1. Taking qualitative methods in organization and management research seriously

Title: Taking qualitative methods in organization and management research seriously
Author(s): Catherine Cassell, (Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK), Gillian Symon, (Birkbeck College, University of London, London, UK)
Citation: Catherine Cassell, Gillian Symon, (2006) "Taking qualitative methods in organization and management research seriously", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 1 Iss: 1, pp.4 - 12
Keywords: Qualitative methods, Qualitative research

Abstract:

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to introduce the new journal and outline the rationale and aims and objectives of Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal (QROM).

Design/methodology/approach – The paper considers why there is a necessity for a journal like QROM, outlines the scope of the new journal, and introduces the articles in the first issue. An invitation for further contributions to the journal is also given.

Findings – There is still a need for an outlet that both provides a showcase for the diverse range of qualitative techniques in use and promotes high quality qualitative research.

Originality/value – This paper is of use to those new readers of the journal, and those who wish to submit to the journal, in that it clearly outlines editorial policy and processes.

2. What happened on the way to postmodern?

Title: What happened on the way to postmodern?
Author(s): David M. Boje, (New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA)
Citation: David M. Boje, (2006) "What happened on the way to postmodern?", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 1 Iss: 1, pp.22 - 40
Keywords: Philosophy, Postmodernism

Abstract:

Purpose – This paper seeks to address the question: what happened to postmodern?

Design/methodology/approach – Three trends are reviewed: postmodern fragmentation, late modern appropriations of postmodern moves; and emergent awareness of the dark-side of postmodern.

Findings – On the way to postmodern theory the revolution to reform modern capitalism fragmented into rhetoric-strands, while practice became ineffective.

Research limitations/implications – The paper concludes with possibilities for participatory research in ways that enact more postmodern forms of capitalist praxis.

Practical implications – It is suggested that qualitative studies of postmodern praxis can be conducted; such as postmodern organizations that enact the dark-side of biotechnology; consumer organizations, such as Blackspot and No Sweat that contract to non-sweatshop factories; and autoethnographic examples of how building a Harley-Davidson chopper is post-production and post-consumption.

Originality/value – The paper shows that in the fragmentation of moderns and postmoderns, there is a relentless appropriation of postmodern moves by late modernism. This is one contributing factor to the “dark side of postmodern.” Other contributing factors are naive brands of postmodern (e.g. chaos theory, complexity, new age spirituality) which, sometimes only see the positive potentialities, and blind one to the dark side. What is original is the call for a combination of critical theory and postmodern theory (critical postmodern) that looks at the relation between various ideas of modern and postmodern and how they can be studied in their dialogicality.

3. The researcher interview: a reflexive perspective

Title: The researcher interview: a reflexive perspective
Author(s): Alan Bryman, (Management Centre, University of Leicester, Leicester, UK), Catherine Cassell, (People, Management and
Purpose – The aim of this paper is to highlight some of the issues that emerge in the researcher interview process. It is argued that researcher interviewing is becoming an increasingly used practice yet the researcher interview is under-critiqued in the literature.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors provide an “insider” account of their own experiences of researcher interviewing. Additionally they seek to locate these experiences within two conceptual approaches: that of reflexivity and identity work.

Findings – The paper aims to investigate some of the distinctive concerns that arise when one researcher interviews another.

Research limitations/implications – The paper outlines the implications for others who may be engaging in the process of interviewing researchers, and highlights further issues for consideration when planning a researcher interview study.

Originality/value – The paper provides an analysis of a little considered, but expanding practice within qualitative research, namely the researcher interview.

4Ethnography then and now

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to review some of the compositional and orientational shifts that have occurred in ethnography during the last 20 years.

Design/methodology/approach – Within the paper the author produces a series of reflections based upon his own experiences of writing ethnography, plus of reading the ethnographic accounts of others.

Findings – Ethnography remains relatively free from technical jargon and high-wire abstraction. Because of its relative freedom from a thoroughly specialized vocabulary and a privileged conceptual apparatus, ethnography continues to carry a slight literary air compared to other forms of social science writing. Ethnography maintains an almost obsessive focus on the “empirical.” Despite attempts to develop a standard methodology over the last 20 years, there is still not much of a technique attached to ethnography.

Originality/value – The paper presents the original views of a renowned ethnographer about developments within the practice of ethnography during the last 20 years.

5Visual images: a technique to surface conceptions of research and researchers

Purpose – This article presents pictorial representation as an innovative and challenging technique for exploring how new and experienced researchers see research and researchers. Pictorial representation provides a means of exploring the various factors
that may influence, limit or inhibit researchers in their practice.

Design/methodology/approach – Three groups were engaged in creating pictorial representations of either “research” or “researchers”. Groups of new doctorate in Business Administration students, second year PhD students and a network of women academic staff from two UK university business schools described their drawings to their group and engaged in general discussion of the issues raised.

Findings – Drawing and discussing pictures allows emotional and unconscious aspects of engaging in research to surface, helping drawers put into words what may be difficult to voice. Such images enrich and enliven the difficult area of research methods teaching and their personal nature helps to “acknowledge the individual in the researcher”.

Research limitations/implications – This paper is based on research with a small number of participants. It focuses on the use of the visual image technique, rather than detailed analysis of the images generated.

Practical implications – We offer the technique to teachers of research methods who can use it to make research methods more interesting and relevant to their students.

Originality/value – The paper outlines an innovative approach to teaching research methods which engages students in discussion about the nature of research, the skills and qualities needed to become effective researchers and assists them to begin the difficult but essential process of reflexivity.

6A critical discourse perspective on managers’ experiences of HRM

Document Information:

Title: A critical discourse perspective on managers' experiences of HRM
Author(s): Helen Francis, (School of Management, Napier University, Edinburgh, UK)
Citation: Helen Francis, (2006) "A critical discourse perspective on managers' experiences of HRM", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 1 Iss: 2, pp.65 - 82
Keywords: Case studies, Human resource management, Line management
Article type: Research paper
DOI: 10.1108/17465640610686343 (Permanent URL)
Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Abstract: Purpose – The discourse of human resource management (HRM) is increasingly dominated by a normative, consensus-oriented perspective on managing the employment relationship. This paper aims to explore the potential of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to provide new and different understandings of HRM and processes of organisational change, and which highlights the creative role of language in the shaping of organisation and management practice.

Design/methodology/approach – A case study analysis of managers' experiences of introducing change in a large catering firm is drawn upon to highlight the inherent tensions in people management, which stem from the need for employers to motivate and control labour in order to remain profitable. This is illustrated in a change programme aimed at increasing organisational efficiency and achieving a “results driven culture” that exhorted managers to think and behave as “entrepreneurs” and to “comply” with stringent new rules on managing their staff.

Findings – It is concluded that conflict and resistance is an inevitable feature of HRM-based initiatives and that CDA offers a powerful lens for exploring this dynamic. Importantly, it provides a less restrictive view of management decision making than that found in conventional understandings of HRM, which tend to treat management as a more or less culturally unified body, and ignores the subjectivity of managers. In contrast, the empirical evidence presented here provides an example of how the deployment of CDA can provide rich insights into the dynamics of HRM-based change rooted in a complex shifting network of alliances (and related discourses).

Originality/value – Focus is placed on how concepts, objects and subject positions are constituted through language and embedded in power relations.

7Doing critical management research interviews after reading Derrida

Document Information:

Title: Doing critical management research interviews after reading Derrida
Author(s): Mark Learmonth, (Nottingham University Business School, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK)
Citation: Mark Learmonth, (2006) "Doing critical management research interviews after reading Derrida!", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 1 Iss: 2, pp.83 - 97
Keywords: Interviews, Management research
Article type: Conceptual paper
The paper invites us to reconsider the processes at work in the conduct of qualitative interviews, especially in the context of management studies; it emphasises, in particular, the paradoxes that arise from the inescapable interdependency between interviewer and interviewee.

The author reflects upon his own experiences of conducting interviews with managers whilst studying for a PhD, and suggests alternative ways of thinking about what goes on during such exchanges.

Interview techniques are not necessarily the neutral tools they might seem to be. The deconstructive insights about interview processes provide a way of thinking about qualitative interview research that might be more consistent with the insights of certain “critical” management studies.

To provide examples of qualitative research based on feminist epistemological assumptions. Such research re-invents rather than recycles management theory, producing alternative understandings which speak to the demands of managing post-corporate workplaces characterised by growing levels of diversity and rapid discontinuous change.

Reports on three feminist qualitative research projects. Describes research processes and outcomes which aim to reflexively attend to diverse voices and researcher and research participant subjectivities.

Provides tangible examples of empirical feminist qualitative research, including discussions of how the research was conducted, the nature of the findings and critical reflections on the extent to which the researchers' feminist epistemological assumptions were enacted.

The three research projects discussed have all been conducted within the Australian education sector. Accordingly, future research could focus on providing practical examples of feminist qualitative research approaches in the management field, in different international and industrial/sector contexts.

Provides management researchers with three examples of feminist qualitative research covering diverse topics including leadership, mentoring and ethics.

While there is a plethora of writing concerned with feminist research generally, there is a dearth of feminist research in the management field specifically. This paper's contribution therefore lies in providing tangible examples of feminist qualitative research in the management field.

The purpose of this paper is to explore some of the problems of teaching qualitative research methods to large
culturally-mixed groups of postgraduate business school students.

**Design/methodology/approach** – After a consideration of some current relevant pedagogical issues the author presents an autoethnographic account of his own parallel experiences of teaching qualitative research methods and learning to play a musical instrument. Emotional aspects of teaching and learning are highlighted in an analysis of the dynamic interaction between the two activities. This is presented as an example of how the “use of learning stories” can increase sensitivity to the anxieties of students.

**Findings** – Finds that the core of the argument lies in the value of self-reflexivity to the business school teacher and that looking inward at personal learning experiences is invaluable for informing current and future teaching practice. Recent learning experiences seem to have the most potential and learning something that is found difficult may be the richest source of empathy and insight.

**Practical implications** – It is argued that reflexive analysis by research-methods lecturers of their own learning experiences can develop synergies which would not only improve the effectiveness of their teaching but also enrich the learning experience of their students.

**Originality/value** – The paper is an attempt to generate some original ideas about teaching research methods in business schools via a mix of autoethnography and music. The core of the argument lies in the value of self-reflexivity to the business school teacher.

---

10 Unpacking complexity, pinning down the “elusiveness” of strategy: A grounded theory study in leisure and cultural organisations

**Document Information:**

**Title:** Unpacking complexity, pinning down the “elusiveness” of strategy: A grounded theory study in leisure and cultural organisations

**Author(s):** Ali Bakir, (Faculty of Enterprise and Innovation, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, High Wycombe, UK), Vian Bakir, (Department of Media, Culture and Communication, School of Creative and Cultural Industries, University of Glamorgan, Pontypridd, UK)

**Citation:** Ali Bakir, Vian Bakir, (2006) "Unpacking complexity, pinning down the “elusiveness” of strategy: A grounded theory study in leisure and cultural organisations", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 1 Iss: 3, pp.152 - 172

**Keywords:** Corporate strategy, Management strategy

**Article type:** Research paper

**DOI:** 10.1108/17465640610718761 (Permanent URL)

**Publisher:** Emerald Group Publishing Limited

**Abstract:** Purpose – The dominant strategy discourse projects strategy as rational and calculable. However, leading academics conclude that strategy is “elusive” and “complex”. The purpose of this paper is to unravel strategy's elusiveness and unpack its complexity through empirical hermeneutic investigation.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Strauss' grounded theory is used to investigate leisure and cultural managers' understanding of strategy-making. Data were collected through multiple interviews with senior managers of a local authority, and the organisation's strategy documents were examined. The grounded theory's transferability to organisations in, and outside, public leisure and culture was provisionally tested.

