



MANAGEMENT
AND *Handwritten flourish* SEVENTH EDITION
BUSINESS *Handwritten flourish*
RESEARCH

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

MARK EASTERBY-SMITH passed away in 2020. He was an Emeritus Professor at the University of Lancaster. His field was organizational learning. He had a first degree in Engineering Science and a PhD in Organizational Behaviour from Durham University, and was an active researcher for over 30 years with primary interests in methodology and learning processes. He carried out evaluation studies in many European companies, and led research projects on management development, organizational learning, dynamic capabilities and knowledge transfer across international organizations in the UK, India and China.

Mark published numerous academic papers and over ten books including: *Auditing Management Development* (Gower, 1980); *The Challenge to Western Management Development* (Routledge, 1989); *Evaluation of Management Education, Training and Development* (Gower, 1994); *Organizational Learning and the Learning Organization* (Sage, 1998); *The Handbook of Organizational Learning and Knowledge Management*, 2nd edn (Wiley, 2011).

At Lancaster he was, variously, Director of the School's Doctoral Programme, Director of the Graduate Management School and Head of Department. Externally he spent several years as a visiting faculty member on the International Teachers' Programme, acting as Director when it was held at the London Business School in 1984. During the early 1990s, he was national co-ordinator of the Management Teaching Fellowship Scheme, funded by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), which was responsible for training 180 new faculty members across UK management schools. He was a former member of the ESRC Post-graduate Training Board and was President of the British Academy of Management in 2006 and Dean of Fellows in 2008.

LENA J. JASPERSEN is a University Academic Fellow in Innovation Management at the University of Leeds. As an early career researcher with a multidisciplinary background in international sociology and organization studies, her research interests have focused on collaborative research and innovation. Part of her role as an Academic Fellow is to develop a portfolio of research projects; hers relate to sustainability and health partnerships.

Lena's background brings both an international and an interdisciplinary dimension to her research. She holds Masters' degrees in Sociology (University of Bielefeld, Germany) and International Relations (Keele University, UK) and was awarded a PhD with Recommendation of Research Excellence from the University of Leeds. Her doctoral research focused on the role of cross-sector partnerships in creating low-carbon development pathways. The results

provided a critical analysis of how partnerships can facilitate but also inhibit the adoption of off-grid renewable energy technologies in Central America. Lena has a strong interest in research methods, particularly working on participatory methods and visual tools that can enhance the collection of both qualitative and quantitative network data. A recent article published in the *British Journal of Management* provides a systematic overview of methods for qualitative network research. Together with colleagues, she has conducted research on global development and published an interdisciplinary volume on conducting field research in development contexts (*Understanding Global Development Research*, Sage, 2017). She has also published an organizational ethnography of the work of the oldest UN human rights treaty monitoring body, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (*The UN-real World of Human Rights*, Nomos, 2012).

RICHARD THORPE is an Emeritus Professor at the University of Leeds where he was latterly Professor of Management Development and Pro Dean for Research at Leeds University Business School. His early industrial experience informed the way his ethos has developed. Common themes are a strong commitment to process methodologies and a focus on action in all its forms; an interest in and commitment to the development of doctoral students and the development of capacity within the sector; and a commitment to collaborative working on projects of mutual interest. Following a number of years in industry, he joined Strathclyde University as a researcher studying incentive payment schemes. This led to collaboration on *Payment Schemes and Productivity* (Macmillan, 1986). In 1980 he joined Glasgow University where he widened his research interests to include small firm growth and development as well as making regular contributions to the Scottish Business School's doctoral programme. In 1983 he attended the International Teachers' Programme in Sweden where he met Mark and embarked on a PhD under Mark's supervision. Collaboration continued through the 1990s with the ESRC Teaching Fellowship Scheme. In 1996 he was instrumental in establishing the Graduate Business School at Manchester Metropolitan University and in 2003 joined the ESRC Training and Development Board. There, he was involved in establishing the training guidelines for both doctorate and professional doctorate provision, and more recently in initiatives to address capacity building in management and business. In 2003 he contributed to the ESRC's Evolution of Business Knowledge programme. His research interests have included: performance, remuneration and entrepreneurship, management learning and development and leadership, and he has published (with others) a number of books including: *Remuneration Systems* (Financial Times/Prentice Hall, 2000); *Management and Language: The Manager as Practical Author* (Sage, 2003); *The SAGE Dictionary of Qualitative Management Research* (Sage, 2008); *Performance Management: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Palgrave, 2008); *Gower Handbook of Leadership and Management Development* (Gower, 2010) and, more recently, two research methods books, *Management Research* (2013), in the Sage 'A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book About' series, and *A Guide to Professional Doctorates in Business and Management* (Sage, 2015). He was President of the British Academy of Management in 2007, Dean of Fellows in 2012 and in 2009–2015 he was Chair of the Society for the Advancement of Management Studies. In this latter role, he initiated the ESRC/SAMS/UKCES Management and Business Fellowship Scheme.

