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From Spirit to Science: Kardecist Analysis as Strategy of Qualitative Research

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Abstract

Strategies of qualitative data analysis usually follow a well-established structure: they begin with a comprehensive reading of the content, followed by the coding of excerpts into smaller units based on their characteristics. These units are grouped into related themes, around which the researcher elaborates explanations for the studied phenomena. This article presents Kardecist Analysis (KA), a research strategy that differs from conventional logic. It was implemented by Hyppolyte Léon Denizard Rivail, who, in 1857, systematized mediumistic communications by applying rigorous scientific procedures. For contextual reasons, Rivail adopted the pseudonym Allan Kardec to publish his studies. Although the focus of this article is the method he developed, we chose to use the name Allan Kardec, given his recognition as the codifier of the Spiritist Doctrine. Among the procedures employed by Kardec, the formulation of questions and the comparison of answers obtained from different mediums stood out, observing the criteria of agreement and universality (adapted in this article to the term “multicontextual occurrence”). Its distinctive feature lies in the horizontal comparison of answers to the same question among different interlocutors, rather than the individual and holistic analysis of each interview, seeking to identify significant convergences for the construction of an interpretive synthesis. Based on this comparative logic, he organized and systematized knowledge, outlining fundamental principles. Thus, we propose the application of KA in the social and human sciences as a methodological alternative, and this article describes how this type of research can be applied in this context.

Introduction

The construction of scientific knowledge also involves the search for new ways to investigate phenomena and interpret the data produced in the research process. Chenail (2008) highlights the appeal of creating innovative methodological approaches based on specific contexts, which, when recognized outside their original environments, become useful resources to other researchers. This perspective resonates with the understanding that qualitative research is particularly powerful because it captures the uniqueness of phenomena and allows for multiple interpretations drawn from rich and complex contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Despite its richness, qualitative research presents significant methodological challenges. Bardin (1977/2022) emphasizes that many researchers do not clearly document the methodological path of their analyses, making it difficult for beginners to access complete examples. Nevertheless, several works have helped clarify analytical processes, such as the works of Creswell (2014), Yin (2016), Angrosino (2009), Gibbs (2009), and Flick (2009), that address stages such as exhaustive reading of the material, coding, categorization, and the formulation of theory. In general, traditional systems of qualitative analysis follow a logic of decomposing the material: one reads the entire content, breaks it down into meaningful units, groups them by theme, and then interprets them to build understanding. This logic underlies approaches such as Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis, Ethnography, and even more “contemporary” methods such as Design Science Research. The common assumption is that a

complete reading of the content is indispensable to ensure fidelity to the complexity of the phenomenon under study.

The reflection that originated this proposal came from an analysis of different strategies for handling qualitative data and the identification of an investigative logic present in the work of Allan Kardec—Hyppolyte Léon Denizard Rivail's pseudonym—during the systematization of the Spiritist Doctrine, which began in 1857. Although it was developed in a different historical context, this logic presents elements that can be placed in dialogue with contemporary qualitative research procedures.One of Pestalozzi's disciples and a graduate in Sciences and Letters, Kardec systematized a set of mediumistic communications, seeking to give the investigative process a methodological organization guided by the scientific criteria of his time—a movement that, as van der Hoek (2024, p. 198) observes, involved an "intellectual appeal to modern scientificity". His methodological practice, however, follows a different logic from the prevalent one in traditional qualitative approaches. Instead of analyzing the full content of each psychographed message, Kardec formulated objective questions and submitted them to different mediums. The analysis thus focused on the systematic comparison of the responses obtained for the same question, giving priority to those that were repeated or showed consistency across different interlocutors, according to the criteria of universality and agreement. This approach sparked curiosity: would it be possible to consider this logic a valid strategy for qualitative research nowadays? The methodology used by Kardec, although historical and situated within a spiritualist context, features comparative and structured elements that resemble fundamental principles of contemporary scientific research. Flick (2009), for instance, points out that comparing interviews or groups is a legitimate procedure in qualitative analysis. The proposal of Kardecist Analysis (KA) revisits this idea, but emphasizes the comparison of convergent answers from different subjects, without requiring the reading and coding of the entirety of the discourses, within a horizontal logic of analysis, in contrast to the vertical logic predominant in qualitative approaches that analyze discourses in their entirety.

This movement to revisit methodological practices in the sense that they are rooted in specific contexts, advocated by Chenail (2008) and Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith (2008) allows for new possibilities of analysis to be considered. Kardecist Analysis, in this sense, emerges as a complementary proposal, rather than exclusive, to established models of qualitative analysis. Although not applicable to all contexts, this strategy proves particularly useful in studies that use interviews as one of the main sources of data, provided that the research design includes elements similar to those observed by Kardec—such as repeating questions to different participants, comparing responses systematically, and searching for patterns of agreement among the discourses. Its distinctive feature lies in the horizontal comparison of responses to the same question among different participants, rather than the individual and holistic analysis of each interview, seeking to identify significant convergences for the construction of an interpretive synthesis. Under these conditions, Kardecist Analysis can offer a relevant methodological contribution, especially when the objective is to construct collective interpretations based on the convergence of individual perceptions regarding phenomena that can be observed in different settings.

This article, therefore, proposes a methodological reflection rooted in academic experience and scientific curiosity, focusing on the systematization of the method used by Hyppolyte Léon Denizard Rivail (Allan Kardec) in light of contemporary qualitative research. The article is organized into four parts: the next section presents the historical context and origins of Kardecist Analysis; next, we describe the logic behind the methodological strategy developed by Kardec; then, we discuss possibilities for applying Kardecist Analysis in the social sciences and humanities; and, finally, we present our concluding remarks. By writing in the first person, we seek to preserve the reflective nature of this journey, without sacrificing the analytical rigor required for academic research. The objective is to present yet another possibility within the methodological repertoire available to contemporary qualitative researchers, specifically in the fields of the social sciences and the humanities.