**Findings** – It was found that in making strategy, managers engage in purposeful, complex processes, here termed “navigational translation” which have mutually impacting relationships with organisational resources, the environment and managers' character, explaining its complexity and elusiveness. The provisional testing of navigational translation's transferability suggests that it has scope beyond public sector leisure and cultural strategy.

**Research limitations/implications** – As this research focused on theory generation, a main limitation is its small-scale testing of navigational translation's transferability. Future research could test transferability with more organisations in leisure, culture and other fields.

**Practical implications** – This explanation provides a robust understanding of strategy that could improve practice. It empowers managers so that they are no longer subjugated to unrealisable expectations that rationalistic strategy tools will work in a complex world.

**Originality/value** – Navigational translation offers a richer, practitioner-oriented understanding of strategy, which utilises leading academic explanations from the various, competing and divergent strategy schools into a pragmatic, multiparadigmatic...
A therapeutic journey?: Reflections on the effects of research on researcher and participants

Document Information:
- **Title:** A therapeutic journey?: Reflections on the effects of research on researcher and participants
- **Author(s):** Kathryn Haynes, (Department of Management Studies, University of York, Heslington, UK)
- **Citation:** Kathryn Haynes, (2006) "A therapeutic journey?: Reflections on the effects of research on researcher and participants", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 1 Iss: 3, pp.204 - 221
- **Keywords:** Accounting, Ethnography, Oral history, Qualitative research, Women
- **Article type:** Conceptual paper
- **DOI:** 10.1108/17465640610718798 (Permanent URL)
- **Publisher:** Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Abstract:
*Purpose –* The purpose of this paper is to explore the effects of undertaking research on both participants and researcher.

*Design/methodology/approach –* Taking an auto/ethnographic approach, the paper provides a reflexive account of the impact of research on identity construction, especially in relation to the specific areas of the accounting profession and motherhood.

*Findings –* There are potential therapeutic effects of undertaking and participating in research.

*Originality/value –* The paper provides an analysis of a little considered area in qualitative research, namely the effects of the research on those involved.

On the edge of social constructionism: Wittgensteinian inquiries into organizations and management

Document Information:
- **Title:** On the edge of social constructionism: Wittgensteinian inquiries into organizations and management
- **Author(s):** John Shotter, (KCC Foundation, London, UK)
- **Citation:** John Shotter, (2006) "On the edge of social constructionism: Wittgensteinian inquiries into organizations and management", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 1 Iss: 3, pp.189 - 203
- **Keywords:** Philosophical concepts, Qualitative methods, Research
- **Article type:** Research paper
- **DOI:** 10.1108/17465640610718789 (Permanent URL)
- **Publisher:** Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Abstract:
*Purpose –* The purpose of this paper is to outline a distinctive kind of qualitative inquiry, strongly influenced by Wittgenstein's very practical philosophical investigations.

*Design/methodology/approach –* The paper describes how there is a very clear, but not yet fully recognized, difference between (at least some crucial forms of dialogically-structured) qualitative research and current more quantitative forms – a difference that is not fully captured in characterizing it as more focussed on subjective experience and as context-oriented.

*Findings –* Central to this approach is a kind of poetic writing that requires a special kind of slow reading that leads us, not to a referential-representational understanding of the text, but to a relationally-responsive understanding of it, a shift from being concerned with the extra knowledge or information that one is left with after reading a text to a concern with what can happen during one's reading of it. Its focus is thus on the provision of detailed portrayals rather than on accurate representations, and with how 'striking' expressions remembered from our reading of such portrayals can come to in-form our ways of perceiving, acting, talking, thinking, and evaluating events occurring around us.

*Originality/value –* Through this way, the seemingly merely descriptive inquiries of the kind Wittgenstein advocates can be applied, for example, in making sense of knowledge creation and innovation in organizations.

Structuring qualitative enquiry in management and organization research: A dialogue on the merits of using software for qualitative data analysis

Document Information:
- **Title:** Structuring qualitative enquiry in management and organization research: A dialogue on the merits of using software for qualitative data analysis
- **Author(s):** Andrew Atherton, (Enterprise Research and Development Unit, Lincoln Business School, University of Lincoln, Lincoln, UK), Peter Elsmore, (Department of Management and Leadership, Lincoln Business School, University of Lincoln, Lincoln, UK)
- **Citation:** Andrew Atherton, Peter Elsmore, (2007) "Structuring qualitative enquiry in management and organization research: A dialogue
on the merits of using software for qualitative data analysis", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 2 Iss: 1, pp.62 - 77

**Keywords:** Computer software, Data analysis, Qualitative methods, Qualitative research

**Article type:** Viewpoint

**DOI:** 10.1108/17465640710749117 (Permanent URL)

**Publisher:** Emerald Group Publishing Limited

**Abstract:** Purpose – To explore the cases for and against the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) in qualitative organisation and management research.

Design/methodology/approach – Reflecting the debate inherent in the questions raised about the use of CAQDAS, a dialogue between the authors is used.

Findings – There are risks associated with using CAQDAS without considering its underpinning principles and assumptions about data analysis. If these are considered explicitly as part of a research methodology, then CAQDAS may be a valuable analytical tool. If not, there is risk of distortion and bias in results from the use of CAQDAS.

Originality/value – The paper addresses a commonly posed question for qualitative researchers, in a format and structure that is likely to stimulate further debate.

14Defining qualitative management research: an empirical investigation

**Title:** Defining qualitative management research: an empirical investigation

**Author(s):** Phil Johnson, (Sheffield University Management School, Sheffield, UK), Anna Buehring, (Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK), Catherine Cassell, (Manchester Business School, Manchester, UK), Gillian Symon, (Department of Organizational Psychology, Birkbeck College, University of London, London, UK)

**Citation:** Phil Johnson, Anna Buehring, Catherine Cassell, Gillian Symon, (2007) "Defining qualitative management research: an empirical investigation", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 2 Iss: 1, pp.23 - 42

**Keywords:** Epistemology, Management research, Qualitative methods, Qualitative research

**Article type:** Research paper

**DOI:** 10.1108/17465640710749108 (Permanent URL)

**Publisher:** Emerald Group Publishing Limited

**Abstract:** Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to report the findings of research which explores how the concept qualitative management research is variably constructed and defined by those who have a direct interest in, and influence upon, important aspects of qualitative management research.

Design/methodology/approach – Information was gathered through the use of semi-structured interviews conducted with 44 individuals who were drawn from four observer-identified types of “expert” informant who were taken to generally represent key groups of stakeholders in the conduct, evaluation and dissemination of qualitative management research. Interview data from these individuals were analysed through an iterative process using the NVivo software package to inductively generate definitional categories and explore aspects of their interrelationships.

Findings – From data analysis it was apparent that there are eight different, but often interrelated, ways in which interviewees define qualitative management research. The philosophical dimensions of each of these variable definitions are outlined and their relationships to the methodological literature are explored. The variety identified amongst informants, indicates how there is a potential dissensus possible regarding what qualitative management research might entail, as well as regarding its provenance and its academic status. This dissensus potentially can create problems with regard to its evaluation.

Originality/value – So whist there is little evidence to suggest any systematic relationship between the variable institutional backgrounds of informants and how they variably define and perceive qualitative management research, philosophical influences upon this contested terrain are explored and the implications of the identified dissensus for how qualitative management research is perceived and evaluated is discussed. The implications of this evidently contested terrain are discussed with particular reference to the future constitution of qualitative management research and its evaluation.

15Post-acquisition integration: ways of sensemaking in a management team meeting

**Title:** Post-acquisition integration: ways of sensemaking in a management team meeting

**Author(s):** Airi Rovio-Johansson, (Gothenburg Research Institute, Göteborg University, Göteborg, Sweden)

**Citation:** Airi Rovio-Johansson, (2007) "Post-acquisition integration: ways of sensemaking in a management team meeting", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 2 Iss: 1, pp.4 - 22
Acquisitions and mergers, Communication, Meetings, Rhetoric, Team management

Research paper

10.1108/17465640710749090 (Permanent URL)

Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Purpose – The aim of this paper is to investigate actors' ways of sensemaking through the use of rhetorical strategies, frames, and categories, in a management team meeting.

Design/methodology/approach – The empirical data were generated from a video recorded and transcribed management meeting, and participant observation. The analysis of institutional discourses and practices builds upon the assumption that language and texts are the main tools for understanding actors' social reality. The managers' ways of sensemaking of institutional discourses and practices is captured through their use of tools like rhetorical strategies, frames, and categories in talk-in-interaction.

Findings – The team managers' ways of sensemaking through mobilizing rhetorical strategies, institutional categories, and how they recontextualise frames in negotiation of a disputed issue, adds new aspects to previous studies of the multi-voiced complex integration processes in a cross-border acquisition. The significance of the results is the revealing of actors' frequent use of rhetorical strategies, frames, and categories in sensemaking processes. The study calls for further research on structural features of institutional talk as related to the dynamics of talk-in-interaction.

Originality/value – The findings and methods of analysis contribute to international business studies and to the empirical-based research on institutional interaction through text and talk.

Discovering complex interdependencies in organizational settings: The role of social network analysis in qualitative research

Fabiola Bertolotti, Maria Rita Tagliaventi

Objectives – The paper's aim is twofold: to display how the application of social network analysis techniques to observational data provides researchers with a unique set of data to make sense of the dynamics of organizational settings; to contribute to knowledge on group design, self-managing teams, and processes of technology diffusion.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper focuses on the findings of qualitative research, recently published, that were conducted in a major Italian clothing company producing garments for the top-end market. Observation, ethnographic interviews and analysis of documents for data collection were employed. Coding procedures and social network analysis techniques were used to analyse data.

Findings – The long presence in the field allowed for the building of two grounded theories. One deals with the process of Computer Aided Design technology diffusion into a small group and it connects a number of variables usually studied separately in the literature. The second accounts for the enactment of spontaneous self-managing practices in a group formally designed as a manager-led team.

Research limitation/implications – The grounded theories are formulated for specific social settings and future research could benefit from replications in different contexts to capture other phenomena leading to different categories to be integrated into the theories or to corroborate them.

Originality/value – The paper derived enacted network data from the direct and prolonged observation of actors as opposed to self-reported network data. This allowed clarification of the actual content and the quality of the interactions among actors, and to move beyond their quantification, thus enhancing the comprehension of the impact of network relationships upon organizational behaviour.

Longitudinal textual analysis: an innovative method for analysing how realised strategies evolve

Longitudinal textual analysis: an innovative method for analysing how realised strategies evolve

Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Purpose – The paper's aim is twofold: to display how the application of social network analysis techniques to observational data provides researchers with a unique set of data to make sense of the dynamics of organizational settings; to contribute to knowledge on group design, self-managing teams, and processes of technology diffusion.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper focuses on the findings of qualitative research, recently published, that were conducted in a major Italian clothing company producing garments for the top-end market. Observation, ethnographic interviews and analysis of documents for data collection were employed. Coding procedures and social network analysis techniques were used to analyse data.

Findings – The long presence in the field allowed for the building of two grounded theories. One deals with the process of Computer Aided Design technology diffusion into a small group and it connects a number of variables usually studied separately in the literature. The second accounts for the enactment of spontaneous self-managing practices in a group formally designed as a manager-led team.

Research limitation/implications – The grounded theories are formulated for specific social settings and future research could benefit from replications in different contexts to capture other phenomena leading to different categories to be integrated into the theories or to corroborate them.

Originality/value – The paper derived enacted network data from the direct and prolonged observation of actors as opposed to self-reported network data. This allowed clarification of the actual content and the quality of the interactions among actors, and to move beyond their quantification, thus enhancing the comprehension of the impact of network relationships upon organizational behaviour.
Grounded theory and management research: a lack of integrity?

Robert Jones, Gary Noble

Purpose – This paper aims to present an innovative methodological framework developed out of primary research that will lead to new understanding about patterns in the strategic actions realised by firms within an industry. The framework is to be applied to increase understanding of how realised strategies evolved in the pharmaceutical industry and overcomes some of the limitations of other methods.

