From the Editors: Qualitative Research and the "Academy of Management Journal"
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Source: *The Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Aug., 2004), pp. 454-462
Published by: Academy of Management
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/20159596
Accessed: 26-02-2020 11:41 UTC

FROM THE EDITORS

Qualitative Research and the *Academy of Management Journal*

Editor's note: For this issue's "From the Editors," I invited Robert Gephart of the University of Alberta to reflect on his observations as a long-serving, award-winning reviewer of qualitative research for *AMJ*. Over the past two and a half years, I have developed a tremendous respect for Bob's keen eye for evaluating qualitative research submissions, and great admiration for the painstaking advice he provides authors about how to improve their work. As a world-renowned qualitative author himself, Bob is in an excellent position to provide observations about how authors might increase the chances of having their qualitative research accepted for publication at *AMJ*.

In a three-way electronic mail conversation about the challenges and opportunities of qualitative research, Bob, Tom Lee, and I all concluded that many authors with potentially very interesting data sets don't seem to know how to analyze them to their full potential. This is perhaps not surprising, given the clear predominance of quantitative methods and statistics courses over qualitative ones, particularly in North America, as well as the inherently greater subjectivity involved in designing and analyzing qualitative research. As such, we encouraged Bob to provide a bit of a minitutorial—complete with reference citations and examples of high-quality papers that use particular qualitative approaches—in addition to his observations about qualitative research submitted to *AMJ*.

The result is a longer-than-usual "From the Editors" column, but one that we believe is well worth the extra reading time for anyone interested in producing, reviewing, or attempting to coax greater insights from qualitative research. We are fortunate to have someone with Bob's expertise share his observations, and we hope that his thoughts will prove useful to researchers for many years to come.

Sara Rynes
Incoming Editor

I am thankful to Sara for inviting me to write this editorial column encouraging scholars to submit their qualitative research to the *Academy of Man-*

agement Journal. Qualitative research is important to *AMJ*. Qualitative research is actively sought and supported by the *Journal,* its editors, and its editorial review board. *AMJ* has published many qualitative papers. The coveted *AMJ* Best Article Award has been won by three qualitative papers—Gersick (1989), Isabella (1990), and Dutton and Duckerich (1991)—and by one paper that combined qualitative and quantitative methods: Sutton and Rafaelli, (1988). Despite these successes, most qualitative papers, like most quantitative ones, do not succeed in being accepted. This situation is not surprising for a journal with a 10 percent acceptance rate.

However, it seems to me as a reviewer that there are certain recurrent issues in qualitative submissions that, if addressed, could improve the prospects for positive revise and resubmit decisions and ultimate acceptance at *AMJ*. This editorial offers suggestions to enhance the quality of qualitative research submitted to *AMJ*. The ideas are based on my experiences as a reviewer for *AMJ* and as a past Research Methods Division chair. I have also been a published qualitative researcher for 26 years and have one *AMJ* publication (out of two submissions). Hopefully these comments will encourage outstanding qualitative research in management.

An important caveat is necessary at the outset: "There are probably rules for writing the persuasive, memorable and publishable qualitative research article but, rest assured, no one knows what they are" (Van Maanen, 1998: xxv). The following comments seek to inspire and inform readers but do not specify formulae, algorithms, or criteria for producing good qualitative research. Instead, the column reviews the nature of qualitative research, notes important linkages between theories and methods, reviews key qualitative methodologies, and highlights challenges and opportunities in submitting qualitative research to *AMJ*. Along the way, helpful examples of qualitative research are cited and useful resources are noted. These suggestions may help authors strengthen the foundations of their qualitative manuscript submissions.

What Is Qualitative Research and Why Is It Important?

Qualitative research is multimethod research that uses an interpretive, naturalistic approach to

its subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative research emphasizes qualities of entities—the processes and meanings that occur naturally (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 8). Qualitative research often studies phenomena in the environments in which they naturally occur and uses social actors' meanings to understand the phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 2). Qualitative research addresses questions about how social experience is created and given meaning and produces representations of the world that make the world visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 3). Beyond this, qualitative research is "particularly difficult to pin down" because of its "flexibility and emergent character" (Van Maanen, 1998: xi). Qualitative research is often designed at the same time it is being done; it requires "highly contextualized individual judgements" (Van Maanen, 1998: xi); morever, it is open to unanticipated events, and it offers holistic depictions of realities that cannot be reduced to a few variables.