The Context and Origins of Kardecist Analysis

Although the method is called Kardecist Analysis, its origin dates back to the work developed by Rivail, later known as Allan Kardec, the name by which we have chosen to refer to him in this article. The adoption of this pseudonym is associated with his work in the Spiritist field, distinguishing this body of work from his career as an educator and intellectual. To understand the context and origins of this method, however, it is necessary to revisit the life of Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail.

Rivail was born in Lyon, France, in 1804, and from a young age he showed an aptitude for science and philosophy (Wantuil, 2019). At age 10, he went to study with the renowned educator Pestalozzi in Yverdon, Switzerland; later, he moved to Paris, where he worked as an educator and founded an educational institute, which was short-lived due to financial problems caused by his business partner (Sausse, 1927/2024). Despite these difficulties, Rivail pursued an academic career and published several textbooks adopted by the University of France. He taught subjects such as physiology, astronomy, chemistry, and physics, which demonstrates his broad education and his commitment to education and science (Sausse, 1927/2024). Although he was not a scientist in the strict sense, he possessed a solid scientific background and culture (Amorim, 1993).

The nineteenth century was a period marked by intense social and intellectual transformations, notably the emergence of positivism, which championed science as the foundation of human progress. Rivail was part of this context and demonstrated a strong commitment to scientific criteria in his research. At the same time, the century was marked by the emergence of spiritual phenomena. An emblematic case occurred in 1848 in Hydesville (U.S.), when the Fox sisters reported communicating with a spirit through unexplained sounds, a phenomenon that soon spread throughout the U.S.A. and Europe (Monroe, 1999; Weisberg, 2009; Walsh, 1973). France, in particular, experienced the phenomenon of “tables tournantes”, or spinning tables; these became the subject of debate among religious figures, scientists, and spiritualists (Monroe, 1999).

In this regard, Kleinhempel (2021) emphasizes that Kardecism cannot be understood exclusively from a religious perspective, since its formation and development encompass different dimensions, including

philosophy, science, therapy, medicine, culture, and spirituality. This characteristic helps us understand the context in which Rivail operated, marked by both convergence and tension between different forms of knowledge production and legitimation. It is within this scenario that spiritual phenomena began to arouse not only religious interest but also intellectual and investigative curiosity, creating the conditions for them to be subjected to systematic observation and scrutiny.

Initially skeptical, Rivail dismissed the phenomena of spinning tables as quackery. In his own words: “I will only believe it when I see it and when someone proves to me that a table has a brain capable of thinking” (Kardec, 1890/2022, p. 238). However, after participating in several séances and observations, he recognized that there was something there worthy of serious scientific investigation.

Once convinced of the authenticity of the phenomena, Rivail decided to investigate them with methodological rigor. According to him, “I glimpsed, in those apparent trivialities […], something serious, as if the revelation of a new law” (Kardec, 1890/2022, pp. 238–239). With the help of friends who had collected numerous spiritual communications, Rivail realized the need to systematize this content in a logical and comprehensible manner. His method was based on observation, comparison, and logical deduction. He never started from pre-established theories, but rather from empirical evidence, as he had done in his earlier works. “I understood, first and foremost, the gravity of the exploration I was about to embark on [...] to be a positivist and not an idealist” (Kardec, 1890/2022, p. 240).

Although similar research on the same phenomenon had been conducted in other countries, such as in the city of Cádiz, Spain (Kardec, 1868), Rivail distinguished himself through his methodological rigor. He stated: “I only saw, observed and coordinated, and I am now trying to help others understand what I myself do” (Kardec, 1859/2021, p. 64). Rivail initially wanted only to educate himself, but upon realizing that the teachings he received constituted a doctrine, he decided to publish them. To this end, he adopted the pseudonym Allan Kardec, a name which, according to him, he had used in a past life and which had been suggested by his spiritual guide; the decision not to use his real name was intended to avoid confusion with his already recognized academic works (Sausse, 1927/2024).

From that moment on, Kardec became the name associated with the codification of the Spiritist Doctrine. In his writings, he emphasizes procedures such as study, observation, comparison, and intellectual effort, aspects that can be interpreted, considering contemporary qualitative research, as elements of an investigative approach. From this perspective, he states: “God wants us to work, to exercise our thought” (Kardec, 1859/2021, p. 55). Kardec employs the experimental method: he starts with the effects, seeks the causes, formulates laws, and then applies them. Thus, he systematized the Spiritist Doctrine, which has a scientific, philosophical, and religious character. He argued that Spiritism should keep pace with progress and accept corrections whenever necessary: “If a new truth is revealed, it (Spiritism) will accept it” (Kardec, 1868/2022, p.42), thereby recognizing the scientific nature of the content he was systematizing.

With this vision, Kardec founded the Parisian Society for Spiritist Studies (PSSS), which aimed to promote the methodical study of the doctrine (Milane Filho & Milani, 2010). His work resulted in the

publication of the five fundamental works of Spiritism between 1854 and 1869. Today, the Spiritist Doctrine has followers in many countries. In 1992, the International Spiritist Council (CEI) was established, headquartered in Madrid, bringing together representative organizations from 34 countries, with Brazil serving as the doctrine's main center (FEB, 2024).

Investigative Principles Present in Kardec's Work

Allan Kardec, the codifier of the Spiritist Doctrine, applied a methodological approach in his studies that, although not formally designated as a traditional scientific method, aligns with various practices recognized in the field of contemporary qualitative research. Kardec (1868/2022) describes his working process as based on observation, comparison, analysis, and causal deduction, proceeding from the effects to identify the laws governing the observed phenomena. Based on these laws, he sought explanations, consequences, and useful applications. In the texts compiled in a posthumous work, the author reaffirms the methodological rigor he employed by stating that he adopted a positivist approach so as not to be led astray by illusions regarding the phenomena he analyzed (Kardec, 1890/2022).

