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## **International collaborative research in qualitative IB studies**

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper discusses dynamics within cross-national teams of qualitative researchers. Existing debates about effective collaborative research tend to assume a quantitative research design, yet the very nature of the qualitative research process leads to different considerations and concerns. Given that emerging processes are inherent to qualitative studies, there seems to be much more potential, yet at the same hidden risks, for collaborative teamwork than so far acknowledged. For instance, in a team multiple perspectives and insights may shed different light on the data, but collaboration in a multinational situation is not without potential problems due to e.g. ethnocentrism, stereotyping and differences in research paradigms, training and institutional pressures. The paper discusses the pros and cons of an international research team in the different phases of a qualitative research process: design of the study, data gathering, data analysis and interpretation. Based on the author's own experiences of cross-national collaborative research and on the extant examples from IB studies, this paper aims to promote reflexivity on this topic and to assist IB researchers to build and sustain productive international research teams.

Key words: qualitative methods, international collaboration, research team, case analysis

## **INTRODUCTION**

This paper investigates the specific risks and rewards associated with conducting qualitative research by means of cross-national collaborative teams in international business. International collaboration to ensure high-quality IB studies is often advocated, but the challenges that teamwork may possibly bring to the research process are seldom scrutinized. Existing literature mainly discusses international research teams in the context of quantitative projects. Often, these are directed by one active project leader and the role of individual (national) participants is reduced to the replication of data collection in the participating countries. Moreover, the research process in a quantitative study is linear by nature.

Given that iterations and emerging processes are inherent to qualitative studies, there seems to be much more potential, yet at the same hidden risks, for collaborative teamwork than so far acknowledged. For instance, interpretation, which is key to qualitative research, may be brought to a new level in a team, where multiple perspectives and insights may shed light on the data. However, collaboration in a multinational and multicultural situation is not without potential problems due to e.g. ethnocentrism, stereotyping and differences in research paradigms, training and institutional pressures.

There is both an increasing interest in and a need for team work in qualitative studies, thus we need a better understanding of the methodological challenges related to

international collaboration. Discussions so far are surprisingly silent about collaboration as comes to e.g. collection and analysis of qualitative data. Macdonald and Hellgren (2004) remind us that empirical research is also *a social process*, but their discussion on interviewing focuses on the process between the interviewer and the interviewee. Further, Dubois and Gadde (2002) investigate the ‘matching’ process of a case study, where theory is being confronted with the empirical world, but implicitly assume an individual researcher being responsible for it. One may however ask, what happens in the social process when the cross-national research team is placed in the middle of the process to conduct the ‘matching’ in practice, i.e. how does a research team function as the analyst. There is not only lack of methodological discussion in this area, but investigators themselves only seldom openly report about the team<sup>1</sup> dynamics or the different functions of the team participants.

In order to fill this gap, the paper discusses the pros and cons of an international research team in the different phases of a qualitative research process: design of the study, data gathering, data analysis and interpretation. The focus is on investigating what are the factors that enhance a high quality end result and what are the challenges that researchers should consider when planning for, or entering into, a qualitative research team. On the basis of earlier literature, of the extant examples from IB studies that report the use of international research teams and of the author’s own experiences of cross-national

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<sup>1</sup> Today, joint publications are common. Often these result from processes where one participant (e.g., a doctoral student) collects the data and the other(s) participate in the phases of analysis and reporting. These situations are not considered here, but rather, the focus is on an effort by a team to conduct jointly all the relevant phases of qualitative study from the planning to the reporting.

collaborative research, this paper aims to promote reflexivity on this topic and to assist IB researchers to build and sustain productive international research teams. The contribution of the paper is to explicate both the potential and problems that go along with the decision to conduct qualitative<sup>2</sup> international business studies by means of international research teams.

The paper is structured in the following way. First, some examples of international collaboration projects are reviewed. The next section of the paper investigates the reasons for cross-national collaboration in qualitative analysis of international business. Then, the challenges and practices of international collaboration are discussed as comes to the basic setting of conducting research in a team. This is followed by an analysis of the working of a team in the different phases of a research process. The discussion shows that team work affects both the practical ways of conducting the research as well as the fundamental research choices made in the process. The concluding summary shows that in addition to presenting the challenges and problems, the paper aims at revealing the opportunities that international collaboration may provide for qualitative research.

