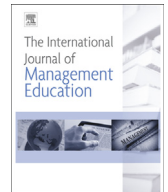


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Research Notes

Developing depth and breadth of research methods training for doctoral students with CARMA webcasts



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ABSTRACT

Research methods training for doctoral students is crucial to the development of the management discipline, yet acquiring depth and breadth across research methods education in a doctoral program can be challenging. As a resource to enhance research methods training, the Consortium for the Advancement of Research Methods and Analysis (CARMA) has been providing online webcasts led by topic experts on contemporary methodological issues since 2004. This paper provides an evaluation and categorization of the 92 webcasts produced during CARMA's first decade to facilitate the incorporation of webcasts into doctoral-level methods training that enhance the depth and breadth of doctoral students' exposure to research methods.

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1. Introduction

The lasting success of the field of management hinges on its ability to ask and investigate research questions of scholarly and practical interest (Bettis & Hitt, 1995; Hoskisson, Hitt, Wan, & Yiu, 1999), which itself depends on the rigor of the research designs used to address these questions (Bettis, 1991; Corner, 2002; Cosier, 1983; Daft & Buenger, 1990; Daft & Lewin, 1990; Daft, 1980; Ketchen, Boyd, & Bergh, 2008). Yet, management research as a whole evidences a general stagnation in the types of research methodologies used (Landis & Cortina, 2015; Scandura & Williams, 2000; Stone-Romero, Weaver, & Glenar, 1995), likely caused by researchers' comfort with the methods they know and have previously used for successful publications (Harlos, Mallon, Stablein, & Jones, 2003; Podsakoff & Dalton, 1987). Addressing this problem and proliferating the methods used in management research requires changes in doctoral education to ensure that researchers gain more familiarity and competence with a wide variety of methodologies (Aguinis, Pierce, Bosco, & Muslin, 2009; Ambuske, Locke, & Manning, 1988; Camerer & Fahey, 1988; Hitt, Gimeno, & Hoskisson, 1998).

Although the question of why doctoral students need deeper knowledge about a wider variety of methods has been addressed (Summer et al., 1990), the question of how doctoral students should gain the variety of research experience they need to further their careers (Mello, Fleisher, & Woehr, 2015) has received less scholarly attention (Shook, Ketchen, Cycyota, & Crockett, 2003). One option is the use of web-based research methods seminars provided by the Consortium for the

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Advancement of Research Methods and Analysis (CARMA). CARMA offers a comprehensive set of such seminars for management and organization scholars through an ongoing series of live webcasts as well as a recorded library of past webcasts.¹ Business school curricula are increasingly incorporating web-based instructional technology and communication options (Martins & Kellermanns, 2004), and online compendia such as the CARMA webcast library offer an opportunity to expand these types of resources to the doctoral level of management education. These webcasts are a potentially valuable source of research methods information and support for doctoral advisors, faculty, and students who seek to gain understanding and expertise across the scope of research methods necessary to advance the field of management (e.g., Hitt et al., 1998; Summer et al., 1990), yet the current structure of adding webcasts to a growing archive without a categorization system limits the impact that this resource can have. This paper documents two approaches for incorporating webcasts into doctoral education to develop breadth of knowledge and in-depth proficiency in research methods. The recommendations and resulting structures, derived from our coding of the 92 webcasts offered during CARMA's first decade of webcasts, are designed to help faculty and students determine which webcasts will be most useful in achieving their program objectives.

1.1. Literature review

Research training has been and remains a major component of doctoral education (McCaskey, 1975; Mitchell, 2007) and the ability to publish impactful empirical research is the cornerstone of many academic careers in management. As a relatively young field, management has enjoyed explosive growth across many disciplines (Ferris, Ketchen, & Buckley, 2008; Hitt et al., 1998; Meyer, 1991; Zammuto & Connolly, 1984); however, the variety of research streams contained within the field of management and the diversity of methodologies used to address questions in those research streams has remained relatively stable (Austin, Scherbaum, & Mahlman, 2002; Scandura & Williams, 2000). Summer and colleagues' (1990) seminal report on the state of the strategic management field notes that longitudinal, qualitative, and interview-based methodologies in particular could offer novel and essential research insights. The growing need for understanding and incorporating new methodologies led their task force of management researchers to recommend that doctoral students gain an appreciation for a wide variety of methods as well as expertise in a method specialized to their research interests. Bettis (1991) offers similar advice, suggesting that methodological diversity is a vital component of positive change in the management field. Other management scholars (Hitt et al., 1998) added that research methods that incorporate panel data, event histories, network-based, logistic, and Poisson analyses could also offer promising avenues for future research in strategic management and encouraged doctoral students to further strategic management knowledge by developing their understanding of these methods and analytic tools. Despite calls from top research journals for more rigorous and varied research designs (Bansal & Corley, 2011; Daft & Lewin, 1990; Lee, 2001), the state of management research is such that "the adoption of novel methodological practices is very slow" (Aguinis et al., 2009, p. 7).

Overall, the research methods used in strategic management articles have not proliferated as predicted, which is a delay attributed to the research methods training offered during doctoral education (Shook et al., 2003). Analysis of the research methods published in top management journals (Blevins, Tsang, & Spain, 2015) further illustrates this effect by demonstrating that most students are familiar with regression techniques but lack the ability to recognize the need for more specialized techniques. An examination of the publications in *Organizational Research Methods* (ORM) during its first decade reports similar findings and attributions (Aguinis et al., 2009). The most highly-cited ORM topics relate to the same designs noted in previous studies (e.g., Podsakoff & Dalton, 1987; Scandura & Williams, 2000). Aguinis et al. (2009) conclude that ORM offers some benefit to researchers hoping to hone their skills in mainstream methods, but further effort is needed to ensure that specialized and underrepresented methodologies are employed to answer novel and interesting questions. Collectively, these analyses indicate that Summer et al. (1990) and Hitt et al.'s (1998) advice to doctoral students and faculty regarding research methods training and proliferation may have been easier said than done and that expertise in novel techniques may not develop solely from reading methods-focused journals.

Given the many roles that faculty are expected to fulfill during doctoral supervision (Wright, Murray, & Geale, 2007), the methods training that individual faculty can offer may be insufficient for the research demands of a contemporary academic career (Bettis, 2012; Lahenius, 2012). The CARMA webcast library is one resource that can supplement traditional methods coursework by introducing doctoral students to a broad array of research methods experts. As such, these webcasts can improve methodological training to advance the field of management.

1.2. CARMA overview

CARMA provides continuing education on research methods and data analysis from introductory to advanced levels and serves as a resource for those who teach research methods and data analysis in management and organizational science ("About CARMA", 2016). A core resource through which they offer education is their library of online webcasts conducted by research methods experts. Each webcast is approximately one hour long and focuses on the presenter's area of expertise. Webcasts commonly contain examples of how and when to use particular research methods techniques, links to datasets,

¹ None of the authors are directly affiliated with the Center for the Advancement of Research Methods and Analysis (CARMA). For more information about CARMA, please consult their website at <http://und.edu/carma/>.

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