In the five fundamental books of the Spiritist Doctrine—*The Spirits' Book* (1857/2011), *The Mediums' Book* (1861/2022), *The Gospel According to Spiritism* (1864/2014), *Heaven and Hell* (1865), and *Genesis* (1868/2022)—one can explicitly identify the effort to systematize and explain the procedures used in codifying the doctrine. In at least three of these works, Kardec directly describes methodological aspects of the research conducted, outlining the context and foundations of the investigative process (1857/2011; 1864/2014; 1868/2022). Furthermore, Chapter XXXII of *The Mediums' Book* (1861/2022) provides a glossary specific to Spiritism, explaining 25 relevant terms, thereby contributing to the conceptual rigor of the study and facilitating understanding of the phenomena discussed.

Particularly in *The Gospel According to Spiritism* (1864/2014), the third book of the Codification, Kardec presents an introduction with the structure and content typical of a scientific work. The 23-page introductory text is organized into four fundamental topics: I—*Purpose of this Work*, in which the author explains the motivation behind and the target audience for the publication; II—*Authority of the Spiritist Doctrine*, a section in which he describes the methodological precautions adopted, with an emphasis on the distinction between ideas originating from the Spirits and his own interpretations as a researcher. In this section, he emphasizes that "it is not because it is in agreement with our own ideas that we present it as true" (Kardec, 1864/2014, p. 22), demonstrating an ethical commitment to the objectivity of the analysis. In Section III—*Historical Notes*, Kardec provides terminological and contextual explanations regarding the customs and language of the era in which the Gospels were written. Finally, Section IV—*Socrates and Plato, Precursors of the Christian Idea and Spiritism*—draws a theoretical parallel between classical thought and Spiritist principles, demonstrating the doctrine's philosophical lineage and the conceptual foundation upon which it is built. Also in this book, the first chapter addresses the *Alliance of Science and Religion*, where the author discusses the integration of these two fields of knowledge as "the two levers of human intelligence" (Kardec, 1864/2014, p. 45).

According to Amorim (1993), this methodical organization reflects Kardec's scientific background; he was concerned with contextualizing his research, justifying his methodological choices, clarifying key concepts, and presenting the foundations underlying the systematized theory. These elements reinforce the scientific nature of the work developed by the codifier.

From a methodological standpoint, Kardec used two essential criteria to validate the collected data: universality and agreement. The first one, the criterion of *universality*, consisted of determining whether a given phenomenon was reported by different mediums in various parts of the world, under similar conditions and without communication among themselves. This recurrence lent legitimacy to the observed phenomenon and ruled out the possibility of fraud, hallucination, or collective suggestion. Kardec (1864/2014, p. 20) emphasizes: "One person may be deceived or may even deceive him or herself, but that will not happen when millions see and hear the same thing." This principle had already been outlined in *The Spirits' Book* (1857/2011, p.15), where Kardec states that the multiplicity of manifestations gives the phenomenon the right to be analyzed seriously: "we can state that the occurrences have multiplied in such a way that nowadays they have earned the right of citizenship, and that we only need to find a rational explanation for them".

As reported in *The Gospel According to Spiritism*, following the publication of the first two works of the codification, Kardec began receiving communications from approximately one thousand serious **Spiritist** centers, spread across different regions of the globe. Based on this, the author states:

Only coincidence confers authenticity upon them. [...] This universal test is a guarantee for the future unity of Spiritism. [...] What determined the success of the Doctrine [...] was that everywhere individuals were able to receive confirmation directly from the Spirits as to what those books contain. (Kardec, 1864/2014, p.23).

The second criterion adopted by Kardec was that of *agreement*, focused on logical consistency and coherence among messages originating from different mediums. He recognized that Spirits, upon leaving the physical body, did not automatically lose their moral or intellectual imperfections. Thus, it was necessary to distinguish between communications from higher entities and those that expressed personal or distorted opinions. To this end, he organized a centralized system of analysis: "it was necessary for one center to bring together all the teachings in order to do a kind of scrutiny of views and *to take the opinion of the majority to everyone else*" (Kardec, 1868/2022, p. 40, emphasis added). Kardec systematized the answers of different mediums to the same question, as in the case of the first question in *The Spirits' Book* ("What is God?"), seeking common elements and discarding discrepancies or inconsistencies. Thus, Kardec (1864/2014, p. 22) concludes that the only reliable guarantee of the veracity of spiritual revelations is "the overall agreement amongst revelations made spontaneously through a large number of mediums unknown to one other and in several places".

In practice, Kardec conducted his investigations using a core group of mediums—such as the Baudin sisters—to whom he posed his central questions. He would then consult eight other mediums with whom he maintained contact, always testing the answers against the criterion of agreement (Kardec,

1890/2022). In cases of doubt or disagreement, he would turn to the collection of communications sent by Spiritist centers from various parts of the world. As Amorim (1993) emphasizes, messages that lacked clarity of reasoning were promptly discarded. Thus, Kardec systematized the information based on agreement, filtered through the lens of logic, ensuring that they were not merely isolated or anecdotal manifestations. It is important to emphasize that Kardec himself did not possess overt mediumship; therefore, he assumed the role of rational organizer of the doctrine. In the book published as *Posthumous Works*, he recounts: “I would bring to each session a series of prepared and methodically arranged questions” (Kardec, 1890/2022, p. 240).

Even after completing the initial draft of his works, Kardec submitted the content for verification by different mediums, reinforcing the process that contemporary qualitative research typically classifies as cross-validation: “My work was largely complete and had taken on the proportions of a book. I, however, *made a point of submitting it to the scrutiny of other Spirits* [...] Thus, more than ten mediums contributed to this work.” (Kardec, 1890/2022, p. 242, emphasis added).

