

The Grounded Theory Review: An international journal

From the Editor

We've had a great response to our June issue focusing on the novice experience of doing classic grounded theory (GT). This is no doubt indicative of the number of new researchers seeking to understand and apply the classic methodology for grounded theory. There's a great sense of accomplishment in completing that first GT study, having followed the full package of classic GT methods and realizing the explanatory power of the emergent theory. The logical next step is to disseminate that theory through doctoral defence, conference presentations, collegial dialogue, teaching, and, of course, those career critical publications. Publication is in fact that next level of apprenticeship in a scholar's career; achieving those important first publications will no doubt require the same diligence as undertaking and completing the research study itself. This is true of all new scholars but anecdotal accounts suggest that those adhering to the classic GT methodology appear to encounter added hurdles wherein the social structural constraints of the dominant qualitative research paradigm impose expectations in terms of what constitutes a good paper for publication that run counter to the classic methodology. These expectations echo familiar criteria as previously encountered under doctoral or senior research supervision where the dominant paradigm assumes that grounded theory is a qualitative method. Anecdotal experiences of classic GT scholars who have managed to navigate the hurdles and achieve publication in mainstream journals would suggest that 'accommodations' are required. Accommodating without undermining remains the classic grounded theorist's challenge; one that needs to be embraced, achieved and experiences shared.

Two of the papers in this issues offer us perspectives on potential accommodating strategies. Johnston's paper presents a

GT of *marketing for acceptance* proposing an explanation of ways in which classic grounded theorists address constraints and requirements to achieve publication. Stern offers us the experience of her many years of successful mainstream publication, suggesting the use of a powerful *hook* to engage the attention of those important preliminary readers – the editors and reviewers. Once hooked, readers may be more open to alternative formats and approaches in the presentation of a paper under review.

In a recent editorial for the *Academy of Management Journal* (2009, vol.52, no.2), Colquitt and Ireland offer another valuable strategy by recommending that aspiring authors study a journal's reviewer evaluation forms to assess prospective publishing potential. These forms will set out key criteria for acceptance and reveal both specific and embedded assumptions regarding what constitutes a paper worthy of publication in that particular venue; assumptions that can be as critical to achieving publication as are the explicit criteria. The manifestation of both criteria and assumptions is of course best evidenced in reading papers being published in the journal under study. Both may require creativity if not compromise on the part of the aspiring author.

In the spirit of assisting those wishing to submit to this journal, we have included in this issue a copy of our peer review guidelines. Every paper submitted is assessed first for its adherence to our particular focus; that is, does the paper espouse and appear to adhere to classic grounded theory methodology; does it propose a substantive or a formal GT; or, does it offer a methodological perspective regarding classic GT. If the submission meets these criteria, it proceeds through to a double blind peer review process with at least two experienced classic grounded theorists reviewing and offering comments and recommendations on suitability for publication. As our guidelines state:

The goal of peer review in this journal is to advance classic grounded theory scholarship by providing constructive comments to authors with a view to enhancing the quality of papers submitted. The role of the peer reviewer is to respect the autonomy of the author by coaching rather than criticising thereby encouraging

and supporting the author's understanding of the methodology and subsequent skill development as a published grounded theorist.

Of course, sustaining reader and reviewer attention requires substance that can only be achieved by crafting that emergent theory through polished writing; taking tentative conceptual ideas from memoing to theoretical writing. To remind us of the core principles in writing a good GT, we include Dr. Glaser's paper on theoretical writing originally published in his 1978 book, **Theoretical Sensitivity**.

Rounding out the issue are two papers that address persistent challenges to the novice grounded theorist. Holton discusses *tussles* that often confront the novice research in transcending issues of preconception and descriptive detail; issues that are frequently the manifestation of research methods training situated in the qualitative paradigm. Hernandez offers advice on achieving a better understanding of theoretical coding as an essential element in classic grounded theory methodology. Her paper also offers a useful summary of the many potential theoretical coding possibilities as explicated in Dr. Glaser's work over the past 30 years.

- Judith A. Holton, Ph.D.

Submissions

We welcome papers presenting substantive and formal grounded theories from a broad range of disciplines. All papers submitted are peer reviewed and comments provided back to the authors. Papers accepted for publication will be good examples or practical applications of classic grounded theory methodology. Comments on papers published are also welcomed, will be shared with the authors and may be published in subsequent issues of the Review. See our website www.groundedtheoryreview.com for full submission guidelines. Forward submissions as Word documents to Judith Holton at judith@groundedtheoryreview.com

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Recommendations:

- Accept as it is
- Accept pending minor revisions
- Revise and resubmit

Basis for Revision:

- Needs a clearer focus
- Core category needs clarification
- Related concepts need clarification
- Theoretical propositions (hypotheses) need to be clearly articulated
- Contribution to knowledge (addressing the literature) needs further work
- Implications for practice need to be addressed
- Limitations of the study need to be addressed
- Data sources need to be addressed
- Brief statement on data collection & analysis needs to be consistent with classic GT methodology
- Composition needs work