ECRM 2007
6th European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies

Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal
9-10 July 2007

Edited by

Dr Dan Remenyi
Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Papers have been double-blind peer reviewed before final submission to the conference. Initially, paper abstracts were read and selected by the conference panel for submission as possible papers for the conference.

Many thanks to the reviewers who helped ensure the quality of the full papers.

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Preface

The Sixth European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies is hosted by the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, in Lisbon, Portugal in July this year. The Conference Chairs are Maria do Rosário Oliveira Martins from the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, and Miguel Baptista Nunes, University of Sheffield, UK and the Programme Chair is Frank Bannister, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

The main aim of this Conference is for individuals working in the area of research methodology for business and management to come together to share knowledge with their peers interested in the same field of study.

The opening keynote address this year is by Dr Elizabeth Reis, from the ISCTE Business School, Lisbon, Portugal discussing the subject of “Samples, Scales and Statistics: The Good, the Bad and the Robust”. During the second day a Socratic Dialogue facilitated by Dan Remenyi, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

A key aim of the conference is share the latest thinking on research strategies, tactics and paradigms. The variety of methods in common use and the continuing debate on what constitutes ‘new knowledge’ makes this a dynamic field and one which affects all academics and others involved in research. The search for new ideas, new methodologies and even new paradigms is both endless and fascinating. This conference offers an opportunity to engage with contemporary thinking in business research and join in the sometimes lively debates, inside and outside of the formal sessions.

With an initial submission of 50 abstracts, after the double blind, peer review process there are 35 papers published in these Conference Proceedings. These papers come from all parts of the globe including Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Pakistan, Serbia, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, The Netherlands, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

I wish you a most interesting conference.

Dan Remenyi
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July 2007

Conference Executive:

Dr George Allan, University of Portsmouth, UK
Dr Joan Ballantine, Queens University Belfast , UK
Dr Frank Bannister, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland
Dr Carole Brooke, University of Lincoln, UK
Dr Ann Brown, CASS Business School, London, UK
Dr David Douglas, Staffordshire University, UK
Professor Gordon Hunter, University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada
Professor Arthur Money, Henley Management College, UK
Professor Dan Remenyi, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland
Martin Rich, CASS Business School, London, UK
Dr Mark Saunders, Oxford Brookes University, UK
Dr Roy Williams, University of Portsmouth, UK

Conference Committee:

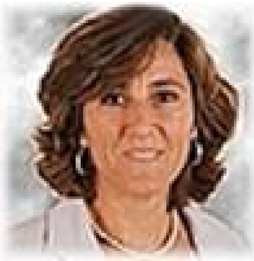
The conference programme committee consists of key people in the research methods community, both from the UK and overseas. The following people have confirmed their participation:

George Allan, University of Portsmouth, UK; Gabriela Avram, University of Limerick, Ireland; Karin Axelsson, Linkoping University, Sweden; Joan Ballantine, Queens University Belfast, UK; Lennart Bangens Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden; Frank Bannister, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland; Edward Barratt, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK; James Bartlett, University of South Carolina, USA; Andrew Basden, University of Salford, UK; Peter Bednar, University of Portsmouth, UK; Diane Benjamin NHS, UK; Angela Benson, University of Brighton UK; Deborah Blackman, University of Western Sydney, Australia; Milena Bobeva, University of Bournmouth, UK; Carole Brooke, University of Lincoln, UK; Ann Brown, CASS Business School, UK; Cathal Brugha, University College Dublin, Ireland; Sven Carlsson, Lund University, Sweden; Jyoti Choudrie, University of Swansea School of Business, UK; Melissa Cole, Brunel University, UK; Aileen Corley, Liverpool John Moores University, UK; Baggy Cox, Imperial College London, UK; Ronald Crawford, University of Greenwich, UK; Marguerite Cronk, Harding University, USA; Deborah Dean, Warwick Business School, UK; Thomas Diefenbach, The Open University, UK; David Douglas, Staffordshire University, UK; Eileen Drew, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland; Stephen Drew, University of East Anglia, UK; Ken D'Silva, London South Bank University, UK; Jose Esteves, Instituto de Empresa, Spain; Jean-Noel Ezingeard, Henley Management College, UK; Mahmoud Fakhra, College of Business Studies, Kuwait; Jason Ferdinand, University of Liverpool, UK; Joseph Gazzopardi, University of Malta; Roger Gill, University of Strathclyde, UK; Goran Goldkuhl, Linkoping University, Sweden; Roz Graham, University of Winchester, UK; Gillian Green, University of Northumbria, UK; Mike Hart, University of Winchester, UK; Clive Holtham, CASS Business School, UK; Bob Hughes, University of Brighton, UK; Gordon Hunter, University of Lethbridge, Canada; Bev Jones, Wolverhampton Business School, UK; Patricia Joubert, University of Swaziland, Swaziland; Habibul Khondker , Zayad University, Abu Dhabi, UAE; Reinford Khumalo University of South Africa, South Africa; Cyril Kirwan, Cyril Kirwin Associates, Ireland; Ela Klecun, London School of Economics, UK; Karl Knox, Nottingham Trent University, UK; Branka Krivokapic-Skoko, Charles Sturt University, Australia; Denise Leahy, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland; Joao Leitao, University of Beira Interior, Portugal; Ann Marie Logue, Letterkenny Institute of Technology, Ireland; Sam Lubbe, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa; Sandy MacDonald, University College Northampton, UK; Bob Macklin, Charles Sturt University, Australia; Marie Macklin, Charles Sturt University, Australia; Tom Macnamara, London South Bank University, UK; Pete Mann, University of Manchester, UK; Garance Marachal, University of Liverpool, UK; Maria do Rosário O. Martins, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal; Rachel McLean, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK; Maggie McPherson, University of Sheffield, UK; Ian Michael, Zayed University, United Arab Emirates; Arthur Money, Henley Management College, UK; Miguel Nunes, Sheffield University, UK; Teemu Paavola, Helsinki University of Technology, Finland; Carole Page, Massey University, New Zealand; Steve Page, University College Chester, UK; Joan Pastor-Collado, International University of Catalunya, Spain; Ganesh Prabhu, Indian Institute of Management at Bangalore, India; Furqan Qamar, Jamia Millisa Islamia Central University, India; Sarah Quinton, Oxford Brookes University, UK; Nasrin Rahmati, Monash University, Australia; Diana Rajendran, Swinburne University of Technology, Australia; Theo Renkema, Netherlands; Martin Rich, CASS Business School, UK; Kristina Risom-Jesperson, Aarhus School of Business, Denmark; Bob Ritchie, Lancashire Business School, UK; Mark Saunders, Oxford Brookes University, UK; Christine Schweighart, Warwick Business School, University of Warwick, UK; Junaid Shaikh, Curtin University, Malaysia; Lisa Simpson, University of Otago, New Zealand; Mohini Singh, RMIT University, Australia; Teresa Smallbone, Oxford Brookes University, UK; Alan Southern, University of Liverpool Management School, UK; Judith Thomas, Oxford Brookes University, UK; Ramayah Thurasamy, University Sains Malaysia, Malaysia: Annika Tidstrom, Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration, Finland; Claudine Toffolon, Université du Littoral-Côte d'Opale, France; Maryann Valiuis, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland; Kevin Voges, University of Canterbury, New Zealand; David Wainwright, University of Northumbria, UK; Teresa Waring, University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, UK; Christine Welch, University of Portsmouth, UK; Leslie Willcocks, London School of Economics, UK; Roy Williams, University of Portsmouth, UK; Diana Wilson Trinity College Dublin, Ireland; Michael Wood, University of Portsmouth, UK; Brent Work UK; Les Worrall, Wolverhampton Business School, UK.

