Quantitative	Questionnaire	Statistical analyses (regression analyses)	Cross-sectional design	Explicit values	Cross-level study

example, investigating how core values are translated or interpreted into specific guidelines (Wæraas, 2020). Studying values practices and dilemmas (upper right quadrant) involves identifying values embedded in actions, thus making implicit values explicit. The researcher must clarify for whom values become explicit, whether it is for the researcher or the participants, through sense-making processes. When aiming at identifying values or value orientation quantitatively (lower right quadrant), statistical analysis, such as exploratory factor analysis, is useful.

When it comes to implicit and explicit values related to action, the behaviours of an individual can be conscious and guided by explicit values. Alternatively, such actions are more or less unconsciously performed, representing implicit values. Thus, values in use or in action can be either explicit or implicit: Values that govern action can be embedded in the action and yet not interpreted or verbally expressed (implicit values), or values governing actions can be expressions or outcomes of intended and explicit values. With the blurred boundaries between explicit and implicit values related to action, some qualitatively values studies could be placed in between the explicit and implicit values quadrant in Fig. 2.1.

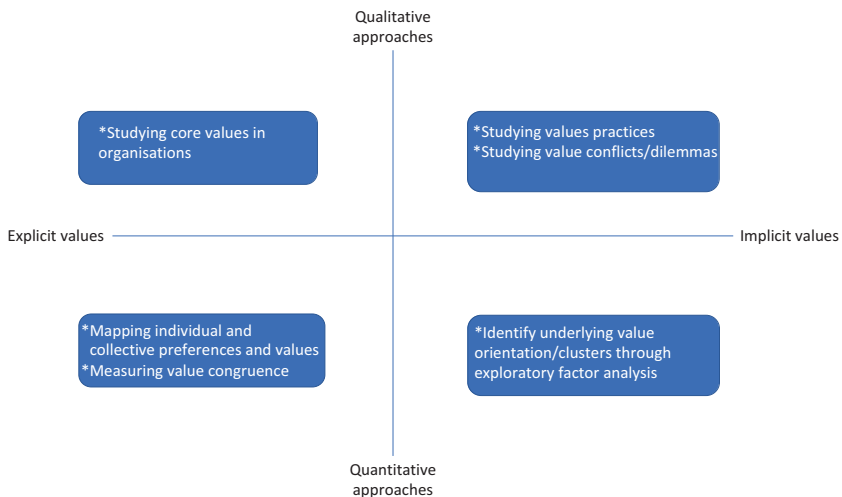


Fig. 2.1 Researching explicit and implicit values by applying quantitative and qualitative approaches

Philosophical Underpinnings for Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Methodologically, the rationale and philosophical underpinnings for qualitative and quantitative approaches differ in their ontological and epistemological assumptions. Generally speaking, qualitative studies take advantage of *interpretive* and *constructivist* forms of enquiry with a subjective view of reality. In contrast, quantitative studies apply the assumptions from *empiricism* (post-positivism included), where reality is viewed objectively and with a focus on the observable and measurable (Bryman, 2016; Smith, 1998). When researching values, a quantitative study seeks to discover the world as it is by measuring pre-defined (explicit) values. In qualitative value research, such as studying implicit values, values are not pre-defined. Rather, hidden and implicit values can evolve and be an outcome of reflection processes (e.g., Aadland, 2010). As such, methods used to elicit values range from deductive approaches that use pre-defined (explicit) values that are rated, ranked or evaluated, to inductive approaches which seek to identify values or to develop an understanding of values (Brigstocke et al., 2017).

These two approaches hold different underlying assumptions. Quantitative approaches assume that values exist objectively, can be pre-given and can be measured. Qualitative approaches challenge the pre-existence of values and highlight the active role of individuals in constructing the values. Hence, 'social reality is an ongoing accomplishment of social actors rather than something external to them and that totally constrains them' (Bryman, 2016, p. 30). How, then, does the researcher handle these different underlying assumptions? What is the order of components, and which choice comes first for the researcher: the conviction to one paradigm, starting with the philosophy of science followed by choices of methods? Or can the philosophy of science be used interchangeably, depending on the purpose of the study and the research questions? We will return to these questions in the next part of the chapter, linking aim with methodological choices.