His role, therefore, was to rationally organize and validate the data received: “The order and methodical arrangement of the contents, as well as the textual comments and the form of some parts of the redaction, are *the only aspects contributed by the one who received the mission of publishing it*.” (Kardec, 1857/2011, p. 41, emphasis added).

The structure of the questionnaire used also reveals aspects of the scientific systematicity present in his investigative strategy: it began with introductory and fundamental questions and, building on these, developed progressive elaborations and deeper explorations. Kardec (1857/2011, p. 26) argues: “A complex question requires preliminary and supplementary ones in order to be answered clearly.”

In organizing the analyzed material, Kardec prioritized convergent responses, eliminating anything that did not directly contribute to the development of the central idea. As he explains: “In the Gospel citations, *we have preserved everything that has been useful for the development of the thought*, eliminating only matters that are irrelevant to the matter at hand.” (Kardec, 1864/2014, p. 18, emphasis added). Furthermore, the author was concerned with coherence and logic in the presentation of the content, classifying the maxims according to their nature and grouping them “so that they follow from one another as far as possible” (Kardec, 1864/2014, p. 18).

In the first edition of *The Spirits’ Book*, published in 1857, the work is divided into three major parts: “Spiritist Doctrine,” “Moral Laws,” and “Hopes and Consolations.” Each part is subdivided into thematic chapters, amounting to 501 questions and answers. In this edition, the text is graphically structured with a dividing line: on the left are the questions asked and the Spirits’ answers; on the right are Kardec’s comments, in which he elaborates on the theory based on the data obtained. The work begins with a lengthy introduction, in which the author defines key concepts (such as soul, spirit, and vital principle), presents the context of the study, and explains the foundations and methodology employed.

Three years later, in 1860, Kardec published the second edition of the work, expanding it to 1,019 questions organized into four parts. A comparative analysis of these two versions will be addressed in another study, but it can already be inferred that the expansion of the content reflects the maturation of the author's methodological process, as well as his ongoing validation and expansion of doctrinal concepts based on new data and observations.

In describing his research procedures, Kardec (1859/2021) distinguishes between two types of data: spontaneous phenomena and induced phenomena. Spontaneous phenomena refer to unsolicited spiritual manifestations, such as apparitions, noises, visions, and the movement of objects without a known physical cause. Induced phenomena, on the other hand, correspond to data obtained through the evocation of Spirits with the assistance of mediums. Although both types were used, induced data predominate, as they are more accessible and controllable within the context of the planned research.

A central aspect of Kardec's investigative strategy is the value of observation as a starting point for constructing interpretations of the phenomena under investigation. In *The Genesis*, Kardec (1868/2022) illustrates this point with the example of Spirits who do not recognize their postmortem condition: "Highly evolved Spirits [...] caused Spirits of this category to manifest themselves so that we could observe them [...]. *It was thus that the theory was born from the observation*" (p. 20, emphasis added). Therefore, the theoretical formulation is not imposed a priori, but constructed inductively based on the repetition of analogous facts. The author emphasizes that observation, comparison, and judgment constitute the methodological triad of his approach (Kardec, 1859/2021). Another essential aspect of Kardecist methodology is the validation of content. The codifier sought to confirm with the Spirits whether he had adequately understood their messages. In this regard, he states:

The principles contained in this book result either from the responses given by the Spirits to questions directed to them at various times and through a great number of mediums, or from the spontaneous teachings given to us and to other persons concerning the matter at hand. The work has been coordinated so as *to present a regular and methodical whole and was submitted for publication only after it was carefully reviewed and corrected by the Spirits themselves*. (Kardec, 1857/2011, p. 17, emphasis added).

In addition to direct validation with the mediums and the Spirits, Kardec used the *Revista Espírita* (*Spiritist Review*), of which he was the editor, as a complementary tool. Through this publication, he publicly tested and discussed new ideas before definitively incorporating them into the Doctrine. In the author's own words: "Let us avoid publishing content that we deem inappropriate or even premature. It is this confirmation that must be awaited before a principle is presented as an absolute truth" (Kardec, 1864/2014, p. 24).

As Leymarie (2022) observes, the journal served as an important methodological tool that facilitated the circulation and critique of content still in the drafting phase: "It allowed for the discussion of principles [...] before accepting them as constituent parts of the Doctrine" (p. 11). According to Masotti (2004), during its first twelve years, *Revista Espírita* served as the main pillar of the doctrinal work, bringing

together contributors from diverse backgrounds—mediums, scholars, scientists, and religious figures. *Revista Espírita* was also where Kardec documented significant revisions to his theory. For example, in *The Mediums' Book*, Kardec states that possession does not exist in the common sense of the term, only subjugation. Later, in light of new data obtained through spontaneous phenomena, he revises this conception: "It has now been demonstrated to us that true possession can occur [...]" (Kardec, 1863, p. 11). Following this reformulation, the concept was incorporated into *The Genesis*. This process illustrates the dynamism of the Doctrine, which is always open to revision based on new evidence. Kardec also emphasizes that research requires time, patience, and a willingness to allow phenomena to manifest spontaneously. According to him, researchers must not rush the phenomena or draw hasty conclusions. In *What is Spiritism?*, he states: "They should wait, follow and observe with tireless patience." (Kardec, 1859/2021, pp. 38–39).

Based on the investigative procedures identified in Kardec's work and the connections established with contemporary qualitative research, **Kardecist Analysis (KA) can be systematized into seven central aspects that guide its application as a methodological strategy**. First, Kardec established two fundamental criteria for the acceptance of messages: universality and agreement. This means that doctrinal content was validated only if there was consensus among different mediums, in different locations, without communication between them. Second, he recognized that data could be spontaneous or induced, adapting the method according to the type of data available.

