

## Research Methods and Practices Identifying the Effect of Education, on an Organisations' Evolutionary Business and Management Development Trajectory

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### Abstract

This paper intends to provide a conceptual theoretical discussion of the critical importance of education, on the evolutionary development of organisational, business and management behaviour. This paper aims to demonstrate why the challenge of producing the correct research design methodology, needs to be met.

This conceptual paper posits that education is crucial in enabling people to make informed decisions, when they interact with the business community. Due to the global financial crisis, critical issues which affect organisational evolution have resurfaced, e.g. corporate social responsibility (CSR), governance and accountability. These key issues are more easily understood, if people are educated, enabled to critically evaluate an organisation's policies and procedures.

**Keywords** Educational experiences; Research; Evolutionary organisational development

### Abbreviations

BIS: Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, UK Government; CAEB: Confirmatory Analysis Epistemological Beliefs; CQC: Care Quality Commission; CRESC: Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change; CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility; EBF: European Banking Federation; EBI: Epistemological Belief Inventory; EBQ: Epistemological Beliefs Questionnaire; EC: European Commission; EQ: Epistemological Questionnaire; EU: European Union; G20: One of the Group of 20 wealthiest countries on the planet; GEES: Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences; LRN: Inspiring Principled Performance; LQES: London School of Economics - Europe in Question series; MDGs: Millennium Development Goals; NHS: National Health Service; NUPI: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs; NVC: Non-verbal Communication; OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; SMEs: Small and Medium Enterprises; UK: United Kingdom; UN: United Nations; UNDP: United Nations Development Programme; UNRISD: United Nations Research Institute Social Development; WEF: World Economic Forum; WTO: World Trade Organisation

### Introduction

There is a paucity of literature providing an analytical discussion of the effect of education upon how the business and management

practices evolve<sup>1</sup>, either generally or much more pertinently, during the global financial crisis [1-8]. It is widely recognised by most observers within the epistemic community that globally, education is fundamental to how we live our lives at the social, political and economic level, hence its presence as Goal 2, in the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) [9,10]. It is also recognised that non-statutory organisations play an equally crucial part in our lives in the delivery of key services e.g. provision of the roads and the transport infrastructure, by which we travel to work, school and hospital<sup>2</sup>. The business and management sector is a key component in the globalisation process, which itself is underpinned by education, enabling knowledge and policy transfer [11].

This discussion will contribute towards providing contextual understanding of hierarchical social relationships, which are replicated by contemporary neoliberalism governance procedures. And how that can be changed by both businesses and people, becoming educated. This paper will demonstrate how education is essential to conceptualise the legitimacy aspects of business, so people can make informed decisions on complex issues e.g. efficacy and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

*"In times of crisis or controversy such as financial scandals, environmental disasters and major structural re-organisation, management uses corporate communication to restore organisational legitimacy by persuading audiences that the organisation is re-aligning its structures and procedures with social norms and rules"* [12].

<sup>1</sup> The Global Reporting Project Team write the 'Carrots and Sticks' Reports. The four core members of the project team are: UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme, GRI - The Global Reporting Initiative, KPMG - A global network of Audit, Tax and Advisory Services professional firms, The Centre for Corporate Governance in Africa

<sup>2</sup> The Salz Review is an independent review, commissioned by Barclays Bank of its business practices, in the wake of recent financial scandals in 2013.

This paper identifies a fundamental problem which the business community needs to address, given how the global financial crisis, still not fully resolved by the end of 2015, has affected people's perception of business practices. The paper will discuss the paradox between the requirement for good governance and effective stewardship, balanced with the need for the business organisation to make a profit<sup>3</sup>. The paper will illuminate how education can play a part in reconciling the CSR/profitable enterprise nexus [13,14]. The lack of research, highlights an important gap in our knowledge of how education shapes the governance attributes of people, who will become highly influential strategic leaders in their own right [15]. There is another nexus to consider, the societal requirement to have managers who can deliver social and/or public goods e.g. health and social care for our ageing populations. Or nature protection e.g. geography or geology, earth, and environmental and sciences (GEES disciplines) for climate change and public health provision [16]. These critical issues have to be balanced with the equally important societal requirement, of producing strategic leaders who themselves, can create and maintain competitive and sustainable socio-economic systems in which businesses can thrive in a CSR manner [17]. Therein lies the main problem, reconciling these two push and pull factors, issues which all too often are in competition with each other.

