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Editorial

Reporting case studies for making an impact

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Good scientific papers build on a robust research design and methods that produce credible outcomes and useful contributions. The research methods used in any scientific study are reported in different sections of the paper: key choices concerning the research design are briefly mentioned in the abstract and introduction, certain science philosophical assumptions and delimitations may need to be explicated in the introduction, all design and method choices are explained thoroughly in the method section, the analytical techniques used appear very lively in the results, and validity limitations and validity enhancement procedures may appear in the discussion or conclusions. The same is true for case studies. For case studies to be credible and to make a valuable impact, the reporting of the research data must be sufficiently transparent and the research process must be traceable (Martinsuo & Huemann, 2021).

In a previous editorial, we identified the general requirements for designing case study research in project studies, mapped the central choices that need to be made in case study research, and introduced alternative case study designs (Martinsuo & Huemann, 2021). This editorial continues by introducing the basic requirements when reporting case study methods in scientific papers. We characterize the typical problems of submitted papers and identify some good practices in coming up with successful papers. While each of the various case study designs has its specific requirements and features, here, we focus on the general method issues instead of the specific details of alternative designs. For a case study to make an impact, it must be well designed, the data collection and analysis methods that were used must be transparently reported, and the study must make a novel contribution to the relevant field (Martinsuo & Huemann, 2021).

With the case study editorial mentioned above (i.e., Martinsuo & Huemann, 2021) and our earlier editorials (Huemann & Martinsuo, 2020; Martinsuo & Huemann, 2020; Pesämaa, Zwikael, Hair & Huemann, 2021), we hope to help authors write better papers on project studies that will have a greater impact.

1. Reporting the cases and the case study context

As recommended in our previous editorial (Martinsuo & Huemann, 2021), the reporting of case studies requires authors to distinguish very clearly between the case and its context (or multiple cases and their specific contexts). Both the cases and contexts need to be identified, justified properly, and introduced in such a manner that the readers can understand their nature and representativeness and also assess the transferability of the research results.

Even if the cases need to be treated anonymously, the readers need to understand their nature or what they represent among all the options of the same type of unit of analysis. For example, if the cases are projects, the authors need to explain what types of projects were selected as cases, why they were selected, and what they are like (e.g., objectives, scope, duration, budget, team size). The same applies to project portfolios or programs: the authors need to explain what types of portfolios or programs were selected, why they were selected, and what they are like (relative to each other and compared to their alternatives). If the cases are organizations, the authors need to provide some background information on the types of organization that were studied, why they were studied in particular, and what is known about them (e.g., size, industry, markets, nature of business, types of projects). Similarly, the contexts of the cases need to be introduced properly: the types of industries, businesses, networks, or organizations surrounding the cases and what is known about them compared to their alternatives.

We have come across many case study papers that do not report enough information on the cases that were studied and the contexts of these. The cases may be introduced extremely weakly, and their application contexts may be quite unclear. Sometimes authors fail to point out whether the case is a project or a process for carrying out a project in an organization. Sometimes we cannot see if the project is treated from the supplier's or buyer's perspective or from the perspective of the entire project network. Authors may also fail to mention if the cases studied belong to the private or public sector, and they do not always introduce the industrial or business sector that the cases belong to. Sufficient information on the cases and their contexts must be provided to the readers to shed light on their representativeness and to enable result transferability.

Sometimes we also receive case study papers where the cases and contexts of the empirical study do not match the earlier knowledge reported in the literature review. For example, it may happen that the literature review highlights projects in private-sector construction

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whereas the empirical study deals with public-sector investment projects. Sometimes the literature review covers project business or project organizing in organizations in general whereas the empirical study concerns specific types of projects only in a certain industry (e.g., product development projects in large firms or construction projects in project networks). There may even be an intra-organizational–inter-organizational context mismatch between the literature review and the empirical study. Authors need to ensure that the context of the literature review matches the context of the empirical study.