Clarity can be gained by contrasting qualitative research with quantitative research that "emphasizes measurement and analysis of causal relations among variables" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 8). Although the two research genres overlap, qualitative research can be conceived of as inductive and interpretive (Van Maanen, 1998). It provides a narrative of people's view(s) of reality and it relies on words and talk to create texts. Qualitative work is highly descriptive and often recounts who said what to whom as well as how, when, and why. An emphasis on situational details unfolding over time allows qualitative research to describe processes. Qualitative researchers also seek to explain research observations by providing well-substantiated conceptual insights that reveal how broad concepts and theories operate in particular cases. This approach is distinct from that of quantitative research using the hypothetical-deductive model that uncovers important relationships among variables and tests general propositions.

The distinction just drawn between qualitative and quantitative research overstates the differences between these overlapping genres. But it does call attention to two critical issues. First, qualitative research employs the meanings in use by societal members to explain how they directly experience everyday life realities. It builds social science constructs from members' "concepts-in-use" and focuses on the socially constructed nature of reality (Schutz, 1973). Quantitative, positivist research, in contrast, imposes scientific meanings on members to explain a singular, presumed-to-be true reality that nonscientists may not appreciate. Second, qualitative research starts from and returns to words, talk, and texts as meaningful representations of con-

cepts. Quantitative research codes, counts, and quantifies phenomena in its effort to meaningfully represent concepts. Qualitative research thus has an inherently literary and humanistic focus, whereas quantitative research is grounded in mathematical and statistical knowledge. An important value of qualitative research is description and understanding of the actual human interactions, meanings, and processes that constitute real-life organizational settings. The depiction and understanding of the meanings of organization members is important in itself (Nelkin & Brown, 1984) and is a task often neglected in organizational research. The domain of naturally occurring meanings is highly accessible to qualitative research and distant from quantitative research. An important issue is to balance the humanistic and literary aspects of qualitative research that focus on meanings with the demands for scientific knowledge based in mathematical or statistical reasoning.

A second important point is that qualitative research involves both data collection and data analysis. Both steps in the research process can be qualitative or quantitative. Many scholars consider the quantitative analysis of qualitative data to be qualitative research. But it can be argued that quantitative analysis of qualitative data requires data to be quantified, and hence this is quantitative research. My point is that management researchers face many mathematical, statistical, and measurement challenges when they apply quantitative or calculative techniques or perspectives to qualitative data. These challenges become obscured when research that uses quantitative tools of analysis is labeled qualitative research.

Qualitative research is important for management scholarship for many reasons. In brief, it provides insights that are difficult to produce with quantitative research. For example, qualitative research can provide thick, detailed descriptions of actual actions in real-life contexts that recover and preserve the actual meanings that actors ascribe to these actions and settings. Qualitative research can thus provide bases for understanding social processes that underlie management. Qualitative research can also provide memorable examples of important management issues and concepts that enrich the field. Finally, qualitative research has potential to rehumanize research and theory by highlighting the human interactions and meanings that underlie phenomena and relationships among variables that are often addressed in the field.

The Methodological Importance of Theory

The relationship between theory and methodology is important. Researchers need to use method-

ologies that are consistent with the assumptions and aims of the theoretical view being expressed. A simplified conception of three perspectives used in management research is presented in Table 1. *Positivism* and *postpositivism* adopt the stance of realism and rely on the assumption of an objective world external to the mind that is mirrored by scientific data and theories. Positivism and postpositivism are efforts to uncover truth or true reality. Postpositivism, the more recent view, differs from positivism in holding that reality can be known only probabilistically, and hence verification is not possible. Falsification, not verification, of hypotheses becomes the basic task of research. Well-developed postpositivist qualitative methods can uncover facts and compare facts to hypotheses or prior findings in an attempt to falsify prior hypotheses or to contradict previous knowledge.

A large proportion of the qualitative research I have reviewed for *AMJ* can be characterized as representing positivism and postpositivism. Many of these submissions seek to mirror quantitative research techniques. An important challenge for this qualitative research is to articulate rules or bases for deciding "associations" and for determining how results and findings fit with preliminary propositions or hypotheses. This is a challenge, since qualitative research lacks the explicit coefficients and criteria for evaluating and falsifying hypotheses that quantitative research has developed.