DANAT VALIZADE is an Associate Professor in Quantitative Methods at the University of Leeds. With a background in labour economics and an established career in the trade union movement, he graduated with a PhD in Business and Economic Studies from the University of Leeds. Danat's research interests coalesce around the changing nature of work, with a specific focus on the quality of working lives, inequalities and digital futures at work.

His empirical research applies advanced econometrics and machine learning to foster a better understanding of causal mechanisms underpinning contemporary employment relations. He has taken part in numerous research projects. He was co-investigator for the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) funded project on gender and ethnic disadvantages in the legal profession, which analysed administrative records spanning the entire solicitor population in England and Wales. He is part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) funded project investigating the relationship between staffing levels and quality of care in care homes using large administrative datasets. He is leading the work on a nationally representative analysis of employers' digital practices at work as part of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) research centre on digital futures at work (Digit).

Danat has published in leading sociology, human resource management and industrial relations journals. He sat on the editorial board of *Work, Employment and Society* and the executive committee of the British Universities Industrial Relations Associations. He is involved in Q-Step, a multi-million pound programme established by the Nuffield Foundation and the ESRC to help undergraduate students develop essential quantitative skills in the Social Sciences.

PREFACE TO THE SEVENTH EDITION

First, welcome to the seventh edition of *Management and Business Research*! We hope you find it both useful and enjoyable to read.

The first edition of this book appeared in 1991, at a time when there were very few management research methods books on the market. It quickly became established as the leading text because it covered all of the essential ground, including a comprehensive treatment of philosophical assumptions, yet was not too long or intimidating to get an overview of the key issues in research and the nature of the research process. Since then, this textbook has been through many rounds of revisions and re-writes. Ultimately, our objective remains the same in that we seek to balance breadth and depth, creativity and rigour, and (the required level of) jargon with an accessible and an engaging style. As we continue to reach out to novice researchers from the undergraduate to the doctoral level, we also aim to show how important research methods are for both academic and practitioner research. So, contrary to what many students may think when they open this book for the first time, this is not just useful for a dissertation project (or two).

As we move with the times, and the changing landscape of management and business research, we always include some new material. For this edition, the quantitative section of the book has been rewritten and, for the first time, we enter the territory of Big Data and machine learning. Machine learning is touted as the hallmark of the new era of quantitative research. It has been taken up by many disciplines, including medicine and economics. We believe that it is time to acknowledge the value and the limitations of machine learning and predictive analytics relative to causal statistical analysis. In 2020, we believe a methods textbook should make room for both – and encourage researchers (including those at undergraduate level) to work with the very data that characterizes our digital age. Therefore, we have also included additional material on conducting online research throughout the book.

In order to assist our readers in the development of their own research project as they work through the book, we have developed a Research Plan Canvas. Modelled on the famous Business Model Canvas, this template helps researchers to keep track of key decisions and to always maintain an overview of the bigger picture, and of how all elements of a research project hang together.

At this challenging time for universities, we also seek to support our academic colleagues by providing a new and much improved instructor manual that provides step-by-step guidance, and accompanying online resources with more exercises than ever before, and

modular slide decks that can be combined as needed. As in the previous edition, the book comes with full access to accompanying research articles, videos, templates and additional resources from the SAGE Research Methods platform.

As this book goes into the seventh edition, we welcome Danat Valizade as a new co-author to our team and we look forward to a strong collaboration for many editions to come. We also say goodbye to Paul Jackson and thank him for the great input provided to previous editions over many years. We mourn the loss of our lead author, Mark Easterby-Smith to whom we dedicate this book.

As we submit this manuscript, we are aware that this book will remain a work in progress. For this we rely on you – our readers – to tell us what you liked or did not like, what you found helpful and what is missing. So please feel free to get in touch and to let us know what you think!

We are facing difficult times. Management and business research is important for navigating these. We hope that this book will go some way to inspire a new generation of academics and practitioners to conduct outstanding research with impact.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is based on the personal research experience of the authors, but thanks should also go to a number of students and colleagues, who have contributed to this edition in a number of ways, through their encouragement as well as their ideas. We have tried to reflect their suggestions as far as possible in the text.