In good case study papers, the authors demonstrate an awareness of the distinction between the cases and their contexts, justify and introduce them clearly, and report the study in a context-aware manner. The choices of cases and their contexts need to be justified by pointing out and explaining their importance, relevance, and suitability for the research task; it must be made clear that they were chosen not only because it is convenient to use them in the case study or because they are easy to access. Even if the cases were anonymized, the authors need to provide sufficient background information on them and their contexts to enable the readers to compare or contrast them with earlier case studies and to assess the transferability of the study's findings. The authors will also need to refer to previous studies relevant to their case study context to build a foundation for and support their empirical study. The contexts and units of analysis covered in the early part of the paper need to match the contexts and cases of the empirical study.

2. Selecting the case study research methods

In all case studies, researchers need to use appropriate methods to access knowledge about the studied phenomenon through a specific case or specific cases in the context of such phenomenon.

Any research method and any source of data in the toolkit of case study researchers may be useful. Table 1 presents examples of case study data collection methods that can be used and their common strengths and weaknesses. To choose the right methods for their study, researchers must be aware of and stay true to the philosophical underpinnings of their research, whether objectivist, subjectivist, realist, pragmatist, or something in between (Martinsuo & Huemann, 2021).

A typical challenge we see in submitted case study papers is that the researchers often settle for an overly simple and easy research method, without considering its sufficiency and suitability for the research task (also Piekkari, Welch & Paavilainen, 2009). Authors may, for example, conduct just a few interviews for a single case or one interview per case for multiple cases, or collect just a bundle of documents, without anything else. They may only interview managers or a specific team even if the topic is related to broader issues in the organization. They may also participate in just one project as action researchers, observing and taking note of only the official events in the project. As a key expectation of case studies is obtaining a rich view of the case (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009), the research method to use must be considered more creatively and the chosen method must be justified clearly. Besides having multiple informants from the project, organization or among the stakeholders, multiple methods or data sources must be used to obtain and triangulate knowledge from different perspectives.

Another challenge, albeit somewhat rarer, that we observe with regard to case studies relates to the philosophical underpinnings and overall research design. Sometimes we receive papers where the authors claim to have used an interpretivist approach but actually used a deductive and extremely structured protocol both for data collection and analysis, based on the findings or frameworks of previous studies. Similarly, some authors introduce hypotheses in the early part of the paper and then process the data using a highly qualitative and inductive approach. Such discrepancies must be resolved. There is a need for coherence among the research philosophy, design, and methods.

In good case study papers, the research methods are considered strategically and match the research philosophy. While the list of data collection methods in Table 1 is not exhaustive, it should inspire authors

Table 1
Examples of data collection methods that can be used in case studies.

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Interviews and surveys		
Individual interview	• Can provide first-hand experiences • Offers potentially easy data access • Can make use of well-known practices of planning, documenting, and analyzing	• May cause selection bias and may pose selection challenges • Can cause data collection problems due to the potential selective memory of the informants • Can cause data collection problems due to the informants' unwillingness to speak • Has confidentiality issues
Group interview	• Can obtain multiple voices and accounts of first-hand experiences • Allows immediate informant triangulation • Allows potentially easy data access • Potentially less labor intensive than individual interviews	• May cause selection bias and may pose selection challenges • Can cause data collection problems due to the potential selective memory of the informants • Can cause data collection problems due to the participants' unwillingness to speak in a group • Has confidentiality issues • Poses documenting challenges
Questionnaire survey	• Can be implemented in a straightforward manner • Offers potentially easy access to a high quantity of information • Offers the possibility of using a quantitative approach in a case study • Can be consistently repeated in multiple contexts • Allows the use of good known practices of planning, documenting, and analyzing	• Superficial and provides limited information • Requires extremely good preparation: questions, scales, analysis approach (after implementation, corrections are not possible) • Requires solid analysis approaches to be useful in case studies
Workshops and exercises		
Focus group	• Can deepen the understanding of a specific topic • Has a potential for co-creation • Enables triangulation and checking/verifying of data in any situation	• May cause selection bias and may pose selection challenges • Requires the researchers to have facilitation experience • Can cause data collection problems due to the participants' unwillingness to speak in a group • Has confidentiality issues • Poses documenting challenges
Workshop	• Can provide rich data and produce artifacts • Allows intervention and co-creation • Enables triangulation and checking/verifying of data in any situation • May immediately benefit the participants (e.g., learning) and has a fun factor	• May cause selection bias and may pose selection challenges • Requires the researchers to have facilitation experience • Requires that the researcher's role and the research purpose be made very clear • Can cause data collection problems due to the participants'