Linking Research Aim with Methodological Choices

Selecting appropriate methods for a given research purpose or a specific research question is an important competence for researchers. The second aim of this chapter is to investigate the link between a study's purpose and the chosen research method or methods. How does the researcher choose between the suitable methods available? The first phase of this requires reflecting and elaborating on the purpose of the research. Figure 2.2 provides an overview of the different types of research purposes that guide choices in research design and the choices of research methods at a lower and more specific level. Research methods and designs lean towards a diverse set of philosophical approaches, as described above and as shown in Fig. 2.2.

This book puts an emphasis on linking research questions to methods of collecting and analysing qualitative data. For specific elaborations, see Chap. 7 in this volume on interviews (by Espedal), Chap. 8 on observation (by Sirris, Lindheim and Askeland) and Chap. 5 on critical group

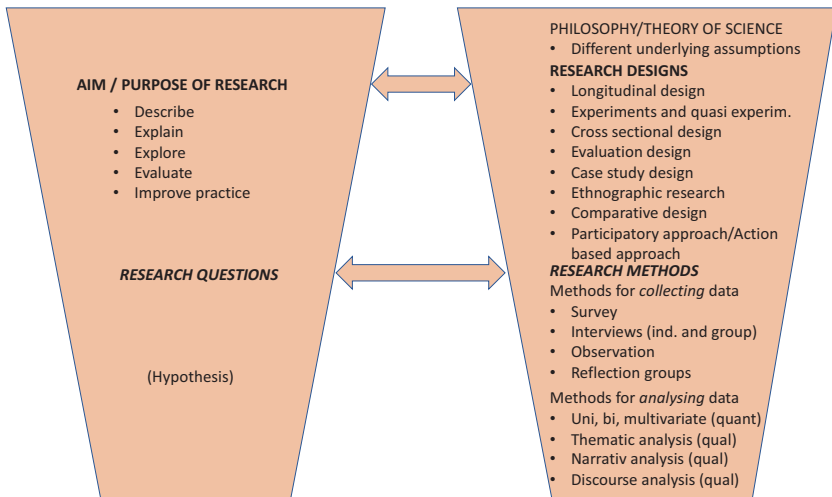


Fig. 2.2 Linking research aims and methodological choices at different levels

reflection (by Eriksen and Struminska-Kutra). These chapters provide examples of linking aim and research questions with methods for collecting data. When it comes to the link between research question and methods for analysing data, see Chap. 9 in this volume for thematic analysis (by Wæraas), Chap. 10 for discourse analysis (by Kivle and Espedal) and Chap. 11 for narrative research (by Espedal and Synnes). Analysis of quantitative data is not covered in this volume but is included in Fig. 2.2 to give the broader picture.

To provide practical guidance for researchers, an overview of the link between the purpose of a research project on values and the methodological choices made at different levels is presented below.

The aim or purpose of a research project can be to describe, explain, explore, evaluate, compare or improve practice, among others. Different aims benefit from the use of different research designs (Fig. 2.2), including longitudinal, cross-sectional and case study designs. If the purpose of a study is to *describe* in terms of mapping personal values among a population at a certain point in time, a cross-sectional design is suitable, choosing a survey/questionnaire as a method for data collection and univariate analysis for analysing the data (quantitative approach). An example of this type of research is conducted by Wennes and Busch (2012). If the purpose is to *explain*, such as to determine whether the independent variable has an influence on the dependent variable (cause and effect), experiments and quasi-experiments are considered a suitable design. However, research on values in organisations is seldom experimental studies (Aadland & Skjørshammer, 2017).