Perhaps because of this challenge, well-known qualitative methods from social science, such as grounded theorizing, have been used. Indeed, most authors making qualitative submissions claim to have used grounded theory processes, although references to grounded theory are more common than detailed application of grounded theory techniques. The problem is that grounded theory often does not fit well with the objectives of positivist or postpositivist qualitative research. The misfit occurs in part because, like many other qualitative techniques discussed below, grounded theory originated within the interpretive research tradition of social research (Van Maanen, 1998) and was designed to achieve interpretive research goals and insights concerning meanings, as noted below. This theoretical-methodological inconsistency may in part explain why many qualitative research submissions, particularly those in the positivist tradition, provide insights that are somewhat limited and at times superficial. It is difficult to provide strong and rigorous findings without well-developed criteria for evaluating hypotheses. And superficial findings seem likely if grounded theory is applied in ways that omit analysis of the differences in meanings across important social groups. Two exemplars of positivist research published in *AMJ* are McNamara and Bromiley's (1997) study of decision making using qualitative and quantitative data, and Gersick's (1989) discovery-oriented qualitative study of groups.

The focus of the *interpretive perspective* differs from the focus on variables and hypothesis falsification used in postpositivism. The goal of interpre-

TABLE 1
Research Traditions[a]

Tradition	Positivism and Postpositivism	Interpretive Research	Critical Postmodernism
Assumptions about reality	Realism: Objective reality that can be understood by mirror of science: definitive/probabilistic	Relativism: Local intersubjective realities composed from subjective and objective meanings: represented with concepts of actors	Historical realism: Material/symbolic reality shaped by values and crystallizes over time
Goal	Discover truth	Describe meanings, understanding	Uncover hidden interests and contradictions: critique, transformation, and emancipation
Tasks	Undertake explanation and control of variables: discern verified hypotheses or nonfalsified hypotheses	Produce descriptions of members' meanings and definitions of situation: understand reality construction	Develop structural or historical insights that reveal contradictions and allow emancipation, spaces for silenced voices
Unit of analysis	Variable	Verbal or nonverbal action	Contradictions, critical incidents, signs and symbols
Methods focus	Uncover facts, compare these to hypotheses or propositions	Recover and understand situated meanings, systematic divergences in meaning	Understand historical evolution of meanings, material practices, contradictions, inequalities

[a] This table is based on Gephart (1999), Guba and Lincoln (1994), and Lincoln and Guba (2000).

tive research is to understand the actual production of meanings and concepts used by social actors in real settings. A relativist stance is adopted such that diverse meanings are assumed to exist and to influence how people understand and respond to the objective world. Interpretive research thus describes how different meanings held by different persons or groups produce and sustain a sense of truth, particularly in the face of competing definitions of reality. And it inductively constructs social science concepts using concepts of social actors as the foundations for analytic induction. This concern with meanings and second-order concepts—the concepts of the concepts of social actors—leads to a focus on thick descriptions of members' talk and nonverbal actions in specific settings. Rather than producing qualitative facts to evaluate hypotheses, interpretive researchers seek to describe and understand members' meanings and the implications that divergent meanings hold for social interaction. Isabella's (1990) award-winning paper stands as an excellent example of interpretive research published in *AMJ*.

Critical postmodernism combines critical theory and postmodern thought. Critical research describes the historical emergence of social structures and the contemporary contexts in which these structures form contradictions with implications for social action and human freedom. For example, critical research explores the presence and implications of the basic contradiction of advanced capitalism: the desire for profit exceeds the available profit. Contradictions are conceived to be basic to the exploitation that emerges when hegemonic worldviews conceal contradictions, leaving people unaware of tacit forms of domination and subjugation that are present. Critical research uncovers relations of dominance and subjugation and produces insights to make social actors reflexively aware of their own role in the reproduction of capitalist inequities. Critical research seeks to transform the social order and allow emancipation from unwanted structures of domination.

Methodologically, critical research emphasizes dialogic and dialectical methods (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) as ways to transcend taken-for-granted truths. Critical research adopts a historical realist assumption that the construction of reality is shaped by social, political and economic values that crystallize and become reified over time. This constructed reality is experienced as firmly as if it were the unconstructed reality assumed by positivists. Thus, critical research uncovers facts about power relations that are obscure to societal members. Further, its assumption is that there are multiple views of the world, and it employs interpre-

tive methodologies to uncover divergent meanings held by groups in power-laden relationships. Morrow (1994) provides a helpful discussion of critical theory methodology. Given the theoretical focus of critical research, many critical management papers have appeared in the *Academy of Management Review*. But empirical research that uses critical theory is rare in management (Alvesson & Wilmott, 1992) and would be welcome at *AMJ* (Eden, 2003). Ashcraft (2001) offers an example of critical feminist research in *AMJ*.

