

Chapter 17

Risk Management Research Design Ideologies, Strategies, Methods, and Techniques

Kenneth David Strang

School of Business and Economics, State University of New York, USA & APPC Research, Australia

ABSTRACT

The researcher interviewed 11 doctoral students and 12 International Disaster Conference attendees to understand how research guidelines could be improved to help these emerging scholars achieve more publications. Empirical studies were cited to substantiate the need for better research method guidance. A research design model was then created as a top-down typology based on a literature review and practitioner experience. The design model consisted of four components: research ideology, unit and level of analysis strategy, formal research method, and analysis techniques. The discussion illustrated how all researcher philosophies can be simplified into one of three ideologies: post-positivist, pragmatic or social-constructivist. Additionally, the author explained how the level and unit of analysis goals are developed into an analysis strategy with research questions or hypotheses. Inquire strategy was integrated with formal research method and ideology, to facilitate the selection of data collection sampling and analysis techniques. Numerous research methods thought leaders were cited to direct new scholars towards best practices. A unique feature of the model was its simplicity and application across all the generally accepted research philosophies, methods and techniques as well as disciplinary fields. Although the study was directed toward risk management practitioners, it applies to any field or industry.

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Risk management practitioners need better research guidelines so that they can publish their studies in scholarly journals to share innovations with the global community of practice (Goodwin

& Strang, 2012). Methodology subject matter experts acknowledge that textbooks provide overwhelming, sometimes conflicting knowledge due to the numerous approaches and differences in terminology across the disciplines (Babbie, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2009, 2012; Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007; Ellingson, 2009; Freedman, 2006; Gill, Johnson, & Clark, 2010;

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Greene, 2008; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Hammersley, 2006; Kline, 2004; Maxwell, 2005; Neuman, 2000; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Richards, 2009; Yin, 2009).

Research method practitioners must take the responsibility to provide better research documentation for emerging scholars. Therefore, I wrote this descriptive study to help emerging risk management researchers design and execute studies in a way in which their work is more likely to be published in scholarly journals. The premise was that a fatally flawed study with an invalid or obscure design has very little chance of being published even if it is well written. On the other hand, a well-designed study, which reveals innovative risk management practices but with a few grammatical errors can be easily revised to make a significant contribution to the global literature and community of practice.

Purpose

In this study, I interviewed eleven doctoral students across several disciplines, namely: management, education, healthcare/nursing, and business. I used a simple opened ended question to have them describe how research methods guidelines could be improved. I also briefly questioned a dozen participants at a recent International Disaster Conference to obtain their perspective on the same issue. I then reviewed the literature and I used personal experience to inform my conceptual approach.

I developed a graphical top-down typology to guide the research design, which consisted of four major layers: research ideology, unit and level of analysis strategy, formal research method, and techniques. The graphical research design typology was supplemented with a discussion of how the layers integrate, and how the techniques are used across the methods, strategies and ideologies. The techniques covered sampling, data collection, descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, ethics, validity and reliability.

This paper is not as a replacement for a methods textbook, but rather, it is a guide to assist in mapping the complex topology of scholarly research. I provided high quality signposts as references, such as these resources which I truncated the citations here past ten years (APA, 2010; Babbie, 2007; Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003; Creswell, 2012; Gill et al., 2010; Glaser & Holton, 2005; Greenacre & Blasius, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Hammersley, 2006; Keppel & Wickens, 2004; Maxwell, 2005; Neuman, 2000; Patton, 2002; Whitley, 2002; Yin, 2009; Zechmeister, Zechmeister, & Shaughnessy, 2001).

Significance

Another reason for writing this paper is there was an empirical need for research guidelines. I am personally inundated with supervision requests. I found empirical evidence of this demand. I published a recursive regression technique manuscript a few years ago in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation* [PARE] (Strang, 2009e). The article critically discussed quantitative research methods and techniques, namely a recursive regression approach for cluster analysis applied to a study as an example (Strang, 2008b). That article was reprinted as a supplement in a higher education research textbook by Pearson as a result of practitioner interest (Strang, 2010j).

Analyzing consumer behavior is an effective way to measure demand. The PARE search engine tracks manuscript downloads. I had more than 100 publications so I was curious when this particular article received attention: over 6,000 accesses at the time of writing. However, a peer manuscript in the same issue garnered 10 times more utilization (80,000 at the time of writing), which I believe was due to the topic of providing guidance to doctorate students for a dissertation research project {xxx, 2009}. Their article was the most popular manuscript in the journal (which started publishing circa 1996).

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