When the purpose of research is to *explore* an issue or understand a phenomenon, a case study design offers an appropriate framework for in-depth studies and investigations (qualitative approaches). Often, a combination of qualitative data sources is then applied. Table 2.1 gives an example (Gehman et al., 2013), where the aim was to explore how value practices emerge and how they are performed over time. In that study, a longitudinal/process design was applied and different qualitative approaches were used for data collection, including observation, interviews and archival data sources. While cross-sectional designs mainly rely on quantitative data, in-depth case study designs use qualitative data.

With longitudinal designs, it is possible to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

If the aim of a research project is to *improve practice*, a participatory approach seems suitable, as working with practitioners/participants will help the researcher discover ways of improving practice. Furthermore, the use of a reflection group can be an appropriate method for collecting data in such a project, and sense-making processes and discourse analysis can serve as a method for analysing data. Depending on time and resource availability, a combination of data collection methods, such as group reflection and observation, may also serve the purpose of the study. Hence, the choice of methods is not solely based on the aim or purpose of the study but also based on pragmatic considerations.

At a lower and more concrete level, research questions can also guide the choice of research methods (Fig. 2.2). Take, for example, the following research questions: How are core values practised or expressed in an organisation? How do leaders and employees experience value conflicts? Both questions imply the use of qualitative approaches, such as observation (when studying practices) and interviews (when investigating experiences). Or consider this research question: To what extent do organisational leaders and members value autonomy, respect, quality and relatedness as important at their workplace? This question would benefit from a quantitative approach, as 'to what extent' suggests mapping the organisation by sending out a questionnaire to a large number of respondents and measuring the importance of the values autonomy, respect, quality and relatedness.

It is worth noting that research questions are not the only clues to the appropriate choice of research methods; the words used in a research question also offer hints. Take the example of the word 'how' and the phrase 'to what extent'. 'How' is not sufficiently answered by numbers (quantitative) but would benefit from richer descriptions and text (qualitative), and 'to what extent' can be measured in numbers; for example, the importance of the value respect can be measured on a scale from 1 to 7. If the mean score is 6, it could be claimed that organisational members 'to a large extent' consider autonomy at work as important. These examples and the description above show that being conscious about research aims, research questions and even choices in wording will guide the

researcher towards suitable research methods. On the left side of Fig. 2.2, hypotheses are specifications developed from research questions and are proposed (mostly) in quantitative studies. Based on theoretical, empirical or logical argumentation, hypotheses are tested using a deductive approach (Bryman, 2016).

To sum up, in order to investigate how studies of explicit and implicit values in organisations are conducted, we have travelled ‘behind the scenes’ by linking the aim of a research project with the methodological choices made at different levels, exploring when and in which settings different designs and methods are suitable.

Mixed Methods Research as a Way Forward

This chapter indicates that most research on values is investigating either explicit values with quantitative approaches or implicit values with qualitative approaches. In what ways have these applied research methods enabled or hindered our understanding of values at work? While the quantitative studies help us assess and map people’s values individually or collectively, such as individual work values, organisational values, professional values and leadership values, qualitative research can give deeper insight into people’s individual or collective experiences, processes and value practices. Explicit and implicit values are often studied separately using either quantitative approaches or qualitative approaches, which may hinder a broader and deeper understanding of the complex value construct and its relevance for practice. Where should we go from here? The following section discusses the use of mixed methods as a possible avenue for future research on values in organisations and leadership. A mixed methods approach can increase our understanding of explicit and implicit values and allow for investigation of the link between them.

Mixed Methods Values Research

Mixed methods research involves collecting, analysing and interpreting qualitative and quantitative data in response to research questions. The

core assumption of this type of enquiry is that ‘the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach alone’ (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). In addition, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data (mixed methods) allows for a broader and deeper understanding of complex human phenomena (Doyle et al., 2016). When using one method or a narrow set of research methods when studying values, there is a risk of ending up with a narrow set of results. Low-variety methods, such as using only quantitative approaches, could introduce the danger of oversimplification. Qualitative methods produce rich and detailed data that can be used to generate ‘thick descriptions’ (Siehl & Martin, 1988, p. 79) of values. These types of data allow for paradoxes and contradictions to be explored. On the other hand, quantitative approaches are useful for comparisons across and within organisations at various points in time, in addition to mapping value orientation and measuring value congruence.

