

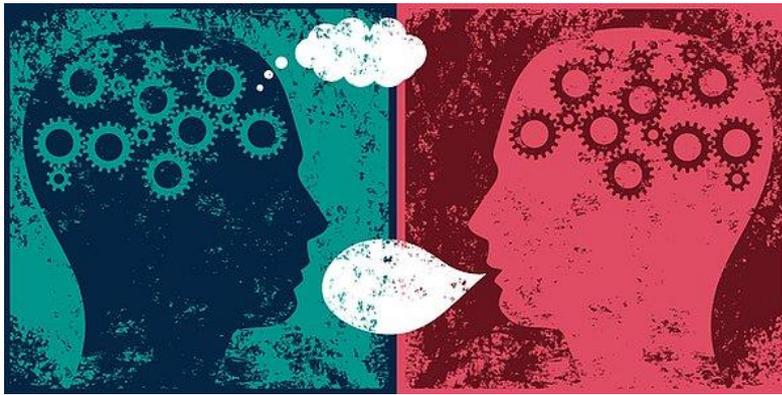
Course title: Qualitative Research and Theory Development

Type of course: Elective doctoral programme course

Semester: II semester (Spring)

Number of credits allocated: ECTS: 6

Name of lecturer: prof. dr. Niels Noorderhaven (Tilburg University)



Objectives of the course:

The objective of this condensed PhD course is to familiarize students with various forms of qualitative research, and in particular with the role qualitative research can play in the development of theory. In PhD programs in business administration typically many theories are discussed, but not much attention is paid to the question where theories come from. As a consequence, young scholars are often much better prepared for doing empirical research than for theorizing, while both skills are necessary for an academic career.

Much writing on qualitative research is plagued by debates between schools of thought, which often deny each other's legitimacy. In the course we will stay far from this, and assume a strongly pragmatic stance. Different approaches in qualitative research serve different goals, and if used in the right way, can all be valid. Likewise, although the emphasis in the course will be on inductive (or abductive) theorizing, this does not mean that deductive theorizing is rejected. But being able to use inductive methods should be part of the baggage of an academic, just like deduction.

In the course we will discuss a series of approaches, some of which are often seen as "positivistic", others which are more "interpretive". The underlying philosophy is "horses for courses": for some research questions (and journals) a positivist approach is best, for other research questions and journals it is better to assume an interpretive stance.

Contents:

The course will be delivered in three four-hour sessions. Each of these will consist of lecture parts and assignments or exercises. Some of the assignments must be prepared in advance, others can be done during the course sessions.

Assignments and Exercises

There are four types of assignment/exercise:

- Analysis of front-ends of papers

This exercise will be done in class. Groups of students will analyze the front-end of two quantitative and two qualitative papers. The aim of this exercise is to create an understanding of the fundamentally different role the front-ends of these different types of papers play.

- Coding

Groups of students will code four interviews, and their codings will subsequently be discussed. The aim of this exercise is familiarize students with the practice of coding, which plays an important role in many qualitative approaches.

- Presentation of possible use(s) of qualitative methods in the students' own research

All students will be asked to give a brief presentation (15 minutes) at the end of the course. In this presentation they will expand on their research plans, and reflect on the possible use of qualitative methods in (parts of) their research.

- Analysis and presentations of exemplars of qualitative research

Students will prepare individually and present one or more articles that are exemplars of (particular approaches to) qualitative research. The aim of this assignment is to familiarize students with different types of qualitative research and to cultivate the ability to critically read and understand the strong and weaker points of these papers.

Overview of the sessions

This overview is indicative, depending on how fast or slow we go some parts may be shifted backwards or forwards.

Copies of overhead slides will be made available after the sessions.