Third, he emphasized that theory should arise from observation, being constructed on the basis of the repetition and comparison of similar facts. Fourth, he highlighted the need to validate the content with the Spirits and, subsequently, with the readership of *Revista Espírita*. Fifth, he understood the importance of time and patience for the phenomenon to manifest in its entirety, without interference from the observer. Sixth, he formulated questions with precision: each session was prepared with logically organized questions, distinguishing complex issues (preliminary or supplementary) from more comprehensive ones. Finally, seventh, he systematized the data based on logical reflection and sequential reasoning, transforming observations into theory.

It is important to note that Kardec conceived the Spiritist Doctrine as a constantly evolving theoretical construct. He himself acknowledges that, should new discoveries reveal flaws or inconsistencies in doctrinal propositions, these must be revised. This commitment to continuous revision in light of new evidence is, according to the author himself, what gives the Spiritist Doctrine its scientific character (Kardec, 1868/2022).

Proposal for the Use of Kardecist Analysis (KA) in Research within the Context of the Social Sciences and Humanities

Just as Kardec (1859/2021, p. 33) believed that conviction is formed through "observation and reasoning", the application of his method to social sciences and humanities must be grounded in these two aspects: *observation*, followed by *reasoning*, both of which are essential for understanding the

phenomena under study. The purpose of this section is, therefore, to describe the seven aspects identified by Kardec for systematizing knowledge, in this case as applied to these two fields of study.

It is important to note that not all procedures identified in Kardec's practice constitute distinctive elements of Kardecist Analysis. Some of them correspond to procedures already established in contemporary qualitative research and are equally necessary for KA, since it does not seek to break with the general foundations of qualitative research. In this sense, the collection of different types of data, the observation of the phenomenon under investigation, and the search for evidence that allows for the analysis and contextualization of the information produced, for example, are procedures found in various qualitative research designs. In KA, these elements are incorporated and serve a function similar to that performed in other approaches, contributing to the contextualization, confirmation, and deeper analysis of the information examined. The specificity of the proposal lies, above all, in the data processing stage, particularly in the way the induced answers are organized and compared horizontally across different participants.

The first and, we dare say, the most important aspect of KA concerns the "two criteria" established by Kardec: Universality and Agreement.

Universality focuses on identifying whether the phenomenon recurs in different contexts. In this case, the researcher cannot simply assume that the context they seek to examine is real; they must find evidence proving that the phenomenon actually exists in the environment they wish to analyze before proceeding to the next stages of the research. It should be noted that, in the case of academic research (as opposed to doctrinal research, as Kardec conducted), universality refers to the observation of the elements being analyzed *in loco*; it does not require proof of the phenomenon in different parts of the world, but rather evidence that the focus of the research is present in different contexts or that it recurs among various individuals. This precaution ensures that a phenomenon capable of being studied, and therefore understood, actually exists.

However, in this regard, a necessary adjustment arises, given the scientific development and progress of the contemporary era. We have chosen to replace the term "universality", used by Kardec (1859/2021), with "multicontextual occurrence". This choice stems from the fact that, in the context of research in the social sciences and humanities, "universality" implies a claim to general validity and the generalizability of findings, which does not correspond to the purpose of this criterion. In Kardec's work, universality served to distinguish a genuine phenomenon from an isolated manifestation, by noting that the same event occurred in different places and among different people. Preserving this essence, "multicontextual occurrence" refers to the requirement that the researcher identify evidence that the phenomenon under investigation actually exists and recurs in more than one context (departments within the same institution or different institutions) or for more than one individual, though without the claim of generalizability. It is, therefore, a criterion of the phenomenon's existence and recurrence, rather than one of universal scope. It is thus recommended that multiple occurrences be verified prior to data collection, since the participants' knowledge of the phenomenon is a *sine qua non* condition for the interviewees'

answers to support the theoretical framework. As a result of this requirement, we believe that single-case studies are unlikely to apply Kardecist Analysis (KA), since, by being restricted to a single context, they do not allow for the verification of the phenomenon's recurrence in the manner suggested by Kardec; such a design, however, appears to be appropriate when integrated into a multiple-case study, in which the phenomenon's occurrence across multiple contexts can be properly identified. Agreement, in turn, demonstrates that for information to be true, it must be reaffirmed by different people, not necessarily in the same words, but conveying the same meaning. This aspect provides the researcher with the assurance that the information is not an isolated opinion, nor an opinion that interests the researcher but is not perceived by others involved in that context. Agreement aims to ensure that the result of the analysis truly represents the phenomenon as a whole, avoiding the interpretation of a personal opinion from any of the respondents as a representative principle of what is being studied, given that: "to claim to be right against all others would be as illogical on the part of one spirit as it would be on the part of one human" (Kardec, 1864/2014, p. 25).

With regard to the aspect of agreement, it is important to note that if the answers of a person holding a directorial position, for example, are at odds with those of the other respondents, this information will not be used, as it is not representative of the general opinion. Therefore, dissenting statements, regardless of who makes them, that do not reflect the reality of that context must be excluded through a process of logical reasoning.

Since they are complementary, the two criteria of Kardecist Analysis are presented in Table 01.

Table 01
– Two Criteria of Kardecist Analysis

Summary of the Two Criteria	**Multicontextual occurrence**	**Agreement**
Brief definition	It is the multiplicity of independent sources used in the research.	It is the coincidence (concordance) of content among the independent sources examined.
Objective	To ensure the researcher's neutrality and protect against appropriation by groups.	To ensure that there is convergence among the ideas analyzed.
What it provides	Raw material: a plurality of sources that remain independent of one another.	Verifiable result: it shows whether this plurality points in the same direction.
Interdependence of the two criteria	An isolated explanation is treated as a personal opinion, accepted with reservations and pending confirmation. It will only be confirmed when there is agreement with the answers of other interviewees from different groups.	When people from the same group agree, they may be operating under the same logic; therefore, this may not represent the truth about the subject under investigation. For this reason, "agreement" is valid only when found across different groups and confirmed by multiple occurrences.
Source: the authors		

It is important to highlight that the two criteria do not operate separately but rather in a complementary manner. **Multicontextual occurrence** provides the raw material for the analysis: a plurality of sources that are independent of one another. Without this plurality, the research would remain limited to the testimony of a single individual, whose statement would have to be accepted based on the trust placed in them. **Agreement**, in turn, constitutes the verifiable result of the comparison, allowing us to determine whether the different sources converge towards the same answer. Without this criterion, the multicontextual occurrence would represent merely a multiplicity of voices, without offering sufficient elements to support the validity of a conclusion.