Design/methodology/approach – A qualitative approach was developed adapting techniques from text, thematic and content analysis to identify and categorise strategic actions realised by pharmaceutical firms (referred to as grand strategies). Strategic actions were not pre-selected but allowed to emerge during the data collection process from public announcements by firms in the industry's main journal, Scrip. Building upon the work of Pearce and Robinson grand strategies can be understood as the packages of strategic actions that firms had planned and/or realised in order to achieve long-term objectives.

Findings – A framework of realised strategic actions and grand strategies in the pharmaceutical industry was developed with 23 mutually exclusive categories. The paper shows how the framework can be used as an analytical tool to explore patterns in strategic action and grand strategy evolution, temporal patterns in strategy development and strategic action co-evolution.

Research limitations/implications – A limitation of the categorisation is that it is based on material collected from two years of empirical data from Scrip in order to develop the methodological framework. The framework was applied to data collected over an 11 year period in order to explore how the strategic actions of individual firms had evolved and co-evolved. Data sources were limited to published sources.

Originality/value – The qualitative approach presented here offers a level of depth that has not been achieved by methodological approaches previously used to explore and compare patterns in realised strategic actions by firms operating in the pharmaceutical industry. The innovative approach contributes to management research in two key ways: providing a methodological framework that overcomes the limitations of previous studies into strategy evolution; and providing a systematic approach to data collection and analysis that can contribute to theory building with regard to strategy evolution.

Liminal ethnography: understanding segregated organisations

A. Langley, N. Kakabadse, S. Swailes

The paper traces the methodological development of grounded theory with particular emphasis on the variations, contradictions and modifications to the methodology both between and within the Glaserian and Straussian Schools. Totally 32 empirical grounded theory studies published in the management literature since 2002 are analysed in order to gauge the impact of these variations on the manner in which researchers have employed the grounded theory methodology.

Findings – It is argued that grounded theory in management research is in danger of losing its integrity. The methodology has become so pliant that management researchers appear to have accepted it as a situation of “anything goes” “Grounded theory” is now loosely used as a generic term to refer to any qualitative approach in which an inductive analysis is grounded in data.

Originality/value – It could be argued that grounded theory cannot continue to be regarded as a moving target, or to be practised as a free-for-all methodology in management research, without risking serious danger of becoming irrelevant. Three suggestions are offered for restoring more discipline into grounded theory studies.
Liminal ethnography: understanding segregated organisations

Francesca Bargiela-Chiappini, (School of Arts and Humanities, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK)


Communities, Ethics, Ethnography, Organizations

Purpose – The paper aims to discuss liminal ethnography as a new approach for conducting research in segregated organisations.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper proposes liminality as a conceptual key to understanding both the condition of the organisational ethnographer and that of her interlocutors. Conversatio is the novel hermeneutical method that is discussed in conjunction with liminal ethnography.

Findings – Liminal ethnography as outlined in the paper emerged as an approach from preliminary contact with the organisational reality of the monastery as a type of total institution. Similarly, conversatio suggested itself as a method that maximises limited face to face contact with interlocutors whose access to the external world is restricted by a behavioural code enshrined in a Rule.

Research limitations/implications – Paradoxically, the restrictions imposed on the researcher provided inspiration for the analytical approach proposed by the paper therefore initial limitations such as restricted access eventually spurred conceptual development.

Originality/value – The original approach should be of interest to organisational researchers operating in total institutions or in organisations where severely restricted access renders extant methodologies only partly applicable, if at all. The paper also discusses ethical issues arising from collaboration with rule-governed communities.

Deconstructing a personal “academic”/“practitioner” narrative through self-reflexivity

Steve McKenna, (Atkinson Faculty, School of Administrative Studies, York University, Toronto, Canada)


Entrepreneurs, Experiential learning, Narratives

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to self-reflexively deconstruct a paper published by the author in 1996 about a Singaporean entrepreneur for whom the author worked. Through the deconstruction a number of important methodological and epistemological issues are raised. Firstly, the way in which the value of qualitative research in management and organization studies is judged more by how it conforms to acceptable ways of data collection, analysis and interpretation (strategic apparatus) than on any “truth” value it may have. Secondly, a consideration of how the “I” of the researcher is influential in how research is undertaken and written up. Thirdly, that this “I” of the researcher is also determined by what is acceptable “scientific” discourse and by other prevailing discourses.

Design/methodology/approach – In a paper published in 1996, the author detailed the “dark side” of an entrepreneur for whom he
worked. Using a psychoanalytic framework this paper constructed the entrepreneur as an irrational and unethical incompetent. In the present paper, this earlier work is deconstructed using insights from Derrida’s in order to highlight “strategic exclusions,” and to offer alternative readings. These alternative readings emphasize the influence of various discourses on the construction of the earlier paper, and also introduce a reading of the earlier paper as a psychoanalytic narrative.

**Findings** – The paper highlights the uses to which “objective tools” of analysis can be put in order to manipulate and construct an explanation and interpretation of personal experiences. This raises important epistemological issues concerning the influence of broader discourses on the representation of experiences and how realities and identities are constructed and performed. The paper concludes by suggesting that whom we are as researchers, and what we observe and write, is more complex and influenced by more discourse(s) than we might think. Even if researchers tell impressionistic and confessional tales simultaneously with their realist ones, it is necessary to consider what discourses may lay behind their telling. It has been argued that a limitation of deconstruction is that it may result in endless iterations and readings of text with no discursive closure. This may be a limitation of the deconstruction offered here.

**Originality/value** – The paper raises questions about the nature of the “academic” narrative and the importance of deconstruction in establishing author positioning within narrative. It contributes to the discussion about objectivity in organizational and management research and issues of epistemology and ontology more generally.

### 21A researcher's tale: dealing with epistemological divergence

**Document Information:**

- **Title:** A researcher's tale: dealing with epistemological divergence
- **Author(s):** Janet Bryant, (Swinburne University of Technology, Lilydale, Australia), Barbara Lasky, (Swinburne University of Technology, Lilydale, Australia)
- **Citation:** Janet Bryant, Barbara Lasky, (2007) "A researcher's tale: dealing with epistemological divergence", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 2 Iss: 3, pp.179 - 193
- **Keywords:** Narratives, Qualitative research, Research methods
- **Article type:** Conceptual paper
- **DOI:** 10.1108/17465640710835346 (Permanent URL)
- **Publisher:** Emerald Group Publishing Limited

**Abstract:** Purpose – The paper’s purpose is to explore a theoretical and methodological dilemma.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Commencing doctoral research, and committed to an orthodox grounded theory approach, a unique story was uncovered which, to do it and the research justice, required an alternative form of representation. Intuition decreed that this should be narrative. However, grounded theory and narrative entail epistemologically and ontologically incommensurate paradigms. The paper seeks to consider whether inclusion of the unique story would compromise, or subvert, the already emergent grounded theory. An exploration of the relationship between different epistemological and ontological traditions is also to be made, based on the assumption that method “slurring,” and a more eclectic approach to using incommensurate paradigms, may be valuable.

**Findings** – In transcribing and coding data using strictly orthodox grounded theory methods, the researcher runs the risk of “stripping” the research story of some critical dimension(s). However, combining a narrative approach with that of grounded theory, the paper allows for the representation of an atypical “Maverick” case, along-side other more typical cases.

**Originality/value** – The paper points out, to the early career qualitative researcher in particular, that it is legitimate to combine seemingly incommensurate methodologies, notably where not to do so would result in the loss of enriching and powerful insights into basic social processes.

### 22Reflections on the use of case studies in the accounting, management and organizational disciplines

**Document Information:**

- **Title:** Reflections on the use of case studies in the accounting, management and organizational disciplines
- **Author(s):** Bill Lee, (University of Sheffield Management School, Sheffield, UK), Paul M. Collier, (Monash University, Clayton, Australia), John Cullen, (University of Sheffield Management School, Sheffield, UK)
- **Citation:** Bill Lee, Paul M. Collier, John Cullen, (2007) "Reflections on the use of case studies in the accounting, management and organizational disciplines", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 2 Iss: 3, pp.169 - 178
- **Keywords:** Case studies, Qualitative research
- **Article type:** General review
- **DOI:** 10.1108/17465640710835337 (Permanent URL)
- **Publisher:** Emerald Group Publishing Limited

**Abstract:** Purpose – The paper’s purpose is to explore a theoretical and methodological dilemma.
Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explain the background to the special issue and to provide an introduction to the articles on case studies included in the issue.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper uses a review of developments in both the qualitative tradition and case studies in management research to provide a backdrop for the articles that are included in the issue. The articles discuss: the merits of unique cases and singular forms of evidence within a single case; the comparability of case studies with tools in other areas; and methods of theorising from case studies.

Findings – The merits of case studies have often been understated. The articles in this issue highlight a broader variety of uses of case study research than is commonly recognized.

Originality/value – This guest editorial introduces the papers in this issue, which may be read either as individual contributions that have merits per se, or as part of a collection that this introductory paper helps to knit together.

23Case study research and network theory: birds of a feather

Document Information:
Title: Case study research and network theory: birds of a feather
Author(s): Evert Gummesson, (Stockholm University School of Business, Stockholm, Sweden)
Keywords: Case studies, Complexity theory, Innovation, Quality, Research methods
Article type: Research paper
DOI: 10.1108/17465640710835373 (Permanent URL)
Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to advocate that case study research needs to renew itself and employ its full potential as an innovative theory-generating methodology in management disciplines; and to propose that a viable strategy for such renewal is to exploit the power of case study research and network theory as supplementary methodologies.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper is a reflective and synthesising comparative study.

Findings – If one steps down from the tip of the iceberg and inspects the underwater properties of case study research and network theory a common core is found: the recognition of complexity. The methodologies supplement each other, case study research primarily using verbal language and qualitative data, while network theory uses a nodes-and-links language that opens up for verbal, graphic and mathematical treatment. Case study research is primarily associated with qualitative research in social sciences and network theory with quantitative research in both social and natural sciences. By abolishing the unfortunate categories of qualitative/quantitative and natural sciences/social sciences that have been set against each other, and letting them join forces for a common goal – to learn about life – people open up for methodological creativity.

Originality/value – By comparing case study research with network theory on a fundamental level, the paper offers a novel perspective on research. It is a contribution to an overriding desire to improve the understanding of management and society.

24The “singular view” in management case studies

Document Information:
Title: The “singular view” in management case studies
Author(s): Sue Llewellyn, (The Management Centre, The University of Leicester, Leicester, UK), Deryl Northcott, (The Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand)
Citation: Sue Llewellyn, Deryl Northcott, (2007) "The “singular view” in management case studies", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 2 Iss: 3, pp.194 - 207
Keywords: Case studies, Interviews, Qualitative research, Research methods
Article type: Conceptual paper
DOI: 10.1108/17465640710835355 (Permanent URL)
Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Abstract: Purpose – This paper aims to challenge the conventional wisdom in qualitative case study research that the findings of the case depend on the identification of common themes across the statements of multiple case informants (usually, as expressed at interview).

Design/methodology/approach – This is a methodological paper that uses a published work to illustrate its arguments. It explores research on the meaning and significance of politically and culturally sensitive emergent change.

Findings – The paper finds that, during such change, many respondents may not accurately discern the “direction of travel” in
their organization and, hence, gathering evidence on common views may not be a productive research strategy.

Research limitations/implications – It was only possible to use one illustration (politically and culturally sensitive emergent change); other scenarios where the “singular view” may be significant were, therefore, not covered.

Practical implications – Ultimately, the findings of a case study may have to rely on insights from just one respondent.

Originality/value – This paper argues that for some research agenda “singular views” may be more insightful than “common themes.” It also discusses the development of research that is prompted by a “singular view.”

