

Anthropological Methods are Meaningful in Business Research: A Case Study of Foodservice at a Chinese University

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ABSTRACT Qualitative research methods, which have long been considered normative by the anthropological and sociological community, have recently made a presence in business research. The present research is to buttress that growing body of evidence. The subject is the foodservice operation of a Chinese university. The qualitative research method is used, to analyze the data collected through participants' observation and in-depth interviews. The present study briefly surveys traditional ethnographic methods used in the social sciences. Then it examines the penetration, or lack of penetration, of ethnographic methods into various fields of business administration research. The study describes the research into the foodservice operation of one Chinese University. The research discovered that foodservice quality had a greatly-perceived influence on the students' health, that foodservice quality affected the students' academics in one aspect, and that foodservice factors affected their satisfaction with their university dining experience. Finally, the study makes the case that ethnographic methods do indeed work effectively in the field of business study.