The societal needs identified here interconnect with Dobson et al. [18] 'Small firms survival and innovation' study. Dobson et al. [18], illuminates the importance of business enterprises being able to adapt to technological and socioeconomic change, in order to remain competitive. Small, medium enterprises (SMEs), need to be able to design innovative services and products, in order to remain solvent in the long term. The likelihood of a small firm having the ability to be innovative, is in part shaped by its businesses evolutionary perspective. *"This exploratory research puts forward an evolutionary conceptualisation of the relations underpinning the innovation process* [18]. Early on in this discussion, we can now see that education will be critical in the evolutionary trajectory of organisational development.

The research will demonstrate that education is a fundamental to the emergence of favourable conditions for the societal provision of proficient strategic leaders. In context, proficient leaders must be enabled with the capacity to manage profitable businesses in monetary terms, coupled with the successful delivery of social issues such as energy conservation and non-discriminatory business practices. Key to this service delivery are the business managers who have the prerequisite skills to assimilate abstract ideas, such as neoliberalism, with its emphasis on profit and growth, an essential necessity in the provision of tax receipts to pay for social goods such as healthcare and education for all. Along with educated strategic leaders, who can ensure that ethical practices are in place, accompanied by a robust governance regulatory system to ensure oversight and organisational compliance [19].

The CSR/profitable enterprise nexus described earlier, is very beneficial for all stakeholders and the various agendas they individually have, especially during the global financial crisis. The CSR/profitable enterprise approach, with education, will ensure social awareness in how a business conducts its affairs, complete with sufficient governance and accountability practices in place. It's important to

remember that for CSR/profitable enterprise approach to work, employing people paying tax, redistributing income by the purchase of social goods accessible for all; business organisations must be competitive and make a profit. People and business being educated to be able to go through this type of critical evaluative thought process is central, for the CSR/profitable enterprise approach to be recognised and accepted. This demonstrates the fundamental importance of education as a significant contributory factor in creating the conditions by which business managers emerge and flourish<sup>4</sup>. Educated stakeholders must also be present to give feedback on innovative ideas from the strategic leader. An educated community will also be able to provide feedback in the form of cautionary tales. Feedback in response to suggested procedures and practices, which may have negative unintended consequences on implementation. The feedback from educated stakeholders will be able to influence the evolutionary path the business takes in delivering its service, an operation now mindful of well thought out critique. This is part of the rationale demonstrating, why society needs to be informed of the key role education plays in the evolution of an organisation's business ethos and ethical stance, during the financial crisis [20].

The effect of globalisation is quite profound upon the business community. Trading areas affected by manmade situations such as a military coup, a civil war, ethnic cleansing and suppression of various political and religious organisations, raise stewardship and governance issues of the businesses involved [10]. There is a similar picture with the effect of the global financial crisis. Here the globalisation process has taken a perverse turn, due it is felt by the impetus of the dominant ideology of neoliberalism, providing a dynamic for the search for ever increasing profits, year on year, by the business community. By far the largest contributor to the global financial crisis has been the banking, insurance and money lending financial sector [20,21]. It is their actions that caused the subsequent contraction of business activity, access to credit became more difficulty. Financial institutions were not as willing to lend, during the global financial crisis, compared to their credit generosity before the financial crisis. This is the area where issues of corporate governance, scrutiny, accountability and corporate social responsibility (CSR), can play a key role in the evolutionary trajectory of how an organisation business and management practices develop [22]. Proficient business leaders who are educated to consider other factors, in addition to the need to make a profit, may have responded differently during the financial crisis. Similarly, had a higher proportion of the customer population been educated, there may well have been more significant opposition to how the business sector conducted itself during the crisis. The business development cycle may well have had a different trajectory. Businesses recognised as social enterprises could be favoured, due to their provision of services being perceived as delivering a public or social good e.g. Credit Unions.

