Reviewer's report

Title: What can management theories offer evidence-based practice? A comparative analysis of measurement tools for organisational context

Version: 1 Date: 19 September 2008

Reviewer: Graeme Currie

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. Existing tools are critique-ed as incomplete, specifically not considering the social and human features associated with organizational context that impact upon translation. So the authors attempt to combine items from a range of existing tools with new items drawn from a review of organizational learning literature to develop a valid and reliable tool for assessing receptive and absorptive capacity for innovation. From my perspective, as a qualitative researcher in the organizational studies tradition, this seems rather odd and liable to exacerbate weaknesses of 'measure and manage' approaches to translation of innovation. Surely, if the problem of translation of innovation is one of taking account of social and human dimensions associated with organizational context, then the authors need to be more reflexive about their adherence to 'manage and measure' tools.

Alternative techniques for assessing the impact of organizational context are rendered even more important because knowledge associated with translation is sticky across organizational and professional boundaries. This is not just a cultural issue, but one about the nature of knowledge and political dimensions of sharing knowledge; i.e. organizational actors may hoard knowledge or resist innovation in pursuit of self-interest. This requires any research is situated in the practice of translation of innovation, rather than an externally imposed measurement tool. You may not agree with this, but I expect a robust defence of your positivist assumptions about translation.

2. If we examine academic literature and policy, whether you use a 'measure and manage' tool or more situated methods, we need to pick up how endogenous factors in the realm of organization and management support translation. Consideration of the following endogenous factors might be more clearly encompassed within your study: reconfiguration of professional roles and relationships; the leadership model enacted (e.g. transformational, 'quiet' or distributed); user involvement; the development of social capital across communities, not just within communities.

3. The paper needs to be restructured to reflect points 1 & 2. I would start with a more detailed review of the problem of knowledge sharing as revealed in the organizational learning literature. For me, organizational learning literature is more critical and reflexive about organizational context compared to the
knowledge management and learning organization literature. This gives you the
springboard to critique existing tools, which appear aligned with a knowledge
management perspective, rather than organizational learning. You then move on
to propose a solution for this. In your case a combination of items from existing
tools and new items from the organizational learning literature, earlier reviewed
(but at the minimum remain reflexive about this, preferably advocate more
situated methods?).

4. Should you remain allied to 'measure and manage' approaches, then you need
to convince me that your new tool is valid and reliable; i.e. there may be further
empirical work undertaken prior to publication.

You might find the following references useful as starting points to address the
above:

(a) Currie and Kerrin in Management Learning (2004) that delineates
organizational learning from knowledge management & learning organization
(b) Currie & Suhomlinova in Public Administration (2006) that discusses boundary
crossing problems in knowledge sharing in healthcare
(c) Bate and Robert in Public Administration (2002) that discusses knowledge
management in healthcare
(d) Work by Addicott, Ferlie & McGivern In British Journal of Management and
Public Money & Management about cancer networks and knowledge
management (2006)

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the
statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare I have no competing interests