Like critical research, *postmodern thought* also begins with the assumption that realities are value laden and contain contradictions. But postmodern thought tends to focus on signs and symbols and the idea that these are decoupled from realities they represent. As such, postmodern thought adds a focus on texts or written documents that symbolically create and disclose structured inequalities. Critical postmodern thought has thus begun to utilize textual, literary, and deconstructionist approaches to analysis of materials. Boje's (1995) study of multiple discourses at Disney provides an example of postmodern research with a critical flavor that appeared in *AMJ*.

This brief review of theoretical perspectives illustrates three distinctive approaches to theory that are related to research methodology. *Postpositivism* requires methods of collecting and analyzing factual depictions of the world that reveal singular truths or realities and that can be used to evaluate (falsify) hypotheses. *Interpretive research* uncovers, describes, and theoretically interprets actual meanings that people use in real settings. It examines how particular meanings become shared, dominant, and/or contested in situations in which alternative meanings and understandings are present and possible. *Critical postmodernism* describes dominant and subordinated meanings, displays the power implications of meanings, and encourages critical reflexivity to make people aware of the constraints on their own meanings and actions. *Critical reflexivity* provides a means for emancipation from structures of domination.

Clearly, qualitative methodologies must be used in ways that are consistent with the theoretical or paradigmatic view(s) adopted and the specific problems being explored. This consistency is important so that the research process is capable of producing the kinds of data and analyses necessitated by the theory in use and the goals of research in the related paradigm. Two options could enhance consistency in theories and methodologies. First, scholars could adopt postpositivist methodological techniques from social science to enhance consistency between postpositivist theory and

methods-in-use in management. Second, scholars could use interpretive or critical postmodern perspectives more often and adopt social science methods that were originally developed for interpretive and critical research agendas and purposes. Most *AMJ* authors and reviewers are well skilled and trained in quantitative, positivist techniques and perspectives but are less prepared to produce interpretive and critical postmodern research. This discrepancy may explain why interpretive and critical postmodern research is less common in *AMJ* than positivist research. However, I believe and have been assured by Tom Lee and Sara Rynes that *AMJ* values and welcomes submissions from each of these three perspectives.

Well-Developed Methodologies Are Useful

Qualitative research requires qualitative methods by definition. It is important to show what was done in the research process and to articulate how research practices transformed observations into data, results, findings, and insights. The methodology used need not be complex, and the methodological account need not dominate the written report. But many qualitative submissions I have reviewed lacked explicit analytical methods.

The major problem with failure to use a rigorous, well-developed methodology is that data are unlikely to be systematically, comprehensively, or exhaustively reviewed. Hence, findings produced from informal or ill-defined procedures may be both different from and weaker than those produced when a clear methodological process is used. When methods are used but not described explicitly, or when findings are presented early in a study and prior to discussion of goals, theory, and methods, other problems arise. For example, if it is unclear to the reader how research was undertaken, it may be difficult to connect claims in the paper that reports that research to the data presented. The operation of concepts in data needs to be revealed in clear and explicit ways if the findings are to be comprehensible and credible. While qualitative methods need to be elaborated or modified for each new application, this does not mean that anything goes or that the best method is no method. Researchers need to report their sources and types of data as well as their data analysis practices.

Qualitative data are collected using one or more research approaches, including case studies, interviews, observations, grounded theory, and textual analysis. General overviews of qualitative research may be found in Silverman (2004) and Golden-Biddle and Locke (1997). In this section, I provide a brief overview of these useful methodologies, suggest resources to consult when planning qualitative research, and note recent *AMJ* papers that use these methodologies.

A *case study* is research that describes a single event or unit of analysis determined by the researcher. There are different types of case studies (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993). Case studies often use archival or documentary data along with other sources, combine qualitative and quantitative data, and examine a phenomenon or "case" as it changes over time. A well-known example of case study research is Biggart's (1977) classic study of change at the U.S. post office. Another example is Heracleous and Barrett's (2001) nicely done case study of the implementation of electronic trading on the London Insurance Market, which was published in *AMJ*.

Interviews are situated, face-to-face interactions in which researchers typically pose questions that respondents answer. There are different types of interviews and related methodologies. Ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979) are used to understand informants' conceptions of culture. Long interviews (McCracken, 1988) link analytical categories and literature with respondents' cultural categories and meanings. Focus groups assemble groups of individuals who respond to questions or themes. They represent a collective rather than individualistic research method that permits collective testimonies and narratives (Madriz, 2000: 836). A classic interview-based study in *AMJ* is Isabella's (1990) paper on organizational change.