(*continued on next page*)

Table 1 (*continued*)

		unwillingness to participate • Has confidentiality issues • Poses documenting challenges
Exercise, simulation	• Can provide rich data and produce artifacts • Allows intervention and co-creation • May create a new perspective on the topic • Enables triangulation and checking/verifying of data • May immediately benefit the participants (e.g., learning) and has a fun factor	• May cause selection bias and may pose selection challenges • Requires the researchers to have facilitation experience • Must be well defined to serve its purpose • Requires the researcher's role and the research purpose to be made very clear • Can cause data collection problems due to the participants' unwillingness to participate and lack of openness • Has confidentiality issues • Poses documenting challenges
Observations		
(Outsider) observation	• Can provide rich data • Can provide real-life data • Enables triangulation and checking/verifying of data	• Has potentially limited access • Not often applied in the business context • Can cause data collection problems due to the participants' difficulty in acting normally • Has confidentiality issues • Requires clear observation criteria • Requires specific researcher skills and sensitivity to the moment
Participant observation	• Can provide rich data • Can provide real-life data • Enables triangulation and checking/verifying of data	• Has potentially difficult data access • Has confidentiality issues • Involves difficulty in deciding what to observe • Takes time • May cause subjectivity or bias • Requires specific researcher skills and sensitivity to the moment
Documentations		
Internal documents and reports	• Can provide easy data access • Can provide a high quantity of data • Offers consistency • May create better understanding especially of the context	• Requires understanding of what the documentation was originally intended for (due to the secondary-data nature) • Likely superficial (with regard to the research task) • Requires clarity of the analysis purpose
Mail/e-mail correspondence	• Can provide a high quantity of data • Can provide real-life data • Allows the use of quantitative analysis approaches within the case study	• Requires understanding of what the data was originally intended for (due to the secondary-data nature) • May require a good relationship with the organization for grant of data access • Has confidentiality issues
Internal databases	• Can provide a high quantity of data • Can provide real-life data • Offers consistency • Allows the use of quantitative analysis approaches within the case study	• Requires understanding of what the database was originally intended for (due to the secondary-data nature) • May require a good relationship with the organization for grant of data access • Likely superficial (with regard to the research task) • Has confidentiality issues
Externally published documents, websites, reports	• Can provide easy data access • Can provide a high quantity of data • May create better understanding especially of the context • Offers consistency	• Requires understanding of what the documentation was originally intended for (due to the secondary-data nature) • Likely superficial (with regard to the research task)
News (magazines, newspapers, professional newsletters)	• Can provide easy data access • Can provide a high quantity of data • Offers consistency • Offers the public views on the topic • Allows the use of quantitative analysis approaches within the case study	• Requires understanding of what the documentation was originally intended for (due to the secondary-data nature) • Can cause data collection problems due to the deviation of the media strategies from the research interest
Social media	• Can provide easy data access • Can provide a high quantity of data • Allows the use of quantitative analysis approaches within the case study	• Requires understanding of what the documentation was originally intended for (due to the secondary-data nature) • Can cause data collection problems due to the deviation of the media strategies from the research interest
Diary, reflection notes	• Can provide secondary data for the purpose of the research; allows triangulation • Can provide rich data • May make the participants benefit from their own learning and reflections	• Requires much effort from the participants • Requires high participant commitment and openness • Has confidentiality issues

to go beyond interviews and find a viable and suitable combination of methods to use so that they can conduct the case study in a comprehensive way. As the overall purpose of case studies is to obtain an in-depth view of the investigated phenomenon in its specific context through the cases chosen, researchers need to think about how they can access the required knowledge in more versatile ways. The data for the cases need some kind of triangulation (Yin, 2009) by using multiple data sources or methods or both. Qualitative and quantitative methods can be combined purposefully, and multi- and mixed-method approaches are generally suitable for case studies. Interviewees are not the only possible sources of knowledge, but researchers should consider the choice of data sources openly and creatively to obtain a comprehensive, unbiased, and balanced picture of the case. Therefore, it is best for the case study protocol to include not just one method of data collection and analysis but two or more, such as interviews complemented with documentation analysis and observation of meetings.