## **INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS STUDIES AND COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH**

It is difficult to find examples of IB studies that have applied qualitative methods, resorted to an international research team and also reported how the methods were

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<sup>2</sup> For practical reasons, the focus and most examples presented concern qualitative studies relying on interviews.

affected by the team work<sup>3</sup>. One of the few example reports of the dynamics of a group is that of the original IMP (Industrial Marketing and Purchasing) study. The book (edited by Håkansson, 1982) reports a study of international industrial markets that involved researchers from five European countries, and collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The methodology section notes several problems in carrying out an international research project and also, discusses how these were dealt with in practice. It notes, among other things, that the researchers were eager to achieve ‘movement’ “since there was a feeling among all the participants that without progress to this next step [development of the questionnaire] the project could be one among many other international projects that are discussed but never achieved”. So a driving force and action is needed to keep an international project going and participants motivated.

Another example is a study of network dynamics in the Nordic context (Havila and Salmi, 2000). It reports a project involving cooperation by four researchers from four universities: two in Sweden and two in Finland. The interview data was collected within a two-year period and the analysis covers changes in the business net of four key actors and three linked actors, in the two countries. Further, the study notes that interviews with (in total 18) managers were all done in the native languages of the respondents (in Swedish/Finnish), although the reporting is in English. While reporting the data collection, this report does not pay attention to *how* the analysis within the team was done. In reality, the group was active and well organized in arranging joint meetings (e.g. writing minutes of each meeting that also summarized the plans of actions) and the

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<sup>3</sup> As this is a work-in-progress paper, the author would be happy to learn about potential studies, and welcomes any suggestions on how to extend the review.

results of the study were achieved by several iterative rounds of discussions among the researchers.

A third example of international research cooperation is provided by Söderberg and Vaara (eds., 2003) who discuss how a pan-Nordic research team studied a pan-Nordic organization created through cross-border mergers and acquisitions. Interview strategy was used in the study. Again, the reporting on methodology focuses on the interaction between the interviewees and the team of or individual researchers, and note the important issue of co-authorship of the interview narratives: the researchers influence the results by their questions, comments and features. The authors give, however, less attention on how the *team* arrived in its final analysis results. Importantly, this group notes that the slightly different academic backgrounds and research profiles, and the interdisciplinarity were assets for the research group.

These examples show that there is long-term and current interest among scholars to carry out international collaborative research using qualitative methods, but there is lack of reporting how the teams function in practice and especially, as comes to the analysis phase of studies.

## **WHY GO FOR COLLABORATIVE TEAMWORK IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?**

Although collaboration and research teams are seldom discussed as comes to qualitative methods (Marschan-Piekkari and Welch, 2004) their use is often suggested for IB studies

(Peterson, 2004, 36). Indeed, research collaboration seems to have many apparent advantages.

Firstly, international business studies often call for accessing a firm (MNE) whose operations are geographically dispersed (Marschan-Piekkari and Welch, 2004, p. 11). A larger team operating in different places may make the logistics easier and provide an extensive geographical reach, thus making the research process easier also in practical terms.

A related issue concerns contextualisation: local team members may have competitive advantage thanks to their connections and languages skills, and they may bring insight of their respective contexts into the research work (Peterson, 2004). In its extreme, the context may have a fundamental effect on research, as exemplified in the work by analysts of the transforming contexts (Michailova and Clark, 2004), where research processes are fundamentally affected by issues that are related to, for instance, the roles, identities, and involvement of the researcher or the relations to informants and to such third party agents as language translators and cultural tutors.

Thirdly, working in teams may bring considerable synergies: joining forces of differently skilled researchers enrich the research process. Team work may save time, provide wider extension and longitude to studies (Peterson, 2004). For instance, triangulation of methods or data may be more easily accomplished if researchers with different skills join

forces. Cooperation may also lead to a higher number of publications that are also of higher quality.

Fourthly, research collaboration potentially means training in research skills within the team. This can be implicit (like the skills of arguing convincingly for own views within the group), but also explicit: the team may actively delegate the tasks and different team members may take different roles (e.g. one focusing on data collection, while another being theoretically oriented, where fruitful dialog between data and theory may take place and advance via inter-personal dialog). Joint discussions and feedback within an open-minded and encouraging group increases the individual understanding and skills. It is important also to take turns in the roles and tasks, to switch from one role to another, as this enhances learning processes of individual researchers and also creates sensitivity to various aspects of research thus improving communication. The team may also actively work on the cultural differences met across different research sites, thus enhancing cultural dialogue within and outside the team.