We would like to thank Mingchu Wang for his patient support throughout the revision process and the production of teaching materials. We also thank Sarah Spence for allowing us to use her great example of grounded analysis.

Our students have always taught us a great deal and we have included a number of their examples, both in this edition and in earlier editions. Those students and colleagues who have helped are now too numerous for all of them to be individually singled out, however all those who have contributed know who they are and are fully acknowledged in the previous editions of the book.

Various university colleagues have also assisted us by reading through the transcripts, making comments and suggesting ideas and to them we are extremely grateful. Again, this number grows with each edition but, for this seventh edition, we would especially like to thank those colleagues and students who have contributed to our new Research in Action textboxes:

Anne Kruckenberg	David Mosse	Georgia Stavraki	Nicholas Loubere
Carly Koinange	Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki	Hakan Ozalp	Sarah Bostan
Catherine Cassell	Eva-Marie Muller-Stuler	Hinrich Voss	Susanne Karstedt
Charlotte Coleman		Ian Smith	Tony Morgan
Conor McDonald		José F. Molina-Azorin	William Ambler

Our editor at Sage for this seventh edition has been Ruth Stitt, who has always offered us encouragement and occasionally hectored us when progress has been slow; for this we are grateful. We also thank Jessica Moran and Sarah Cooke for their support during the revision process.

The authors are grateful to Sage for permission to include extracts from R. Thorpe and J. Cornelissen (2003) 'Visual media and the construction of meaning', Chapter 4 in D. Holman and R. Thorpe (eds), *Management and Language* as well as the inclusion of a broad selection of online resources from the Sage portfolio, including its Research Methods platform.

Finally, we would like to thank our families for their tolerance while this book was being written and rewritten – we hope they will consider the outcome to be worth the effort.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

'This new, fully revised edition of *Management and Business Research* is the ideal research methods text for new and experienced researchers in management. The new edition has kept all of the strengths of the previous editions and has been updated and extended with important new developments in ethics, big data and quantitative methods. Written in an accessible and engaging way with case examples and illustrations, this is the best text in the field that offers a comprehensive as well as practical guide on the entire research process.'

Joep Cornelissen, Professor of Management, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, The Netherlands

'This excellent text goes beyond offering a useful overview of everything that the research student needs, to also offer cutting edge insights into the use of new methodological approaches. A must for every business or management student planning to engage in research.'

Catherine Cassell, Dean of Birmingham Business School, UK

'*Management and Business Research* has been central in forming the methodologies applied throughout my doctoral research. It has exceeded all expectations I held for a Research Methods book, providing deep, holistic understandings of multiple methods rather than simply mapping out methodologies that currently exist. Throughout the current pandemic that has demanded dramatic shifts in methodologies and revisiting the book has facilitated a confident and successful transition to alternative methodologies. It has gone beyond enabling an awareness of the diversity of methods available to researchers to provide clear and extensive explanations of these, which can be effectively mobilised within my research.'

Jack Daly, PhD student at Leeds University Business School, UK

'I find the book very useful in guiding my qualitative investigation in the finance and accounting sector for completing my MSc. The book provides overarching understanding on scientific research and practical guidance for conducting business research. The information provided is up-to-date and engaging. This is definitely a resourceful must-read for students planning their master thesis.'

Jingwen Zhou, MSc student at University of California, Irvine (UCI), USA

'This is a user-friendly book for undergraduate students majoring in management and business. The book is very interactive, and the online resources are sufficient. Notes and definitions in the margins of the book make the reading much easier. This is the Bible for writing my final dissertation.'

Conghui Huang, undergraduate student at Essex Business School, University of Essex, UK

'As an undergraduate student, I found this book applicable to planning and conducting any social science research project. Concepts are explained clearly but concisely, and examples are relevant and thought-provoking. The chapter on machine learning is especially useful since it explains an important topic not yet covered in most research methods textbooks.'

Alex Patel, BSc student at University of Leeds, UK

GUIDE TO ICONS

Your digital resources

Don't forget to use the wealth of digital resources available with this book to help with your research.

To access these resources, simply visit <https://study.sagepub.com/easterbysmith7e>.

The following icons appear throughout the book to indicate where extra learning resources are available:



Online solution

Go online to access answers to questions and exercises in the book.



Example

Explore additional practical examples that build on key issues and methods.



Template

Download a selection of useful templates including a literature review checklist and a research plan canvas.