An important consideration of how a business operates, it's 'legitimacy', is how it's perceived by its direct, indirect, internal and external stakeholders. Legitimacy can be conceptualised as being socially constructed from the interaction over time, between management and organisational stakeholders [23]. If a business is seen to implement policies, procedures and practices which do damage to a community, there could be a heavy price to pay in the form of bad publicity or reputational damage, of the business corporate (brand)

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<sup>4</sup> The Foreword of this EC Guide, was written by Johannes Hahn is Member of European Commission - Responsible for Regional Policy and Laszlo Andor is Member of European Commission - Responsible for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion.

image. How an organisation's business and management practices evolve during difficult times, e.g. a natural disaster, a manmade problem, or the global financial crisis, are crucial to the long-term prospects of the organisation.

*"As legitimacy is a social construct in the sense that it is subjectively perceived and ascribed to an organisations actions and outcomes, it is predominantly analysed from a symbolic-interpretive perspective Hatch and Cunliffe 2006"* [12].

Organisations have suffered reputational damage from how it is perceived the business treats its workers. Examples are many-fold e.g. the clothing company who manufacture Gap jeans suffered problems, when it was announced that workers were on the UK equivalent of less than 50 pence per hour. Similarly, a business using employment market duality, in the form of single open ended or zero hour contracts for new workers. Or much more divisively, migrant workers only, not indigenous workers, can also expect to experience market resistance in the form of product boycott. This response would be due to the perception of the discriminatory nature of a business utilising such employment practices. The business who owns the Starbucks coffee house chain, have found it problematical to reconcile their substantial profits, with the perception of the small amount of tax they pay in the UK, compared to the amount of business they appear to do. Vodafone and Amazon have similar perceptions of paying too little tax problems. Perceptions in the business community are acute amidst the global financial crisis, especially when it's regarding a potential financial scandal [24]. Business leaders educated and enabled to understand complex abstract ideas e.g. agenda-setting, media manipulation and public perception, are more likely to be aware of accidental and unintentional institutional business practices which discriminate against certain groups. Once aware, business leaders will implement organisational change, including at the governance and stewardship level, to ensure there is sufficient scrutiny and accountability of the organisation's practice. Once again education, this time interacting with stakeholder's perception, has played a key role in influencing the evolutionary trajectory of how the business and management ethos of an organisation developed, during the financial crisis.

Business and people's perceptions are shaped to some degree by their education. Analysis of Ginzel et al. [23] organisational impression management study, informs the reader that strategic leaders may well find steering their organisation through an 'unanticipated' shock problematical, if they don't have the skills and aptitudes with which to assess the situation and appropriately respond. Sudden business shocks, for example a media expose alleging racist practices by the organisation, *"are especially difficult for top managers to cope with when they immediately place the organizations image or reputation in doubt"* [23]. Group-differentiated policies, political rhetoric and media representation - agenda setting, act to reinforce neoliberal norms and values, keeping certain structures and institutions in place. Neoliberal multiculturalism serves to discriminate against certain groups of people on multiple levels e.g. lower skilled and unskilled workers. Businesses need to be educated so that they do not accidentally introduce institutionalised exclusions, which often result in reinforcing racial stereotypes. Education is needed to inform business and people that neoliberal governance must be situated within the local context [25].

Business need to consider the role of education and how a contribution they make, might be beneficial in more ways than one. Business engaging with education can not only help increase profits but also assist in how their governance, stewardship and accountability