Biographies of Conference Chairs, Programme Chair and Keynote Speaker

Conference Chair

Dr Maria do Rosário Fraga Oliveira Martins



Maria do Rosario Martins is an Associate Professor and vice-Director at the Institute for Statistics and Information Management (ISEGI) of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa. She is also Pro-Rector of this University. Her research interests include Econometrics, Multivariate Analysis, Credit Scoring, Knowledge Management, e-Learning. Maria has a degree in Economics from the Faculty of Economics of the Nova University of Lisbon, a Master of Econometrics from the Free University of Brussels and a Doctor of Economics (Ph.D.) from the Free University of Brussels. She is author of several publications including chapters in books and articles. She has published in several national and international journals and conference proceedings. She is the scientific co-ordinator of several funded research and development projects as well as community consulting within CEGI and regularly advises graduate students (Masters and PhD) at ISEGI and other schools in the Econometric and Statistics area. She is also called as external committee member to dissertations in other institutions.

Programme Chair

Dr Frank Bannister

Frank Bannister is a Senior Lecturer in information systems in Trinity College. Dublin. His research interests include e-government, e-democracy and IT value and evaluation, particularly in the public sector. He is chairman of the European Conference on e-Government, a member of the European Group on Public Administration and editor of the Electronic Journal of e-Government. Frank is also a member of the Institute of Management Consultants in Ireland, a Fellow of the Irish Computer Society and a Chartered Engineer.

Keynote Speaker

Dr Elizabeth Reis

Elizabeth Reis is full professor of Statistics and Marketing Research at the Department of Quantitative Methods, ISCTE Business School in Lisbon. She received a degree in Economics from the Faculty of Economics, University of Oporto and completed a Ph.D. in Social Statistics at the University of Southampton, UK. Her research interests are focused both on data collection (evaluation of sampling methods and surveys' quality) and data analysis methodologies (multivariate statistics applied to business and management research). She is now President of the Scientific Committee of the ISCTE Business School, Director of the Management Doctoral Programme and President of the Business and Management Research Unit (UNIDE – Unidade de Investigação em Desenvolvimento Empresarial).

Biographies of contributing authors (in alphabetical order)

Jane Andrews (PhD) is a Research Fellow and part-time Lecturer at Aston Business School, Birmingham, UK. Her research interests include pedagogy within a Business School setting, European Higher Education, graduate employability, and management of the not-for-profit sector. She teaches research methodology for business courses, public policy and sociology.

Farrah Arif started her career in 1998 after completing MBA as a marketing researcher and worked on consumer and industrial researches under the aegis of multinational organizations. Moving ahead in my career, She took up teaching assignments at various colleges and taught marketing subjects in various colleges.

Andrew Armitage is a Senior Lecturer in Management Development at Anglia Ruskin Unviversity and and Asssociate Lecturer At the Open University. His main areas of teaching are Operations and Quality Management and Research Methods at doctoral, masters and undergraduate level. His doctorate was concerned with the learning syles of students and supervisory styles of supervisors within the postgraduate research process.

Marie Ashwin is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Hertfordshire and successfully completed her PhD in 2005 on 'The implications of market orientation for management in the British Higher Education sector' She has spent the last 15 years delivering research methods to students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Peter Bednar's academic interests cover contextual analysis, organizational change and information systems development, and he has published several book chapters and many articles in these fields. He currently lecturers in the School of Computing at the University of Portsmouth, UK and is also affiliated to the Department of Informatics at Lund University, Sweden.

Ann Brown is a Senior Lecturer in Information Management in the Faculty of Management at Cass Business School. She took an MSc (Operational Research) at LSE while working at the British Steel Corporation as an Operational Researcher. She obtained her doctorate from City University in 2005, based on her work into the problems and potential of Information Systems applications to create Business Value for organisations. She supports a number of IS academic conferences through her work as a member of conference committees. She is on the editorial panel for Information and Management.

Gonçalo Costa is a researcher for Tourism, Innovation and Services Nucleus in Lusíada University. At this moment, is doing is PHD in Knowledge Management in De Montfort University, after a degree in Economy, a pos-degree in E-Business and Information Systems and a Master's degree in Management in Lusíada University. Professionaly is a Key Account Manager for telecommunications and information systems.

Patricia Cucin Educational Background: 1989 - 1995; University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences, Bachelor of Sociology and informatics. Field(s) of Expertise: Media researc , communications effectivness.

Peter Dyer received his B.A. (Hons) in History and Management from the University of Lincoln in 2006. His research investigations have centred upon changing meat hygiene practice, organizational and government regulatory change. This has focused primarily upon perception of identity, communication methods and its implications for practice and the politics of collaborative

Sjoerd Gehrels started in Dutch higher education after a ten year career in the hospitality industry in 1989. In CHN University, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands he fulfilled posts as senior lecturer, deputy director for the world 3rd largest BBA Honours Programme in International Hospitality Management and programme director for the MA in IHM. He achieved his MSc from the University of Surrey, Guildford in 1999 and a MBA from Oxford Brookes University, Oxford in 2004. Recently Sjoerd Gehrels finished his first two years taught programme of the Doctor of Education Degree at the University of Stirling, UK (distinction level). In his doctorate research the first (pilot) interviews have been performed and very interesting data have been collected.

Rene Chester Goduscheit has a Master in Political Science from University of Aarhus, Denmark, and is currently taking his PhD in interorganisational network-based innovation leadership. Previously, he was working as a business consultant in Denmark and the UK.

Friso den Hertog graduated as an industrial psychologist at the University of Leyden. He started his career in 1970 as internal consultant at Royal Philips in Eindhoven. In 1975 he got his Ph.D. in technical sciences from the Technical University Delft. After eleven years he moved to the department of Science Policy in The Hague, and became deputy director of planning. In 1985 he was appointed as professor at the University Maastricht.

Kristina Risom Jespersen received her PhD-degree on the topic Information and New Product Development Decision-making from the Aarhus School of Business in 2004, and is currently holding a position as assistant professor at the department of Marketing and Statistics at the Aarhus School of Business. Her teaching portfolio contains courses in research methodology and statistics as well as introduction to new product development.

Lars-Olof Johansson has been a lecturer in information systems for about seven years. He started his phd-studies in the beginning of 2006. During 2004-2005 he published four different papers in medium ranked conferences such as IBIMA, Iadis e-commerce aand IRIS. He has also published some papers on scandinavian e-government workshops.

Patricia Joubert has worked as a Lecturer at the University of Swaziland for over ten years. Her research interests are in Human Resource Management, Labour Relations, and Small Business management and in Research Methods. She is also a ECRM Committee representative in Swaziland and is a major co-ordinator of the University of Swaziland links with other institutions. She has won best paper awards in some of the international conferences and is a professional member in a number of professional associations.

Orla Kirwan is a PhD Candidate at NUI Galway, Ireland. She is a recepient of a Government of Ireland Scholarship (2005-2008) through the Embark Initiative. She has completed a Masters in E-Commerce prior to this research.

Branka Krivokapic-Skoko, B.Sc. (Hons), M.Sc.(Econ), Ph.D. (Lincoln University, New Zealand)Branka is a senior lecturer in Economics and Management at the School of Marketing and Management, Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, Australia. During last few years her research activities have focused on ethnic business communities, informal, ethnically-based business networks, and generally multi-disciplinary perspectives on entrepreneurship. She also teaches research method papers and published in the area of mixed methodology and comparative method.

Murray Lindsay is the dean of the Faculty of Management and a professor of accounting. Prior to arriving at the University of Lethbridge in September 2005, he was an associate professor of management accounting and control at the Richard Ivey School of Business, University of Western Ontario. In addition, he spent 14 years at the University of Saskatchewan.

Lars-Olof Lychnell, is a Ph.D. candidate at the Stockholm School of Economics and holds a Licentiate degree. His research interest is IT-related organizational change in Small Businesses on one hand, and action research approaches on the other. Lars-Olof is a former IT-manager and specially concerned with the combination of theory and practice.