And finally, it is often fun and rewarding to work together in a cross-national research team! Given the iterative processes in qualitative studies, there are perhaps even more chances for intellectually challenging and rewarding discussions during the research process than when accomplishing a linear project.

Indeed, the nature of the research process affects fundamentally the ways in which the team works. The quantitative studies usually follow a linear study process, where the



researchers agree on the common theoretical frame and questions are set early in the process. This requires more coordination for the process, and may therefore also lead to a more disciplined research project accomplished within (or almost) the deadline. Often, the large cross-national research projects (for instance, funded by the EU) call for strict planning and reporting. For these to function, the linear process may be easier (with commitments on a written agreement-basis) to follow. On the other hand, if the international team goes for an emerging process with incremental commitments, there is more chance in developing and refining also the theoretical frame and key concepts along the process. This may also result in more 'innovative' ways of using qualitative studies. This paper focuses on those studies where the researchers allow for iterative processes. Indeed, the key question here is how a research team deals with the *emerging process* of the qualitative studies. (Recently, this type of view to e.g. case studies has become more prominent; for instance, Dubois and Gadde (2002) emphasize 'systematic combining' or continuing interaction between theory and the empirical world in case analysis.) It may well be that it is in the emerging processes, that a team may best use its potential for good qualitative studies.

Despite the good intentions and potential advantages of international research collaboration, team work is not without problems either. As in any team, there looms the possibility for free-riding; it may be impossible to find mutually fitting timetables for the research; it may be difficult to decide on name orders (giving credit) in joint publications... In order to investigate the setting in more detail, the following discussion on the pros and cons of an international research team is divided into two parts. Firstly,

international research collaboration is investigated by looking at the setting and research design for collaboration, in other words, what one needs to consider when setting up a research team. Secondly, the paper looks at the different phases of the qualitative research process and discusses how a team may tackle these.

## **SETTING THE STAGE FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH**

Several issues relating to the basic setting and the very initial decisions to carry out joint research affect the qualitative research process. These concern the features of the team, the purpose of the project and the working practices that the team adopts.

### *Team constellation*

International research collaboration means crossing several boundaries – be they cultural, national, ethnical or linguistic – that all influence research interaction. These are crossed in the research sites but focus here is on the boundaries within the team.

The team is affected by the *background (education, research training, and areas of teaching) of the participants*: this need to be similar enough to give the basis for cooperation. However, one needs also differences to ensure fruitful discussions and innovativeness. The institutional backgrounds also affect how the research process is seen and what are seen to be the proper aims for the project<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> An example in point may be the current debate about the role and function of a case study approach as such, where different educational and research training backgrounds may lead to total disagreements.

Also, *the features (age, nationality, gender, languages skills)* of the participants play a role. As one established scholar once commented to our starting research group: “Make sure to have also someone who disagrees with the others. This way you make progress”. In practice, this advice works best, if the team members take turns in playing the role of the ‘disagreeing individual’ or sparring partner. If this role stays with one person, he or she will quickly leave the group. Similarly, being the only man in a group of women researchers, or vice versa, may be tricky. The working language in international research groups is usually English. If this is the native language for some participants, it puts them into a different position from the others. The best potential for a balanced discussion lies in a situation where the languages skills are roughly on the same level. On the other hand, in group work one may well compensate, for instance, poor oral skills with better writing skills, thus still contributing to the result developments. These examples concern the language as a tool in the team work, its role in data collection and analysis is a separate issue.

#### *Decision to cooperate*

Joint research often seems to start accidentally and on the basis of mutuality in research interests. For qualitative work, which means in-depth analysis of the data and interpretation, it seems to be exceptionally important to have a good ‘working atmosphere’ within the group. Qualitative researchers are often advocates of longitudinal research methods. This means also that the research team must - or at least some parts of it - ‘live together’ for a longer time period. Given that a qualitative study calls for deep

‘involvement’ it is important to create commitment. Individual commitments to the research project often rely on personal liking and mutual interest. Often, the initial members of the project stay committed, but when the group grows, the issue of cost-benefit analysis becomes more acute. Both for the initiators, as comes to the question of who to invite to the group so that the new members are committed enough, and for the new-comers, concerning the rewards that the efforts will bring. Indeed, creating and maintaining *enthusiasm* seems to be essential for qualitative research team work.