Video

Access a range of free videos, including content from the SAGE Research Methods platform.



Weblink or Additional guidance

Follow links to additional, publicly accessible resources.



Case study

Access a range of free SAGE Research Methods Case Studies.



SAGE Journal Articles and book chapters

Read SAGE Journal Articles and chapters from other research methods textbooks.



Activity

Take part in a range of activities involving self-study, group work, or open discussions in class.



Dataset

Access real-world datasets to support your quantitative research and analysis.

ONLINE RESOURCES



Head online to <https://study.sagepub.com/easterbysmith7e> to access a range of online resources that will aid study and support teaching. The seventh edition of *Management and Business Research* is accompanied by:

For Lecturers

- A comprehensive **instructor's manual** with step-by-step guidance, ideas for tutorials and seminars, and answers to activities in the book.
- **PowerPoint slides**, which can be adapted and edited to suit your own teaching needs.

Set up or use your instructor login to access these lecturer resources.

For Students

- Test your understanding and prepare for exams with interactive **multiple-choice questions**.
- Watch **online videos**, including free content from **SAGE Video**, to improve your understanding of key research concepts.
- Check your understanding with **answers to exercises** in the book.
- Choose from a range of **practical resources** and **templates** for download, including research plan canvasses, literature review templates, interactive graphs and R tutorials.
- Access a range of free **SAGE Research Methods case studies**, which link theory to real life.
- Read **SAGE journal articles** and **chapters from other research methods textbooks** to further your knowledge and support your assignments.
- Broaden your understanding by accessing **useful weblinks** to publicly accessible resources and access **additional guidance** on key topics.
- Revise key terminology with **glossary flashcards** and **encyclopaedia entries**.

YOUR GUIDE TO THE RESEARCH PROCESS

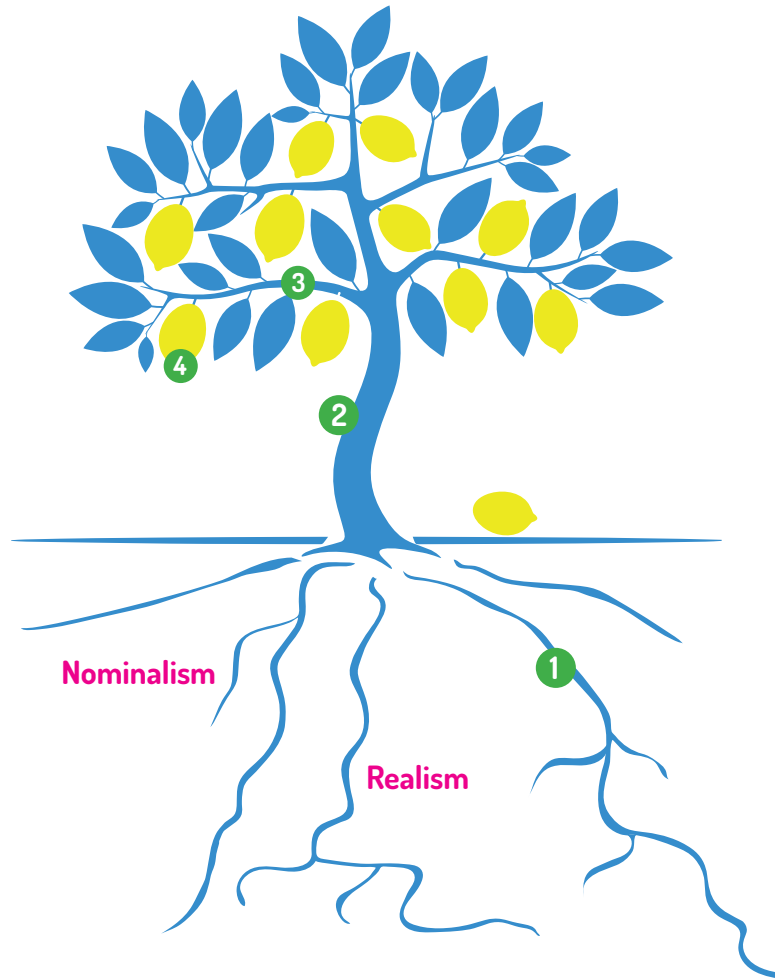
Understanding the philosophy underlying research designs and methods is a crucial part of any research project.

Chapter 3 of this book, 'The Philosophy of Management and Business Research', outlines how a tree can be used as a metaphor to represent the research process. The tree metaphor is designed to help you understand the importance of research traditions and key concepts.