Milan Nikolic 1998 he graduated at the Technical faculty “Mihajlo Pupin” in Zrenjanin, Department of development engineering.The Master's degree paper entitled: “Introducing a higher degree of determination in the process of winning a new product in manufacturing companies” he defended on 7 March 2001 at the Technical faculty “Mihajlo Pupin” in Zrenjanin (University of Novi Sad). PhD thesis entitled: “Quantitative model for selecting a new product with research into relevant criteria”, he defended on 3 december 2004 at the Mechanical faculty University of Belgrade at the department of Industrial engineering. He has been working at the Technical faculty “Mihajlo Pupin” in Zrenjanin (University of Novi Sad) since 1 October 1998 as assistant teacher. In September 2005 Milan Nikolic got the title of docent at the Technical faculty “Mihajlo Pupin” in Zrenjanin. He organizes teaching for the subjects: Strategic management, Public relations, Organization of production business systems and Decision theory. The basic fields of interest of Milan Nikolic are using quantitative methods in management with a particular stress on the business decision making, product development, reengineering, benchmarking, organizational culture ond public relations. Milan Nikolic published about 60 papers in these fields.

Kersti Nogeste is a senior program and project manager with more than fifteen years experience managing successful projects and programs of work in Australia and North America. In addition to this work experience, Kersti has also attained a Doctor of Project Management degree, is a guest university lecturer and a board member of a regional hospital and health service.

Guo Chao (Alex) Peng is a PhD student in the Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield in UK under the supervision of Dr Miguel Nunes. He holds a First-Class Honours degree in B.Sc. Information Management in the same department. His current PhD project aims to investigate the barriers and risks associated with the post-implementation of ERP systems in Chinese companies.

Diane Phillips is an associate professor and the chair of marketing at Saint Joseph’s University. Her Ph.D. is from the Pennsylvania State University. Her research synthesizes portions of social psychology and consumer behaviour in order to better understand how and why individuals consume. This understanding is designed to help researchers provide concrete recommendations to advertisers and marketing managers.

Jason Phillips is currently an Associate Professor of Marketing in the Department of Marketing at West Chester University. He received his B.S. in Business Logistics in 1988 from Penn State, an M.B.A. with an emphasis in History/Journalism in 1991 from Texas A&M University, and a Ph.D. in Management Science/Operations/Logistics from the

Pennsylvania State University in 1999. His current research interests include professional ethics, transit policy, and nonprofit business strategy. He has published articles in the Journal of Business Logistics, Transportation Journal, and the International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management.

Martin Rich initially worked in the information systems sector as a consultant and project manager, before joining Cass Business School as a lecturer. During his career at Cass he has taken responsibility for a series of innovative applications of technology to management learning, all of them underpinned by a thorough research foundation. His interests centre around applying the scholarship of teaching and learning to management education.

Juan Rodon Escade is a Assistant professor of Information Systems at ESADE Business School. His research focuses on inter-organizational information systems (IOIS) implementation, and IOIS standards development.

Susan Sayce is a Senior Lecturer Bournemouth University Recipient of a Bournemouth University Business Research Fellowship 2006 Research Interests: Teaching Methodology to Postgraduate Students Gender Issues in the Workplace Industrial Relations Recipient of a Higher Education Academy Business, Management, Accounting and Finance Teaching and Learning Research Grant for Assessing International Business MA Students with Mini-vivas (2006/07)

Sebastian Schulz is research assistant at the Marketing Department of the University of Goettingen. His main research topic are usability testing and consumer behaviour in the internet

Kerstin Thomson is a University lecturer at Stockholm University and research assistant at School of Business. Research report at licentiate level "Activity-based control - a value-raising contribution in service management development?" at SU and Conference report "Strategic performance management" at ISMC (2006)

June Tolsby is a project Manager and Researcher holds an MA within ESST from Oslo University received in 1996. She has worked as a programmer, consultant and researcher for 18 years within various industries. She is currently working as a project manager and researcher at the Faculty of Engineering at Ostfold University College and is affiliated with Aalborg University Department of Business Studies as a PhD student.

Ana Vasconcelos, BA, PGDip, PhD, is Lecturer in Corporate Information Management at the Department of Information Studies, the University of Sheffield. She has previously lectured at the School of Computing and Management Sciences, Sheffield Hallam University, and at the School of Information Management, Leeds Metropolitan University. Prior to that, she was a researcher at the National Institute Industrial Technology and Engineering (INETI) in Portugal. She has carried out research evaluation in the field of information technologies and the information society for the European Commission since 1992. Her research interests are in information and knowledge management and information systems adaptation, with a focus on information behaviour, discourse and identity in a variety of contexts.

Maarten Verkerk (1953) obtained his masters degree in chemistry (cum laude) in 1977, and started his career as a junior scientist at the Technical University Twente. He received his Ph.D. in the Technical Sciences in 1982. In that year he moved to a research position in Philips' Physics Lab in Eindhoven. In the period between 1982 and 2002 he worked as factory manager in The Netherlands, Taiwan and Germany. In 2003 he took on the role of general manager in the psychiatric hospital in Maastricht. In 2004 Maarten received a second Ph.D., now in business administration at the University of Maastricht. In 2005 Maarten Verkerk was appointed as part time professor at the Technical University Eindhoven

Christine Welch is a Principal Lecturer in the Department of Strategy & Business Systems in the University of Portsmouth, UK, where she teaches research methods, knowledge management and systems analysis. Her research interests include critical systemic thinking, contextual inquiry and information strategy, and she has published in these fields.

Modelling Business Graduate Employability: Developing a New Conceptual Framework Through Empirical Research

Jane Andrews and Helen Higson
Aston University, Birmingham, UK

Abstract: The ‘internationalisation’ of Business and Management education, reflective of EU enlargement and the unprecedented globalization of education, has resulted in growing numbers of overseas students adding a diversity and richness to the learning environment within many contemporary European Higher Educational institutions (Green, 2006; Sliwa & Grandy, 2006). However, cross-national studies analyzing the impact that the internationalisation of business education has on the employability of business and management graduates are rare. Furthermore, there exists a notable gap in research aimed at identifying and conceptualising the generic business skills and competencies required by European employers of business and management graduates. By proposing a conceptual framework based upon a working model of business graduate employability, this goes some way to addressing this gap.

Keywords: Graduate employability: business & management education: empirical research

Major Influence Factors in Consumer Socialization of Pakistani Children: An Application of Conjoint and Cluster Analysis

Farrah Arif
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Abstract: It is a general understanding amongst the academicians and marketers that there are certain agents, such as, parents, peers, mass media/advertisements, and brand knowledge that are affecting the process of consumer socialization of children. This paper generates a humble academic discussion on determining and/or measuring the influencing factors of the consumer socialization of children by the use of conjoint analysis. Moreover, cluster analysis is used on the part-worth utilities of conjoint analysis to ascertain if clearly defined clusters of children existed. A sample of 60 children in the reflective stage (11-16 ages) is interviewed for the analysis. The research findings generate some very interesting discussion with regard to the consumer socialization of children: the most important factors affecting the Pakistani children's consumer socialization are 'Parents', 'Peers', and 'Brand Knowledge'; children did not show any significant difference between low- and high-involvement purchase decision processes; girls are more influenced by their 'Parents' whereas boys' buying behaviour is greatly affected by 'Peers' and 'Brand knowledge'; and children can significantly be divided into three segments: 'Brand Oriented', 'Parents Oriented', and 'Peers Oriented'.