For joint qualitative research, the approach of ‘incremental commitment’ seems to be typical. Håkansson (1982) notes about the initial IMP work that “The project was initiated on the basis of one, somewhat unclear promising idea held by some researchers with very small resources in terms of both money and time.” This is often the case of international projects and thus calls for a lot of faith in the beginning. Thus a basic requirement is that the team members enjoy working together and see the project worthwhile to be committed over some time. *Shortage of resources* is a common problem. Empirical research is extremely resource-intensive and this is particularly true for extensive interviewing programmes (Macdonald and Hellgren, 2004).

#### *The ways to work and how long does it last*

As in any team work, for the international research project to succeed there is a need to consider such issues as: team communications, joint meetings (who is responsible, when, where), the research output (in the form of publications and/or other reporting), and the deadlines that everyone can agree on. Having several nationalities and identities involved

probably makes these decisions even more difficult, and it may take some time and several meetings before the common ground for the cooperation rules are found.

Today, research groups have several on-line possibilities for active communication from distance. But in addition, especially in the data analysis phase, there is a need for face-to-face meetings. It is critical to organize effective meetings, so that there is enough time to go through different periods that often seem to be present in meetings: disagreements, reconstruction and decision-making (Håkansson, 1982). The IMP Group notes that one of the functions of the face-to-face meetings was “to maintain enthusiasm, cement the social relationships between us and to reach decisions on the next stage of the work” (Håkansson 1982).

Setting the deadlines is important too. Usually these are eagerly set, but can not always be met. This caused problems for conducting the IMP-project in its entirety and keeping up commitment (Håkansson, 1982), and seems to be typical for academic research. Also, there is a need for observable signs of progress, as this creates motivation among the researchers. Simultaneously, one needs penetration and rigor which relates to the quality of the research process. Indeed, there is a need for a balance between progress and rigor. The approach of incremental commitment, according to Håkansson (1982) leads to “perhaps the most important methodological question: balancing forward movement in the project against greater penetration of the issues to be tackled.” In other words, there is a need for process support is needed for an effective research team work (Müller, 1998).

Different participants may have different pressures for ending or continuing the project, which may cause tensions. There are usually several wishes and constraints as comes to the time period for analysis, as the project needs to be done within the frame of different other obligations that the participants have. One solution is, of course, to let participants to leave and to accept new members – which in turn potentially leads to some adjustments of the framework and the resulting study. Indeed, there must be a balance in the *allocation of work*, so that each (national) representative has a fair amount of (e.g. data collection) work to do. If the load is too high, there is a risk that the participant leaves the group, or that the whole project is postponed due to the delay in the input. On the other hand, when the group works well together over a longer time period, it is possible to take shifts in the tasks that are critical to the progress: when one participant is occupied with other responsibilities (e.g. loaded with teaching or on occasional leave), the others may take on more tasks, knowing that the person will do his/her share at an other point of time. However, the considerations of when and for how long to conduct the analysis is not only a practical question of when do the team members have time. It may also have fundamental effects on the results. Analysis of processes in the real world have restricted time spans, and as Dubois and Gadde (2002, 557) note this “makes the conclusions a function of time at which the study was conducted”.

### *Output and reporting*

There is a high possibility that a research team creates a better output in terms of quick and high-quality publications than an individual analyst. The reason for this is the

possibility to have 'peer review' within the team, before submitting the papers to outside evaluation. Often, however, problems of the project work become clear at the stage of producing the written output, concerning e.g. meeting the deadlines and questions of authorship (Håkansson, 1982). On the other hand, a team often gives potential for producing reports in different constellations of authors, and also for using other outlets than journals, as different members have access to various audiences, where they may make the joint work better known.

### *Iterations in the research process*

For the team to operate successfully there should be agreement on the character of the research process: how flexible or rigid process it followed. Dubois and Araujo (2004) advocate a flexible research process. Indeed, there seem to be two perspectives to e.g. the case process: whether it is taken as mainly linear (Yin 2003, Halinen & Tornroos, 2005), or whether one allows for more flexible and emergent research process as suggested by e.g. the adductive approach (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). The initial IMP Group notes the difference between the two types of research approaches: 'the coordinated decision approach' and 'the incremental commitment approach'. These call for different amounts of planning and rule-formation, but in addition, ideally require also (different) explicit choices and agreement by the team as comes to the underlying features of a valid and rewarding research process. Anyway, at some level, the project team needs to agree on the design of the study and a common research program.