25Introducing strong structuration theory for informing qualitative case studies in organization, management and accounting research

Document Information:

Title: Introducing strong structuration theory for informing qualitative case studies in organization, management and accounting research

Author(s): Lisa Jack, (Department of Accounting, Finance and Management, University of Essex, Colchester, UK), Ahmed Kholeif, (Department of Accounting, Faculty of Commerce, Alexandria University, Alexandria, Egypt)


Keywords: Accounting, Case studies, Research methods

Article type: Conceptual paper

DOI: 10.1108/17465640710835364 (Permanent URL)

Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Abstract: Purpose – The aim of this paper is to present a reinforced version of structuration theory, known as strong structuration theory, set out in Stones as a disciplined approach to qualitative case study research in the organization, management and accounting fields. This framework challenges the belief held by certain critics that structuration theory cannot be used in substantive empirical research but is only a sensitising device or analytical tool.

Design/methodology/approach – A conceptual discussion is the approach of the paper.

Findings – The key concepts of strong structuration theory are outlined and then put in the context first of two attempts to apply the framework to empirical research and second of two recent papers which address theoretically informed qualitative research and the use of structuration theory in IT studies.

Research limitations/implications – There are some limitations of this paper. The framework offered was not used to set the original research questions in the two case studies employed as these cases were conducted before the publication of Stones’ book in 2005. Also, as weaknesses in the framework can best be assessed using empirical findings, a full evaluation cannot be carried out until such research is undertaken.

Originality/value – This paper draws on recent research and thinking in sociology that have yet to be brought into case studies in the fields of accounting and management in particular.

26Competitive advantage as a legitimacy-creating process

Document Information:

Title: Competitive advantage as a legitimacy-creating process

Author(s): Gina Grandy, (Department of Commerce, Faculty of Social Sciences, Mount Allison University, Sackville, Canada), David Wicks, (Department of Management, Sobey School of Business, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Canada)

Citation: Gina Grandy, David Wicks, (2008) "Competitive advantage as a legitimacy-creating process", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 3 Iss: 1, pp.21 - 41

Keywords: Canada, Competitive advantage, Management strategy, Organizational theory, Small enterprises

Article type: Research paper

DOI: 10.1108/17465640810870373 (Permanent URL)

Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore how small firms in the tattooing industry actively shape institutional expectations of value for consumers in a changing industry.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper draws upon interviews with key actors in the firms under study to explore their
experiences with consumers and other constituents in determining how competitive advantage is constructed in this
environment. These data are complemented data with interviews with governmental representatives and material from secondary sources.

Findings – The results reveal efforts of firms to construct and increase organizational legitimacy through the prominence of discourses of professionalism based on artistry and medicine/public health. These bases of competitive differentiation are not the clear result of exogenous pressure, rather they arise through the active efforts of the firm to construct value guidelines for consumers and other constituents.

Practical implications – Strategic management in small firms is a complex and dynamic process that does not necessarily mirror that of large organizations. Constructing competitive advantage is an interacting process between key actors of small firms and various constituents.

Originality/value – The paper extends the application of institutional theory in strategic management by illuminating the active role that firms play in creating industry norms, especially in industries where norms are not well established or no longer entrenched. Moreover, exploring an alternative site of study offers a means through which to see well-studied issues in new ways.

27The “I”, the “me” and the “you know”: identifying identities in organisations

Document Information:

Title: The “I”, the “me” and the “you know”: identifying identities in organisations
Author(s): Nancy Harding, (University of Bradford, School of Management, Bradford, UK)
Citation: Nancy Harding, (2008) "The “I”, the “me” and the “you know”: identifying identities in organisations", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 3 Iss: 1, pp.42 - 58
Keywords: English language, Individual perception, Individual psychology, Interviews, Qualitative methods, Self actualization
Article type: Research paper
DOI: 10.1108/17465640810870382 (Permanent URL)
Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Acknowledgements: The author is grateful to Jackie Ford, University of Bradford, and Brendan Gough, University of Leeds, with whom he worked on the research project from which the data used in this paper were drawn.

Abstract: Purpose – “Identity” is of major interest in organisation studies, but as identity is concerned very much with subjectivity it is difficult to explore it empirically. The purpose of this paper is to offer a methodology for analysing interview transcripts designed to discover the ongoing processes of becoming of the self, or of identities, embedded in the data. This way of analysing qualitative data allows the development of theories of how others construct their identities through the swift-moving concatenation of selves appearing, disappearing and reappearing in the moment-to-moment construction of the self.

Design/methodology/approach – The methodology involves analysis of personal pronouns and the gaps and interruptions in speech. Personal pronouns, it is shown, illustrate the appearance of different enactments of the self, each appearance/re-appearance signalled by pauses, gaps or other interruptions in the flow of speech. The method is based on the theories of Bollas, a psychoanalytical theorist, and Harré, and Mühlhäusler and Harré who have explored how personal pronouns work.

Findings – The paper demonstrates how subjects explore who they are as an “I” and a “me”, revealing the multiple selves that appear in any transcript, and thus processes of identity formation. Provision of a worked example of the model, of a manager discussing her work, demonstrates how analysis of personal pronouns illuminates aspects of subject formation whose exploration is difficult.

Research limitations/implications – The methodology is recommended for others' use and adaptation. It allows possibilities for expanding the types of research questions that may be posed, as it provides a method for data analysis, personal pronoun use, that attempts to work with the “other minds” problematic. In other words, it allows glimpses of how subjects see themselves.

Originality/value – This paper is of use to qualitative researchers, and if its methodology is taken up can expand knowledge of the constructions of selves in the workplace.

28Boundary work as inner and outer dialogue: dieticians in Sweden

Document Information:

Title: Boundary work as inner and outer dialogue: dieticians in Sweden
Author(s): Ewa Wikström, (Department of Business Administration, School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden)
Citation: Ewa Wikström, (2008) "Boundary work as inner and outer dialogue: dieticians in Sweden", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 3 Iss: 1, pp.59 - 77
Purpose – This purpose of this paper is to examine the ways in which one occupational group used boundary work to increase their influence and power with more influential occupational groups in a medical setting.

Design/methodology/approach – A qualitative interview study is used to investigate an occupational group (hospital dieticians) as it tried to increase its influence in a setting of established occupational groups. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with dieticians and managers at a university hospital, and by the examination of selected hospital documents.

Findings – This study concludes that the dieticians' boundary work to become more influential in a setting of established groups was characterized by their boundary setting actions as inner dialogue and their boundary spanning actions as outer dialogue. In the inner dialogue, the dieticians established a professional group and a vocabulary for the continuous communication of their unique competence that could relate to the existing medical knowledge. In the outer dialogue, the dieticians structured and made sense of their setting by the labelling of roles as power entities and by using self-images and metaphors.

Research limitations/implications – This research was designed to describe the dieticians' efforts and experiences in the studied setting. Therefore, the data provide access to one occupational group but not to the other groups in that setting. A second limitation is the absence of observations.

Practical implications – This research contributes to the knowledge of the relevance of practitioners involved in boundary work aimed at improving professional collaboration. The study is helpful in identifying important boundaries that facilitate the establishment of collaborative relationships, and the development of accounts, procedures and routines.

Originality/value – The research focuses on how influence on practice is constituted through boundary work.
Practical implications – Cultural change programmes must appreciate the importance of enduring values, correctly identifying those which appear most resonant for employees, ensuring that these feature prominently when promoting a “work-life balance” agenda.

Originality/value – It is unusual for case studies to look in detail at processes of change. This paper refines notions of organizational culture change and considers how best to include employees most likely to be resistant to a “work-life balance” agenda.

30 Organizing: how to study it and how to write about it

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to review emerging approaches to field studies of organizing that aim to avoid the problems of traditional methods and techniques.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper is based in pragmatist philosophy and constructionist perspective. Within this frame, the paper starts with a brief history of fieldwork methods in organization study, continues by diagnosing their shortcomings in the light of contemporary developments, and ends by reviewing promising approaches to studying contemporary organizations.

Findings – Young researchers are warned about possible risks and gains from experimenting with new methods.

Originality/value – The potential value of the paper is in its function of a guide for organization scholars looking for innovative approaches to their study object.

31 Walking between decision models: analogising in strategic decision making

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the characteristics of situations where managers analogise, and when they change to a different decision model; examine how the analogies are evoked, what characteristics they have and how they are used, and add to the understanding through taking a qualitative approach.

Design/methodology/approach – This is an illustrative case study of a new market entry attempt by a medium-sized manufacturing firm based on interviews and analytical dialogues with management team members.

Findings – The paper finds that decision makers analogise when cause/effect-relationships are unclear, and change decision models when the analogy has helped to formulate a theory of the nature of the problem or a recipe for handling the situation. They evoke analogies by automatic recognition, using internal and external sources, for transfer within and between domains. The use of analogy occurs in problem setting, problem solving, action and
sensemaking modes.

**Research limitations/implications** – Misunderstandings can occur in dialogue between researchers and decision makers. Future interpretive research should consider participant observation and conceptual modelling. A computational study might incorporate situational differences, roles, and the issues identified in this study.

**Practical implications** – Awareness of the prevalence of analogy in decision making can help practitioners critically evaluate the analogies used and consider multiple perspectives on problematic situations.

**Originality/value** – The paper adds to the literature by taking a qualitative approach to analysing. The findings offer some support to prior research using laboratory and analytical approaches, while suggesting reconsiderations and offering new insights.

---

### 32 Working with stories: diverse tales of organizational life

**Title:** Working with stories: diverse tales of organizational life  
**Author(s):** Paula Hyde, (Manchester Business School, Manchester, UK)  
**Citation:** Paula Hyde, (2008) "Working with stories: diverse tales of organizational life", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 3 Iss: 2, pp.147 - 158  
**Keywords:** Ethnography, Mental health services, Narratives, National Health Service, Storytelling  
**Article type:** Research paper  
**DOI:** 10.1108/17465640810900559 (Permanent URL)  
**Publisher:** Emerald Group Publishing Limited  
**Abstract:**  
Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the use of stories in a mental health environment. It includes an account of learning to read and recognise stories as a particular form of organizational narrative in the National Health Service (NHS).

*Design/methodology/approach* – The study involved a retrospective search for stories contained within ethnographic data collected from a mental health organization. A small number of stories were analysed in an attempt to discover how stories were used in one particular organizational setting.

*Findings* – The stories told by staff ranged from heroic action on behalf of a patient and in spite of the organization, to tragic stories of staff coming to harm. Stories told by patients concerned their experiences of meaningful relationships with the staff. Alongside this small collection of stories, two particular phenomena associated with storytelling are described; the first involves counter-stories, which involved either discrediting accounts of patient as storytellers or offered different stories to suggest competing interpretations. The second involved collapsed story forms exchanged between staff as a means of convergent sense-making.

*Originality/value* – The paper works with stories as a particular narrative form in one particular mental health setting. These stories have the potential to draw attention to aspects of organisational life such as fears about harming patients or coming to harm and possibilities for relationships between patients and staff. Two forms of exchange related to storytelling are detailed and are described as counter- and collapsed stories.

---

### 33 A narrative analysis revealing strategic intent and posture

**Title:** A narrative analysis revealing strategic intent and posture  
**Author(s):** Nancy E. Landrum, (Management Department, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Little Rock, Arkansas, USA)  
**Citation:** Nancy E. Landrum, (2008) "A narrative analysis revealing strategic intent and posture", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 3 Iss: 2, pp.127 - 145  
**Keywords:** Annual reports, Corporate communications, Corporate strategy, Epistemology, Literary forms, Narratives  
**Article type:** Research paper  
**DOI:** 10.1108/17465640810900540 (Permanent URL)  
**Publisher:** Emerald Group Publishing Limited  
**Abstract:**  
Purpose – This paper examines the letters to shareholders of Nike, Inc. and Reebok over the period 1990-1999. Using narrative analysis, the purpose of this paper is to show how strategic intent of these two companies is revealed through their letters to shareholders.