The aim of values research is, among others, to identify and detect values as explicit, implicit or in combination, making a mixed methods approach reasonable. In values research, using a variety of methods enables results that may deepen our understanding of values in organisations. Mixed methods research has advanced significantly over the last few decades, ensuring that the weaknesses of each method are minimised. When researching values in organisations, mixed methods research allows for investigating explicit and implicit values in a research programme as well as the link between them (Fig. 2.3). Although some values studies have applied a mixed methods approach, the use of mixed methods in values research is limited (Aadland & Skjørshammer, 2017).

Another argument in favour of the use of mixed methods in values research is related to the state of prior theory. Whereas mature literature is well served with quantitative approaches and nascent literature calls for qualitative research, the intermediate state of literature is considered well suited by a mix of both approaches (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007). Regarding the state of values research in organisations, the study of explicit values has had a long relationship with quantitative approaches, whereas, as stated above, qualitative value studies have recently increased in numbers.

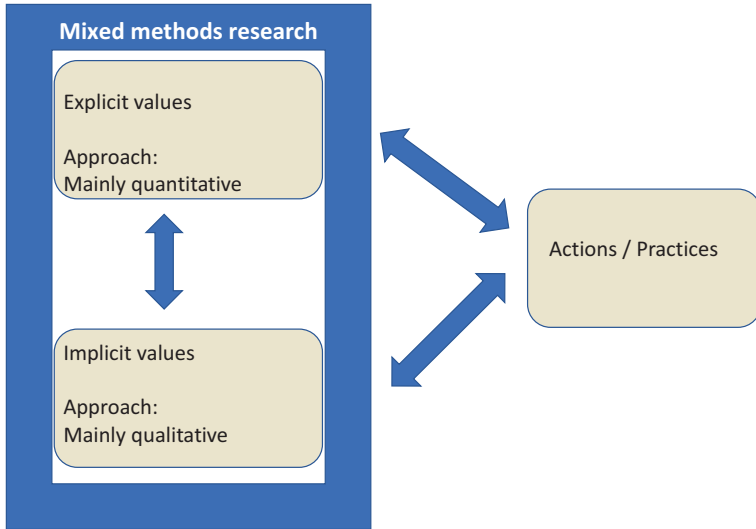


Fig. 2.3 The role of mixed methods research in bringing together studies on explicit and implicit values related to actions

Different types of mixed methods research designs exist. *Convergent parallel mixed methods* is a design in which the researcher collects quantitative and qualitative data at roughly the same time to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. *Explanatory sequential mixed methods* design usually consists of quantitative research followed by a qualitative data collection phase. This design is considered explanatory because the quantitative results are further explained with qualitative data. *Exploratory sequential mixed methods* design occurs in the opposite sequence to explanatory design: a primary qualitative phase builds into a quantitative data collection. This design can be used, for example, to develop new measurement instruments where the qualitative phase identifies unknown variables and the quantitative phase serves to test an instrument or to generalise the qualitative results for a wider population (Creswell, 2014).

Mixed methods research allows for both pre-determined and emerging methods, open-ended and closed-ended questions, as well as analysis of text and statistical analysis, and the researcher makes inferences across