3. Reporting the data collection for the cases

Case study researchers need to report the data collection method used transparently so that the readers can assess the sufficiency of the data for the research task and even replicate the study in other contexts.

Even if scientific papers tend to be short, the key data collection method choices made need to be written explicitly and justified clearly. Sometimes, additional details of the data collection process undertaken can be reported in appendices or as supplementary materials that the readers can access online.

The general challenges with data collection in case studies have to do with unexpressed delimitations concerning the data collection method choices made, and poor documentation. Concerning the choices of data collection method, for example, some researchers may concentrate merely on the cross-sectional data within the case, failing to explicitly mention or offer any evidence of the situation in which the data were collected and characterize the timing of data collection (e.g., phase of the project). Retrospective case studies are quite typical, but they tend to cause errors in the interviewees' recollection of past issues, and the researchers often neglect this matter. Data collection method choices should also deal with the sources of data. Some researchers may collect data merely from managers, without justifying it as a purposive scope choice and without paying any attention to the other people involved in the projects. Poor documentation refers to the lack of details in reporting the data collection process undertaken. Very often, the descriptions of data collection are vague and superficial, and reviewers tend to request more details.

In good case study papers, the data collection is purposefully delimited, sufficiently versatile, temporally appropriate, and transparently described. The entire research process needs to be introduced to characterize the route from the research purpose to the data collection and analysis and the drawing of conclusions. For some research topics, cross-sectionality and retrospectiveness may not be the optimal considerations for data collection, but process or longitudinal study should be adopted instead. Especially if the emergence or evolution of a phenomenon is to be investigated, the related process should be followed, how the events and episodes unfold should be observed, and the data collection should be spread over a period of time (see Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas & Van de Ven, 2013; Sergi, Crevani & Aubry, 2020). The use of each data collection method needs to be justified and explained to offer the readers a clear picture of how and what knowledge was sought and during which time span.

Sufficient justifications, background information, and procedural details of the data collection need to be provided. Authors need to be able to explain why certain sources of data were used and considered for the case study. Background information is related to data transparency. In the case of interviews, for example, background information may pertain to who the interviewees were, how and why they were selected for the study, and what their job positions and tenures are. Procedural information, on the other hand, pertains to the ways of accessing the data, such as how the interviews were conducted (e.g., face to face, online, by telephone), how long the interviews were, what language was used in the interviews, how the interviews were documented (e.g., via audio or video recording, field notes) and later transcribed, and how the interview transcripts were translated (if necessary).

The same requirement of justifications, background, and procedural information applies to all the alternative data sources. Authors may need to differentiate the treatment of the data sources in the method description to some extent as some data sources are primary (generated specifically for the case study, such as interviews and observations) whereas others are secondary (generated for other purposes, such as project documents and social media feeds). Some sections of the data collection process and/or data sources can be summarized in a table or figure to visualize the research steps for the readers.

4. Reporting the case data analysis method employed

When writing papers based on case study research, the most demanding requirement often relates to reporting the data analysis method used and building the argument regarding novelty from the analysis. It is not sufficient to just mention that some coding and categorization took place. There is a need to explain and justify the development of the coding approach, introduce the key steps of coding concerning the analysis in the specific case study, introduce the analysis contents, and explain how the cases were treated in the analysis.

Submitted papers often suffer from an extremely short and uninformative description of the data analysis process that was undertaken. Worse and surprisingly, some papers do not have a data analysis section. If there is a short paragraph on the data analysis process that was undertaken, it sometimes merely repeats the general data analysis approaches discussed in qualitative-data analysis books or articles but does not explain how such approaches were operationalized in the case study. In papers like these, the study results may come as a surprise to the readers as the data analysis procedures that were employed are not explained.

Another classical challenge of case study papers is related to the reflection therein of the researchers' lack of knowledge concerning the previous relevant studies in the attempt to employ an inductive analysis approach, even if very similar studies have been conducted and very similar frameworks are available. Negligence of earlier research in designing a data analysis framework or failure to adjust one's inductively developed framework is a common error in case studies. As many domains of project studies have actually already been researched, researchers should acknowledge earlier studies and use them in determining their analysis frameworks, or at least adjust their frameworks through purposive readings during the analysis process.

Success with case study papers requires a skilled description of the data analysis process and contents used toward the end of the method section. Data analysis is a crucial step in building the validity of the case study research. Again, researchers need to balance the article length requirements of journals and the detail requirements of reviewers and other readers. The entire data analysis process needs to be introduced step by step, from exploring the data and presenting the analytical framework to explaining how the data were interpreted and how the conclusions were derived from the data analysis. For case studies, there is a need to conduct case-specific and cross-case analyses with rigor, and consequently decide on whether the analysis should be reported starting from the cases (covering the core analytical themes within and across the cases) or by using a phenomenon-based thematic structure (immediately covering all the cases).

The data analysis section should offer a sufficiently thorough description of the justified data analysis method choices and structures that guide the understanding of the results, using tips from textbooks (e.g., Miles & Hubermann, 1994; Stake, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) or certain articles (e.g., Gioia, Gorley & Hamilton, 2012) as helpful guides and justifications for structuring the data analysis process. Various techniques for conducting a rigorous case study analysis exist, such as systematic coding, content analysis, narrative or discourse analysis, and network analysis. If the inductively derived frameworks find guidance or support from extant literatures, then systematic combining and abductive reasoning can be very useful when analyzing case-based data (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Visualizing the analytical structures through figures or tables is usually also very helpful (Gioia et al., 2012; Miles & Hubermann, 1994; Stake, 2006). The use of qualitative-data analysis software may increase the efficiency and quality of the data analysis work, and multiple researchers are sometimes needed to verify the quality of the data analysis. It is important to report such procedural issues in the method section. Furthermore, if the authors decide to use direct quotes from the data or vignettes as part of the findings, they should explain how the quotes or vignettes were selected, and why they were selected. Transparency of the data analysis choices, structures, and process is necessary so that the analysis can be replicated in other contexts if and when needed.

5. Interpreting the data and drawing conclusions from the cases

In addition to the steps of coding and case treatment, there is a need

to describe how the obtained findings were interpreted and how the conclusions were arrived at on the basis of the data analysis process that was undertaken. The data interpretations and the conclusions derived from the cases are then built into the article's results (findings) section. Selected few key issues will be picked from a helicopter perspective and included in the discussion section to find the answers to the research question(s) and to discuss them vis-a-vis the existing literature, and to point out the study's contributions.

A typical problem in interpreting the data and reporting the case findings is that authors may just offer a superficial description of the cases or a rough overview of certain themes identified in the data, with support from some direct quotations from interviews, observations, or documents. Indeed, we sometimes see that the cases are described using a certain descriptive structure, but there is no cross-case analysis or contextual consideration. Alternatively, there may be a thematic framework through which the case data are merged into one story (as if all the cases were exactly the same), but there is no consideration of the different experiences across the cases or data sources/informants. These kinds of approaches often imply that the authors executed only the first and second steps of the data analysis process (reading, coding, and categorization) but did not execute the most important third and fourth steps (searching for patterns, similarities, and differences, and interpreting the cases for the phenomenon and in their context). Such a superficial treatment of the data often leaves the readers wondering, "What is the issue here? What do these cases or these themes offer together as a whole? What is the novelty or surprise?" Often, the analytical framework is too trivial and simplistic, the cases in their context are not properly covered in the findings, the data collection method employed is not sufficiently transparent, and the flow of the entire story is not coherent and grounded in earlier knowledge.

Another common error is mixing the case study findings with the findings of earlier studies. Sometimes the existing literature is used by comparing the case study findings with those of earlier studies in the findings section. However, the readers need to see exactly what was found from the empirical study conducted, and must be able to differentiate the authors' own work from someone else's. Therefore, the previous knowledge should have been included in the literature review, and previous studies that guided or supported the data coding and analysis process undertaken in the present case study should have been mentioned in the method section, when introducing the data analysis process that was undertaken in the study. The writing of case study papers does not need to proceed in a linear manner. Even if the relevant previous studies were identified very late during the research process, the authors can include them in the early sections of the paper and in a separate discussion section.