Keywords: Consumer socialization of children, involvement, conjoint analysis, cluster analysis, and segmentation

Truths and Realities: An Autobiographical Account of a Researcher's View from the Inside

Andrew Armitage
Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford UK

Abstract: Modernity's positivistic portrayal of absolute truth is according to postmodernists a myth, in a world where multiple realities exist. As such postmodernism argues for the demise of the meta-narrative, as they claim modernism violates reality and imposes closure upon the research process and its findings. This has implications for those engaged in research as it calls into question whose reality and truth we accept and challenges the motivations that lie behind those who report and publish research findings. Conducting research and its eventual publication leads those receiving, and reading such accounts into the belief that a "tidy" and "orderly" path has been travelled through the research process. Authors of research accounts present an idealised story of how social and management research is designed and executed, where research is carefully planned in advance, predetermined methods and procedures followed, and results based within a rational process are the inevitable conclusion. As such, authors of research rarely acknowledge the realities of conducting research, or confronting their own self-doubts, and beliefs in what they are attempting to convey to the recipients of research accounts.This paper presents two autobiographical accounts of my personal journey through the research process and is concluded with my personal reflections of my personal struggle and despair of coming to terms with the 'realities' of the wider context in which I undertook my research.

Keywords: Authentic voice; self-reflection; validity; honesty; interpretation; postmodernism

Mutual Research Designs: Redefining Mixed Methods Research Design

Andrew Armitage and Diane Keeble-Allen
Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford, UK

Abstract: This paper responds to the challenge of Tashakkori and Teddlie, who in their Handbook of Mixed Methods have invited others to re-define their typology of mixed methods research design. The extant literature concerning this terminology has and continues to cause much confusion and concern for those who adhere to the complaints of those who hold diametrical positions within the mono-paradigm approach of conducting research undertakings. Those of a more practical and pluralistic persuasion, who hold that research should address real life problems over the methodological pureness of mono-methodological positions, favour the adherence towards what has become known as the ”Third Way” encapsulated within the pragmatic paradigm.

The use of a mixed methods approach found within the research process is based on a rationale of making a number of pragmatic decisions. Therefore this paper commences with a discussion of the relationship between paradigm and strategy. The assumptions of the pragmatic paradigm are then outlined and these are set in the context of other paradigm positions. The discussion proceeds on the closeness of the relationship between paradigm assumptions and approach before offering a redefinition of the terminology currently in use within the extant literature concerning mixed methods research.

Keywords: Quantitative, qualitative, third way, mutual research designs

So what do I do now? Handling Qualitative Data

Marie Ashwin[1] and Alan Hirst[2]
[1]University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, UK
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Abstract Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005:206) state that “no single, agreed upon approach to qualitative data exists. However, it is possible to give some rather general and helpful advice.” Considering the complex relationship between a researcher and their qualitative data this paper is based upon the approach developed during the PhD journey when in spite of such guidance the process was often painful and confusing. The literature reveals an inclination to focus upon the reduction and analysis of qualitative data with little practical advice on how to actually managing the type and volume of data collected. Morse (1994) and Lindlof (1995) acknowledged the problems and developed processes for analysing the large volumes of data generated by qualitative research. Initial guidance was taken from the writing of Miles and Huberman (1994) who developed a framework for reducing, structuring and detextualising qualitative data. Implicit in the guidance of these authors is the need to be ‘very familiar with your data’ (Collis and Hussey, 2003:263). However, no detailed literature on how this might be done could be identified and it became apparent that students were not adequately supported in contemporary research methodology publications.

The framework proposed in this paper was designed specifically to demystify qualitative research during the teaching of research methods at undergraduate and postgraduate levels as it becomes more frequently used in research design. It comprises of a series of templates which guide the student through the stages of transcription, reduction and interpretation. The model clearly identifies the stages from initial development of the research objectives and operationalisation of the concepts, through how to present and reduce the data, to the identification of key issues and their linking back to the research objectives. The framework has been tested empirically by a limited number of students in several British universities and has been successfully adapted to address the depth of analysis required for research projects at all levels.

Keywords: Data analysis, qualitative data, data reduction, data structuring, detextualisation

Conquering Complex and Changing Systems through Recognition of Individual Uniqueness

Peter Bednar and Christine Welch
University of Portsmouth, UK

Abstract: From the point of view of each individual's sense-making, an organization is an emergent property of inter-individual sense-making processes and activities. The organization is a result of emergence from individual sense-making perspectives. A critically informed approach to research involves recognition / understanding of this emergence. Without the recognition of the uniqueness of each particular individual's experience of organizational life this critical approach may be undermined. Within a logical empiricist tradition (LE), the focus of a researcher's attention rests on increasing the precision and clarity with which a problem situation may be expressed. This can lead to an artificial separation of theory from praxis, of observation from observer and observed. 'Knowing' about organizational context may be deeply embedded and inaccessible to individuals concerned. Knowing is formed by on-going construction of meanings through synthesis of new data with past experience. A hermeneutic-dialectics (HD) perspective emphasises self-awareness of human individuals. It goes towards emancipation and transparency rather than clarity and precision. A researcher adopting an HD perspective will recognize that there are ambiguities inherent in socially-constructed world views. Critical Systemic Thinking assumes a critical position with regard to informed academic practices. However, a problem for critically-informed research is also a pedagogical one. The research audience needs not only to be engaged in a dialogue regarding a transformation of modern research practices, but also needs to be informed about which foundations these practices supposedly draw upon. So there is a two-fold challenge: the subject-matter of research, and unfamiliarity with critical perspectives by the audience for that research. It may be difficult to establish a dialogue with regard to critical of ways of thinking, if those ways are unknown to the audience.

Keywords: Contextual dependency, hermeneutic dialectics, critical systemic thinking, organizational analysis, paradigmatic divide

Theories of IT adoption and Research Methods

Ann Brown
Cass Business School, City University, London, UK

Abstract: Traditional approaches to IS adoption research produce models that work for only a narrow group of applications and situations. The research question is concerned with understanding the drivers of adoption of ICT applications within target populations of individual users or organizations. But for an organization making decisions about the adoption of novel complex ICT applications this is not the question that they are interested in. This paper discusses the implications for the research question and research methods in these situations.

Keywords: IT adoption research; technology adoption process; e-commerce

Why Link Knowledge Management, Ethics and Organizational Culture? - A Philosophical Approach

Gonçalo Costa, Mary Prior and Simon Rogerson
Centre for Computing and Social Responsibility, Leicester, UK

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to debate the philosophical approach underlined to the link of knowledge management, ethics and organizational culture, but also demonstrating the arising issues in the choice of the right philosophical approach by the researcher, as well as, the inherent characteristics of the epistemological and methodological solution chosen.

Keywords: Knowledge management; ethics; organizational culture; interpretative theory; critical theory; grounded theory

The Analytical Role of Network Approach in Internet Advertising Campaigns Planning

Patricia Cucin[1], Nataša Kejžar[2], Janko Hočevar[1] and Samo Kropivnik[2]
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Abstract: A network of major Slovenian Internet sites has been analysed on the basis of the Internet audience browsing behaviour in order to improve advertising strategies and plans. The data have been derived from a commercial project commissioned by the International Audit Bureau (IAB) Division within the Slovenian Advertising Chamber (SOZ). The basic objective of the project is to define the consensual currencies in the Internet advertising market in Slovenia. In addition, more specific analyses have been undertaken to get as much insight into consumer behaviour as possible. The methods of network analysis have proven valuable in improving advertising strategies and plans. In our network approach the relations between sites have been defined not on the basis of how pages are linked through their content (text, menus, HTML links etc.), but on the basis of how individuals are shifting from site to site while browsing the Internet. Any two sites are linked if the same consumers are accessing them, and the strength of the link depends on the number of consumers accessing both sites. Therefore, links are sensitive to the day of the week and to the period of the day. Besides the entire network (total and based on a long period), one can develop very precise partial networks to carefully design an Internet advertising campaign.

