Reviewer's report

Title: Engaging national organizations for knowledge translation: comparative case studies in knowledge value mapping

Version: 1 Date: 23 April 2011

Reviewer: Bridie Kent

Reviewer's report:

Many thanks for inviting me to review this manuscript, which outlines a qualitative multiple case study of organisations’ activities related to knowledge translation. The design involved six organisations, with a spokesperson from each expressing their opinions in response to nine questions in a telephone semi-structured interview.

The findings from the interviews were informative and clearly this information will be helpful to any researchers who want to use national organisations as part of research dissemination strategies. The authors call this approach Knowledge Value Mapping. They argue that the findings from this study will aid communication between national organisations and researchers.

1. Is the question posed original, important and well defined?
The aims of the study are clearly stated and the analysis of the data has been guided by three assumptions. Minor changes to turn the assumptions into research questions would enhance this aspect of the manuscript since in its current format, the assumptions lack impact.

2. Are the data sound and well controlled?
Ample details describing the findings are provided; so much so that the main points for the themes are lost among the words. No further information is needed, rather a major revision needed to reduce the length of the findings section and to draw out the key points that emerged from the case studies. Furthermore, the use of sub-themes is confusing. It requires the reader to keep referring to the supplementary files. A minor revision, renaming the sub themes, would solve this problem.

3. Is the interpretation (discussion and conclusion) well balanced and supported by the data?
The authors have not engaged in discussion of the findings in relation to the existing literature. They discuss KT issues in the background but don’t address these again in light of the findings. I’d like to see this expanded (major revision).
They make the point that KT is not simple or cheap – this comes relatively left-field with little evidence provided to support this conclusion. I don’t disagree with the authors but the data that they present do not support this conclusion.

4. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to allow others to evaluate and/or replicate the work?
Comparative case study as a design is appropriate to meet the aims of this project and the process is relatively well described. A minor revision is needed; more information to explain the process of identification of the national organisations since this would enhance replication and inform other researchers considering using national organisations.

5. Are there any ethical or competing interests issues you would like to raise?

The authors indicate that they did not seek ethical review due to the information being requested was to be sourced from an individual speaking for their organisation and not personal opinion. In some jurisdictions ethical review would still be required for this and it would be helpful to have further reasons provided for this decision.

Thus although this is an interesting and informative paper, there are some major revisions and some minor revisions needed.

Major revisions:
1. Rewriting of the Background and results sections since these are very long (the manuscript is estimated to be in excess of 10,000 words). The main points should be kept and the non essential information omitted.
2. Further discussion of the KT issues that arise from the findings. They make the point that KT is not simple or cheap – this comes relatively left-field with little evidence provided to support this conclusion. I don’t disagree with the authors but the data that they present do not support this conclusion.

Minor revisions:
1. Turn the assumptions into research questions
2. The use of sub-themes is confusing. Therefore renaming the sub themes would solve this problem.
3. More information to explain the process of identification of the national organisations

Discretionary revision:
1. Further details to expand the rationale for not seeking ethical review.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests