EDEN DOCTORAL SEMINAR IN CASE STUDIES IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

PROGRAMME

Professors Rebecca Piekkari and Catherine Welch (team teaching)
Total contact hours: 30 h

Day 1  Monday 30 September 13.00 – 17.00
What are qualitative methods and what is a case study?

Key themes:

- various definitions of the case study: when does a study qualify as a case study?
- changing views on the case study since the early 20th century, including recent developments
- disciplinary conventions regarding the case study and why they are important
- the importance of the case study to qualitative research

Learning outcomes:

- be able to identify a case study
- be able to take a position in a debate about what qualifies as a case study
- be able to recognize and appreciate difference disciplinary conventions in management
- understand how the case study is related to other qualitative methods and approaches

Background reading:


Core readings:


1) Positivist and alternative approaches to case studies and the quality of case research

Key themes:

- the role that philosophical assumptions play in shaping how the case study is conducted and evaluated
- the debate between ‘positivist’ and alternative positions on the case study
- the relationship between a researcher’s/reader’s philosophical assumptions and the quality criteria they apply to the case study
- the debate on case studies and generalisability

Learning outcomes:

- understand the meaning of ‘qualitative positivism’
- be able to differentiate between a positivist and an alternative case study
- be able to follow good research practices and procedures that improve the quality of the case study
- understand that quality criteria for assessing case research are not value free

Core readings:


2) Research design: selecting cases and casing

Key themes:

- The ‘traditional’ (positivist) view of research design: Yin (2009)
  - key design tasks
  - role of theory in the design phase
  - case selection (number, sampling)
- The alternative view of research design
  - rethinking the concept of research design
  - process of casing (boundaries, unit of analysis, iteration between ideas/evidence)

Learning outcomes:
• understand the difference between ‘design’ and ‘emergent’ logics in case research
• appreciate the value of the ‘casing’ process
• appreciate the range of different case study designs
• appreciate the importance of consistency in your design choices

Core readings:


Day 3  Wednesday, 2 October 09.00 – 16.00

Data sources and analysis for case research

Key themes:

• ‘all is data’: contrasting non-interview data, particularly observation and archives, with interview data
• opportunities and challenges of triangulating sources and ‘mixing’ methods
• the analytical challenges faced by case researchers: coding and beyond
• reporting on your analytical journey

Learning outcomes:

• appreciate the value of non-interview data
• be able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different data sources
• understand different options for mixing qualitative and quantitative data and analysis
• understand the strengths and limitations of coding and other analytical strategies (including computer-aided qualitative data analysis)
• to be able to ensure greater transparency in explaining and reporting on the process of data analysis

Core readings:


**Day 4 Thursday, 3 October 09.00 – 16.00**

**Theorising with cases**

Key themes:

- a pluralist approach to theorizing from case studies
- the expanded role for case studies in theorizing process (theory generation, development, testing – and beyond)
- ‘contextualised explanation’: showing how case studies can produce meaningful explanations
- to provide a pluralist approach to theorizing from case studies

Learning outcome:

- appreciate the relationship between the case study as a research strategy and the theoretical purpose of the study
- understand the positivist circle of theorizing
- understand alternative, theorizing purposes for the case study beyond that of theory building
- appreciate that ‘context’ is an essential component of, not hindrance to, theorizing

Core readings:


Day 5  Friday, 4 October 10.00 –15.00
Reporting and publishing case studies

Key themes:

- the role of writing up in the research process (both for PhD and journal articles)
- common dilemmas when writing up case data and how to resolve them
- to present various reporting strategies – including alternatives to a traditional approach.

Learning outcomes:

- understand how the researcher’s philosophical position may be reflected in the write up of the study
- appreciate the options available when writing up your case study
- anticipate potential problems when writing up a case-based project
- be able to write up your methodology chapter with greater confidence

Core readings:


Examples to be discussed in class: Methodology chapters of case-based PhD thesis which have been successfully defended.