Thus, convergence among dependent sources does not constitute sufficient evidence, as it may stem from the influence of one source over the others. Similarly, the existence of independent sources that present divergent responses does not, in and of itself, justify the formulation of a consistent conclusion. It is the interplay between the independence of the sources and the agreement of their responses that allows for the construction of a theory whose validity does not depend on the individual authority of the one conveying it, but rather on the verification provided by the body of analyzed information. This interplay thus helps to avoid both personalism and the uncritical acceptance of positions shared by a particular group.

It is important to remember that both criteria must be subjected to rational scrutiny. The plurality of sources and the agreement among their answers do not preclude a rational analysis of the information obtained; on the contrary, it is through this scrutiny that evidence is evaluated and the theory is progressively developed. Agreement among different sources, therefore, does not represent an absolute or unquestionable truth, but rather a foundation for elaborating explanations whose validity rests on the observed convergence and the rational examination of the information.

The second aspect noted by Kardec concerns the “two types of data origins: spontaneous or induced.” In accordance with KA’s guidelines, it is suggested that this type of research presents data collected through interviews (induced), supplemented by data that emerge within the researched context (spontaneous). Spontaneous data, as the name implies, appears without having been suggested or induced by the researcher, arising from the flow and routine of the natural environment in which the research is being conducted; such data can be captured at different moments, such as during participant observation or document analysis.

The third aspect concerns the “observation of the phenomenon.” In this regard, it is important to confirm the existence of certain key phenomena related to the subject under study, using, in this case, the spontaneous data that emerge while researchers are in the field conducting the research. Observing the phenomenon will help reduce the likelihood that the researcher will reach superficial and/or hasty conclusions about the phenomena being analyzed.

“Validation of knowledge” with informants, in turn, is the fourth aspect. Its purpose is to verify the veracity of the content being developed. Kardec used two types of validation: the first involved the respondents themselves, analyzing the knowledge generated; and the second involved publishing

shorter sections in a journal, in which he presented new ideas and discussed them with others who also believed in communication with Spirits. Similarly, it is suggested that strategies be systematized to verify whether what is being constructed truly represents the perceptions of those involved in the researched context; to this end, it is suggested that the synthesis of the responses be shared with at least one of the study participants so that they can assess whether what is being presented truly reflects reality. This task requires extra care on the part of the researcher, but it ensures that what is being structured accurately reflects the observed reality, rather than what the researcher would like to find and/or present as the result of their work. The publication of parts of the work in journals or conference proceedings is also a useful strategy for verifying the consistency of what is being developed, provided that the insights derived from the feedback on these publications are incorporated into the content being developed.

A fifth aspect is “time” in the conduct of scientific research, since phenomena do not conform to the researcher’s will, who can only produce quality work to the extent that the subject can be verified through observation. In this regard, it is suggested that, if there is insufficient time to observe the phenomenon, in order to prove (or not) the results of the logical analysis of the questions to be asked, the researcher should opt to adopt a different research methodology.

The sixth aspect concerns the care and organization of the sequence of questions to be asked during the collection of the induced data. For horizontal comparison to be possible, the answers must address the same subject. Therefore, the question serves as the unit of comparison: it is the fixed element, while the interviewees and the locations where the interviews take place are the variable elements. Without well-defined questions, the answers lack a common axis, and without this axis, it is not possible to develop a theory based on them.

We have identified five important aspects to consider when formulating questions:

1. **a) Defining the problem.** A question is not merely an invitation for the respondent to speak; it defines the problem for which an answer is sought. The phrasing partly determines what can be observed and compared later. Very broad questions tend to generate answers about different aspects of the same topic; well-defined questions make the subject of the answer explicit. Thus, different answers can be examined in relation to the same problem, even if they present different explanations, arguments, or emphases.
2. **b) Clarity, precision, and one point per question.** Questions should be clear and precise, without overly complex phrasing. If each question addresses a single point, it is easy to identify which problem each answer refers to and to compare them side by side without ambiguity. A question that combines several independent problems makes comparison difficult, because each respondent may be answering a different part of it.
3. **c) Breakdown into related questions.** A broad issue may require several complementary questions, each focused on a specific aspect, such as the existence of the phenomenon, its nature, its causes, its relationships with other phenomena, and its consequences. These dimensions constitute a

possible analytical reconstruction of the logic of inquiry. Their value lies in allowing for the comparison of responses across identifiable dimensions, without confusing different issues.

4. **d) Logical sequence.** When a subject requires a series of questions, they must be organized methodically and follow one another naturally, rather than occurring at random. There is a progression: one question establishes the initial concept, another explores it deeper or introduces a necessary distinction, and others explore relationships and consequences. Thus, the set of answers is located within a broader structure, in which each question plays a role in the development of the topic.
5. **e) Main and follow-up questions.** The researcher prepares questions that introduce the problem and questions that revisit, specify, or challenge what has been presented. Unclear, incomplete, or questionable points are revisited through different questions or by consulting other sources until clarification is obtained. In all cases, the focus is on the logical sequence of the questions.

