Title: Designing Qualitative IS Research Projects

Ph.D. course at the Center for Doctoral Studies in Business, University of Mannheim

Instructor:

Prof. Dr. Jens Dibbern, Institute of Information Systems, University of Bern

Dates & Time:

- April 04, 2018 14.00-18.00: Class (including break)
- April 05, 2018 09.00-12.15: Class (including break)

Period for student group work

- May 28, 2018 14.00-18.00: Class (including break)
- May 29, 2018 09.00-12.15: Class (including break)

Course description:

This course provides an overview of qualitative research methods and their application in the field of Information Systems (IS). The course begins with an introduction to the basic principles and alternatives of conducting qualitative research. It then provides deeper insights into three types of qualitative research, i.e. positivist variance-theoretic, interpretive (and/or grounded theory based), and process theoretic. For each of them, the underlying design principles will be discussed with illustrative examples. The students are required to summarize and discuss particular research papers and to reflect on how the design principles of conducting qualitative research were applied in the respective papers. For particular topics the students will be grouped into teams and will be required to prepare their group work and present it in class. Overall, the course is designed to be interactive. The students learn how to design their own qualitative research study. They are enabled to illustrate the application of the design principles learned in the course.

Grading:

The course will be graded based on three inputs:

- 20% Contributions of the students to class discussions during the sessions
- 30% Group presentation
- 50% Written research proposal, which has to be presented in form of a written research-in-progress paper after the course. In this paper, the students are required to elaborate a research proposal in which they show how a topic of their choice (e.g. their dissertation topic) could be examined (either entirely, partly, or complementarily) using (at least) one of the discussed qualitative research approaches and respective design principles. This paper is due two months after the course sessions (July 31, 2018). Details about the proposal, including an example, will be provided at the end of the course. The instructor will provide written feedback on each proposal.
Readings for Class Discussion:

A collection of papers will be provided prior to the course in electronic form (see Schedule with Literature). The students are required to read the literature highlighted in BOLD prior to the sessions. The other readings (including the basic literature) are recommended but are not obligatory readings.

Basic readings:


Short Bio:

Jens Dibbern is a Professor and Co-Director of the Institute of Information Systems at the University of Bern, Switzerland. He received his Ph.D. in information systems from the University of Bayreuth and was assistant professor at the University of Mannheim, Germany. His research focuses on various aspects of the division of work in information systems provision and through information systems, such as outsourcing, offshoring, platform ecosystems, enterprise systems use, and IT-supported collaboration. His publication appeared or appear in Information Systems Research (ISR), Management Information Systems Quarterly (MISQ), Journal of Management Information Systems (JMIS), Journal of the Association of Information Systems (JAIS), and others. He has been associate editor of MISQ and currently serves as senior editor of JAIS and MISQ Executive; he is also department editor of Business & Information Systems Engineering.
## Schedule:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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Example for Illustration: Dibbern (2008)  
| 3  | Day 2   | Dibbern, J. | 2.2 Data Analysis (and Presentation of Findings)          | (See Session 2)                                                   |
Foundations for Grounded Theory: Corbin and Strauss (1990)  
Suddaby (2006), Urquhart et al. (2010)  
Examples for Illustration: Leonardi (2013)  
Kumar et al. (1998) |
| 5  | Day 3   | Student Presentations | 3.1 Seven Principles of Interpretive Case Study 3.3 Exemplified Applications | Student groups choose a paper of their choice for illustration of the Principles of Interpretive Case Study Research |
| 6  | Day 3   | Student Presentations | 3.2. Principles of Grounded Theory 3.3 Exemplified Applications | Student groups choose a paper of their choice for illustration of the use of Grounded Theory |
| 8  | Day 4   | Dibbern, J. | 4.2. Exemplified Applications                                 | Examples for Illustration: Huber et al. (2013)  
Huber et al. (2017) |
|    |         | Dibbern, J. | 5. Outline on Research Proposal                               |                                                                          |
Structure and Content

1. General Principles and Alternatives of Conducting Qualitative Research (Session 1)
   a. The Triadic Network of Justification
   b. Qualitative versus Quantitative Research
   c. Categorization of Qualitative Research
      i. Exploratory versus Confirmatory
      ii. Positivist versus Interpretive
      iii. Variance versus Process Theoretic

2. Principles for Positivist Variance-Theoretic Case Study Research (Sessions 2 and 3)
   a. Rigor in IS Positivist Case Research
      i. Research Design
         1. Research Questions
         2. Theoretical Slate
         3. Case Design – Single-Multiple
         4. Replication Logic and Generalizing
         5. Unit of Analysis
         6. Context of the Case Study
      ii. Data Collection
         1. Elucidation of the Data Collection Process
         2. Multiple Data Collection Methods
         3. Data Triangulation
         4. Case Study Protocol and Case Study Database
      iii. Data Analysis (and Presentation of Findings)
         1. Elucidation of the Data Analysis Process
         2. Field Notes, Coding, Data Displays, and Flexible and Opportunistic Process
         3. Logical Chain of Evidence
         5. Searching for Cross-Case Patterns
         6. Use of Natural Controls (Explanatory Case Studies)
         7. Quotes and Project Reviews
         8. Comparison with Extant Literature (Exploratory Case Studies)

3. Principles for Interpretive Case Study Research and for Grounded Theory (Sessions 4 to 6)
   a. Seven Principles of Interpretive Case Studies
   b. Principles of Grounded Theory
   c. Exemplified Applications

4. Principles for Process Theoretic Case Study Research (Session 7-8)
   a. The Challenge
   b. Seven Strategies for Theorizing from Process Data
      i. Narrative Strategy
      ii. Quantification Strategy
      iii. Alternate Templates Strategy
      iv. Grounded Theory Strategy
      v. Visual Mapping Strategy
      vi. Temporal Bracketing Strategy
      vii. Synthetic Strategy
   c. Summary
   d. Exemplified Applications

5. Outline on Research Proposal (Session 8 - Conclusion)
Literature

(All papers listed here will be made available electronically.)