structures evolve during a crisis [26]. Business organisations themselves need to be educated on issues such as efficacy, transparency and ethical practice. These are abstract, complex, theoretical issues which may not be fully grasped by even the most seasoned Board of Directors member. Certain businesses might need to be made aware of issues of lay member representation, democratic participation, non-discriminatory practices and special interest groups. Involving stakeholders, is a response to the critique of 'democratic recession' [27]. If businesses develop along this route, they will have the critical evaluation skills to accurately assess the likely outcome of suggested policy formulation. Issues which might exacerbate global warming, or increased personal debt levels for people, due to a relaxation in credit controls. Education will help businesses see the benefits of having user group forums, which regularly feedback their views. Business practices will evolve in response to feedback on general business performance in monetary terms, but also at the latent level such as staff retention. There is a connection here with Bache [28] 'measurement of quality of life' work. Businesses would benefit from educated user group feedback on concerns raised that the adoption of certain business practices could accidentally discriminate against certain groups in society, disempowering and disenfranchising people [29]. Here an organisation would be responding to issues raised that are prevalent at the time, e.g. the global financial crisis. These are the sort of issues which can be alleviated by robust governance, by business practices which are open, honest and transparent. Such an approach will produce evolutionary organisational development geared towards full disclosure where possible, with lay representation overseeing the businesses practices [27]. This has come about due to businesses becoming educated in issues of stewardship and corporate social responsibility. Armed with education, people and business are able to comprehend the increasing saliency of functional representation in the technology of governance, during the global financial crisis.

*"An evolutionary approach considers that simply passing information from one person to the next will not provide the conditions for evolution; it also requires interaction through spanning boundaries. Within the small firm these will include knowledge, role and also friendship boundaries."* [18].

Dobson et al. [18] analysis of two methods of evolutionary organisation development, reaffirms the importance of knowledge transfer, education, and the complex relational aspects of evolutionary development. Aldrich and Ruef [18] give a warning that the nature of evolutionary development, can occasionally have negative effects upon the business and management ethos of the organisation. "Variations are also sometimes suppressed with organisations. Dominant groups and coalitions may constrain opportunities to variation to prevent challenges to their power and privilege" [18]. Although Aldrich and Ruef [18] were discussing the technological and administrative aspects of evolutionary organisational development; this observation in their study, has a bearing on how governance and ethical practices policies and procedures can be affected, by the emergence of dominant partnerships during the evolutionary development of a business. Essentially key gatekeepers have acquired strategic positions within the organisation during the evolutionary phase and are able to shape the ethos and efficacy of the business [30].

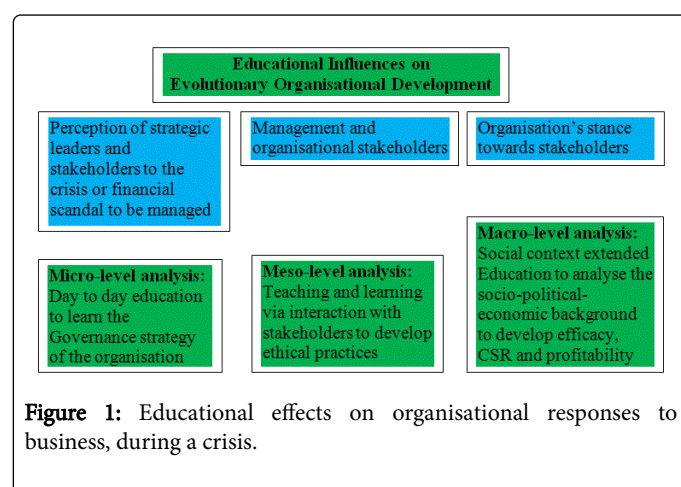
Certain businesses might not be aware that their current governance and accountability structures perpetuate inequality and discrimination [31]. Other strategic leaders who organise participation, in our case, governance with lay member representation, will determine to a significant extent, the nature, level and how new stewardship,



governance and accountability policies will be interpreted and implemented [32]. Education will play a key role in enlightening strategic leaders of the issues they need to consider when conducting business. Thus education substantially influences the evolutionary trajectory in which the business and management of an enterprise develops over time [33,34].