Session 1

- Introduction to qualitative research
- Theory building
- Exercise 1: front-end of papers
- Grounded Theory
- Paper presentations:
 - Isabella (1990)
 - Orlikowski (1993)

Session 2

- Sources of qualitative data
- Coding
- Exercise 2: coding
- Case studies
- Paper presentation:
 - Van Echtelt et al. (2008)
- The Eisenhardt method
- Paper presentation:
 - Graebner (2009)

- The Gioia method
- Paper presentation:
 - Corley & Gioia (2004)

Session 3

- Criteria for evaluating qualitative studies
- Qualitative Comparative Analysis
- Paper presentation:
 - Crilly (2011)
- Ethnography
- Paper presentation:
 - Lok & De Rond (2013)
- Process analysis
- Text as data
- Paper presentation:
 - Maguire & Hardy (2009)
 - Vaara & Monin (2010)
- Synopsis
- Exercise 3: student presentations on the possible use of qualitative methods in their research

Exercise (1):

Front end of papers

Two quantitative and two qualitative papers
How do the front-ends of these papers differ:

- How is the study motivated?
- How do they draw on the literature?
- How do they justify the research method?
- What is the contribution that they promise?

Paper Presentation:

Isabella, L. A. (1990). Evolving interpretations as a change unfolds: How managers construe key organizational events. *Academy of Management journal*, 33(1), 7-41.

- Analyze the front-end: how is the study motivated, how is literature used, how is method justified, what is the promised contribution?
- Analyze the Methods section: is it clear how/why the research context has been selected, and how data have been collected and analyzed? What do you think of the research method?
- Analyze the Findings and Discussion sections: how is evidence presented, how does the paper flow from description to analysis to theorizing?
- What is the end product of the paper, how is the (new/elaborated) theory presented?
- What is your own opinion? Do you like the paper, is it inspirational?

Paper Presentation:

Orlikowski, W. J. (1993). CASE tools as organizational change: Investigating incremental and radical changes in systems development. *MIS Quarterly*, 309-340.

- Analyze the front-end: how is the study motivated, how is literature used, how is method justified, what is the promised contribution?
- Analyze the Methods section: is it clear how/why the research context has been selected, and how data have been collected and analyzed? What do you think of the research method?
- Analyze the Findings and Discussion sections: how is evidence presented, how does the paper flow from description to analysis to theorizing?
- What is the end product of the paper, how is the (new/elaborated) theory presented?
- What is your own opinion? Do you like the paper, is it inspirational?

Exercise (2):

Coding of interviews

Four interview transcripts are printed in this syllabus. All interviews are with managers functioning on the Dutch-Japanese interface: a Dutch manager working for a Japanese company in The Netherlands; a Japanese manager working for a Japanese firm in The Netherlands; a Dutch manager working for a Dutch firm in Japan; and a Japanese manager working for a Dutch firm in Japan.

- Go through one or more of these transcripts taking the perspective of a qualitative scholar interested in decision making in these Dutch-Japanese situations, with a special focus on the role of consensus.
- Code words, phrases or parts of text that you think might play a role in developing a theory of (consensus) decision making in this context; assign a label to each code.
- After the initial coding, go through all codes again to see if you need to pull together different codes, or conversely, split up a code.

Paper Presentation:

Van Echtelt, F. E., Wynstra, F., Van Weele, A. J., & Duysters, G. (2008). Managing supplier involvement in new product development: a multiple-case study. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 25(2), 180-201.

- Analyze the front-end: how is the study motivated, how is literature used, how is method justified, what is the promised contribution?
- Analyze the Methods section: is it clear how/why the research context has been selected, and how data have been collected and analyzed? What do you think of the research method?
- Analyze the Findings and Discussion sections: how is evidence presented, how does the paper flow from description to analysis to theorizing?
- What is the end product of the paper, how is the (new/elaborated) theory presented?
- What is your own opinion? Do you like the paper, is it inspirational?

Paper Presentation:

Graebner, M. E. (2009). Caveat venditor: Trust asymmetries in acquisitions of entrepreneurial firms. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(3), 435-472.

