

SUMMARY OF ARTICLE

MILLER, C., CARDINAL, L. & GLICK, W. (1997). RETROSPECTIVE REPORTS IN ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH: A REEXAMINATION OF RECENT EVIDENCE. ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL, 40(1), 189-204.

Main topic

Inaccuracy of retrospective reporting (e.g. informant fallibility)
Reexamination of evidence based on Golden data ('92)

Conclusions /
Suggestions /
Recommendations

Error in informant fallibility should be differentiated from error in measures. **Methodological issues** impact (e.g. weak instruments).

Percent agreement's shortcomings as an accuracy statistic. To consider:

- > inter-temporal reliability > (indirect) retrospective reliability
- > reliability index (Perreault & Leigh; adjustment for **change**, underlying probability)

Questionnaire methodology may result in **attenuation** due to measurement error. To consider:

- > **complexity** of assessing own organization strategy via Miles & Snow description
- > inter-rater agreement estimates

By using Glick et al.'s (1990, ref. (1)) measure, informant reliability not lower in retrospective than in non-retrospective reports.

- > Use **valid and reliable measures with retrospective reporting**. This doesn't not support such fallibility in recalling the past as stated by Golden.

To consider:

- > **free reports** (e.g. accuracy)
- > **multiple informants**
- > ask about simple facts / **concrete events**; don't ask about events from distant past
- > **motivate** informants and explain importance; **minimize** data collection duration and inconvenience
- > **statistical controls** for systemic forces of recall errors
- > retrospective reports **not the only method** in management studies toolbox

MY THOUGHTS

Key learnings

Research can get **biased due to research design**, not due to informant attributes.

Being **mindful in suggesting / adopting the use / abandonment** of study any protocols based on single study results without assessing how study design might affect such results.

Opinions, thoughts, interesting issues

Interview data could be seen as qualitative retrospective data.

How does **context** affect the results? Does the original study's hospital context have any impact in assessment? How does CEOs as informants impact assessment (informant variation)?

How to **develop** questionnaires (and other data collection methods) that are deep enough to enable rich data, but at the same time easy to answer?

In a case where **professional raters** are used in assessing behavior, f.ex., with a specific research instrument, long education might be needed.

Strengths / weaknesses

Clarifying statistical methods impact.

Effect sizes, N?