These aspects allow us to understand the development of questions as a systematic process, guided by the need to establish a common axis for comparing responses. To this end, the questions must define the problem under investigation, specify its various dimensions, and establish a logical sequence that facilitates a deeper exploration of the research. When necessary, follow-up questions allow for revisiting aspects that have not been sufficiently clarified.

Based on this logic, the process of constructing questions can be summarized in three interconnected steps:

1. **Delimit**: formulate clear and precise questions that define an identifiable problem and serve as a common reference point for the answers.
2. **Specify**: Break down broad problems into complementary questions, each focused on a particular aspect of the subject under investigation.
3. **Sequence**: Organize the questions into a logical sequence so that a deeper exploration of each aspect contributes to an understanding of the problem as a whole.

These steps guide the development of questions and the development of the investigation. Horizontal comparison, in turn, occurs when different answers are related to the same question, allowing them to be examined side by side. Thus, the development of questions establishes the conditions for comparison, while the analysis of answers constitutes the procedure through which this comparison takes place.

As a seventh aspect, Kardec systematized the data based on logical reflection and sequential reasoning, transforming observations into theory. This is the most important aspect of systematizing content, since the researcher will demonstrate their ability to systematize the information obtained, which will result in the construction of the theory that the research project set out to analyze. Just as Kardec did, it is important to retain what is useful for the development of ideas, setting aside what is not relevant to understanding the phenomenon under investigation. In this sense, the researcher’s focus should not be on chronological order, but rather on grouping and classifying the information according to its nature, so

that the sequence of ideas accurately represents the analyzed context, always keeping in mind the criteria of reason and logic when analyzing the information identified in the research.

The seventh aspect, therefore, should not be understood merely as the stage of data systematization, since the organization, classification, and interpretation of information also constitute fundamental procedures in other qualitative approaches. The specificity of Kardecist Analysis lies in the relationship between systematization and the horizontal comparison carried out throughout the analytical process. Table 02 presents a comparison between a traditional qualitative analysis (conducted vertically, considering the entirety of the interview transcripts) and the horizontal comparative analysis used by Kardec in the systematization of the analyzed data.

Table 02
– Comparison of Traditional Qualitative Analysis and Kardecist Analysis

Methodological Dimension	Traditional Qualitative Analysis	Kardecist Analysis – KA
Axis and Direction of Analysis	**Vertical and Holistic**: Analyzes each interview individually, comprehensively, and in depth from start to finish.	**Horizontal and Comparative**: Systematically compares the answers given to the same question by different interviewees.
Process Flow	**Bottom-Up and Sequential**: Raw data → Organization→ Comprehensive reading→ Coding→ Themes/Descriptions→ Interpretation.	**Structured by Questions**: Raw data → Question-by-question comparative analysis→ Interpretive synthesis.
Examination and justification of findings	**Internal consistency**: the findings are supported by consistency among data, codes, categories/themes, and interpretation. This rigor can be reinforced by procedures such as validation, triangulation, and participant follow-up.	**Occurrence and agreement criteria**: the findings are supported by occurrence—verifying that a particular aspect recurs among different respondents (which lends it a universal character) and by agreement—that the answers converge in terms of their content.
Question Design and Structure	**Contextual logic**: Open-ended or semi-structured interviews focused on the narrative flow and the participant's experience. Information regarding the investigated aspects may be found in any part of the interviewees' narrative.	**Direct horizontal comparison**: Questions designed to compare each answer horizontally, distinguishing between broad, preliminary, and supplementary questions, with a focus on precisely understanding the aspect being specifically addressed in that question.
Theory Construction	**Abstraction by coding and/or theme**: The theory emerges from the grouping of themes, codes, and meanings extracted from individual discourses.	**Logical synthesis by agreement**: Theory is constructed progressively through the horizontal comparison of answers, the identification of occurrences and agreements, and the logical chaining of findings, articulating evidence from different participants.

Source: the authors

Rather than relying predominantly on the reconstruction and interpretation of each individual narrative to subsequently arrive at broader categories or themes, KA organizes the information based on the questions posed and compares, for each one, the answers provided by different participants. The interpretive synthesis is thus constructed progressively through the identification of occurrences, convergences, and any divergences, preserving the link between each conclusion and the body of evidence that supports it.

In this sense, theoretical construction in KA results from a process of logical-sequential chaining: one answer is compared with other answers to the same question; the identified agreements are related to other data produced in the research; and, based on these relationships, the researcher gradually advances in the formulation of broader propositions about the phenomenon under investigation. The objective is not simply to gather similar information, but to evaluate, through reason and logic, which elements exhibit sufficient consistency to contribute to an understanding of the phenomenon. The theory, therefore, does not arise exclusively from the abstraction of codes or themes extracted from individual discourses, but from the progressive construction of a synthesis supported by the agreement among different interlocutors and by the logical articulation among the findings. It is precisely this combination of **horizontal comparison, agreement, and logical-sequential reasoning** that constitutes one of the main distinctive characteristics of Kardecist Analysis.

Furthermore, we noted that the Kardecist Analysis approach was initially conceived based on reflections on qualitative research in the context of organizations. However, its characteristics are not restricted to this field and can be adapted and applied in different areas of the social sciences and humanities, taking into account the specificities of each field of knowledge and the objects under investigation. The potential for expanding this strategy will therefore depend on its adoption and experimentation by other researchers, who will be able to assess its relevance and explore the possibilities for applying the procedures identified in Kardec's work to different research contexts.

Concluding Remarks

Allan Kardec (1868/2022, p. 37) states that "no science [...] has come from the mind of one sole human being. All, without exception, are products of successive observations that find support in previous ones, leaning on one known point to arrive at an unknown one" This statement clearly summarizes the method he employed in constructing the Spiritist Doctrine, which, although it emerged in the context of the nineteenth century, reveals methodological aspects relevant to contemporary qualitative research. In this sense, this article does not set out to discuss the doctrinal foundations of Spiritism or its religious dimension, but rather to analyze the methodological procedures employed by Kardec in his systematization of data and theoretical construction. The premise was to demonstrate that the way the author organized, validated, and interpreted the data received by mediums contains elements that, if properly understood, can contribute to the development of qualitative research in the social sciences and humanities.