## Theoretical Framework

There are a multitude of theoretical frameworks which could be considered when discussing the evolutionary trajectory of organisational business and management development. At this juncture, I need to inform the reader that I'm coming from a post-modernist, contemporary, structuralism perspective in the tradition of Giddens: structuration [35] and Gergen: social construction [36]. This paper now turns to deliver a conceptual theoretical review identifying a few theories which can be adapted to analyse the evolutionary approach of an organisation. Fairclough' [37-39] dialectical-relational approach to discourse analysis, can be adapted for inquiry into what affect does education have, when interacting with the other causal factors, which influence the evolutionary trajectory of an organisation. Fairclough's analytical framework acknowledges the wide socio-political-economic context in which written and spoken discourse is embedded. Fairclough [40] operationalises his research framework, to analyse discourse on three levels, the micro-level, meso-level and the macro-level [12]. When conducting research on evolutionary approach to organisational development, micro-level in Fairclough [40] managerial discourse, could be adapted to become education in governance strategy, during the daily morning team meeting. Similarly, meso-level, in Fairclough [40] interaction between management and organisational audiences, can be adapted to become teaching and learning from strategic leader and internal/external stakeholder user-group meetings. Finally macro-level, in Fairclough [40] social context, can be extended to include education in how to develop governance, corporate social responsibility and ethical practices while operating on a profitable basis. Figure 1 is a schematic diagram, illustrating some of the organisational business management responses, due to a financial scandal or some other negative incident, an organisation could implement, as part of its evolutionary changes to deal with the crisis.



**Figure 1:** Educational effects on organisational responses to business, during a crisis.

Levels of analysis - Applied to evolutionary organisational development theory

Adapted from Fairclough [37-39] and Ginzel et al. [12,23].

Evolutionary trajectory can be influenced by an organisations ability to embrace new technological innovations. Let's examine Murmann's [41] interpretation of co-evolutionary theory as a source of change. Coevolution would act as a conduit to the majority supported adaptionist theory. Or there is the minority ex post selectionist theory. Both adaptionist and ex post selectionist theory enable organisations to change, to adopt recently developed innovative technology advances, when delivering their service. This is essentially the 'hard' nuts and bolts of production [41]. Coevolution theory has mutual causal factors by which coevolution takes place. Coevolution in essence focusses upon 'soft' relational aspects of production and service delivery. Coevolution theory processes work by shaping the evolution of industries in the surrounding area and important features of their environment. Murmann, says that in coevolution theory, there are three main causal factors which produce/enable coevolution. These three mechanisms are existing commercial ties, exchange of personnel and lobbying [41]. In coevolution theory, these are the three fundamental levers under which organisational evolution takes place. Conceptually, I argue that in looking at evolutionary organisational development, a fourth fundamental lever exists in the form of education. This fourth lever acts as a social conscience on the organisation, while it's evolving through a process of organisational change. During which, the social pressures of the global financial crisis, are ever present in the background. It's by education, the fourth lever in generic coevolution theory, that the CSR/profitable enterprise approach, complete with stakeholder representation would come into being. Education would be the catalyst during evolutionary organisational development, increasing the likelihood that businesses will adopt robust governance policies, procedures and practices. The critical importance of education, the fourth lever in coevolution theory, is underscored by the surrounding global financial crisis. An entity, which acts to represent a latent threat to good governance and efficacy.

In applying the theoretical framework of coevolution to business management, strategic leaders need to have been educated, so they have the composite critical thinking skills with which to perform the operational mechanics required, to deliver their service. Palazzo and Scherer and Suchman work on business and management research, acts to reinforce coevolution theory. Their studies demonstrate that due to how organisational legitimacy is perceived by surrounding stakeholders, legitimacy has a pivotal role in business. *"Adopting an agency approach, the strategic perspective regards legitimacy as an operational resource which can be employed in the pursuit of organisational goals"* [42].

This paper now turns to discuss some of the conceptual theories regarding analysis of how the social conditions under which evolutionary organisational development takes place can be influenced by a multitude of factors. Greenstein [43], asked a very pertinent question which is still valid today, when discussing the influence of education on how businesses and management practices change due to the global financial crisis. Greenstein, asked *"Who learns what from when, under which circumstances, and with what effects?"* [43]. The reason Greenstein's question has contemporary resonance today, is because the evolutionary trajectory an organisation takes in developing its business and management approach, is substantially influenced by education. Thus the recipient, content, when and the learning atmosphere, under which businesses and individuals are educated, have a substantive societal inculcation effect upon them. In practice neoliberalism, the dominant ideology of the day, exerts significant influence upon the trajectory of evolutionary organisational

development. Often neoliberalism has a similar effect upon the business and management ethos and efficacy of the organisation [44]. This is because organisational evolution is not a standalone independent process, it is shaped by the societal values in which the evolution is embedded. In this sense, the evolutionary organisational development of business practice, is very similar to the familial or political socialisation process, seen in social work or the political sciences disciplines. By the innovative use of comparative analysis, we can see that education is a socialisation agent, in the context of being a necessary constituent during evolutionary organisational development [45].

