



# The Essence of Research Methodology: A Concise Guide for Master and PhD Students in Management Science

By Jan Jonker, Bartjan Pennink



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Methodology is the ?eld which is indisputably complex. In the academic world, it is often said to be important, yet in everyday academic practice, it is not always treated accordingly. In teaching, methodology is often a mandatory course. Usually, it consists of learning how to adopt several common approaches when doing research, and how to conceive a research design (often leading to a survey). This usually leads to collecting data on a modest scale and – when the opportunity arises – analysing the data with the help of some statistics. Ask the students of their opinion at the end of such a course and they tend to heave a deep sigh of relief and say, "I have got through it." Then their real courses start again, in which methodology often does not play a role at all. We are of the opinion that writing-off methodology in this way is a real pity. It ignores the valuable role that methodology should play in academic teaching as a whole. Here, methodology is presented as a form of thinking and acting that, while obviously entailing research work, can also include the design and change of organisations. This broad approach has been purposefully chosen, as it is almost obvious from research and graduation projects that the students do not really have a clue what methodology involves and, therefore, wasting their time by producing work that has a little quality.

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#### **Editorial Review**

From the Back Cover

This publication is designed to provide Master and PhD students with a concise introduction to conducting research in organisations. The aim is to impart knowledge for making the appropriate methodological choices and to give readers a practical guide to designing and executing a research. Over fifty concrete examples, exercises, discussions and short case studies give a good illustration of the practice of research so to enhance the understanding of the application of methodology in specific research contexts. Another special feature of this book is the extensive comparative Glossary of key methodological terms, ideas and notions that has been incorporated. Also, various checklists are provided to help students structure their research activities and reflect on key issues and choices that need to be made. Finally, more fundamental theoretical, ontological and epistemological issues and debates are touched upon and discussed in the footnotes.

#### About the Author

Dr. J. Jonker is an associate professor and research fellow at the Nijmegen School of Management of the Radboud University Nijmegen (Holland). His main research interest focuses on organisational change, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and business strategy. He is a visiting professor at the University of Nottingham (UK), Versailles and Toulouse (France). He has written several books and numerous articles. He combines his academic work with business consulting, thus staying in touch with different discourses and realities.

Dr. B.J.W. Pennink is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Business Administration of the State University Groningen (Holland) where he mainly teaches courses in research methodology to undergraduates and graduates in different Master programs. In addition, he lectures at the Academy for Management (Enschede) and was a visiting lecturer at the University of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso between 1991 and 2005.

They both have been lecturers in Qualitative Methodology for the Dutch Organisation for Business Research (NOBEM) between 1989 and 2004. NOBEM is a network between universities across The Netherlands providing methodology courses for PhD students in the field of business studies. This book is based on precious and pleasurable experience gained teaching together for more then a decade. A concise edition of this book appeared in Dutch under the title "De Kern van Methodologie" (2000 and 2004), published by Royal Van Gorcum Publishers (Assen).

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