

Editorial for the ECRM Special Issue of EJBRM 2012

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Guest Reviewers: *Martin Rich, Barbara Crump, Marie Ashwin and Angela Benson*

Editorial to the conference issues

The subject of research methods in business is showing an extra-ordinary level of activity and innovation and this conference (the 11th European Conference on Research Methods in Business and Management) reflected this. These papers dealt with the problems facing management researchers in a variety of ways. Many Papers offer help in applying new methods such as Design Science. Perhaps the outstanding feature was the number of papers that concentrated on the assessment of research methods and the quality of results achieved by each type.

The final selection of papers was made by the editor of the Journal, who is grateful for the help provided by the guest reviewers. The papers selected were chosen for their quality of writing, their relevance to the Journal's objective of publishing papers that offer new insights or practical help in the application of research methods in business research and the degree of innovation in the subject matter.

The chosen Papers

The first two papers critically assess the current position of research methods from separate view points. One (*Stacy and Stacy*) reviews the change in attitudes to ethical standards applied in research over the last century and suggests that current standards need reassessing. The second paper (*Venables and Baskerville*) seeks to use Design Science to generate rules for the assessment of competing research methodologies.

In the paper on multi-methodological methods (*Marais*) it is argued that the need for using a combination of research methods for individual research projects will increase as we face ever more complex socially relevant problems. *Marais* develops a 3 Dimensional framework (incorporating the key choices of; the key components of a project, the criteria required to produce high quality empirical work, the goal of the research project) to help researchers recognise when and how to adopt multi-methods.

A highly professional assessment is given by *Cardoso and Ramos* of how well the principles for conducting and evaluating interpretive IS research (proposed by Klein and Myers (1999) in their landmark paper in the MIS Quarterly), have been applied in subsequent papers in the two most reputed journals in IS research – MIS Quarterly and ISR . They find mixed results!

Design Science seems to be acquiring more supporters – particularly for research into Information Systems. The paper by *Gacenga et al* uses the technique to focus on the design process .

Two of the papers offer specific support for the application of empirical research methods – one on interview techniques for qualitative research (*Hirose et al*) and the second on web surveys (*Bataard*). *Hirose et al* introduce a highly original approach, taking the view that the emotional state of the interviewee is of great significance to the accuracy and quality of qualitative interviews. They propose that existing sensing devices can be used to assess the emotional responses of interviewees and hence determine true responses more effectively. *Bataard* offers us an excellent guide to developing effective web surveys drawing on the existing theory developed for surveys carried out by traditional methods.

The conference received a good number of papers on the teaching of research methods. This issue includes two of these papers. The thorny issue of evaluating the value of teaching courses in higher education is addressed in the first paper (*Griggs et al*). The paper argues that it is the learning outcomes that are of importance and that there are several stakeholders for which this is of interest. Their approach is to propose a balanced score card framework for evaluation. The final paper (*Mkanshi and Acheampong*) deals with the complexity of the choice of research philosophy that all PhD students face at the beginning of their research. The paper calls for the development of a 'planned, systematic framework and procedure' to help students to make sense of the many options available to them.