both quantitative and qualitative databases. Hence, mixed methods values research can bring together studies on explicit and implicit values related to practice (Fig. 2.3; note the arrow bringing together research on explicit and implicit values). This approach may increase our understanding of the role values play in the actions and practices of organisations. The following examples of types of value research illustrate this point. When the aim is to investigate value congruence between individuals and organisations or to study the link between explicit values and action, both quantitative and qualitative approaches can be applied. Explicit values can be studied quantitatively when investigating value congruence, the match between the organisation and individuals or *to what extent* there is a link between explicit values and action. Explicit values may also be investigated qualitatively by exploring *how* the core values of an organisation are expressed or practised in action. Based in actions (the right side of Fig. 2.3), implicit values can be identified and become explicit, for example, by reflection processes (qualitative approach) which in turn may improve practice. While quantitative studies can help assess and map people's preferences and values individually or collectively or map value congruence, qualitative research can give deeper insight into people's individual or collective experiences and value practices. These purposes can be combined in mixed methods research. Thus, the mixed methods approach to the research of values in organisations allows for the investigation of both explicit and implicit values as well as the link between them. Figure 2.3 integrates the information about qualitative and quantitative approaches when studying implicit and explicit values from Fig. 2.1 with the linking of purpose and methodological choices, as shown in Fig. 2.2. Figure 2.3 also shows the role of mixed methods in values research related to action. Research designs such as longitudinal designs (see Fig. 2.2) may include both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Other types of mixed methods research may involve mixing designs, such as mixing case study designs using qualitative approaches with cross-sectional designs using quantitative approaches.

Challenges Related to Mixed Methods Research

How can researchers mix methods when the paradigms in which they are based differ in their ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions? As described, there are differences in philosophical assumptions between the paradigm of empiricism (post-positivism included) and the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm. Empiricism views values as objective and measurable, whereas the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm views values as evolving and constructed through sense-making processes by social actors/individuals. Schultz and Hatch (1996) presented strategies for working with multiple paradigms, pointing at paradigm interplay as a strategy for crossing paradigms.

Others welcome an alternative paradigm that embraces a plurality of methods and assumptions. Pragmatism is a frequently identified paradigm for researchers using mixed methods (Doyle et al., 2016). Pragmatism is also regarded as a way to bridge science and morality (Kraatz et al., 2020) and is an appropriate paradigm for action research. On a philosophical level, pragmatism supports the view that both quantitative and qualitative approaches advance knowledge production. On a practical level, the researcher must choose the best method for answering the research questions while maintaining a balance between subjectivity and objectivity. The paradigm of pragmatism supports the view that although qualitative and quantitative approaches are distinct, they can work together, allowing the researcher to freely choose the best methods to answer the research questions (Doyle et al., 2016). A relevant question in this regard is where the research questions come from, which is not discussed further in this chapter.

Another critical issue in mixed methods research concerns what to do about divergent findings, since most researchers strive for congruency between qualitative and quantitative data, which strengthens the validity and reliability of their research. Inconsistencies between the two sets of findings can occur when, for example, anonymous methods in the quantitative phase and non-anonymous methods in the qualitative phase lead to different responses, especially when investigating sensitive issues. Divergent findings can also have a theoretical explanation and may lead

to the collection of additional data in order to resolve the discrepancy. In this way, divergent findings can uncover and refine new theories and insights (Doyle et al., 2016).

Conclusion

The chapter intended to establish an overview and serve as a road map to the current methods used in studies on values in organisations and leadership. The main insights of this chapter are that explicit and implicit values are usually studied separately using quantitative approaches (such as surveys/questionnaires) for explicit values and a combination of qualitative methods to identify implicit values. While quantitative studies can help assess and map people's preferences and values individually or collectively, qualitative research can provide deeper insight into people's individual or collective experiences and value practices.

Future studies on values work may benefit from the use of mixed methods research approaches that can increase the understanding of and bring together studies on explicit and implicit values related to action. In this way, a mixed methods approach may open up prospects for research on values in organisations. Mixed methods values research also gives an opportunity for greater interdisciplinary collaboration, which is highly relevant for researching values that are grounded in disciplines like psychology, sociology, leadership studies and organisational research. Well established and often neglected is the importance of how specific methodological approaches bear practical as well as theoretical implications, and the need for exploring the interplay between method and theory more deeply is highlighted by Zilber (2020).

An ongoing reflection on methodological choices, such as paying attention to and being conscious of the link between research aim and research methods, will result in more informed choices about methods and, thus, the nurturing of diverse ways of conducting research. In turn, this will open up space for new fields of research, subsequently widening and deepening our understanding of the world.

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