A project involving iterations means that there may be iterative processes of data gathering and analysis, and also, iterative processes of discussions within the research team. This paper is leaning towards the view that an international research team may get best results in qualitative research if it allows for ample iterations. Which, in turn, call for more coordination and commitment over a longer time period from the team members.

Which ever approach is taken, international research team working on a joint research project needs to pay attention to the different phases of the research: from the basic research setting (including the theoretical basis, the theoretical and empirical objectives) to the qualitative data collection and analysis.

## **CROSS-NATIONAL RESEARCH TEAMS AT WORK: CHALLENGES AND POTENTIALS IN DIFFERENT PHASES**

### *The theoretical basis and objectives of the study*

A key starting point for a research project is to find the theoretical basis for the work. Even if there are differences in theoretical positioning, the participants need to work on the basis of what everyone can agree about. The influence and cross-fertilization from different fields may well provide important innovative thinking. Thus, if the research team consists of a variety of views or ‘outsiders’, there is a potential for new innovative ideas, as well as the need for a thorough discussion of the common basis for research.



Indeed, the strength of the team work is that the choices of the theoretical frame must be made *explicit*. In order to accomplish the (case) study, there is a need for at least some explicit discussions and agreement on the conceptual basis of the study. This frame does not need to be presented as ‘the theory’ (Håkansson, 1982), but a common ground must be found. The arrival at agreement on this by the team probably makes all theoretical choices better grounded, more visible and easier to report. This does not mean, necessarily, that the theoretical frame is rigid or given at the outset of the study. Rather, it may evolve in the (case) process.

Also, the *initial theoretical and empirical objectives* for the research work call for explicit discussions in the team, to avoid misunderstandings. Joining forces in a team brings new potential for development of ideas and for sparring due to the larger knowledge base and experiences, concerning for instance, different cultural contexts. Also, discussing the objectives brings the participants into intercultural communication situation and, as a by-product, may provide them cross-cultural training in this respect. Often the rationale for an international research team is exactly the empirical objective of gaining more extensive international data.

#### *Data collection*

A clear strength of a multinational team is that the multiple participants have access to a more extensive empirical basis: to several international research sites. Thus the empirical base is more extensive and the operations on the research sites can be carried out either by locals or at least researchers who master the local language and culture. With a

suitable combination of different nationalities and skills within the team, no individual needs to enter into or learn peculiarities of very many different contexts. The data collection need not be outsourced to local outsiders, but can be handled within the team. Also, the many international (contextual) differences of the multiple sites may be brought under analysis by the team.

If the researchers are collecting data from their own context (home country), they are closer to the research objects and may also resort to the tacit and accumulated knowledge of the national business context. This is usually lacking in those situations when an individual researcher visits different research sites in different countries. Foreign research sites bring along several, for instance cultural, challenges to researcher that call for adaptations. Often this means that the researcher can control less the research methods and procedures, but should accept the improvisation and adaptation involved (Wilkinson and Young, 2004). A key question for the team is to tackle this improvisation: do all members 'accept' deviations (cf. original research process), and how are improvisations of individuals taken by the group?

The working language in the team may affect the power positions between different (native/non-native) researchers and affect both communication and decisions made within the team. The interview language, in turn, may affect the results obtained and the interpretation. Indeed, these points are important, as it has been recently noted that language is one of the key issues affecting studies (see Marschan-Piekkari and Reis, 2004). Usually the working language for the research teams is English, and very often

this is not the native tongue of any of the researchers. It is usual also that reports are written in English. Ideally the interviews are conducted in the mother tongues of the interviewees. This means that an important interpretation process happens when these are translated in the discussions within the team and for the research reports.

### *Analysis of data*

A central area of research concerns the analysis of data. When this is done within a team there is a vast potential for really deep going discussions and analysis. For instance, the different cultural issues raised during the data collection may be addressed and different cultural interpretations may be worked with. In its extreme the working with different cultural frames and data from different cultural contexts may well lead to serious questioning of the concepts used and their validity in different contexts (Faria and Wensley, 2002). These kinds of fundamental issues of course give potential for developing the theories further.