Fairclough's [38] work on discourse acts to underpin the relationship between societal inculcation, knowledge and power, transferred by spoken and written word. Fairclough [38] also acts to demonstrate the significant influence education has upon a business's development trajectory. Hierarchical social relationships are developed, recognised, and legitimised by the communication between the actors involved. Discourse is a resource tool people use to relate to one another, '...either keeping separate from one another, cooperating or competing with one another, or dominating one another' [38]. Theoretically, we can adapt Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to look at the effect of education upon evolutionary organisational development. Fairclough [39] explains that CDA can be used for the analysis of social wrongs such as prejudice, unequal access to power, privileges, and material and symbolic resources [39]. van Dijk [46] describes CDA as critical, in the sense that it studies *"the way social power, abuse, dominance, and inequality are reproduced, enacted and resisted by text...in the social and political context."* The critical review of some of the theoretical frameworks which could be used, to conduct a research inquiry of the effects of education upon evolutionary organisational development, has demonstrated there are numerous ways to proceed. The next section provides a brief overview of some of the philosophical, ontological, epistemological and objectivity issues to consider, prior to embarking upon the research journey. Various research methods are discussed, detailing the nature of the data collected, and how best to interpret the data.

## Research Design Methodology - A Critical Review

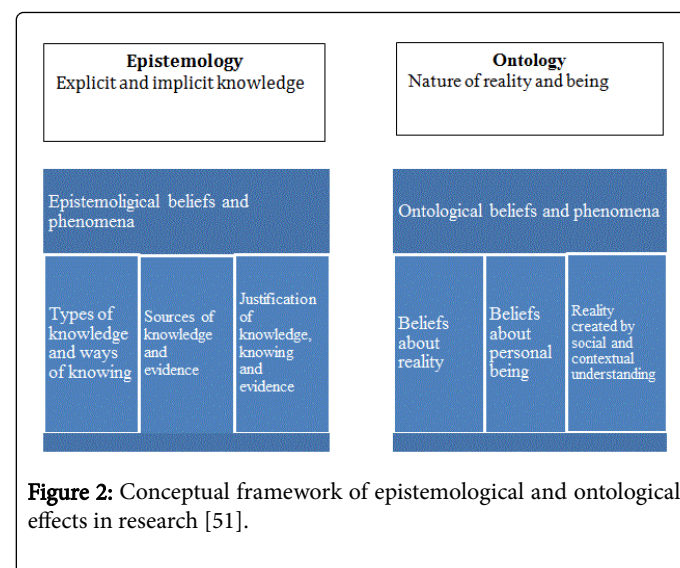
### The importance of philosophy on research design

The nature of the research inquiry is the benchmark by which the choice of research methodology should be made. This makes the researcher's philosophy, critical to the manner in which the research is conducted. A researcher's philosophy tells the reader, the philosophic view of the surrounding world held by the researcher. This gives an insight into how the researcher considers knowledge and knowing, the role individual values have on interpretation, and how they would approach a research inquiry. *"Every research tradition makes four key assumptions: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological"* [3].