*Design/methodology/approach* – A qualitative narrative analysis incorporating literary genres and strategic narratives and applying
them to strategic schools of thought.

Findings – Nike uses many narrative styles, suggesting they view events in a variety of ways in their sensemaking. Reebok, on the other hand, used a limited number of narrative styles, suggesting a limited view or interpretation of events.

Research limitations/implications – Future research could include additional documents of the companies, both public and private.

Practical implications – This analysis shows that companies can successfully use polyplotted and flexible narrative styles, whereas the old school of strategy suggested a single, unswerving course.

Originality/value – The contribution of this paper is the use of organizational narrative as epistemology within the study of strategic management.

34Of methods and methodology

Document Information:

Title: Of methods and methodology
Author(s): Alan Bryman, (School of Management, University of Leicester, Leicester, UK)
Citation: Alan Bryman, (2008) "Of methods and methodology", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 3 Iss: 2, pp.159 - 168
Keywords: Qualitative research, Research methods
Article type: Research paper
DOI: 10.1108/17465640810900568 (Permanent URL)
Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Acknowledgements: The author would like to thank Catherine Cassell and Gillian Symon for inviting him to give a paper for the symposium “Current debates in qualitative research in the organization and management field,” EURAM, Ljubljana, May 2008. The present article is based on that paper. The author also wishes to thank them for their helpful and encouraging comments on the paper which helped in preparing it for publication. The author also wishes to thank the Economic and Social Research Council for funding the research project “Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: prospects and limits” (Award Number H333250003) which made possible the research on which parts of this paper are based.

Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore what the term “methodology" might be taken to mean. It uses an aphorism by Howard Becker as a springboard for examining the nature of methodology, arguing that Becker's view of methodology was misleading.

Design/methodology/approach – There are two components. First, “insider” account of research findings concerning the nature of mixed methods research is presented. These findings derive from a content analysis of articles based on mixed methods research and from interviews with mixed methods researchers. Second, the paper examines the paradox that qualitative research is often viewed as generating interesting findings but that qualitative researchers frequently feel that they experience difficulty in placing qualitative articles in mainstream journals.

Findings – The findings from the mixed methods study demonstrate that mixed methods research is often rationalized in a different way from how it is actually employed.

Research limitations/implications – The second part of the paper should be extended so that a more comprehensive analysis of publication patterns can be carried out.

Originality/value – There are relatively few examinations of what we mean by “methodology.” The paper tries to move these considerations forward by arguing that methodology is about the examination of “methodic practice.”

35Transforming research case studies into teaching cases

Document Information:

Title: Transforming research case studies into teaching cases
Author(s): Pavel Štrach, (Institute of Management and Marketing, Škoda Auto University, Mladá Boleslav, Czech Republic), André M. Everett, (Department of Management, School of Business, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand)
Citation: Pavel Štrach, André M. Everett, (2008) "Transforming research case studies into teaching cases", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 3 Iss: 3, pp.199 - 214
Keywords: Case studies, Data collection, Research methods, Research results, Teaching methods
Article type: Viewpoint
DOI: 10.1108/17465640810920287 (Permanent URL)
Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Acknowledgements: The authors would like to thank and acknowledge stimulating feedback from two anonymous reviewers and financial support of Internal Grant Agency of Škoda Auto University, project “Brand Management” in developing ideas presented in this paper.

Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to encourage consideration of the multiple factors affecting dual use of case studies for both research and teaching, and conversion between the two types; to encourage development of a case transformation protocol to add rigor to this process.

Design/methodology/approach – Literature review with discussion.

Findings – Noting that insularity diminishes the potential contribution of the research underlying either teaching or research cases, this paper advocates establishment of more formalized conversion approaches.

Practical implications – Dual use of case studies can provide economies of scale for academics, conserving time, effort, and funding, but involving greater care and advance consideration of the implications of differences between teaching and research cases.

Originality/value – By highlighting key issues and proposing solutions, this paper advances understanding of the potential for transformation of cases and the importance of advance consideration of their purpose(s).

36Managing spoiled identities: dirty workers’ struggles for a favourable sense of self

Document Information:

Title: Managing spoiled identities: dirty workers’ struggles for a favourable sense of self
Author(s): Gina Grandy, (Department of Commerce, Faculty of Social Sciences, Mount Allison University, Sackville, Canada)
Keywords: Entertainment industry, Self esteem, United Kingdom, Work identity
Article type: Research paper
DOI: 10.1108/17465640810920278 (Permanent URL)
Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore how a group of dirty workers, that is, exotic dancers employed in a gentlemen's club, engage in identity construction amidst various macro, meso and micro considerations.

Design/methodology/approach – This study adopts a social constructivist approach in exploring the stories of a group of 21 dancers employed at a chain of exotic dancing clubs in the UK, For Your Eyes Only.

Findings – Identity construction is a complex process whereby dancers struggle to secure a positive sense of self among the various resources they encounter. The findings focus upon the processes of distancing through projecting disgust upon clients, other dancers and other clubs. Dancers do this to minimize the stigma associated with their own identities and position themselves in a more favourable light to others. In doing this, dancers construct a variety of identity roles for themselves and “others.” This process of distancing also results in the construction of a hierarchy of stigmatization whereby dancers categorize motivations for dancing, type of dancing and type of clubs to rationalize the work they perform and manage their spoiled identities.

Practical implications – The stories of these dancers illustrate the messy nature of identity construction for dirty workers. In turn, it also illuminates how a better understanding of the complexity of identity construction for exotic dancers can offer insights transferable to other dirty work occupations and organizations in general.

Originality/value – The paper provides an indepth look at an occupational site that is relatively unexplored in organization studies and thus makes a unique empirical contribution. It also offers a more comprehensive theoretical lens for understanding identity construction and dirty workers.

37Lost in translation? Language, culture and the roles of translator in cross-cultural management research

Document Information:

Title: Lost in translation? Language, culture and the roles of translator in cross-cultural management research
Author(s): Huiping Xian, (Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour Division, Graduate Business School, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK)
Citation: Huiping Xian, (2008) "Lost in translation? Language, culture and the roles of translator in cross-cultural management research", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 3 Iss: 3, pp.231 - 245
Keywords: Cross-cultural management, Cross-cultural studies, Interpreters, Languages, Management research
Article type: Conceptual paper
Acknowledgements: The author thanks Professors Catherine Cassell and Eileen Fairhurst for their encouragement and feedback in the development of this paper.

Abstract: Purpose – To promote more open discussion on translating data, this paper aims to provide a critical and reflexive evaluation of the problems and issues that the author experienced with regard to qualitative data translation.

Design/methodology/approach – Drawing on personal experiences of translating Chinese women's narratives into English, the author demonstrates that qualitative data translation may have linguistic, cultural and methodological problems.

Findings – Researchers and translators should recognize the linguistic and cultural differences that data translation must negotiate. It is argued here that researchers and translators should preserve and highlight cultural differences rather than resembling the dominant values of the target culture by translation. A translator is an integral part of the knowledge producing system. The roles of the translator as both an inter-cultural communicator and a data interpreter must be acknowledged in the research process.

Originality/value – This paper challenges common assumptions that data translation is merely a technical problem, and that a translator could “objectively and faithfully” transfer meanings of research data from source language to target language.

38 Constructing participation practice: an ANT account

Document Information:

Title: Constructing participation practice: an ANT account
Author(s): Suzanne Perillo, (Department of Education, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia Workplace Psychology, Schiavello, Melbourne, Australia)
Keywords: Australia, Change management, Employee participation, Organizational change, Schools
Article type: Research paper
DOI: 10.1108/17465640810920296 (Permanent URL)
Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore how participation can be investigated as an open and non-exclusive sociomaterial practice.

Design/methodology/approach – Framed by translation discourse and a view of the social world as a sociology of associations, participation in organisations is conceptualised as a network building practice. Actor-network theory (ANT) is used as an analytical method to describe the character of everyday constructions of participation practice related to changes in curriculum and its delivery in an Australian independent school.

Findings – It was found that participation was performed as an uncertain practice. People in relation with technology and other material entities, co-constructed and re-constructed multiple participation practices.

Practical implications – For researchers, an ANT account of constructing participation practices provides an additional analytical tool for investigating participation in terms of relationality. The idea of constructing participation as networked practice provides practitioners with a reflective tool for detecting and enabling multiple (and sometimes inconsistent) participation practices.

Originality/value – Compared to participation research approaches that predetermine and predict variables of relevance, this paper is concerned with the everyday management of participation as an uncertain sociomaterial practice. In pursuing a critical line of inquiry, managerialist informed notions of planning, organising and coordinating are not debunked form relevance. Rather, it is proposed that translation and managerial discourses are co-implicated in complex investigations of participation practice.

39 Strong emotions at work

Document Information:

Title: Strong emotions at work
Author(s): Gail Whiteman, (Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands), Thaddeus Müller, (de Warme Stad, Rotterdam, The Netherlands), John M. Johnson, (School of Justice and Social Inquiry, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, USA)
Citation: Gail Whiteman, Thaddeus Müller, John M. Johnson, (2009) "Strong emotions at work", Qualitative Research in Organizations
40 The indirect approach of semi-focused groups: Expanding focus group research through role-playing

**Abstract**

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to present an alternative way of using focus groups in research – a role-play-enhanced focus group method – in which participants are presented with the challenge of dealing with a specific task while playing a familiar but nevertheless fictive role.

Design/methodology/approach – The research is performed through an experimental approach in which a focus group of small business owner-managers are assembled and presented with a prepared case exercise. The design is a role-play-like setting in which the participants are to act as the board of a company.

Findings – Carefully designed, well-prepared role-play-like activities can add substantially to focus-groups.

Originality/value – Adding an experimental dimension to focus groups offers the possibility of addressing topics indirectly and thus increases their usefulness.

41 Ethical confessions of the “I” of autoethnography: the student's dilemma

**Abstract**

Purpose – This paper aims to draw attention to a unique paradox concerning doing an autoethnography as a PhD. On the one hand, a student may feel a pull towards revealing a vulnerable, intimate, autoethnographic self, yet on the
other hand she may be pushed away from this because the oral/viva voce examination process may deny the student anonymity. Through the telling of this tale the complexities concerning self-disclosure and student autoethnography reveal are explored.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The tale is autoethnographic: a fictionalised account based on real events and constructed from substantial field notes, personal diaries, e-mails, and reports.

**Findings** – This paper contributes to relational ethics concerned with self-disclosure and the “I” of a reveal, and highlight the possibilities for developing Medford’s notion of mindful slippage as a strategy for removing highly personal and possibly harmful elements within student autoethnography.

**Research limitations/implications** – The paper provides a preliminary theoretical framework that has not been empirically tested and is situated within “introspective” autoethnographic research.

**Originality/value** – The paper takes an innovative approach to autoethnography, addressing ethical value systems specifically within a PhD context.

---

42 Career stories of women professional accountants: Examining the personal narratives of career using Simone de Beauvoir’s feminist existentialist philosophy as a theoretical framework

---

Document Information:

**Title:** Career stories of women professional accountants: Examining the personal narratives of career using Simone de Beauvoir’s feminist existentialist philosophy as a theoretical framework

**Author(s):** Peggy Wallace, (Trent University, Peterborough, Canada)

**Citation:** Peggy Wallace, (2009) "Career stories of women professional accountants: Examining the personal narratives of career using Simone de Beauvoir’s feminist existentialist philosophy as a theoretical framework", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 4 Iss: 1, pp.62 - 84

**Keywords:** Accountants, Feminism, Human resource strategies, Philosophy, Women

**Article type:** Research paper

**DOI:** 10.1108/17465640910951453 (Permanent URL)

**Publisher:** Emerald Group Publishing Limited

**Abstract:** Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to describe the use of Simone de Beauvoir’s feminist existentialist philosophy in an empirical research study concerned with the career choices of women professional accountants.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A theoretical framework, based on de Beauvoir’s philosophy, is developed. It is argued that her feminist philosophy provides an appropriate theoretical lens for the study of careers. The challenges encountered in developing this approach together with their resolution are described.

