How to Develop a Multi-Grounded Theory: the evolution of a business process theory

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Abstract

In the information systems field there is a great need for different theories. Theory development can be performed in different ways – deductively and/or inductively. Different approaches with their pros and cons for theory development exists. A combined approach, which builds on inductive as well as deductive thinking, has been put forward – a Multi-Grounded Theory approach. In this paper the evolution of a business process theory is regarded as the development of a multi-grounded theory. This evolution is based on empirical studies, theory-informed conceptual development and the creation of conceptual cohesion. The theoretical development has involved a dialectic approach aiming at a theoretical synthesis based on antagonistic theories. The result of this research process was a multi-grounded business process theory. Multi-grounded means that the theory is empirically, internally and theoretically founded. This business process theory can be used as an aid for business modellers to direct attention towards relevant aspects when business process determination is performed.

Keywords

QualiT; qualitative; Research method; Grounded Theory; Business Processes; Dialectics

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