From Wahl and Prause's [3] observation about research, two of the four key concepts mentioned, epistemology and ontology, need to be defined. This is because they affect the philosophical approach of a researcher, and subsequently the nature on which the inquiry would be conducted. Epistemology can be defined as all of one's explicit and implicit beliefs, attitudes and assumptions about the acquisition, structure, representation, and application of knowledge [47]. In practice, epistemology employs a scientific discourse derived from the epistemologies of positivism and realism. Epistemology is about

discovering the underlying meaning of events and social interaction. On research study implementation, epistemology can be defined as a focus upon reliable and valid tools, with which to uncover knowledge. Epistemology can be said to be different forms of knowledge of reality [48]. Using this definition, the researcher would be constantly asking questions, mainly regarding the potential for an accidental introduction of bias into the proceedings. This epistemological approach would ask, what is the nature of the relationship that exists between the researcher and the participant? How do we know that what we've seen is the truth? Epistemology would also ask, how do we come to understand a unique person's worldview? Epistemological beliefs can help the researcher to understand repressed and/or subconscious views, which have remained hidden from the research participant and perhaps significant others attention [49]. A word of caution, the epistemological approach of the researcher could result in a person they came into contact during research, suddenly realising that currently or previously, they have been abused in some way. Philosophically, epistemology can be propositional or non-evidentiary, alternatively, it can be weak or strong argument [50]. Figure 2 provides diagrammatically, further conceptual explanation of the nature of epistemology and ontology.

We next move on to ontology, which similarly to epistemology, involves how a person views the world around them. In one interpretation of ontology, reality is created by individuals and groups. In this interpretation, ontology is an individual's collective beliefs about the nature of reality and being. Developing deductively, ontology would mean the world and knowledge is created by social and contextual understanding. Reality exists and has been created on a directed social basis. There is an objective reality and we can understand it, and it through the laws by which it is governed. Reality is the practical effects of ideas. A definition of ontological belief, is the researcher accepts the origin, permanence and changeability of reality and being. Put simply, ontology is identifying the reality of "how things really are" and "how things really work". This fits in with the social constructivist perspective, who would favour research design methodology which is qualitative in nature. A research approach which is most effective at interpreting human social action from the insider perspective [52].



**Figure 2:** Conceptual framework of epistemological and ontological effects in research [51].

## Social Network Analysis

Social network analysis (SNA) can be used for either quantitative, or qualitative research, so it can be used in a mixed-methods research design. *“Social Network analysis (SNA) often uses a sociogram to clarify different concepts. Sociograms are network graphs in which nodes represent actors and ties represent relationships between them”* [53]. A sociogram [54-56], is a powerful analytical tool that enables the researcher to identify causal relationships between various independent variables e.g. disease spread knowledge [57], or tobacco usage studies [53]. SNA can be used to study the diffusion of innovation and how organisations evolve, including their social characteristics e.g. their ethical stance and approach to CSR.

## Secondary data sets

The research design could choose to include the use of secondary data sets, which themselves can come in many forms. Epistemological, ontological and objectivity considerations manifest themselves, in choice of time period in which the secondary data sets are taken from. There's also such influence on choice of secondary data, which press releases, company reports, audited accounts, statements, speeches, media contact and press interviews. Similarly, who authored such

documents? Secondary data sets written by contractors who rely upon an organisation being studied for a significant proportion of their business, might author much more favourable text, then competing organisations, or a local pressure group, who are campaigning against some of the business' activities [58].

Analysis of secondary data sets would take place from the epistemological position at the outset, that education has some effect upon business, including evolutionary organisational development. In the process of conducting the research using secondary data sets, the inquiry could be geared to collect and interpret the effect of education, or the lack of, upon people's perception of how business practices affect their lives [59]. That would be an ontological choice made by the researcher.

## Data collection and analysis

The paper turns to discussion of the theoretical concepts, which underpin research methodological design, that of data analysis and collection. Table 1 details the six most common ways in which research studies are designed, providing a conceptual framework of the epistemological and ontological construct, for each methodological measurement strategy.

