

▼ Introduction to Research Methods and Applications Minitrack

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Organizational systems and new information technologies continue to affect organizations in a number of ways and have opened a myriad of methodological challenges for academics in particular as to how to understand the effect of these technologies on organizations and for practitioners in general attempting to meet organizational needs. Papers in the research methods and applications minitrack have reported on a number of research approaches and issues affecting MIS researchers when studying the effects of information systems in organizations. Papers investigating research questions on a number of issues have yielded mixed results and generated animated discussion in the sessions of this minitrack.

The following papers promise to yield further discussion and debate in this area:

The first paper is entitled “Exploring the Semantic Validity of Questionnaire Scales” is by co-authored by Kai Larsen, Dorit Nevo, and Eliot Rich. This paper suggests that many behavioral researchers have been or are currently engaged in survey research and in analyzing results using statistical methods. They found that respondents are often asked to fill out questionnaires leading to questionnaire fatigue and reluctance to conscientiously respond. The authors argue that in spite of the popularity of the approach, serious unanswered questions remain about what questionnaires actually measure. To answer these questions, this paper ventures into a new area of inquiry within survey research, providing a semantic analysis of questionnaires. In so doing the authors diverge from traditional survey validity measures, and offer a novel approach to questionnaire validation. This can have important contributions to future research.

The second paper in this minitrack addresses the impact of the nine common errors researchers make when designing a survey instrument. This paper is

entitled “Examining the “Urban Legend” of Common Method Bias: Nine Common Errors and their Impact” and is co-authored by Andrew Schwarz, Colleen Schwarz and Tracey Rizzuto. In this paper the authors examine the “urban legend” of Common Method Bias (CMB) and question the impact of nine common errors that researchers make when designing survey instrument. They define the nine most common errors and implement these errors in an empirical study of 537 undergraduate students enrolled in an Introductory Psychology course at a large southeastern university. By analyzing this data in PLS, the authors discover that each of the sources of CMB differently impacts the measurement and structural model for researchers. This has implications as to how structural models can be used to arrive at conclusions that are seen to be valid.

The third paper in this minitrack is entitled “Conducting Qualitative Research in an International and Distributed Research Team: Challenges and Lessons Learned” and is co-authored by Rafael Prikladnicki, Roberto Evaristo, and Jorge Luis Nicolas Audy. The authors discuss the challenges for planning and executing qualitative research conducted by an international research project team. The study comprised an exploratory examination of strategies of offshoring and onshoring for software development. An important methodological challenge is that the members of the research team live in different countries, rely on different languages and originate from different cultures. These challenges are in many ways analogous to those inherent in the way in which many MIS researchers carry out their research especially as it relates to distributed software development. To explore these issues, the authors present the difficulties they faced on collecting and analyzing the qualitative data. Their main contribution is the identification of challenges, strategies to overcome them, and a set of lessons learned.