Keywords: Network analysis, internet audience behaviour, internet advertising

“Tales of an Immersed Researcher: Dealing with an Intimate Experience of Practice, New Perspectives on the Politics of Regulatory Change and Communication”

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Abstract: Both Governmentality and accounts of collaborative ethnographic study are well served by the academic literature. However, this discussion focuses upon discourses that circulate around the debate of meat hygiene practice and how it mediates through implementing organizational and regulatory change; it initiates a whole new discussion on the politics surrounding collaborative ethnographic study. This study subtly illuminates the differing expectations and gaze of the researcher and sponsor relationship. Between the degrees of control for both, as each search for insights into existing practice, exposing challenging attitudes and communicating the need for change within a watchful public realm. This discussion offers a rare glimpse into the workings and perspectives of a government agency, very much at the forefront of implementing public health and food policy. It presents the researcher’s competing objectives with a desire to produce publishable material, an awareness of the sponsor’s audience and the challenges of selectivity; all contributes to a stimulating piece of collaborative ethnographic study.

Keywords: Collaborative ethnographic study; politics of communication; selectivity; governmentality

An Exploratory Analysis of Groupthink Issue in Focus Group Research

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Abstract*:* The focus group method is an increasingly popular qualitative research method to gain insight into complex problems. One of the disadvantages of the focus group method is that in the group may cause the groupthink phenomenon. The aim of this paper is to present and discuss some of the causes of the groupthink issue in focus group research, and describe some techniques to reduce this phenomenon. Based in a literature review, we propose some common techniques that may help to reduce groupthink.

Keywords: Groupthink, causes groupthink, focus group

How Hospitality Industry Managers' Characteristics Could Influence Hospitality Management Curricula

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Abstract: This doctorate research (EdD): work in progress describes the value systems and other driving powers of hotel upper segment restaurant managers (HUSRM's) and the way that these can influence hospitality management curriculum design. The transcripts of the digitally recorded semi-structured interviews were analysed applying grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss) and using NVivo7 QSR software in order to conceptualize on the answers provided by the respondents. The research generated some elements in the ongoing construction of theory about the characteristics of this specific category of professionals and the application in education. By using grounded theory methodology, theory is constructed from the empirical data. The outcomes of the research provided an overview of the divers value systems and driving powers of the respondents. Recommendations were made to have these value systems, driving powers and other characteristics to be taken into account by hospitality management schools in the curricula content and proximaty to the industry. A moderate alert was issued in relation to schools' size and format as perceived by the respondents. The research is going to be moved into a next phase that involves expanding the interview sample.

Keywords: Upper segment restaurants, value systems, driving powers, hospitality management curricula

Action Research in Inter-Organisational Networks Impartial Studies or the Trojan Horse?

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Abstract: Traditionally, the literature on action research has been aimed at intra-organisational issues. These studies have distinguished between two researcher roles: The problem-solver and the observer. This article addresses the distinct challenges of action research in inter-organisational projects. In addition to the problem-solver and observer roles, the researcher in an inter-organisational setting can serve as a legitimiser of the project and manage to involve partners that in an ordinary business-to-business setting would not have participated. Based on an action research project in a Danish inter-organisational network, this article discusses potential pitfalls in the legitimiser role. Lack of clarity in defining the researcher role and project ownership in relation to the funding organisation and the rest of the network can jeopardise the project and potentially the credibility of the researchers. The article generates a number of preliminary consideration points for future research to test.

Keywords: Action research, Inter-organisational networks, Methodology, Researcher roles

Methodological Strategies for Design-Oriented Research in Organizations

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Abstract: Design-oriented research can be defined as research into planned interventions in the natural context of organizations with the aim to develop a knowledge base for the innovation and improvement of those interventions. This kind of research has to face the double hurdle of both academic quality and practical relevance. There are two main strategies for successfully taking this double hurdle. The first strategy follows the perspective of the knowledge supplier and adjusts academic research to comply with practical needs, whereas the second strategy integrates academic research in the design of the practical organizational change program. In that case research is regarded from the perspective of the knowledge consumer. This paper elaborates upon the second strategy. More specifically, we reflect on our experiences with a small- and a large-scale organizational change programs. The first program offered the empirical base for a retrospective comparative case study within 14 SMEs and aimed to develop theory on intervention strategies. The second study is based on a database built by a strong pool of field workers that systematically reported observations before, during and after their interventions within 650 SMEs. This paper shows how these small- and large-scale change projects offered a fruitful platform to obtain both academic and practical understandings of organizational change. Indeed, the empirical context of intervention programs can be used to get insight in the practical management of change processes, and at the same time it is suited for more academic purposes like the development of new knowledge about organizational change. In this context three issues are discussed: (1) the origin of theory building, (2) the relationship between design and development, and (3) safety measures to prevent mutual contamination of research and action.

Keywords: design-oriented research, mixed design, adjusted experiment, evaluation research, large- scale organizational change

The Manager as a Mole, Participant Observation by Men who Manage

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Abstract. The *Ethnographic method* has established an accepted position in organization and management studies during the last 30 years. Key to the practice of ethnography is the idea that the researcher him-, or herself is the main instrument of observation. The ethnographer has to become part of the situation that is being studied. Ethnography appears to be the preferable methodological route, when phenomena are complex, hard to predict, and strongly context-bound. A basic condition for such studies is that the researcher is really able to get too close to the daily life in the organization. This paper discusses a very special strategy for organizational ethnography, in which the observation is carried out by some-one who is already a member of the organization. The advantage of this strategy is that the researcher has already considerable knowledge about the organization and has access to many formal and informal situations in the organization. However the combination of roles is not without danger. From the research perspective a number of important question are to be answered: (1) What is the news value of this kind of research, (2) How close can you get to the daily life in the organization, and (3) What happens when you come too close? The empirical ground of this study is the participant observation during seven years in two factories of the Dutch electronics corporation, Royal Philips. The researcher who built his technical and managerial career within Philips, acted as a production manager in these factories.

Keywords: Ethnography, qualitative methods, participant observation, production management, organizational change

Business Research Methods: From Information Chaos to Knowledge Competence in the Mind of Students

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Abstract: The present paper demonstrates a competence and knowledge type framework for teaching business research (BRM) methods on large group teaching of social science students. The view of BRM is to represent a multi-methodological approach to knowledge. Quantitative and qualitative methods are natural building blocks of students' knowledge competence. The aim is to secure that students have the opportunity to experience mini-abductions through out the BRM course, and that these mini-abductions result in the development of knowledge competence. As students gain knowledge competence from teaching and by learning of the different disciplines in BRM, information chaos of the post cold-war problematique becomes windows of opportunity for business process decision-making. The addressed questions are: What are the BRM building blocks of knowledge competence? How are these capabilities derived from BRM courses? How is student learning in BRM facilitated?

Keywords: Teaching BRM, knowledge competence, knowledge types

Visualization as a Tool in Action Case Research

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Abstract: There are numerous examples of the use of visualization of events and processes within the field of Information Systems. Rich pictures are used in soft systems methodology (SSM), images of event-driven chain models are used in process modeling, etc. This paper focuses on the use of generic visualization methods in action case research. In action case research, the researcher balances between interpretation of qualitative data and intervention to solve the problem of the research partner. Two kinds of results are expected: conceptual results, as in describing expected events or expected functionality, and concrete results, as in taking action in some problem-solving context. The questions raised in this paper are:

- What are the benefits of using visualization as a tool for building shared interpretations and mutual understandings between researchers and practice in action case research settings?
- How can visualization activities in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) contribute to bridging the gap between conceptual and concrete levels of results?

In this paper we present empirical findings from an action case research project. Flower Systems Ltd. is a software company that has developed a document handling system (ISOX) especially designed to meet the needs of social services in local governments. The concrete result of the collaboration is a more user-friendly, redesigned version of ISOX based on the use of different visualization techniques. The conceptual result is a proposed model for using visualization when balancing between interpretation and intervention.