- Analyze the front-end: how is the study motivated, how is literature used, how is method justified, what is the promised contribution?
- Analyze the Methods section: is it clear how/why the research context has been selected, and how data have been collected and analyzed? What do you think of the research method?
- Analyze the Findings and Discussion sections: how is evidence presented, how does the paper flow from description to analysis to theorizing?
- What is the end product of the paper, how is the (new/elaborated) theory presented?
- What is your own opinion? Do you like the paper, is it inspirational?

Paper Presentation:

Corley, K. G., & Gioia, D. A. (2004). Identity ambiguity and change in the wake of a corporate spin-off. *Administrative science quarterly*, 49(2), 173-208.

- Analyze the front-end: how is the study motivated, how is literature used, how is method justified, what is the promised contribution?
- Analyze the Methods section: is it clear how/why the research context has been selected, and how data have been collected and analyzed? What do you think of the research method?
- Analyze the Findings and Discussion sections: how is evidence presented, how does the paper flow from description to analysis to theorizing?
- What is the end product of the paper, how is the (new/elaborated) theory presented?
- What is your own opinion? Do you like the paper, is it inspirational?

Paper Presentation:

Crilly, D. (2011). Predicting stakeholder orientation in the multinational enterprise: A mid-range theory. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 42(5), 694-717.

- Analyze the front-end: how is the study motivated, how is literature used, how is method justified, what is the promised contribution?
- Analyze the Methods section: is it clear how/why the research context has been selected, and how data have been collected and analyzed? What do you think of the research method?
- Analyze the Findings and Discussion sections: how is evidence presented, how does the paper flow from description to analysis to theorizing?
- What is the end product of the paper, how is the (new/elaborated) theory presented?
- What is your own opinion? Do you like the paper, is it inspirational?

Paper Presentation:

Lok, J., & De Rond, M. (2013). On the plasticity of institutions: Containing and restoring practice breakdowns at the Cambridge University Boat Club. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(1), 185-207.

- Analyze the front-end: how is the study motivated, how is literature used, how is method justified, what is the promised contribution?
- Analyze the Methods section: is it clear how/why the research context has been selected, and how data have been collected and analyzed? What do you think of the research method?
- Analyze the Findings and Discussion sections: how is evidence presented, how does the paper flow from description to analysis to theorizing?
- What is the end product of the paper, how is the (new/elaborated) theory presented?
- What is your own opinion? Do you like the paper, is it inspirational?

Paper Presentation:

Maguire, S., & Hardy, C. (2009). Discourse and deinstitutionalization: The decline of DDT. *Academy of management journal*, 52(1), 148-178.

- Analyze the front-end: how is the study motivated, how is literature used, how is method justified, what is the promised contribution?
- Analyze the Methods section: is it clear how/why the research context has been selected, and how data have been collected and analyzed? What do you think of the research method?
- Analyze the Findings and Discussion sections: how is evidence presented, how does the paper flow from description to analysis to theorizing?
- What is the end product of the paper, how is the (new/elaborated) theory presented?
- What is your own opinion? Do you like the paper, is it inspirational?

Paper Presentation:

Vaara, E., & Monin, P. (2010). A recursive perspective on discursive legitimation and organizational action in mergers and acquisitions. *Organization Science*, 21(1), 3-22.

- Analyze the front-end: how is the study motivated, how is literature used, how is method justified, what is the promised contribution?
- Analyze the Methods section: is it clear how/why the research context has been selected, and how data have been collected and analyzed? What do you think of the research method?
- Analyze the Findings and Discussion sections: how is evidence presented, how does the paper flow from description to analysis to theorizing?
- What is the end product of the paper, how is the (new/elaborated) theory presented?
- What is your own opinion? Do you like the paper, is it inspirational?

Exercise (3):

Presentation of possible uses of qualitative methods in your research

- Do you see a possible use of qualitative methods in (parts of) your own research?
- If no, why not?
- If yes, in what way, and how would you approach it?
- Can any of the papers discussed function as a template for you?