

Methods for Investigating Organizational Knowledge Communication

For the 2016 edition of JOOKC we, the editors, issued a general call for research articles focusing on methodology and methods of special interest to researchers carrying out research in the knowledge communication of organizations. We did so with a view to opening up a discussion of novel methodological ways of conducting research pertaining to the relationships between organization, knowledge and communication. The underlying reasoning was primarily a twofold one: First of all, in its capacity as a 3rd order disciplinarity, Organizational Knowledge Communication is independent from the restraints of any one disciplinary doxa and of any one method. That does not mean, obviously, that Organizational Knowledge Communication does not accept or allow for method use etc. But it does mean that scholars viewing themselves as Organizational Knowledge Communication scholars do adhere less to protocol (methodologically and method-wise etc.) than do the bulk of other researchers. What Organizational Knowledge Communication scholars adhere to and ‘live’ in their research, in terms of method and methodology, is an acceptance of the idea that their only obligation is to match the complexity of the object of study with modes of examinations befitting said complexity. Secondly, because we, the editors, had come to the belief that Organizational Knowledge Communication had, by now, reached a sort of state of maturity that would seem to call for a more in-depth account of methods and methodologies of choice among our peers.

Our call did certainly not go unanswered. In fact our call was answered by quite a number of researchers from all over the world. Out of that number, a total of four papers were accepted for publication. Each of the four papers making up this year’s edition of JOOKC is, needless to say, a high-quality research paper in its own right. But, in addition to that, the criterion superimposed on each of the four papers was whether or not it would add novelty to the methodological ‘how’ of Organizational Knowledge Communication research. Each paper contributes exactly with the added value called for, of course, and – mirroring the complexity of Organizational Knowledge Communication – each paper does so in its very own and unique way.

This edition of JOOKC opens with Peter Kastberg’s Research Design – Composition, Configuration and Interdependencies. In this essay, he argues for a view on research design that focusses on the interdependent integration of the elements of a research design (i.e. research question, philosophy of science, methodology, method, and data). In his view, it is this integration – and not strict adherence to protocolar serialization – of the elements in the research design which allows for a relational rather than an atomistic outlook and which, in turn, gives rise to an ecological conceptualization of research design. Promoting an idea of plasticity and fluidity while, at the same time, not relinquishing control over project-relevant, multifaceted decision-making processes – and their respective interdependencies – , the overall aim of the paper is to pave the way for establishing a reflexive approach to research design which, in turn, would be in tune with the tenets of the field of Organizational Knowledge Communication. The second paper is the paper by Sigrid Norris and Jesse Pirini, Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand, entitled Communicating knowledge, getting attention, and negotiating disagreement via video conferencing technology: A multimodal analysis. In their paper the authors present, discuss and conduct research by means of a multimodal methodological approach which allows them to gain new insights into the real-life complexity of knowledge communication. With explicit reference to their multimodal perspective they demonstrate that communicating knowledge, coordinating attention, and disagreeing

are not primarily produced through language, but are rather performed through the interconnection of always multiple modes such as gaze, gesture, posture or object handling with or without language. Both the novel methodology applied as well the insights gained through its use beckon us to examine, with equal multimodal complexity, other settings in which knowledge is communicated – from education to employment, from organization to gaming. The third paper is Linda Greve's *Distributed, Negotiable and Hyper-Individual : Towards a Definition of Shareable Knowledge*. This article investigates how groups scaffold their knowledge-sharing processes by use of numerous modes and argues that knowledge sharing is constituted by the modes available, not necessarily the knowledge available. This article puts forward the claim, that knowledge cannot be shared as if it were a physical resource, as it is by definition bound to personal experience. This claim is tested and – as it turns out – substantiated in settings in which select groups of professionals are encouraged to solve certain problems. Emerging from the novel and complex experimental methodology employed comes the crucial distinction between knowledge co-creation on the one hand and exchanging information or experiences on the other. The distinction is crucial because it debunks – in a theoretically substantiated and empirically founded way – a truism which still haunts the fields of Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning alike, i.e. the (fallacious) conflation of knowledge and information. The fourth paper in this edition of *JOOKC* is *Experience Sampling as a Method for Studying In Situ Organizational Communication* by Benjamin Lauren, Michigan State University, USA. In his paper, the point of departure is that all organizations are – or should for obvious reasons be – interested in healthy communication workflows. This article describes a complex method for studying in situ communication in the multilayered flux of workplace communication. Due to that fact the most – if not all – organizations are either project organizations or – at any rate – rely on a number of project-based organizational strands, the focal point of the paper and the novel method presented, discussed and applied is one of communication around projects. The insights gained (both method-wise and in terms of the results produced) are as current as they are important; not only to Organizational Knowledge Communication but indeed also to the adjacent fields of Organizational Communication as well as Project Management.

The Editors