

EJBRM Editorial for Volume 17 Issue 3 2019

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Editorial by the Editor: Ann Brown

This issue has seven papers, addressing a wide range of topics in business research methods, including –

Qualitative data analysis

- Two papers presenting practical ideas on the analysis of qualitative data (Noel Pearse; Anastacia Mamabolo and Kerrin Myres)

Business research process

- A Critique of the current mainline approach to the business research process (Chris Callaghan)

Teaching Business research methods

- Two papers presenting practical ideas on the teaching of business research methods at undergraduate and at postgraduate levels (Ben K. Daniel; Martin Rich, Ann Brown and Aneesh Banerjee)

Quantitative methods

- An application of a well-known quantitative analytical method in psychology (Q methodology) to business research (Charmaine du Plessis).
- A paper analyzing the effects of sequencing in complex experiments in Business Research (Peter Kotzian)

Two papers offer practical help in the analysis of qualitative data. Noel Pearse makes unusual use of deductive methods to analyse qualitative leadership data. A case example of mixed methods investigating the skills of entrepreneurs by Anastacia Mamabolo and Kerrin Myres aims to contribute a better understanding of the process of transitioning from a qualitative to quantitative study.

Chris Callaghan contributes an entirely theoretical paper analyzing the current mainstream approach to the business research process. He attributes the current slowdown in returns from business research to weaknesses in the way in which business research is driven. In his view the process supports incremental developments rather than major change and he calls for changes to how the business research process is managed.

Teaching research methods to undergraduate and postgraduate students presents a challenge. Research is an activity for which experience is a key learning tool. But teachers at these levels are dealing with students who have had little time to gain practical experience. Ben Daniel presents a framework (TACT) to help students identify the actions they need to take in carrying out rigorous analysis of qualitative data. The paper describes the successful use of this approach in workshops at the university of Otago in New Zealand. The paper by Martin Rich, Ann Brown and Aneesh Banerjee establishes the importance of the skills of critical thinking and the lack of such skills by undergraduates. They describe the approach taken at Cass Business School in delivering a module teaching this skill in the first year using Practice Based learning methods.

Q methodology is used in psychology but infrequently if at all, in the discipline of Business and Management. So, the paper by Charmaine du Plessis takes a well-established quantitative research method and disseminates it to another discipline. She shows how this method can address some of the issues raised by collecting social media data.

Peter Kozian raises concerns about the analysis of the results of complex experiments in business, using quantitative measures. Simple experiments compare the effect of a stimulus on the dependent variable of two groups – the control and the experimental. Complex experiments can involve more than one stimulus applied consecutively. Kotzian shows that even if the stimuli are apparently independent, the sequence in which they are applied can affect the statistical results, introducing a potential bias to the conclusions reached.