**Findings** – The theoretical framework informs the analysis and critique of the stories of career told by 13 women chartered accountants. Multiple meanings for the oft-reported categories for leaving public accounting surface, extending the women-in-accounting literature.

**Research limitations/implications** – The use of a structured tool may obscure certain aspects of career or unduly highlight other aspects. The framework should be used in future studies of the careers of women professionals, e.g. lawyers and minority groups, such as men of colour to assess its contribution beyond the current study.

**Practical implications** – The generated insights can be used by the accounting firms to develop alternative human resources policies and practices in an effort to retain women accountants and by the profession in assessing the nature of the work.

**Originality/value** – The development of a research methodology incorporating individual voices, the role of personal agency in career and feminist existentialism, all of which are often absent from the research concerned with women accountants provides a more in-depth understanding of careers and a way forward for further research on the subject.

---

43 Reflexivity in the co-production of academic-practitioner research

---

Document Information:

**Title:** Reflexivity in the co-production of academic-practitioner research

**Author(s):** Kevin Orr, (The Centre for Management and Organisational Learning, Hull University Business School, Hull, UK), Mike Bennett, (The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE), London, UK)

**Citation:** Kevin Orr, Mike Bennett, (2009) "Reflexivity in the co-production of academic-practitioner research", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 4 Iss: 1, pp.85 - 102

**Keywords:** Organizational politics, Research work, Storytelling, United Kingdom

**Article type:** General review
Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to offer a reflexive account of the co-production of a qualitative research project with the aim of illuminating the relationships between research participants.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper draws upon personal experience of designing and conducting a research project into management learning, run jointly between an academic and a senior practitioner. The methodological issues involved and the reflexive dynamics of how the work of research collaboration is accomplished are considered.

Findings – Engaging with radical reflexivity helps to produce insights about the co-production process.

Originality/value – This paper contributes to the field of reflexivity and is innovative in its context of academic-practitioner research.

44Using triangulation to validate themes in qualitative studies

Title: Using triangulation to validate themes in qualitative studies
Author(s): Karsten Jonsen, (Department of Research and Development, International Institute for Management Development, Lausanne, Switzerland), Karen A. Jehn, (Social and Organizational Psychology, Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands)
Citation: Karsten Jonsen, Karen A. Jehn, (2009) "Using triangulation to validate themes in qualitative studies", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 4 Iss: 2, pp.123 - 150
Keywords: Management research, Qualitative research
Article type: Case study
DOI: 10.1108/17465640910978391 (Permanent URL)
Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Acknowledgements: The authors are deeply grateful to the following scholars for providing valuable insights, guidance, inspiration, or constructive critiques of previous versions of this paper: Susan C. Schneider, Martha L. Maznevski, Lindred Greer, Mary Yoko Brannen, Willem Smit, Karin Oppegaard, Jeanny Wildi, Sonja Rispens, Anand Narasimhan, John Weeks, Sebastien Point, Karen O'Reilly, Veronique Mottier, and two anonymous reviewers.

Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to provide instructional guidance on how to increase validity and reduce subjectivity in qualitative studies, such as grounded theory. The paper also demonstrates how different techniques can help management research by including informants/managers in a time efficient way.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper describes how three complementary triangulation methods can be used for validation and exploration of concepts and themes in qualitative studies. Tree graphs, concept mapping, and member checking are applied in a managerial case study, complementing a conventional grounded theory approach.

Findings – The paper suggests that naturalistic inquiries, such as grounded theory and thematic analysis, can use mixed methods and multiple sources and coders in order to offset biases and to validate and sort findings. The case study presents three different perspectives on how an organization comprehends diversity as a strategic issue.

Originality/value – The paper suggests a mixed methods design that addresses some of the potential shortcomings often found in grounded theory and other qualitative studies, their theory development and their documentation of processes. It positions the approach over the range of the triangulation literature and it argues that it is important to be aware of different triangulation mindsets, and these they are not necessarily contradictory.

45Safeguarding subjects?: A reflexive appraisal of researcher accountability in qualitative interviews

Title: Safeguarding subjects?: A reflexive appraisal of researcher accountability in qualitative interviews
Author(s): Caroline Garrell, (Department of Management Learning and Leadership, Lancaster University Management School, Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK)
Citation: Caroline Garrell, (2009) "Safeguarding subjects?: A reflexive appraisal of researcher accountability in qualitative interviews", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 4 Iss: 2, pp.110 - 122
Keywords: Interviews, Marriage, Qualitative methods, Qualitative research, Role conflict
Article type: Research paper
DOI: 10.1108/17465640910978382 (Permanent URL)
Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the long-term effects of qualitative interviews on respondents. The paper offers a reflexive account of the author's research practices with regard to “safeguarding” research participants and researcher...
accountability.

Design/methodology/approach – In 1999-2002, 20 women and 18 men who are in dual earner marriages/partnerships were interviewed separately. The study was entitled “Hard Labour 1”. In this paper, it is explained how, in 2007, 17 “Hard Labour 1” participants were contacted for a follow-up study entitled “Hard Labour Revisited”. They were asked, via telephone and e-mail, whether (and if so, how) they perceived themselves to have been affected by their interview for “Hard Labour 1”.

Findings – Some respondents are interviewed at a time of personal anxiety. This group perceived their interview as having been influential because it made them reflect deeply on their situation, bringing their thoughts to bear when they conducted subsequent negotiations with partners. However, participants do not see this as a reason to avoid qualitative research. They describe themselves as agentic beings who felt ownership of their involvement in “Hard Labour 1”. Their approach makes them reflect upon the author’s interpretation of “safeguarding” which is now regarded as a concept which may be co-constructed between researcher and participants.

Originality/value – The paper explores “safeguarding” in relation to the long-term effects of qualitative research interviews. It is suggested that undertaking a reflexive reappraisal of research practices is important because analyses of past projects may (as in the author’s case) result in a “shift” in understanding of research concepts from both an empirical and a theoretical perspective.

46 From re-presentation to re-creation: Contributing to a radicalisation of linguistically turned interviewing in management studies

Document Information:
Title: From re-presentation to re-creation: Contributing to a radicalisation of linguistically turned interviewing in management studies
Author(s): Peter Svensson, (Department of Business Administration, Lund University, Lund, Sweden)
Citation: Peter Svensson, (2009) "From re-presentation to re-creation: Contributing to a radicalisation of linguistically turned interviewing in management studies", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 4 Iss: 2, pp.168 - 185
Keywords: Interviews, Linguistics, Qualitative methods, Research
Article type: Conceptual paper
DOI: 10.1108/17465640910978418 (Permanent URL)
Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the possibilities of letting ideas from ethnomethodology inform a radicalisation (i.e. going to the roots) of interviewing in management and organization studies.

Design/methodology/approach – The argument draws upon insights from discourse and conversation analysis, in particular the acknowledgement of the productive function of language use in social life.

Findings – A radicalised approach to interviews is one that tries to abstain from letting the interview talk represent an organizational reality “out there.” The aim of radicalised interviewing is rather that of trying to identify situations and practices within the organization that resemble the interview situation.

Research limitations/implications – Interview research within management and organization studies needs to take into consideration that the relation between interview accounts and organizational reality is one of the re-creation rather than re-presentation. This insight has implications for both the interview practice and the analysis of interview material. The challenge for the interviewer is to contribute to an interview situation that enables the re-creation of organizational reality.

Practical implications – The practice of interviewing in business practice offers the same kind of problems as the research interview, and thus needs to take into consideration the re-creational nature of the interview situation.

Originality/value – The paper attempts to complete the linguistic turn and explore the radical consequences for the practice of interviewing. Doing so, the paper contributes to the self-reflexive methodological debate in a way that tries to avoid pragmatic and inconsistent argumentation.

47 Methodological emotional reflexivity: The role of researcher emotions in grounded theory research

Document Information:
Title: Methodological emotional reflexivity: The role of researcher emotions in grounded theory research
Author(s): Keith Munkejord, (Department of Psychology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway)
Citation: Keith Munkejord, (2009) "Methodological emotional reflexivity: The role of researcher emotions in grounded theory research", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 4 Iss: 2, pp.151 - 167
Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Research work
Article type: Research paper
Organizational ethnography and methodological angst: myths and challenges in the field

**Title:** Organizational ethnography and methodological angst: myths and challenges in the field

**Author(s):** Dvora Yanow, (Department of Culture, Organization, and Management, Faculty of Social Sciences, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

**Citation:** Dvora Yanow, (2009) "Organizational ethnography and methodological angst: myths and challenges in the field", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 4 Iss: 2, pp.186 - 199

**Keywords:** Ethnography, Organizations, Social anthropology

**Article type:** Viewpoint

**DOI:** 10.1108/17465640910978427 (Permanent URL)

**Publisher:** Emerald Group Publishing Limited

**Acknowledgements:** This is a revised version of a keynote address presented to the 3rd Annual Joint University of Liverpool Management School and Keele University Institute for Public Policy and Management Symposium on “Current Developments in Ethnographic Research in the Social and Management Sciences” (Liverpool, September 3-5, 2008). The author is grateful to the participants for their lively discussion and comments.

**Abstract:** Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to assess the myths and challenges in the field of organizational ethnography and methodological angst.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This paper is initially written as an invited keynote address for the 3rd Annual Joint Symposium on “Current Developments in Ethnographic Research in the Social and Management Sciences” (University of Liverpool Management School and Keele University Institute for Public Policy and Management, Liverpool, September 3-5, 2008). It explores what might be distinctive about organizational ethnography and how that might be different from “anthropological” ethnography. In particular, it engages a kind of collective methodological performance anxiety among organizational studies scholars without formal training in anthropology who do ethnographic research.

**Findings** – The paper argues that it is time to be explicit about a variety of forms of professional angst that many ethnographic researchers within organizational studies carry which have not been discussed.

**Originality/value** – The paper is of value to those willing to consider the myths and challenges that need engaging and perhaps uprooting and casting off.

Looking to the past to understand the present: organizational change in varsity sport

**Title:** Looking to the past to understand the present: organizational change in varsity sport

**Author(s):** Daniel Parker, (Halina Trading, Halifax, Canada), Gina Grandy, (Commerce Department, Mount Allison University, Sackville, Canada)

**Citation:** Daniel Parker, Gina Grandy, (2009) "Looking to the past to understand the present: organizational change in varsity sport", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 4 Iss: 3, pp.231 - 254

**Keywords:** History, Leadership, Organizational change, Sports

**Article type:** Research paper

**DOI:** 10.1108/17465640911002527 (Permanent URL)
Purpose – This paper aims to explore how varsity football athletes and coaches negotiate meanings when faced with the unmet expectations of a new head coach brought into lead a turnaround process. It also aims to pay particular attention to the role of history in this meaning making process.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper draws on semi-structured interviews with players and coaches at two points in time. To preserve the richness of their experiences and illuminate the historical aspects of change, it focuses on the stories of three players and one supporting coach.

Findings – Numerous symbols of change emerge that have multiple and contradictory meanings. The meanings around success and failure are renegotiated over time as individuals struggle with the unmet expectations of change. Moreover, individuals are unable to shed the failures of the past and move forward.

Practical implications – Change is a complex and messy process of managing multiple meanings. Understanding change entails more than a snapshot picture of an organization. New leaders have no control over the past, yet they need to be aware of how individuals experienced the past in order to increase the likelihood of success in the present.

Originality/value – Success and failure are experienced as an ongoing process as athletes and coaches experience, reflect on and interact with others. In illuminating the role of history in how change is experienced in the present, the paper demonstrates that the past can serve as both an immobilizing force, as well as a comparative point enabling individuals to rationalize their emotions.

