Mind the Gap and Find Common Ground: Empirical Research in Multiple Firms

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Agenda

- Academia-industry collaboration
- The empirical study: Case study and interpretive study
- Advantages and challenges
- Discussion
- Conclusion
Academia-industry collaboration

http://shirahime.ch
In fact...

(Grossman et al., 2001)

- The funding and resource allocation for academic research in industry has been minimal

- In firms where academic research is nascent, the concern is "to take the research and training needs of the industries more seriously"
The empirical study

Case Study [Yin, 1984]
A global IT firm

- Preliminary questionnaires
- In-depth interviews

Interpretive Study (Walsham, 1995)
7 firms

- In-depth interviews
## Research field and population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaires</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research field</td>
<td>A global IT management software provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research population</td>
<td>25 leading service architects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Open questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>Open coding (Strauss &amp; Corbin, 1990)</td>
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Advantages

• Comparing different work procedures

• Finding solution for one firm in another firm`s best practices

• The ability to decontextualize and recontextualize

• "Same old Bess in a new dress"
Challenges

- Ethics

- Interviewer`s knowledge and expertise

- "On the record"/"off the record" data
Discussion

• Triangulation

• Limitations
  o The additional cases were in a single country
  o Restricted access to written material
  o One/two interviews in each firm
Conclusions

- Interpretive study, especially in multiple firms, is an effective way to collect rich data from the field.

- Several strategies (e.g., interviewer expertise, knowledge sharing) were found helpful in promoting collaboration.

- Ethical concerns should be handled carefully, as well as their perception by the industrial collaborators.
Questions?

Thank you!