A number of *observational methods* are available for use. The first method is *participant observation*, which involves social interaction in the field with subjects, direct observation of relevant events, formal and informal interviewing, some counting, collection of documents, and flexibility in the direction the study takes (McCall & Simmons, 1969: 1). In participant observation, it is common for a researcher to play the role of a member of the group studied and to use subjective experiences as critical data. Barker's (1993) study of how teams control members' behavior provides a classic example of observation-based research. Yakura (2002) provides a recent example of participant-observation-based research published in *AMJ*. A second observational approach is *ethnography* (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), which involves the production of descriptions of culture obtained by immersion in the culture studied. Perlow, Okhuysen, and Repenning, (2002) provide a recent example of ethnographically informed fieldwork published in *AMJ*. A third observation-based approach is *ethnomethodology* (Coulon, 1995), defined as the study of the practical methods members of society use to con-

struct and maintain a sensible understanding of the social world. An example of ethnomethodological research published in *AMJ* is provided by my paper on disaster sensemaking (Gephart, 1993).

Two additional observational methods have important but unrealized potential in management research. The first is *conversational analysis,* the study of sequential, utterance-by-utterance, talk and conversation that often uses ethnomethodological concepts to provide an understanding of how talk structures social interaction (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000: 492). The second is *systematic self-observation,* a new and well-developed observational technique that involves "training informants to observe and record a selected feature of their own everyday experience" (Rodriguez & Ryave, 2002: 2). Systematic self-observation may prove particularly useful to researchers interested in language use in organizations.

Grounded theorizing (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is the process of iteratively and inductively constructing theory from observations using a process of theoretical sampling in which emergent insights direct selection and inclusion of the "next" informant or slice of data. Grounded theory involves constant comparative analysis whereby groups are compared on the basis of theoretical similarities and differences. A large number of research submissions and qualitative papers published in *AMJ* refer to grounded theory as part of their methodology. Indeed, by examining the methodological citations in qualitative submissions, one would conclude grounded theory was a ubiquitous methodology in our field. But relatively few manuscripts explain how grounded theory methodology was used to produce results and findings. It is even less common for qualitative papers to address related grounded theory practices, such as theoretical sampling and the constant comparative method of analysis. Perlow, Okhuysen, and Repenning (2002) provide a recent example of grounded theory–influenced research published recently in *AMJ.*

Textual analysis involves analysis of texts using ideas from theories in hermeneutics and literary criticism intended to provide systematic understanding of texts. Two forms of textual analysis that have been used in management and organizational research are *semiotics,* which is the study of signs (Barley, 1983), and *narrative analysis* (Boje, 2001), which examines structural, literary features of texts. *Rhetorical analysis* of texts (Simons, 1989) is also relevant to narrative analysis. Narrative-rhetorical analysis is illustrated by Barry and Elmes's (1997) analysis of strategic management as a form of fiction. Locke and Golden-Biddle's (1997) study of management texts is an example of narrative-rhetorical analysis published in *AMJ.*

Textual analysis can also be undertaken with computer software support (Kabanoff, 1997). *Computer-aided textual analysis* uses the capabilities of computers to produce qualitative and numerical results from qualitative or textual materials (Kelle, 1995). Computer-aided *interpretive* textual analysis is a related qualitative research approach that provides insights into organization members' meanings by using computers to support theoretical sampling, textual analysis, expansion analysis, and grounded theory development (Gephart, 1997). Computer-supported qualitative data analysis allows one to systematically, comprehensively, and exhaustively analyze a corpus of data. Many qualitative papers submitted to *AMJ,* particularly positivism-oriented papers, would benefit from a computer-supported textual analysis approach because it provides ways to investigate qualitative and quantitative features of texts and offers approaches to hypothesis testing using qualitative and/or quantitative data. Few *AMJ* papers have used such techniques even when these have been recommended during the review process.

Challenges and Opportunities

This section outlines common problems and challenges found in many qualitative submissions to *AMJ,* and potential solutions to these problems. These points follow from the issues raised above, as well as from rereading reviews written by other reviewers and myself in the last two years, and editors' letters to authors in which these materials had been retained.

The first issue is that many submissions appear to be "one off" papers that do not seem to be embedded in ongoing research projects or programs. Qualitative research manuscripts that emerge from broad, ongoing research programs seem more likely to produce substantial new insights because they address multiple issues and have large corpora of data to analyze. This point is underscored when authors revise and resubmit a paper. Since few manuscripts are acceptable on first submission, reviewers often request additional data and analyses. But few authors actually return to the field, collect new data or add previously collected data, or employ new or different analytical procedures. Where research is part of an ongoing research program, authors can more readily elaborate their ideas, modify their topics, and analyze additional data. The iterative nature of qualitative research should continue during the submission and the review and revision stages of research.

