

Editorial for EJBRM Volume 17 Issue 1

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Editorial by the Editor: Ann Brown

This issue has four papers, addressing a range of exciting new ideas in business research methods. All four papers make impressive use of empirical research work to illustrate and explain the concepts they propose. The subjects addressed are:

- A practical research method based on critical realism illuminated by a case application (Saxena)
- A case demonstration of how mixed methods can deliver superior results to a mono-method in some situations (Angeles et al)
- An investigation into the perceived problem of participant carelessness in survey research (Marasi et al)
- A method for supporting student learning of research methods (Daniel)

Critical Realism, as an alternative research philosophy to positivism and interpretivism, is explained with great clarity by Deepak Saxena. The practical application of this philosophy through retroductive analysis is described and illustrated excellently by application to a longitudinal case study on the implementation of an enterprise system. The retroductive method is explained well and we emerge with a good understanding of the strengths, challenges and limitations of this approach.

Adrianela Angeles, Edgar Centeno and Cristian Villanueva present an application of mixed methods in a case examining the factors that contribute to the success of structural flexibility in SMEs. Their aim is to establish how effective mixed methods can be. The strength of the paper is in its detailed description of the application of mixed methods, which clearly demonstrates the value that this approach can deliver.

Participant carelessness (when respondents fail to follow survey instructions) is a widely accepted potential problem for quantitative research work. Shelly Marasi, Alison Wall and Kristen Brewer test this assumption, empirically, by carrying out a large sample survey to compare careful and careless respondent's data. Their results suggest that this is not likely to be a major problem in most situations.

The fourth paper is a change of pace in that it addresses the issue of teaching research methods to students. The author, Ben Daniel, explains some of the problems that students struggle with when learning to carry out research. He presents an online software tool, still under development (*iMethod*) based on learning analytics research methods, which tracks student's engagement with various content on research methods. This gives teaching staff greater knowledge of where students struggle most. The paper describes the successful use of this tool at a workshop (ARM) in a university in New Zealand.