Well-written case study papers report the results of the in-depth data analysis that was conducted using a clear and well-justified analytical framework. The structuring and logical flow of the findings are important, and so is the transparency of the empirical data. The use of well-crafted tables and figures is usually a good way of summarizing some findings, but they need to be informative and also sufficiently compact to suit the journal format and they need to be explained in the text. We recommend that the results section of case study papers be kept "clean" or purely empirical so it will be quite clear where the evidence for the study findings was found. A separate discussion section is needed after the findings, where the major matches and mismatches between the findings of the present and previous studies can be reflected, and where the research question can be answered on the basis of both the current and earlier research findings.

6. Ensuring validity and quality

As different case studies may have specific underlying scientific philosophical assumptions, it is important for the validity considerations for the case study to be aligned with the chosen research design. The validity issues of case study papers are explicitly covered in the scope choices and delimitations (in the introduction section), in the validity-enhancing procedures (in the method section), and as validity limitations (in the conclusion section). All case study researchers must consider the very specific validity issues in their own study (e.g., quality, transferability, reliability, replicability). Papers do not need textbook sections but honest and straightforward considerations of the validity issues in the empirical study itself.

A common challenge of case study papers is that validity and reliability considerations are either completely missing or are covered extremely superficially and unsystematically. Some papers may even include a brief, neutral validity statement almost directly copied from textbooks or some other papers, not matching the actual contents and research design of the paper. Sometimes the reviewers do not notice the missing or weak validity considerations. This may be because project studies have a short history as a scientific field, but it is obvious that project scholars are now learning to better consider validity issues. An important part of scientific research is the open and critical treatment of research validity.

Another common problem of case study papers is that they do not clearly explicate the scope delimitations of the study and the procedures that were undertaken to enhance the study's validity. For example, the paper may concentrate on a certain level of analysis, such as a portfolio, but may cover the literature on the organizational level and/or the project level, confusing the scope of the study. The implicitness of scope delimitations causes typical challenges during the review process, when the readers have to guess what the study covered and what it purposely excluded. Scope delimitations in case studies may deal with the context or with the level or unit of analysis and have direct implications on the domains to which the results may be transferable. Similarly, if validity enhancement is not covered in the paper, the entire setting may appear as opportunistic, or the readers may not be able to see the rigor with which the research was carried out. The authors thus have the responsibility to report and justify their method choices.

Good case study papers have a very strategic orientation toward research validity, and this is apparent throughout the paper. The scope choices of the study match the research procedures and outcomes. Validity is built into the study from beginning to end, not just added as a last-minute generic paragraph of limitations. Some guidelines for relevant aspects of validity in qualitative and case studies are reported in various textbooks (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2009) and articles (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010; Goffin, Åhlström, Bianchi, & Richtnér, 2019; Lindgreen, Di Benedetto, & Beverland, 2021; Pratt, Kaplan, & Whittington, 2020). As all case studies are unique, it is important for authors to openly report their genuine method choices and remaining limitations. Higher-quality case study papers will contribute to more impactful project studies over time.

7. Making an impact with case studies

While case studies may be relevant and interesting stories, they also have a good potential to have a practical and scientific impact. First and foremost, the researchers themselves play a central role in making their papers attractive to the prospective readers. Here, the papers' title, abstract, and keywords are crucial. The writing style and readability are also quite important in maintaining the readers' interest throughout the paper. Selecting particularly relevant and interesting cases and reporting them with their real names (or at least informative pseudonyms) is likely to attract readers. Summing up the study's contributions in a very explicit and informative way will help the next researchers build on the study's findings. Besides the publisher's distribution of its journal with the researchers' article, the researchers themselves can advertise and share their own work in line with their publishing agreement with the publisher.

Practical impacts relate to both explaining the implications of the study's findings to professional project audiences in the paper's conclusion section and translating the scientific text into lectures for

educational sessions and consulting practice (which requires additional work besides scientific writing). Generally, case studies are not intended to make normative claims or generalizations (e.g., "this is how things should be done"). However, they are important because of the novel understanding of the investigated phenomena that they offer, their potential to produce learning from cases in certain contexts, and the fact that they can activate discussion among practitioners and for educational purposes. Deriving useful practitioner benefits from case study papers is an important and broad topic, however, and may be the subject of another editorial. Thus, below, we concentrate on the challenges of and good practices for making a scientific impact.