Keywords: Visualization, action case research, intervention, interpretation

An Assessment of Customer Service Using Covert and Overt Qualitative Research Approaches

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Abstract: It is important to understand how consumers make preferences for, and choose among existing products or services designed for them. Moreau and Dahl (2005)'s response is that in many situations their needs are more specific and unique and thus require consumers to play an integral part in constructing their own solutions which is why the researchers tackle the problems using a social-action approach that argue for the need to get the opinion of those directly affected in making choices. The social –action approach requires that subjects be studied in their natural setting; a factor that led the researcher to combine use of covert and overt qualitative research approaches.

The increased level of competition in any type of business has led organisations to employ better customer service techniques to improve the efficiency and quality of their service (Palihawadana, 1999) and switch from a passive to a more active market approach (Naudé & Ivy, 1999). The overriding philosophy of every service providers is offering a service that best meets the needs of the users. Therefore, if Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) are to satisfy their customers, they must be aware of their own offerings and how these are perceived in the market place. They need to be aware of the influential factors impacting on their service (Moogan, et al. 2001:197). Under the latter circumstances, a market and organisational analysis becomes imperative for in-depth knowledge of customers' needs and that of the market and the wider business environment served. However, as a preliminary study that is intended to inform future research, focus here will be on the organisational analysis and its influence on the MFIs clients with the view to suggest areas for improvement. The study will then be extended to the other MFIs with the intention to enhance their service delivery. MFIs should understand their own offerings and how these are perceived in the market place, because it could have important marketing and management implications. Consequently, the discussion in this paper will focus on the factors emerging from the data. The factors influencing service delivery are the institutional image, ease of access, packaging of service, staff motivation and understanding of the service and the distribution logistics of the service. Other factors included provision of service demanded and their purchasing criterion; the associated risks and challenges in buying the services.

Keywords: Front office review checklist, customer service, major influences on Micro Finance institutions, impact, gaps, covert and overt qualitative research approaches

Exploratory Study of Implementations Using Adaptive Structuration Theory

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Abstract: This research is focusing on the implementation of an Information System, more specifically a building energy management system, within several organisations. Energy-related research shows that the most fundamental indicators: energy consumption, fossil fuel dependence, import dependency, CO_2 emissions, and energy prices are moving in the wrong direction. The research will look at the implementation and subsequent use of information systems to manage energy components, monitor energy usage and implement potential energy efficiencies within organisations.

The research is being undertaken using a multi methodological approach incorporating case study and grounded theory. Adaptive structuration theory will provide the conceptual model that will help to capture the longitudinal change process, and a modified model is proposed describing the theoretical framework that further investigates and explains the implementation process. This will be achieved using case studies from four organisations at different stages of system implementation. The researcher has confirmed access to these organisations and data collection commenced on October 1st 2006. The researcher is also conducting 1 hour interviews with approximately 20 organisations, covering both the public and private sectors, as the imperatives to adopt may be quite different across the sectors. There is currently no published research in the area of information system implementation which investigates an energy management system using adaptive structuration theory as the conceptual model. The research will give rise to an insight into, and analysis of, effective implementations of energy management systems in organisations. The researcher is undertaking a PhD, and this paper outlines the research in progress agenda for this project.

Keywords: adaptive structuration theory, case study, grounded theory, is implementation, research in progress

Formal Methods of Qualitative Analysis as a Tool for Understanding the Formation of Co-operative Enterprises

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Abstract:: The paper elaborates on one of the formal methods of qualitative analysis - Event Structure Analysis (ESA) - which can capture and unfold the complexity of organisational processes. It is a formal and replicable technique of qualitative data research used for analysing and interpreting events. The method is formal as it uses a set of logical rules to analyse cases. The formal rules produce results that can be replicated and generalised to other cases. The method is qualitative in the sense that it draws on some subjective criteria and understanding of the researcher, and tries to preserve the context of circumstances in which events take place.

Using the literature on co-operative enterprises, the paper demonstrates the advantages of using the formal methods to examine the formation process, and to systematise and analyse narrative data collected across the cases (Stevenson & Greenberg, 2000). Event Structure Analysis (ESA) can map causal factors leading towards the formation of a co-operative in a rigorous and replicable way in order to answer the questions such as: What are the similarities between actions which led towards the formation of co-operatives? Can we compare causal factors across the cases to uncover themes in explaining the formation process? ESA is considered appropriate for causal analysis with an emphasis on process and contingency, and conceptualises causal relations as complex conjectures of factors and conditions (Griffin & Ragin, 1994). ESA can be applied to the narrative of a process of co-operative formation to clarify temporal ordering and sequences of actions in leading towards the formation of co-operative enterprises.

Keywords: Qualitative; formal methods; co-operative enterprises

2-loop Action Research

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Abstract: This paper outlines a general 2-loop model of action research in order to account for two important facets of action research that traditional cycle models do not explicitly account for. One facet concerns the interplay between the processes of action research (i.e. diagnosing, action planning, acting, evaluating, and learning) on one hand, and their conceptual outcomes (i.e. the perceived real world situation, the theoretical understanding, and the observed organizational response) on the other. The second facet concerns the dynamic exchange of knowledge between the world theory and the world of practice. Both types of knowledge are necessary, but none of them are sufficient to shape the result of an action research project. We argue that the dialectic between these two worlds manifests itself in a certain point which we call "the moment of truth", where the theoretical understanding is challenged by practical facts, and where practice is scrutinized by theoretical knowledge. We believe that by acknowledging these facets, it is possible to enhance the quality of action research.

Keywords: Action research, systems approach, process, research method

"Research Dilemmas in Management and Business Studies"

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Abstract: This paper examines the philosophical and practical dilemmas that are faced by researchers in management and business studies – in the context of the epistemological and ontological assumptions introduced. The relevant methodological frameworks to be used stem from Strauss and Quinn (1997). The importance of employee language and organisational discourses are presented from the empirical data on "Aspects of Organisational Culture and Change" in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire to demonstrate some of the epistemological and ontological dilemmas faced by researchers in organisational analysis. Symbolic interactionism and stories are used to highlight the importance of speech actors within an organisational change context. The contribution focuses on what can be considered credible and valid knowledge that can be generalised in organisational and management studies.

Keywords: Language, research methodology, epistemology, theory and practice

Possibilities of Quantitative Assessment and Measurement in Benchmarking

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Abstract: The paper considers the possibilities of quantitative approach in individual (corresponding) segments of benchmarking process. Specific methods are proposed for quantification in benchmarking. These proposals are inspired by acknowledged methods of quantitative and multicriteria analysis .In order to enable the application of the proposed methods, it is necessary to define benchmarking process parametres at the very start. Benchmarking parametres imply characteristic features of a company which are related to the process being analysed by benchmarking. Selection of parametres depends on both the type and nature of the observed process and the priorities set by the company performing benchmarking. The selected parametres should accurately and in a representative way represent the object of benchmarking. Quantification is performed by reducing all the preliminary parametre values to the [0, 1] interval. This is very important because it offers better possibilities for comparison. Application of measures for determining the similarity of companies is also introduced. Relative parametre weights are also taken into account. The proposed methods, among other things, enable observing the ranks of individual benchmarking partners, the position of the observed company in relation to individual benchmarking partners, analysis by individual parametres, observing the measures of similarity of the observed company to each of its benchmarking partners, as well as the measure of similarity between all the benchmarking partners. Such analyses provide data which are very useful for selecting both the competent benchmarking partner and further strategic actions of the observed company.

All the calculations are shown on an imaginary model. A general conclusion is that quantitative approach fits into the concept and philosophy of benchmarking very well. The proposed methods are very convenient for practical application due to their simplicity.