Managers’ motivation to evaluate subordinate performance

Title: Managers’ motivation to evaluate subordinate performance

Author(s): Sylvie St-Onge, (Department of Management, HEC Montréal, Montreal, Canada), Denis Morin, (Department of Management and Human Resources, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Montreal, Canada), Mario Bellehumeur, (HEC Montréal, Montreal, Canada), Francine Dupuis, (HEC Montréal, Montreal, Canada)

Citation: Sylvie St-Onge, Denis Morin, Mario Bellehumeur, Francine Dupuis, (2009) "Managers' motivation to evaluate subordinate performance", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 4 Iss: 3, pp.273 - 293

Keywords: Managers, Motivation (psychology), Performance appraisal, Performance management

Article type: Research paper

DOI: 10.1108/17465640911002545 (Permanent URL)

Discourses of change: policing, sexuality, and organizational culture

Title: Discourses of change: policing, sexuality, and organizational culture

Author(s): Andrea P. Lewis, (Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois, USA)


Keywords: Homosexuals, Organizational culture, Police, Sexuality, United States of America

Article type: Case study

DOI: 10.1108/17465640911002518 (Permanent URL)
Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to highlight the need to expand current organizational studies to include positive experiences of non-heterosexual workers while identifying, often covert, heteronormative workplace practices. Included in this is a reflexive analysis of author positionality.

Design/methodology/approach – A qualitative study utilizing participant observation, narrative interviews, and autoethnography are employed to begin understanding lesbian work experiences.

Findings – Three dominant strategies are used by participants to understand variant sexuality: strategies of discourse, strategies of resistance, and strategies of identity formation. Findings indicate that as awareness about lesbian identities increased so did understandings of difference and, in turn, resistance to heteronormative power structures increased.

Research limitations/implications – Future research could include other sexually stigmatized groups.

Originality/value – The contributions of this paper include broader understandings of how sexuality organizes work, how researcher positionality impacts organizational climates and research processes, and practical suggestions for organizations expanding diversity efforts and researchers aiming to increase diversity awareness.

52Bullying, disability and work: a case study of workplace bullying

Title: Bullying, disability and work: a case study of workplace bullying

Author(s): Margaret H. Vickers, (School of Management, College of Business, University of Western Sydney, Penrith South DC, Australia)


Keywords: Bullying, Disabled workers, Employment, Workplace

Article type: Case study

DOI: 10.1108/17465640911002536 (Permanent URL)

Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to present a case study of a woman diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) who was bullied out of her workplace.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper commences with a narrative about our protagonist, Miranda (a pseudonym), before offering some important contextual theoretical information, including: a discussion of employment concerns for people with disability generally, and for those with MS in particular, and of workplace bullying. Miranda's experiences are then shared as an intrinsic and particularistic case study of her experiences of being bullied following her disclosure of MS at her workplace.

Findings – Recommendations are made for further research into the potential problems of the workplace experiences of people with disability as a result of learning from the particularities of Miranda's individual case, as well as how this case study has illuminated a potentially much wider and previously unexamined problem of workplace bullying of people with disability.

Originality/value – The author is unable to find any other research studies that examine the phenomenon of workplace bullying of people with disability in general, or people with MS in particular.

53The diary project: revealing the gendered organisation

Title: The diary project: revealing the gendered organisation

Author(s): Penelope J. Plowman, (International Development UEA, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK)

Citation: Penelope J. Plowman, (2010) "The diary project: revealing the gendered organisation", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 5 Iss: 1, pp.28 - 46

Keywords: Gender, Narratives, Organizational change, Organizational culture, Qualitative methods

Article type: Research paper

DOI: 10.1108/17465641011042017 (Permanent URL)

Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to show how an application of the qualitative diary method reveals the gendered organisation.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper draws on the author's experience of her own design and implementation of the diary method, using qualitative diaries, dialogues and interviews. The application is known as the “diary project” and is carried out in a case-study organisation in which the researcher is addressing wider questions about gender, change and organisation.
Findings – The outcomes show how the diary project methodology is effective for learning about gender norms and practices embedded in organisational culture. Reflections on the interface between the personal and the professional, the formal and the informal, emotion, sexuality and power, hierarchies and difference, draw out significant organisational phenomena which shape advantage and disadvantage and unequal access and control.

Research limitations/implications – The diary project methodology is about the organisation in the present. To study gender embedded in the organisation requires the organisational researcher to also work with other research methods, to achieve a deep understanding.

Practical implications – The experience of the diary project is that it offers organisational researchers and change practitioners a methodology for study and intervention.

Originality/value – The paper is of use to readers looking for a participatory organisational research methodology to examine the gendered organisation. Findings highlight the value of the diary project methodology for a deep analysis of organisation.

54Managerial narratives: a critical dialogical approach to managerial identity

Document Information:
Title: Managerial narratives: a critical dialogical approach to managerial identity
Author(s): Steve McKenna, (School of Administrative Studies, Atkinson Faculty, York University, Toronto, Canada)
Citation: Steve McKenna, (2010) "Managerial narratives: a critical dialogical approach to managerial identity", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 5 Iss: 1, pp.5 - 27
Keywords: Managers, Narratives, Work identity
Article type: Research paper
DOI: 10.1108/17465641011042008 (Permanent URL)
Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited
Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the use of a dialogical approach, associated with the Russian literary critic and philosopher Bakhtin, in understanding the portrayal of managerial identity in management narratives. In particular, it applies these ideas critically to understand how managers' identities are partly shaped by the dominant discourse or idea about what a manager should “be.”

Design/methodology/approach – The paper draws on three written narratives of managers. It applies a dialogical approach to consider how they position themselves interactionally in the narratives in such a way as to highlight a managerial identity based on being “enterprising” and “for change,” while simultaneously voicing alternative identities negatively. The use of the written narratives of managers and the application of a dialogical approach is an important contribution to the literature.

Findings – The findings suggest that managers, when reflecting on organizational events through narrative, assume a managerial identity that reflects current dominant discourse about what a manager should “be.” In doing so they reject other possible discourses that offer alternatives, not only to managerial “being,” but also to what management and organizations might reflect and represent. The paper also, however, recognizes that some managers reject this identity and its implications for organizational activity.

Research limitations/implications – The paper suggests that managerial identity is partly a product of a dominant discursive/ideological formation rather than individual choice. Although managers may reject this interpellation creating an alternative is constrained by the regime of truth that prevails about what management is at any given time. The approach might be considered overly deterministic in its view of managerial identity.

Originality/value – The paper extends the understanding of managerial identity and how it is portrayed through narrative by using a dialogical approach to interpretation.

55Exploring inner landscapes through psychophenomenology: The contribution of neuro-linguistic programming to innovations in researching first person experience

Document Information:
Title: Exploring inner landscapes through psychophenomenology: The contribution of neuro-linguistic programming to innovations in researching first person experience
Author(s): Paul Tosey, (School of Management, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK), Jane Mathison, (School of Management, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK)
Citation: Paul Tosey, Jane Mathison, (2010) "Exploring inner landscapes through psychophenomenology: The contribution of neuro-linguistic programming to innovations in researching first person experience", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 5 Iss: 1, pp.63 - 82
Keywords: Interviews, Neurolinguistic programming, Phenomenology, Qualitative research
Article type: Research paper
Abstract: 

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore a contemporary European development in research into first person accounts of experience, called psychophenomenology, that offers enhancements to phenomenological interviewing. It is a form of guided introspection that seeks to develop finely grained first-person accounts by using distinctions in language, internal sensory representations and imagery that have been incorporated from neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). It is also a participative, relational and developmental form of interviewing, in the sense that the interviewee can gain significant insight into their experience; the process is not concerned purely with data gathering.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors review the theoretical assumptions on which psychophenomenology is based, then describe the principal method used in psychophenomenology, the “explicitation interview”. The interview protocol is illustrated with transcript data, through which they identify specific aspects of NLP that have been incorporated into psychophenomenology.

Findings – Psychophenomenology offers refinements to the precision of phenomenological methods found in organizational research, such as interpretative phenomenological analysis.

Research limitations/implications – The epistemological claims and implications of psychophenomenology are reviewed.

Practical implications – These developments may provide a basis for reconsidering the research value of introspection, which has often been dismissed as non-rigorous.

Originality/value – The paper introduces psychophenomenology to the field of organizational research. It also describes how psychophenomenology has innovated by drawing from NLP, an approach to personal development that is found in organizational practices such as executive coaching, in order to enhance the precision and rigour of both interviews and transcript analysis.

56 Reflexivity: recursion and relationality in organizational research processes

Title: Reflexivity: recursion and relationality in organizational research processes

Author(s): Paul Hibbert, (Department of Management, Strathclyde Business School, Glasgow, UK), Christine Coupland, (Nottingham University Business School, Nottingham, UK), Robert MacIntosh, (Department of Management, The Business School, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK)

Citation: Paul Hibbert, Christine Coupland, Robert MacIntosh, (2010) "Reflexivity: recursion and relationality in organizational research processes", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 5 Iss: 1, pp.47 - 62

Keywords: Cause and effect analysis, Qualitative methods, Research

Article type: Research paper

DOI: 10.1108/17465641011042026 (Permanent URL)

Abstract: 

Purpose – The paper seeks to support a better understanding of the types (or processes) of reflexivity which may be involved in the practice of organizational research, and the implications of reflexive practice for organizational researchers.

Design/methodology/approach – A characterization of reflexivity as a process is developed from extant research, in four steps. First, the principal dimensions of reflexivity – reflection and recursion – are identified and delineated. Second, recursion is shown to have two modes, active and passive. Third, reflection is shown to have both closed, self-guided and open, relational modes. Fourth, through integrating the detailed characterizations of each of the dimensions, different types of reflexivity are identified and defined.

Findings – The paper shows how different types of reflexivity may be experienced sequentially, as a progressive process, by organizational researchers. Implications for research practice are derived from a consideration of this process.

Originality/value – The paper develops a novel conceptualization of reflexivity as a process with individual and relational aspects. This conceptualization supports important insights for the conduct and legitimation of reflexive research.

57 The hospital safety coordinator as “practical author”

Title: The hospital safety coordinator as “practical author”

Author(s): Paula Lentz, (Department of Business Communication, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, USA), Kristy Lauver, (Department of Management and Marketing, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, USA), Jennifer Johns-Artisensi, (Health Care Administration, Department of Management and Marketing, College of Business, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, USA)

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate how one hospital safety coordinator socially constructs a complete environment of care. Specifically, it applies Shotter’s “practical author” framework to examine the author-response interaction between the safety coordinator and other mid-level supervisors.

Design/methodology/approach – Qualitative methodology is employed to examine this authorship. Data include printed materials employees receive upon hire, an observation of an environment of care orientation presentation, and semi-structured interviews with the safety coordinator and mid-level supervisors.

Findings – The paper reveals how the safety coordinator uses a variety of rhetorical strategies to balance the tensions between mandating compliance with environment of care requirements and facilitating buy-in to the idea of compliance as a moral and ethical imperative. This creates an ethos among the employees where they feel authorized to go beyond the requirements and act on their own to construct a safer culture.

Research limitations/implications – The paper has multiple practical and theoretical implications that may be useful to health care and other organizations when examining the broader need for a complete, supportive environment where employees not only comply with but actually live and believe in the values of their organizations’ cultures. A limitation is that employee perspective and behavior are primarily inferred based on supervisor reports.

Originality/value – The paper extends theory on communication and developing organizational environments and provides practical application possibilities for organizations.