A second problem is that the introductions to qualitative papers often lack adequate reviews of important literature relevant to the topics of the papers. A surprising number of qualitative papers provide literature reviews as part of their results, findings, or conclusions and only after results and findings have been stated. This practice makes the work completely mysterious until topics, concepts, and past research are finally noted. By the time this occurs, the findings often appear to readers to have been arbitrarily assembled or drawn directly from the literature rather than based on data, causing reviewers to ask, What is new here? This problem can be addressed by providing an effective review of literature that notes the content and limits of prior research in the apposite field and that points to a lacuna in the literature that the study can address. Further, qualitative papers need to address important research in related fields as well as in management since management is a transdisciplinary field and significant implications are often based in or relevant to important issues and social research trends outside the field.

A third and related problem is that qualitative submissions often fail to state explicit goals, objectives, or research questions that frame the papers and guide data analysis and research outcomes. It is important for qualitative research to have a clear focus and bases on which to proceed. Also, the importance of the research questions posed is fundamental to the contribution made by a given paper. Through specification of research questions that reflect an important gap in the literature, a study can identify important lacunae in the scholarly domain.

Fourth, where questions are provided, the concepts underlying them often are not well defined, and the meaning of the questions remains elusive. It is important for research papers—whether qualitative or quantitative—to define and explain key concepts in ways that allow the reader to anticipate how the concepts could be located in data or observations. Conceptual and empirical definition of key concepts is important even when a paper's authors seek to dispute or elaborate prior definitions. And the theoretical background to these concepts needs to be disclosed in ways that create consistency among theories, concepts, research questions, and methodologies.

Fifth, although methodological issues are important to qualitative research, it is extremely common to find that the methodology is underspecified. Since methodological issues have already been addressed in detail, only a few brief comments are noted here. It is important to describe the analytical method or approach used to address research questions: to clearly describe the processes used to review data and to formulate themes and insights. The reader needs to know how categories or themes were discerned in data and how key decisions were made in the research process. It is useful to refer to explicit and established research methods and literature to describe general methodological approaches and to indicate how such methods have been modified or adapted to address current research questions and data. But methodology should be explained and then used. It should not overwhelm the conceptual importance of a paper.

Several specific methodological issues are often evident to reviewers once data are presented. A common reviewer request is to provide the "thicker and more detailed" descriptions that are essential for capturing members' meanings and in situ social processes. Thus it is important where possible to include raw or primary qualitative data in papers (for instance, actual talk by respondents). It is also important to analyze or interpret such data, not simply to present it. In addition, it is important to compare and contrast examples to reveal conceptual similarities and differences in data. These examples need to represent key concepts and to be selected on conceptual and methodological grounds, with discussion provided as to how the examples relate to the broader corpus of data used in the study. Drawing these links avoids the common problem of "exampling," whereby a researcher addresses a few examples but fails to explain how these examples represent a broader data set or to explain why they were chosen. Finally, there is a tendency for qualitative submissions to present faits accomplis, offering findings without explanation as to their origins. This practice is a problem since it is important to show how findings were surfaced from data or otherwise disclosed through analysis. Without these connections, findings often appear to lack grounding in data.

A sixth domain of problems concerns discussion and conclusion sections. Authors need to revisit research questions or goals in their discussions to explain how their questions were answered and how their goals were achieved in the reported research. The broader implications and importance of the findings are contributions the paper offers. These need to be explained and related to issues in management and to key social science research issues.

Conclusion

Good qualitative research is difficult and challenging to undertake. Many scholars believe good qualitative research is more difficult and time con-

suming to create than good quantitative research. Qualitative research often involves fieldwork, and the word "work" is important here. There are no algorithms for producing it. Qualitative researchers will likely be less productive than quantitative researchers in terms of the number of manuscripts produced. Qualitative researchers should be evaluated in terms of the significance and the impact their publications have on the field. The advantage of qualitative research is that it offers scholars a rewarding and meaningful way to lead their lives. The rewards include direct engagement with everyday management and organizational realities and opportunities to make substantial contributions to the field. Qualitative research often advances the field by providing unique, memorable, socially important and theoretically meaningful contributions to scholarly discourse and organizational life.

<div align="right">
Robert P. Gephart, Jr.
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