Some common challenges regarding making a scientific impact relate to the title and abstract of a paper: they may be uninformative or overly technical, may lack the right words, and may fail to inspire. Sometimes the titles and abstracts of submitted papers do not match the contents of the papers, thereby misleading the readers and endangering a proper reviewer selection. Fortunately, the problems with titles and abstracts are often spotted and resolved during the review process, but they can be corrected beforehand by the authors themselves, by clarifying the core content of the paper. Often, researchers write the abstract at the last minute, as a technical assignment, by merely repeating the facts stated in the paper and concentrating on the empirical cases. In reality, however, the abstract should be made attractive and informative. Its main task is to attract and inspire people to read the paper by clearly positioning the entire study and stating its contributions.

Authors may also change the title and abstract in the manuscript file during the revision but forget to change them in the Editorial Manager system, which may cause a confusion in the publication process. It is the authors' responsibility to ensure that their case study paper has an informative, attractive title and abstract, and that these are consistent in the manuscript and in the submission system.

Another common challenge concerning the impact of a case study has to do with the ideas for future research. Research prospects may be treated very technically and briefly and written at the last minute. They may only involve implementing the case study in other contexts or using the developed framework in quantitative studies. Yet, the role of ideas for future research is quite central in creating a scientific impact for the paper and activating new research. Especially with case studies (and more generally with any project study), there is a need to think about the research possibilities concerning the studied phenomenon in a strategic way, not just empirically but also theoretically.

Scientific impact is sometimes assessed in terms of citations. Unfortunately, some case studies are not cited much after their publication. Either they fail to find their audience or their research quality and contributions are too weak to merit citing. As mentioned in an earlier editorial (Martinsuo & Huemann, 2020), we see writing as a conversation with the audience (Huff, 1999), which implies that by citing other authors, people participate in a certain conversation. What, then, attracts other authors to cite certain research papers?

Successful case study papers are written for a specific audience and speak to that audience from the title onwards. Special care should be taken in writing the title and abstract for the audience. In the main text, there is a need to offer sufficient information about the cases to enable comparison, replication, and purposive contrasting by other researchers, both in their own research and in forthcoming publications. Authors can make their paper attractive by demonstrating the problem that the study sought to address or the need for the study and its relevant goal, show appreciation for and insights regarding other authors' works, cite a study contribution that can build future research, and use an easy-to-read and high-quality writing style. When proposing future research avenues, the researcher must inspire the audience to move forward by presenting the research possibilities strategically. Furthermore, authors can take an active role in advertising their case studies in an inspiring way through their personal channels and social media accounts, and in converting their findings into materials that can be used for educational and practical purposes.

8. Summary: tips for reporting case studies

Together with the earlier editorial (Martinsuo & Huemann, 2021), this text offers several tips for authors who want to publish their case studies in journals such as International Journal of Project Management.

- Clearly justify your choice of research design. Be explicit with regard to your study's scope delimitations.
- Clearly describe and justify your choice of case/cases. Be clear about your unit of analysis (case) and level of analysis.
- Report the case study context comprehensively enough to enable the readers to understand the results of your case study in its specific context.
- Ensure that your research methods are aligned with the underlying research-related philosophical assumptions of your chosen research design.
- Ensure the depth of your case study. Use well-justified data collection methods, ensure that they support each other, and form a coherent research method entity for studying the case(s).
- Report the data collection methods (method choices, data sources, background information, procedures, documenting) in a transparent manner.
- Report your data analysis approach (choices, ways of coding and analyzing, structuring, interpreting, drawing conclusions).
- Do not settle with just the first rounds of data analysis, which are superficial, as bases for your study results. Rather, write the results of the in-depth final phases of the data analysis in such a way that they will offer something new and surprising concerning the case in its context and the phenomenon being investigated, at the chosen level of analysis.
- Assess and discuss your study's validity issues in line with the philosophical assumptions of your chosen research design. Report the procedures through which you attempted to enhance your study's validity (in the method section) and clearly identify the validity limitations that remained (in the conclusion section).
- Ideas for future research should not be considered only on the basis of the validity limitations of your study. Rather, think about them more strategically in relation to the investigated phenomenon and theories.

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