Keywords: Benchmarking, benchmarking partners, assessment, quantification, comparison

Research Strategy Development for Dummies : Define a Framework of Research Options and then Use It

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Abstract: This paper describes how a framework of qualitative research options was constructed and then used to define the research strategy for addressing the research question of

> *How to improve the way in which project stakeholders define and align intangible project outcomes with tangible project outputs?*

The decision to construct and then use the framework was taken to ensure that all relevant research options were considered in terms of the research paradigm, approach, methodology and data collection methods; and to link the research question to the most appropriate combination of research paradigm, approach, methodology and data collection. The framework was constructed as a series of top-down tiers (research paradigm, approach, methodology and data collection methods), underpinned by the unit of analysis, researcher role, ethics and research quality. Each tier comprised a selection of relevant research options – paradigms (positivist, realist, interpretivist, constructivist); approaches (inductive, deductive), methodologies (ethnography, grounded theory, case study, action research) and data collection methods (individual/group meetings, workshops, reference documentation). Once the framework was constructed, the research question was compared and linked to relevant research option/s in each successive tier; starting with the paradigm options, working through the approach options, methodology options and data collection options. Combinations of research options were considered to be valid as long as they could be justified, and no options were considered to be mutually exclusive; so, multiple options could be chosen from each tier of the framework. The resulting research strategy followed the realist paradigm using a combination of inductive and deductive approaches to implement an action research methodology, collecting data through a combination of individual and group meetings, group workshops and reference to documentation. Implementation of this research strategy answered the research question by developing a method for defining and aligning intangible project outcomes and tangible project outputs.

Keywords: Qualitative, research strategy, paradigm, approach, methodology, data collection

Using PEST Analysis as a Tool for Refining and Focusing Contexts for Information Systems Research

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Abstract: It is common for inexperienced researchers and research students to aim at investigating very wide contexts such as countries (e.g. China, India, UK), regions (e.g. the Arab Countries) or even continents (e.g. Africa). Such studies in Information Systems (IS) are not only unrealistic and potentially unfeasible, but may result in findings that are neither significant nor meaningful.

Research supervisors often face difficulties in explaining and resolving these common pitfalls in research proposals. This paper proposes the use of Political, Economic, Social and Technological (PEST, also often referred to as STEP) analysis as a tool to identify narrower contexts and focus research questions around feasible and meaningful regional contexts. It illustrates this process with the results of an analysis carried out as part of an ongoing PhD research project. The project aims to investigate the barriers and risks associated with the post-implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems in Chinese companies. PEST analysis was used to define an appropriate region in China (i.e. Guangdong), as well as the type of company to be studied, namely State Owned Enterprises (SOE). This analysis was followed by a set of SWOT analyses in order to identify a suitable sector, namely the electronic and telecommunication manufacturing sector. The paper also shows how the researcher reviewed, compared and synthesised large amounts of literature and statistical data when constructing arguments and standpoints.

This approach helped to develop a profound understanding of the Chinese context and has proved to be a valuable decision-making tool when selecting an appropriate Chinese region, a type of company and an industry sector in which to conduct the research. It resulted in the redefinition of the research question and in data collection and analysis that is more likely to produce useful, meaningful and generalisable findings.

Keywords: PEST or STEP analysis, information system, enterprise resource planning (erp) system, china, chinese companies

I Can See Myself Doing That! Using the Sims Virtual Environment to Enable Consumers to Anticipate Upcoming Consumption Experiences

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Abstract: Consumers construct mental simulations, or consumption visions, to help them anticipate upcoming consumption experiences. This study further develops the assessment and measurement of the concept of consumption visions. First, we report previous research using traditional, experimental methods to understand consumption vision construction. Second, we explore the utility of the Sims interactive environment as a research tool for examining consumption visions. The Sims environment is a virtual world that allows individuals to create virtual identities and engage in a variety of games, activities, and consumption experiences. Among other things, Sims allows consumer researchers to measure a consumer's online selection of individual products and assortments of products. Finally, we discuss applications of the Sims methodology to cross-cultural research.

Keywords: consumers, consumption visions, decision making, interactive, Sims

Development of Variant Definitions for Stakeholder Groups with Regard to the Performance of Public Transit in the United States

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Abstract: In the United States, the performance of public transit systems is often characterized, in both the popular press and academic literature, as being mediocre at best and growing steadily worse. Drawing on insights from the extant literature and a census of all U.S. transit systems, this research argues that "multiple definitions" of transit performance exist and are composed of three macro-constructs which are weighted differently by different stakeholder groups and thereby provide unique definitions for each stakeholder group. Statistical analysis of the data suggests that there are differences in both the absolute importance and relative importance placed on the three macro-constructs by U.S. transit stakeholder groups. Therefore, the examination of public transit performance from a multiple stakeholder points-of-view perspective appears warranted in order to better evaluate the performance of public transit systems.

Keywords: Transit performance, public transit, performance assessment, performance constructs, stakeholder

Millennial Students, Approaches to Learning, and Independent Research Skills

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Abstract: This paper draws on literature about different generations, and about learning styles and strategies, and focuses on approaches to learning favoured by the generation born between approximately 1982 and 2000. The term *millennials* is used by Howe and Strauss (2000) to refer to this group, which encompasses the overwhelming majority of undergraduate students, and a high proportion of postgraduate students, currently in higher education. One characteristic of millennials is their orientation towards learning styles which stress their individuality; even in a team setting they typically demonstrate approaches which place an emphasis on individual team members' contributions. This raises a question of how this group of students can most effectively learn to carry out individual and independent research as part of their studies. Independent, individual work is an important part of most degree programmes. It can contribute to student-centred learning by encouraging students to choose and explore their own areas of interest, it has an important part to play in the construction of a body of knowledge among a complete cohort of students, if different members choose different topics to work with, and it offers students an opportunity to develop useful research skills. Superficially, it would appear that millennial students, with their orientation towards individuality, should be well disposed towards carrying out independent research. However research into information literacy suggests that, while students of this generation are typically very confident with many applications of information technology, there are significant gaps in their practical ability to use information.

This paper investigates further the extent to which a similar effect can applies to independent study within a degree programme, and looks both at millennial students' confidence and perception of their ability to study independently and at particular skills that they can apply.

Keywords: Generations, learning styles, independent learning

An Application of Grounded Theory to Study Managerial Action during the Implementation of an Inter-Organizational Information System

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Abstract: This paper shows the application of Grounded Theory (GT) method in a research project that studied the role of managers of an inter-organizational information systems (IOIS), during and after the implementation of the IOIS. We present the steps being followed –sampling, data collection, analysis, and literature comparison–, paying special attention to the intricacies that arose during the research process, and we reflect on the lessons learned from using GT in an interpretive case study. We favoured the “Straussian” version of GT over the “Glaserian”: first, because the former view treatment of the existing literature, and second, because the Straussian version provides us with the coding paradigm analytical technique, which allows us to focus on process data. The paper shows: firstly, how grounded theory analytical techniques are useful to analyze process data; secondly, how action diagrams can help structure and report on process data; and, thirdly, the importance of flexibility, creativity, and being open mind in using the analytical tools of GT because it may take different directions before a plausible theory starts to emerge. The objective of the paper is to give a personal perspective that may help novice researchers in the use of GT.

Keywords: Grounded theory, coding paradigm, action diagrams, IS implementation

Managing the Fear Factor (or how a Mini-Viva Assessment can Improve the Process of Learning for International Students)

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Abstract: This paper is about an exploration of international business student's learning through the use of mini-vivas as a form of assessment. It also includes an investigation of the meaning of a mini-viva for students who have a wide range of nationalities. Pedagogical research has indicated that using this form of summative assessment for large cohorts of international students maybe problematic (Carless 2002). However, experimentation with this model of assessment with MA business students in research methods has indicated that mini-vivas can enhance and consolidate the learning potential of international students. So in effect this paper is also about explaining why this has happened in relation to student's learning.

