Chapter 1
Philosophical Framing and Its Impact on Research

Eileen M. Trauth
The Pennsylvania State University, USA

Lee B. Erickson
The Pennsylvania State University, USA

ABSTRACT

The variety of lenses and openness that is brought to the research process shapes both academic research and the application of knowledge to real-world settings. Researchers who endeavor to contribute both rigor and relevance require a wide range of methodological tools and a clear understanding of how such tools frame the questions to be answered, as well as the methods used and potential outcomes. It is important that both researchers and publication gatekeepers clearly understand the impact of philosophical framing on research methods and findings. Drawing on research related to the use of social media to facilitate product innovation "crowdsourcing," the authors consider the implications of alternative research scenarios on five key dimensions of research: epistemology, theory, review of literature, stakeholder perspective, and rigor-relevance. Examples of existing and emergent topics within the research field of crowdsourcing are provided to illustrate methodological pluralism.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the influence of philosophical framing on the way in which research is conducted and the findings that result. It does so by considering choices with respect to five dimensions of research: epistemology, theory, review of literature, stakeholder perspective, and rigor-relevance. Extending the work presented in Trauth (2011) that focused on the contribution of interpretivist as an alternative to positivist approaches to business research (1), this chapter draws upon research within the field of product innovation to consider the implications of alternative research scenarios that are based upon differing choices regarding these five dimensions. Arguably, the variety of lenses and openness researchers and

publication gatekeepers bring to the research process is indicative of the variety of approaches used in the exploration of both existing and emergent topics. This, in turn, will have a direct effect on the relevance of academic research.

Based on their collective experience in conducting academic research and in applying that knowledge in real-world settings, the authors provide examples of research related to the use of social media to leverage the "crowd" for knowledge, creativity, and productivity. The advancement of scientific knowledge requires that researchers are responsive to business trends and issues that might bring with them challenges to current research methods. Researchers who endeavor to contribute both rigor and relevance require a wide range of methodological tools and a clear understanding of how such tools frame the questions to be answered as well as the methods used and potential outcomes.

BACKGROUND

Before we begin our discussion of the impact of philosophical framing, we offer some background to help situate the reader within the context in which the discussion will progress. There is little disagreement that the widespread use of the Internet combined with new social media technologies is changing not only our personal lives, but also our workplaces, our communities, our society, and our world. We are seeing more and more examples of how individuals, organizations, and governments are leveraging the power of the Internet to bring attention to social, political, and personal issues (Morello, 2007; Magid, 2009; Webster, 2009). Budding entrepreneurs are leveraging the reach of the Internet to start new businesses (Howe, 2008; Brabham, 2008a, 2008b, 2009; Lakhani & Panetta, 2007; Trompette et al., 2008; Chanal & Caron-Fasan, 2008; Feller et al., 2010). One growing area of interest is the use of social media tools to tap into the knowledge and

creativity of the "crowd." Individuals from around the world are helping to complete tedious tasks more quickly, solve complex problems, and create new profit centers for businesses small and large (Nambisan & Sawhney, 2008; Sawhney, Verona, & Prandelli, 2005).

Turning to the crowd for their knowledge and creativity is often referred to as "crowdsourcing," a term coined by Jeff Howe a writer for *Wired* magazine (Howe, 2006). Howe noticed that more and more companies were taking advantage of the Internet to reach out to the crowd to complete a variety of tasks historically accomplished using internal resources. Each day we are seeing companies both small and large leverage crowdsourcing for problem solving (Archak, 2010; Lakhani et al., 2007), data collection (Chilton, 2009), knowledge sharing (Wasko & Faraj, 2000; Allen et al., 2008), market research (Whitla, 2009), and even new product innovation (Prandelli, Sawhney, & Verona, 2008; Jeppesen & Frederiksen, 2006; Nambisan & Sawhney, 2008).

But researchers are only just beginning to understand how organizations, governments, and individuals are leveraging crowdsourcing and new social media tools for innovation. As researchers we are hungry to unravel, dissect, and explain the growing popularity and use of these models and tools. And our approach to unraveling these new mysteries is fundamentally influenced by the philosophical framing we bring to the task. With this background in place, we now turn our attention to the impact of the philosophical framing of the researcher on the research that is conducted.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACTS OF PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMING ON RESEARCH

Epistemological Framing

A fundamental consideration in the philosophical framing of a research project is the decision re-

Related Content

A Novel Aspect Based Framework for Tourism Sector with Improvised Aspect and Opinion Mining Algorithm
Vishal Bhatnagar, Mahima Goyaland Mohammad Anayat Hussain (2018). *International Journal of Rough Sets and Data Analysis (pp. 119-130).*
www.irma-international.org/article/a-novel-aspect-based-framework-for-tourism-sector-with-improvised-aspect-and-opinion-mining-algorithm/197383

Dynamic Load Balancing Using Honey Bee Algorithm: Load Balancing
Sudha S. Senthilkumar, Brindha K., Nitesh Kumar Agrawaland Akshat Vaidya (2021). *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology, Fifth Edition (pp. 98-106).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/dynamic-load-balancing-using-honey-bee-algorithm/260178

Modeling Rumors in Twitter: An Overview
Rhythm Waliaand M.P.S. Bhatia (2016). *International Journal of Rough Sets and Data Analysis (pp. 46-67).*
www.irma-international.org/article/modeling-rumors-in-twitter/163103

Customer Lifetime Value
Kijpokin Kasemsap (2018). *Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology, Fourth Edition (pp. 1584-1593).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/customer-lifetime-value/183873

Analysis of Click Stream Patterns using Soft Biclustering Approaches
P. K. Nizar Banuand H. Inbarani (2011). *International Journal of Information Technologies and Systems Approach (pp. 53-66).*
www.irma-international.org/article/analysis-click-stream-patterns-using/51368