The issue of iterative discussions is particularly important in qualitative studies, where the data collection and analysis often take place simultaneously. Ghauri (2004) notes that the analysis often starts with 'story telling' and proceeds to e.g. coding. In a research team, these initial stories collected from the field may be shared and scrutinized within the group, thus putting them immediately under the analysis of several observers.

Indeed, when doing the matching between theory and empiria with the help of the evolving case and framework (Dubois and Gadde, 2002) the research team may perhaps

best use its potential. Discussions and analysis in this 'small world of scientists', or researchers' network, provide a good basis for more extensive advancement of knowledge. How the process takes place relates also to the issue of what the case under analysis actually is.

However, to use the team's analysis potential to the full, there must be enough "scope to compare, challenge and synthesise 'insider' and 'outsider' perspectives" (Marschan-Piekkari and Welch, 2004b, p. 13). Therefore, enough time should be given for this phase to live up to the potentials of a multinational team. Further, the team itself needs to be careful in not falling into stereotypical thinking as concerns both its participants and the interviewees. To combine insider and outsider perspectives and to enhance reflexive dialogue, one way is to 'create space in which to exchange expectations, assumptions, and feelings' as the project progresses (Easterby-Smith and Malina, 1999, p. 85).

Macdonald and Hellgren (2004) discuss the 'Hostage syndrome' in interviews. Accordingly, the researchers may identify with the organizations in which they are interviewing and the organisation's interests become the researcher's interests. These – potentially biased - interests too can be brought into better light in a team. When the 'representatives of different companies in the different sites bring their 'truths' into the team discussion, evident biases may be noted and contrasted with the evidence of others. (For example, in the study of international business networks, the analysis of the network horizons of different actors was based on data collection by different researchers in different sites, Havila and Salmi, 2000). However, making the differences explicit in the

team does not necessarily mean that they are settled. Next, the team needs to decide how to tackle the contradictory information, which according to Myrdal (1970, quoted in Macdonald and Hellgren, 2004), is often the rule rather than the exception in the interviews. The strength of the team work is that these contradictions are not hidden or forgotten, but rather, more easily brought into the analysis.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The key question of this paper is: how does an international research team work when applying qualitative method for data collection and analysis? Further, it has aimed to investigate how the potential of a heterogeneous team may be fully used, and how the teams may find common rules for research work. Indeed, a research team brings potential as it gives more and different resources to the research project. Simultaneously, the team restricts the process if compared with a single analyst, since all issues need to be jointly agreed on. Indeed, this paper shows that dynamics relating to both the team and the research project need attention. As the national and cultural boundaries are crossed both within the team and in the research sites, an international research project calls for both intercultural and cross-cultural skills. Ideally, the team members may act as cultural interpreters and middle-men. Crucial for producing the new interpretations is to allow enough time for the face-to-face meetings of the researchers for joint understanding to develop.

Both challenges and advantages of international collaboration have been presented. One fundamental point arising from this discussion is the better tools that a team can produce

for understanding the cultural and contextual differences. These complex issues can be brought under discussion within the team and thus the probability of better interpretation and innovations in theory development increase. Secondly, the heterogeneity and resources of the multinational team give better opportunities for extensive data collection and deeper analysis and understanding of different contexts. This too increases the potential for empirical extensions and theoretical advancements increases. Finally, the discussions and interpretations taking place within the international and multicultural team are likely to lead to better understanding of managerial realities in different contexts. Therefore, one may expect better relevance as comes to managerial results of the studies. Not a minor point is the possibility of an international team to disseminate the information more widely; in addition to providing implications also being able to give better interpretations and comparisons of the different cultural/national findings.

Despite the tendency to conduct research with multiple participants, there has so far been lack of analysis how this affects the research processes and results. The present paper gives some guidance in this respect. Some of the issues are practically oriented, but some raise fundamental principles of how to do qualitative studies. There is still room for analysis of the current practices of researchers: for instance, how explicitly are joint projects designed and formulated, and whether/how explicitly researchers consider the challenges and potential of working within an international team. In particular, more analysis is needed as comes to the question of how the team of researchers work as comes to the analysis phase of qualitative studies.

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