Keywords: International students, research methods, mini-viva, deep learning, assessment

A Scale to Measure the Usability of Print-Catalogs

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Abstract: The usability of interfaces is mainly tested via standardized-questionnaires or via less standardized process-oriented verbal protocols. Standardized questionnaires have got the advantage of generating reasonable indices adequate to the effort. In contrast, process oriented verbal protocols offer the opportunity of gaining more thorough insights into the interaction and the problems that might come up. While efficient standardized methods for the measurement of online media with their non-linear structure already exist, there are no such methods to measure the usability of linear structured offline media. However, it can be assumed that usability of online print media plays an important role for a brand's image and the buying behavior of customers.

The objective of our study was to adapt a scale to measure usability of online shops to the needs of offline catalogs in order to measure their usability. A field study (n = 60) and a laboratory experiment (n= 92) have been made to test the reliability and validity of the adapted scale. Individuals were asked to evaluate the catalogs of two travel companies by using the adapted questionnaire. Concerning the reliability, in both studies the scale showed good internal consistency. The values of cronbach's alpha were comparable to results in studies using the original scale with online shops. Concerning the validity, results show correlations between usability and buyer's intention as well as recommendation. Furthermore, the usability scores of both catalogs differed as experts (n = 20) expected. Moreover, the questionnaire was validated using the results of verbal protocols that were collected simultaneously in the laboratory study. In example, the correlation between usability scores and problems that came up during the interaction was proofed.

Overall, the results support the usefulness of the adapted scale to measure the usability of print-catalogs. Implications for research and management will be discussed.

Keywords: Usability Scale implementation, verbal protocols, print-catalogs

Grounded Theory in Business Research - a Project Management Approach to Bridge a Gap of Conceptual Understanding

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Abstract: A problem facing a grounded theory researcher is the initial uncertainty and unwillingness to participate amongst potential interviewees. People in business as well as in the public sector are used to being well informed of the research project agenda before contributing, and question the lack of survey schemes and focused interview questions. Time allotted for interviews in a business and management context is often scarce. In an ongoing study on formulating goals and management by objectives, much time was spent on building trust in the method, thus reducing time for data collection. The research process is nonlinear and cannot easily be described in a linear presentation. To find a solution, an explanatory model of the method in project management terms emerged along with the grounded theory. To meet the criteria of being readily recognized in business, a Gantt chart was an obvious choice to adopt and adapt. It offers a lens to look upon the method and convey an image of the process, and to identify and describe research activities. The explanatory model is based on the original writings by Glaser and Strauss, modified by Glaser and adherents during four decades and influenced by an earlier process model, launched by Fernández.

Using an explanatory model is at the discretion of the researcher. Applying a high-level Gantt chart is simplifying the process. It is therefore vitally important to recognize the differences in the underlying logic in research and business and to identify the role of the researcher. Finding a common processual denominator for business and research in project management and highlighting similarities reduced the initial gap of understanding between the domains of academy and practise in a grounded theory study. It offers a possibility to be further developed of grounding not only in data, but in initial understanding.

Keywords: Grounded theory, research process, explanatory model, project management approach

Making Employees Interpretation of Product Development Work Comprehensible Using a Grounded Theory Approach

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Abstract: This paper demonstrates how an inspired grounded theory approach can be used as a research method to comprehend participants' interpretation of product development work. Since, this paper deals with an inspired grounded theory approach, it means adjustments to the more traditional grounded theory approaches have been done (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1997). The paper focuses on how employees reflect on their participation in product development projects. To understand how this happened, specific individuals participating in specific product development projects were followed over 13 months. Consequently the operative level within product development was investigated, focusing on how the participants interpret the process.

Being inspired by grounded theory I wanted to focus on the processes that bring about knowledge, and to make a consistent and holistic representation of findings to avoid 'the building block world view' representation (Addleson, 2001: 177). According to Addleson (2001) a 'building block world view' is defined as 'a world where tasks and goals are concrete, discrete, easily identified, and are capable of being enumerated and ordered, and a world where tasks exist independently of what people think or believe' (Addleson, 2001: 177). Through this process *knowledge harvesting*, emerged as a concept that encompasses how inclusion and exclusion mechanisms, a flexible and coordinate project planning and the project manager's compliance, influences employees understanding, and adjustment to product development work. These concepts advocates a more organic understanding of product development where practice and learning, inseparably bound, evolve based on human interaction through collaborations, discussions, emotions, preconceptions and authority continuously supervised by adopted methods, routines and procedures.

Keywords: Ad-hoc inclusionism, Flexible and coordinated project planning, Knowledge harvesting, paraknowledge, project manager compliance

The use of Grounded Theory and of Arenas/Social Worlds Theory in Discourse Studies

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Abstract: This paper exemplifies the combined use of Grounded Theory and of the Arenas/Social Worlds Theory in a study of the discursive interaction amongst middle managers at a UK University administration and academic computing services. This study aimed at exploring the role of discursive interaction and negotiation in the organisational adaptation of information systems, by defining the premises upion which discourses were constructed and deployed on the basis of particular worldviews and how in turn they informed back different worldviews. It presents key lessons learned from this approach in relationship to the roles of codification, of relationships bewtween conceptual categories and between between theoretical influences and empirical work, as well as those emerging from\ the lived experience of research analysts.

Keywords: Grounded theory, arenas/social worlds theory, discourse analysis, case study, information systems adaptation

Wasting Time: The Mission Impossible With Respect to Technology-oriented Security Approaches

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Abstract: Security is still too orientated towards technology and behavioural aspects are under prioritized. Organisations focus on the ability of technology to minimise risks. This paper as a preliminary research of a PhD thesis will argue that this assumption and approach is misguided, so we will focus on how a critical approach is more useful to exposing these issues. The key to secure systems is employees' perception and the action they take in accordance with the learned and perceived need for an understanding of compliance. The paper is about critical approaches to research and it just happens to be information and communication technology (ICT) that is the subject area.

Keywords: Critical research; ICT security; organizational misbehaviour; learning; compliance

Making Progress in Theory Development in Management Accounting Research by Focusing on Both Context and Pattern: Towards a Broader and More Respectable Role for Case Study Research

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Abstract: This paper advocates and defends an expanded and relatively unexplored view of field research in management accounting—focused around developing and testing theory—to overcome the data problems identified within the discipline (Zimmerman, 2001) and its failure to produce a substantive cumulative body of knowledge (Hartmann, 2000; Ittner & Larcker, 2001; Chenhall, 2003). Towards this end, the paper critically examines three aspects of conventional wisdom that have prevented the legitimization of an expanded and more scientific role for field research. However, this examination also reveals that this will require qualitative researchers to engage more directly with the traditional scientific notions of replication, validity, generalization and time honored principles for drawing causal inferences based on a post-positivistic, realist philosophy of social science (see Phillips, 1987; 1990; Sayer, 1992; Shadish, 1995; Tsang and Kwan, 1999). The paper then develops a methodology that extends and refines Eisenhardt's (1989, 1991) and Yin's (2003) comparative, multiple case logic of replication and shows how three examples in management accounting illustrating progress in theory development and/or increased understanding of phenomena followed an approach remarkably consistent with it. Finally, attention is turned to explaining Kasanen, Lukka, and Siitonen's(1993) conclusion that the majority of significant managerial accounting innovations stem from practice or consulting bureaus and not from academic accounting research, shedding light on the trade-off introduced in accounting by Ahrens and Dent (1998) and elaborated upon by Lillis and Mundy (2005) regarding conducting in-depth versus multiple case studies.

Keywords: Replication logic, theory development, generalization, case studies, observational studies