Advancing a pragmatist epistemology in organisational research

Title: Advancing a pragmatist epistemology in organisational research

Author(s): Diane Ruwhiu, (Department of Management, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand), Malcolm Cone, (Department of Management, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand)

Citation: Diane Ruwhiu, Malcolm Cone, (2010) "Advancing a pragmatist epistemology in organisational research", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 5 Iss: 2, pp.108 - 126

Keywords: Epistemology, Knowledge management, New Zealand, Organizational theory, Pragmatism

Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the utility of a pragmatist epistemology as a viable methodological avenue for addressing the challenges associated with the normative models of science that dominate organisational management. At the same time, theorisation of a paradigm grounded in a pragmatic epistemology is presented.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper seeks to explore the different assumptions guiding a pragmatist epistemology, based on the development of an alternative philosophic framework, such as an indigenous paradigm that draws its logic from a Maori worldview. In doing so, it counters the ideological tension created by the disjunction of applying an epistemological perspective that aligns with what we conceptualise as a mainstream Western view of knowledge creation and maintaining the integrity of taking an indigenous worldview.

Findings – In the paper, we argue that kaupapa Maori research, as an indigenous paradigm draws from a pragmatist epistemology, providing a platform for a culturally attuned response to mainstream organisational research.

Originality/value – The paper is of use to qualitative researchers, in and beyond indigenous contexts, as it grounded in a methodological approach that draws from a pragmatic epistemology offering insightful, more richly contextualised research avenues in organisation and management.

Towards an integrative reflexivity in organisational research

Title: Towards an integrative reflexivity in organisational research

Author(s): Leah Tomkins, (Birkbeck, University of London, London, UK), Virginia Eatough, (Birkbeck, University of London, London, UK)

Citation: Leah Tomkins, Virginia Eatough, (2010) "Towards an integrative reflexivity in organisational research", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 5 Iss: 2, pp.162 - 181

Keywords: Carers, Employee attitudes, Flexible working hours, Organizational theory, Phenomenology

Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the utility of a pragmatist epistemology as a viable methodological avenue for addressing the challenges associated with the normative models of science that dominate organisational management. At the same time, theorisation of a paradigm grounded in a pragmatic epistemology is presented.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper seeks to explore the different assumptions guiding a pragmatist epistemology, based on the development of an alternative philosophic framework, such as an indigenous paradigm that draws its logic from a Maori worldview. In doing so, it counters the ideological tension created by the disjunction of applying an epistemological perspective that aligns with what we conceptualise as a mainstream Western view of knowledge creation and maintaining the integrity of taking an indigenous worldview.

Findings – In the paper, we argue that kaupapa Maori research, as an indigenous paradigm draws from a pragmatist epistemology, providing a platform for a culturally attuned response to mainstream organisational research.

Originality/value – The paper is of use to qualitative researchers, in and beyond indigenous contexts, as it grounded in a methodological approach that draws from a pragmatic epistemology offering insightful, more richly contextualised research avenues in organisation and management.
Making sense of sensemaking: the critical sensemaking approach

Title: Making sense of sensemaking: the critical sensemaking approach

Author(s): Jean Helms Mills, (Department of Management, Sobey School of Business, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Canada), Amy Thurlow, (Public Relations Department, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Canada), Albert J. Mills, (Department of Management, Sobey School of Business, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Canada)


Keywords: Critical thinking, Organizational culture, Organizational processes, Reasoning

Article type: Conceptual paper

DOI: 10.1108/17465641011068857 (Permanent URL)

Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to revisit the oft cited but as yet not operationalized Weick's sensemaking framework, in order to provide suggested ways forward. Development of a method based on Weick's sensemaking is suggested as a starting point for a heuristic that takes into account missing elements from his original model while operationalizing (critical) sensemaking as an analytical tool for understanding organizational events.

Design/methodology/approach – Following the trajectory of sensemaking, the limitations of Weick's model were discussed (i.e. failure to address power and context) and the critical sensemaking was developed as a method that takes into account agency in context. Empirical studies that apply sensemaking were discussed.

Findings – It is concluded that plausibility and identity construction are key to understanding how some voices are heard over others and through critical sensemaking sense that can be made of such phenomena as the gendering or organizational culture and discriminatory practices in organizations.

Practical implications – A heuristic can help people to understand the socio-psychological properties involved in behavioural outcomes.

Originality/value – Critical sensemaking builds on and operationalizes Weick's original sensemaking approach and demonstrates how it can be used in a range of empirical studies, something that Weick himself suggested was lacking.

Knowledge construction and risk induction/mitigation in dialogical workgroup processes

Title: Knowledge construction and risk induction/mitigation in dialogical workgroup processes

Author(s): W. David Holford, (Department of Management and Technology, School of Management, University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM), Montreal, Canada)

Citation: W. David Holford, (2010) "Knowledge construction and risk induction/mitigation in dialogical workgroup processes", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 5 Iss: 2, pp.127 - 161
The purpose of this paper is to examine how knowledge is constructed and risk is induced within the workgroup environment of a large North American aerospace company.

Design/methodology/approach – Based on an epistemological position on knowledge and risk, an initial conceptual framework is proposed. This is then evaluated and re-constructed across a qualitative and ethnographic case study approach involving direct observations and interviews, whereby empirical results were interpreted and analysed across discourse analysis.

Findings – A dialogical model is proposed describing both verbal and non-verbal interactions between group members leading towards knowledge complexification on the one hand and risk mitigation on the other hand. Factors leading towards dialogical breakdown and subsequent risk induction are also presented.

Research limitations/implications – This single case study prevents generalizing the findings across the entire firm in question, and by extension any manner of external validity outside of the firm’s context. Additional workgroups/teams within the firm need to be evaluated, while similar studies in other institutions within the knowledge economy are to be envisaged.

Practical implications – Workgroup managers must nurture an environment conducive towards mutual trust and respect, where individuals are given the time and freedom to express themselves, all the while being open to differing viewpoints and experiences. Coercive dialogue between members should be discouraged. It is proposed that this can be achieved across a parental “safety net” approach.

Originality/value – The paper presents the “how” and “why” of an effective dialogical knowledge constructing process occurring at the interpersonal level, attempts to propose how management can to help achieve this within their organisation, and attempts to bridge the areas of knowledge creation and risk induction at the interpersonal/workgroup level.
**Abstract:**

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to provide a rationale and step-by-step description of how to use rhetorical criticism as a method for accounting for organizational isomorphism in organizational fields.

Design/methodology/approach – The idea that rhetoric is an important form of organizational discourse has gained interest among organizational scholars in recent years. Institutional theorists, especially, have been willing to embrace the “rhetorical turn” in organization studies. These scholars recognize that rhetoric plays an important role in creating, maintaining, and disrupting organizational and institutional orders. This paper adds to this research agenda by suggesting that organizational isomorphism can be partly understood as a rhetorical phenomenon. A method of rhetorical criticism – a qualitative approach for analyzing the rhetorical dimensions of texts and practice – and its efficacy for institutional research is explicated. Using a popular television program about crime scene investigations (which has arguably produced a “CSI effect” that influences the criminal justice system as an organizational field) as a sustained example, steps are provided for conducting rhetorical criticism of popular culture texts in order to account for isomorphic trends in an organizational field.

Findings – Rhetorical analysis of cultural and organizational artifacts, including institutional work, can expose myths and ceremonies that guide practices effectively and problematically.

Originality/value – The potential value of the paper is in its function as a guide for (neo)institutional and organization scholars looking for innovative approaches to studying organizations from a cultural perspective.

**64Exploring the use of entity-relationship diagramming as a technique to support grounded theory inquiry**

**Abstract:**

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to compare fundamental concepts from the grounded theory approach to social science research and concepts from entity-relationship diagramming, a technique used to model data from the field of systems analysis, and propose that entity-relationship diagramming can be a useful tool for grounded theory researchers.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper compares and contrasts concepts from the two different fields, demonstrating the construction of an entity-relationship diagram from data from an existing grounded theory research project, and the correspondence between the data model constructs and the grounded theory constructs.

Findings – A strong correspondence was found between these two sets of concepts and suggests that the entity-relationship diagramming technique may be a useful addition to the social scientist’s toolkit when carrying out research using the grounded theory approach.

Originality/value – The paper bridges two distinct fields – information systems and grounded theory – and proposes a novel way for qualitative researchers to analyse and depict data.

**65The role of path dependency in a hospital merger**

**Abstract:**

Purpose – The role of path dependency in a hospital merger

Design/methodology/approach – The role of path dependency in a hospital merger

Findings – The role of path dependency in a hospital merger

Originality/value – The role of path dependency in a hospital merger
Citation: Elsa Solstad, Inger Johanne Pettersen, (2010) "The role of path dependency in a hospital merger", Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 5 Iss: 3, pp.238 - 258

Keywords: Amalgamations, Change management, Critical path analysis, Hospitals, Organizational change

Article type: Research paper

DOI: 10.1108/17465641011089863 (Permanent URL)

Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore how change processes are dependent on historical events, geographical conditions, strong stakeholders and social norms developed over long-time periods. The paper poses the question: what is the role of path dependencies in mergers between hospitals when motives of the mergers are ambiguous and the context of the change initiatives is characterized by conflicting goals?

Design/methodology/approach – The primary objective of this study is to describe the experience of three hospitals that were merged into a hospital enterprise, with the focus on a change in activity from 2003 to 2006. This fieldwork allowed a longitudinal study. The empirical data were generated from observations, interviews, document studies and newspaper clippings.

Findings – The investigations showed that the merger forced the hospitals to change, but the new organization – the different components of the merged hospital – followed different pathways to handle the externally imposed changes. Parallel processes evolved, and these processes were rooted in the historical and geographical conditions. Further, the paper illuminates the unique strengths of qualitative research methods that allowed a deeper understanding of these change processes.

Originality/value – The paper's findings add to our knowledge on the complex relations between externally imposed organizational change and the nature of internal organizational behaviour when intertwined with strong stakeholders. The paper particularly highlights the possible consequences when there is little interaction between the changes of systems and the practices of the professionals in hospitals when the processes are heavily influenced by path dependencies rooted in historical and geographical traditions.

66 “Adjustment” of the independent expatriate – a case study of Doug

Document Information:

Title: “Adjustment” of the independent expatriate – a case study of Doug

Author(s): Steve McKenna, (Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies, York University, Toronto, Canada)

Citation: Steve McKenna, (2010) ““Adjustment” of the independent expatriate – a case study of Doug”, Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal, Vol. 5 Iss: 3, pp.280 - 298

Keywords: Culture, Expatriates, Lifestyles, Narratives, Qualitative methods

Article type: Case study

DOI: 10.1108/17465641011089881 (Permanent URL)

Publisher: Emerald Group Publishing Limited

Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the idea of expatriate adjustment through naturally occurring data. Specifically, through an investigation of three e-mails sent to the author by a friend, Doug, the paper explores the notion that adjustment is a fluid concept and that through qualitative research methods it is possible to appreciate the expatriate experience in the context of an expatriate’s “whole life” of experiences. This is in contrast to positivist approaches to the study of adjustment which offer limited snapshots of adjustment at particular moments in time.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper investigates three e-mails sent by Doug to the author. The e-mails constitute a form of naturally occurring data, and through forms of narrative analysis the e-mails are able to be examined to throw light on the process of expatriate adjustment.

Findings – The paper highlights ways in which qualitative research methods generally, and specifically when used in relation to expatriates, enable a fuller understanding of the processes of “adjustment” that expatriates experience and its relationship to their life as a “work in progress”. This type of research approach and analysis complements the more positivist study of expatriates. In some aspects it supports research findings on adjustment, but it serves to humanize the independent expatriate and their experience.

Research limitations/implications – The research is a case study of only a single subject. The paper suggests the potential for using naturally occurring data in the study of expatriates and independent expatriates in particular.

Practical implications – Stories of the experiences of expatriation offer insightful and “real” access to the lived experience of the expatriate. In this sense, they can be much more powerful than other forms of cross-cultural training.

Originality/value – The paper highlights the importance of naturally occurring data and the need to consider “whole lives” in the past and present, of research “participants”.