THE TREE AS A METAPHOR FOR THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The key elements of the tree are the roots, the trunk and branches, the leaves, and the fruit. Each of these plays a vital role in the growth of the tree and parallels important aspects of conducting research.

- 1** The **roots** of the tree symbolize the research traditions within particular disciplines. The soil in which the roots are anchored is made up from the experience of previous research projects all designed to answer the problematics that exist within particular management disciplines or fields. Your research is rooted in these traditions and builds on existing theory and knowledge.
- 2** The **trunk** transports the nutrients from the roots through the branches to the leaves and fruit; it also provides strength and shape to the tree. The colour-coded cross-section of the tree on p. 71 symbolizes the four main features of a research design: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods and techniques.
- 3** Moving up and along the **branches**, the leaves of a tree collect energy from sunlight, and so represent the collection and analysis of research data. It is the collection of what is already known about the subject (drawn up from the soil), together with new empirical research data collected from the leaves, from your original research study, which enables the evolution of theory.
- 4** The **fruits** of the tree represent research outputs. The form of outputs depends on underlying assumptions and the purpose of the research.



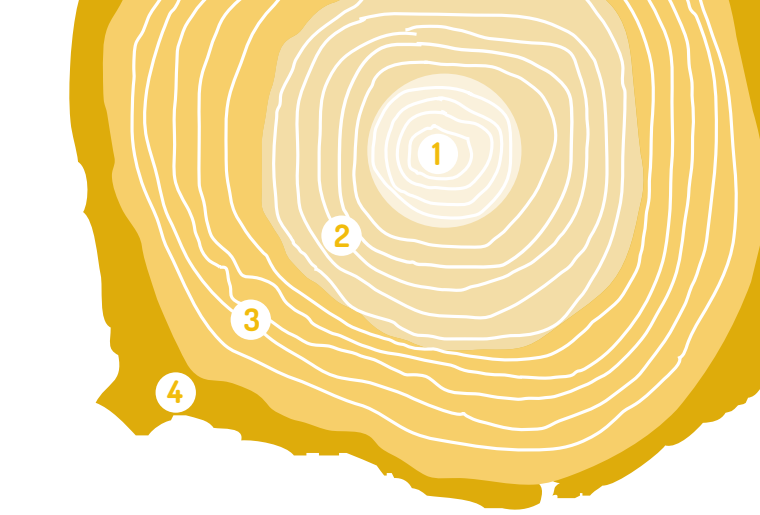
CROSS-SECTION OF TREE TRUNK

1 The inner ring of the trunk is the densest part of the trunk, and represents the **ontology**, your basic assumptions about the nature of reality.

2 The second ring of the trunk represents the **epistemology**, the assumptions about the best ways of inquiring into the nature of the world.

3 The third ring from the centre represents the methodology or *how methods and techniques are combined* to form a coherent research strategy.

4 The outer fourth ring of the trunk (bark) represents the individual **methods and techniques** that are used for data collection

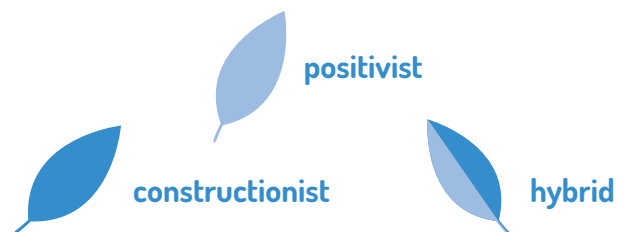


and analysis, such as interviews and questionnaires. The bark is the only aspect of the research that is visible to others but behind it lie many assumptions and decisions about methodology, epistemology and ontology.

If the trunk is rotten from the inside, the tree cannot withstand the weather in the long run. A research project where ontology, epistemology and methodology do not align cannot withstand evaluation or critical review.

The leaves represent the collection and analysis of data.

We distinguish between three main kinds of data based on the underlying epistemology (second ring in the trunk cross-section), according to whether they are essentially **positivist**, **constructionist** or **hybrid** (mixed methods) approaches.



Various Third Ways

DELVE DEEPER

In the same way that roots draw nutrition from the soil, research traditions are drawn up and form the basis of the research design, methods and forms of analysis. There are three different possible ontological research traditions (inner ring in the trunk cross-section) explained in Chapter 3 – a **realist** perspective, a **nominalist** perspective and what we term **various other third ways** (a mixture of the realist and nominalist traditions).



Watch book author Richard Thorpe explaining the tree metaphor in this video:

<https://study.sagepub.com/easterbysmith7e>