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Editorial by the Editor; Ann Brown

Invitation to our readers to send in their opinions and views by letter to the editor

We want to hear from you. We are always interested in well-argued points of view. All your letters will be read by the Associate Editors and selected ones will be published in a later issue.

The research papers in this issue address a wide range of subjects including:

- An introduction to Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) (Saman Javed and Noshaba Batool).
- Three papers on Qualitative Research Methods on – methodological rigour (Marian Carcary); the use of Grounded Theory (Rozilawati Razali, Mashal Kasem Alqudah and Dzulaiha Aryanee Putri Zainal) and evaluation issues (Ann Brown and Martin Rich).
- Two papers on teaching Research Methods to Business students - one reviewing current approaches to teaching (Anthony Mitchell and Martin Rich) and the other proposing a case-based approach (Colin Reddy).
- Two papers on the value and application of Interventionist Research Methods (Vesa Titola, Jouni Lyly-Yrjanainen and Teemu Laine; Carin Venter)
- A critical review of the use of the Quantitative Research Method - Experience Sampling Methodology (Ozge Can)

The papers

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)

Qualitative Comparative Analysis, developed by social science researchers, has been growing in popularity for business researchers. Saman Javed and Noshaba Batool give an introduction to the method, illustrating it by showing how it might be applied in a specific case example.

Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative Research Methods include a broad field of tools and approaches. The effectiveness of the results achieved depends on researchers' subjective judgement as much as rigour in application. Marian Carcary argues that the research audit is a means to improving rigour and develops a framework for applying it effectively in practice. Rozilawati Razali et al. describe the special issues involved in applying Grounded Theory methods to research projects in Software Engineering. They make extensive use of case material from their own research; effective evaluation is a continuing problem for all types of project work. Evaluation of the impact of teaching methods in terms of learning has been a major concern for many years. Ann Brown and Martin Rich assess how Business Schools are approaching this activity, in the light of the pressure for change to business courses experienced in this century.

Teaching Research Methods in Business Schools

Anthony Mitchell and Martin Rich report on changes to curriculum design in business schools, the manner in which research methods are taught and the effectiveness of the student-supervisor relationship in managing research projects. The focus is on undergraduate business students. Colin Reddy argues for starting with a case-orientated approach to teaching research methods, before moving onto to presenting inferential statistics and other research tools. His paper describes the positive results of his experience in using this approach.

Interventionist Research Methods

Interventionist research methods attract interest through their perceived value in connecting researchers to actual practice and their potential for supporting organisational change. The two papers on interventionist research address the issue differently. Vesa Titola et al. discuss the nature of and change in the role of interventionist researchers in a particular longitudinal research project. Carin Venter reflects on the use of Soft Systems Methodology as an Action Research method, applied from a critical systems thinking perspective in order to achieve change.

Quantitative Research Methods - Experience Sampling Methodology

Ozga Can provides a systematic and critical assessment of the use of Experience Sampling Methodology (ESM) in current organisational research, through the analysis of a sample of recent papers applying this method. The findings suggest that some studies fail to reach recommended standards and the paper goes on to suggest ways to improve the use of this method.