Although Kardec's work is usually associated with the realm of faith and religiosity, it is fundamental to recognize that his intellectual background was deeply rooted in the scientific rationalism of the Enlightenment. His role as an educator and his adherence to the principles of observation, comparison, and verification mean that his work can be recognized as comparative qualitative research, even though, for many, the subject of mediumship distances him from academic traditions. However, as indicated in the introduction, the focus of this investigation is on the methodology he developed—referred to here as Kardecist Analysis (KA)—and not on the dogmas or beliefs stemming from the Spiritist Doctrine. This

approach is justified by the desire to contribute to researchers who, even if they do not share the spiritual assumptions of Kardec's work, may find in his method a valid strategy for analyzing qualitative data.

We highlight that Kardec, in addition to addressing the four classic elements of scientific research—historical contextualization, definition of concepts, description of the method, and theoretical foundation—incorporated seven aspects into his analytical practice: (1) the principles of multicontextual occurrence (a term adopted in place of "universality," as it does not presuppose generalization) and of agreement; (2) the distinction between spontaneous and induced data; (3) direct observation of phenomena; (4) validation of responses with different informants; (5) the use of time as an element of maturation and deeper reflection; (6) specific procedures for formulating and organizing questions directed at mediums; and (7) the systematization of data, based on logical reflection and sequential reasoning, to be consolidated into a theory.

It is also worth noting that Kardec valued the diversity of sources, seeking answers from different mediums who, preferably, had no connection to one another. This strategy aimed to ensure greater impartiality, reducing the possibility of ideological contamination or mutual influence among respondents. The distinctive feature of Kardecist Analysis compared to other qualitative methods, in turn, lies in the direct comparison of responses to the same question, rather than in a holistic analysis of each interview. It is, therefore, a process of horizontally comparing responses, with the goal of identifying significant convergences. When there was agreement among different mediums on a particular issue, Kardec presented the interpretive synthesis as a provisional result of that investigation. This procedure reveals not only a commitment to coherence and logic but also respect for the structured construction of knowledge.

It is important to point out that Kardec did not limit himself to simply comparing responses. He organized the data systematically, following a natural sequence of topics and articulating the content in a logical, clear, and accessible manner. The result of this effort is the construction of a theory that emerges from a rigorous process of data comparison and validation, which is similar to the practices of content analysis and thematic analysis adopted in contemporary qualitative research. However, Kardecist Analysis distinguishes itself from other research strategies through the horizontal comparison of responses to the same question among different participants, rather than the individual and holistic analysis of each interview, seeking significant convergences that support an interpretive synthesis. Thus, its methodological contribution appears promising, especially when the goal is to construct collective interpretations based on the convergence of individual perceptions regarding recurring phenomena in different environments. We note, however, the caveat that KA may not be applicable in a single-case study, since such a study is limited to a single context—which may not meet the criterion of multi-contextual occurrence; the strategy remains viable, however, when integrated into a multiple-case study.

The application of Kardecist Analysis therefore requires the researcher to possess a high degree of critical judgment, logical reasoning, and methodological rigor. As advocates of qualitative research, we recognize that accepting this analytical model required a process of reevaluating assumptions and being

open to new ways of understanding “how to conduct research.” However, by studying the methodological framework that Kardec used to develop his theory (the Spiritist Doctrine) and the foundations that underpinned his investigative practice, we have come to understand that Kardecist Analysis can be a legitimate contribution to the field of social and human sciences, provided it is applied judiciously, ethically, and with sound reasoning.

The dissemination of this knowledge is therefore justified by the need to expand the methodological repertoire of qualitative researchers. By presenting Kardecist Analysis as a possible strategy for interpreting data, we hope to foster dialogue among different traditions and contribute to the diversification of approaches in the humanities. Although the method emerged in a specific context linked to the study of spiritual phenomena, its foundations—such as the validation of information, comparative analysis, rational synthesis, and logical systematization—can be adapted to other research contexts.

We highlight a significant passage from *The Gospel According to Spiritism*, which expresses the critical and rational spirit that Kardec demanded of his readers and scholars:

‘When in doubt, abstain’, states one of your ancient proverbs. Thus, accept only what is backed by indisputable evidence. Whenever a new opinion appears that seems the least bit doubtful, pass it through the sieve of reason and logic. Whatever reason and common sense reprove, fearlessly reject it. It is better to reject ten truths than to accept one single lie. (Spirit Erasto in: Kardec, 1861/2022, p. 154).

This quotation encapsulates the commitment to rationality that permeates Kardec’s entire body of work and which, consequently, must be adopted by those who intend to use his methodological strategy as a tool for scientific inquiry.

Reiterating that Allan Kardec’s role, as he stated, was not that of a creator, but rather that of an attentive observer, a discerning analyst, and a disciplined systematizer. As recorded in the book *Posthumous Works* (1862/2022, p. 148), Kardec explains that: “Neither that of an inventor nor that of a creator. I saw, observed, and studied the facts with care and perseverance; I coordinated them and deduced their consequences: that is the entire part that falls to me.” May we, like Kardec, see, observe, and study phenomena with seriousness, humility, and perseverance, recognizing that scientific knowledge, in any field, is always the result of a collective and ongoing process of interpretation and construction.

Declarations

Author Contribution

The first author prepared the initial draft of the manuscript. The subsequent development of the work was a collaborative process, through which all co-authors contributed to its refinement, expansion, and theoretical advancement, collectively strengthening its arguments and overall contribution. All authors actively participated in the intellectual development of the manuscript .

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