	Construct that is measured	Examples	Design of the measurement tool	Strengths
Questionnaires	Measure multiple, presumably independent epistemological beliefs	EQ, EBQ, EBI and CAEB	Agreement using a Likert scale using specific statements	Measures separate independent beliefs using same scale; statistical analysis
Interviews	These methods measure the structure, impact and origin of the belief	Interview, verbal responses, think-alouds	Usually a structured interview with probes	Depths of response; justification of beliefs, evidence and examples
Vignettes	Vignettes measure commitment to different epistemological world views and stances	Vignettes summarise that a prototypical world view or situation	Agreement using a Likert scale using to the vignette	Measures relative commitment to separate world views described in the vignette
Essays, journals and storyboards	These measure the structure, origins and impact of beliefs	Detailed question	Usually an essay focussing upon one of several specific questions	Depth of response; justification of beliefs, evidence and examples; can be revised
Concept maps	Measure the relationships among beliefs	Individual create a concept map	Individuals construct the concept map; identifies key concepts and their links	Identifies key concepts and their relationships
Scales	Scales measure commitment to epistemological and ontological relativism	Four quadrant scale	Situates oneself at a specific point in the quadrant	Compares epistemological and ontological beliefs using the same scale; measures strength on each dimension

**Table 1:** Six measurement strategies used in research [51].

All the methodological tools discussed in Table 1, can be used on an interchangeable, multidisciplinary basis. This means that the six measurement strategies discussed, can be used in mixed-methods and grounded theory research methodological design [51].

## Data Collection and Data Analysis Revisited - A Few More Examples

The researcher could choose to use interactive board games, adapted to encourage the use or discussion of people's perception, of what role education could play in evolutionary organisational development. Such interaction, perhaps at a trade fair or conference could also illicit

responses, which indicate if people feel that education is more or less likely to feature in the evolutionary trajectory of how a business grows. In a different setting e.g. a team building event, or workshop, simulation or role play could be used. Here participants would be asked to play the part of either an educated or uneducated stakeholder. After group work, participants feedback what they feel the issues are to the wider community there business serves, if either providers or stakeholders are educated or not [60]. Role play and simulation exercises can then conclude with a plenary session where representatives of each role, can feedback their views of the issues faced by each type of internal or external stakeholder, educated or not. These interactive board games, role play or simulation, can also be used to



establish if people felt that better governance and accountability policies would be devised or not, changing the efficacy of business practices<sup>5</sup>.

Finally, when discussing data collection and analysis, this author's epistemological and ontological choice, is to use NVivo10 to analyse the verbal or text discourse. NVivo10 software, with its ability to analyse a rich multi-layered tapestry, of the many nuances and themes that arise during biographical-narrative interpretive method (BNIM) interviews, is the most accurate way to analyse interview data. There is also non-verbal communication (NVC) data which can be observed during BNIM interviews, which in turn can be themed and coded, as part of data analysis method.

## Conclusions, recommendations and future implications

This paper has highlighted an operational disconnect between organisations who have genuine intentions of improving governance and stewardship, finding there are too many strong societal forces, exacerbated by the financial crisis, which conspire to reinforcing inequality by neoliberalism reproduction. In short, due to neoliberalistic market forces, businesses aren't able to adopt the CSR, efficacy and ethical ethos they wanted. Due to the negative externality of the financial crisis, it may well be that some organisations have not evolved in the manner they wished, certainly not from the standpoint indicated by the literature search conducted. One causal factor producing such a disconnect, appears to be a lack of business leaders who are enabled, educated to pursue a twin path of profit alongside social awareness. Some observers may view this discourse as value laden, and to a degree the previous comment is. My observation serves to establish the necessity for research on the effect of education (or lack of), on the development trajectory of business management organisations. However different stakeholder's standpoints can be different and opinions change over time, as business circumstances change. There is a real difficulty in conducting robust, neutral, objective research. Should the epistemological and ontological standpoint be, education should be geared towards generating profits, above demonstrating social responsibility? Or should the research approach be, education should prioritise how a business is viewed in its local community, thus there should be focus upon governance and accountability, on an equal footing with profit. This fundamental problem acts to highlight how important it is that people are educated, so they are enabled to fully understand the effect of business practices operating in their locality.

## Potential new lines of inquiry

Future research might want to inquire, what are the most favourable conditions required, to deconstruct neoliberal ingenuity, a strategy to be maintained throughout organisational change? Potential research might also illuminate, which organisational strategies needs to evolve, during the embryonic stage of an organisation, to increase its likelihood of developing effective governance policies in its future. An enlightening by-product of this self-same study would be, identification of which operational methodologies, and/or which

socio-political-economic variables, underpin the paradigm of neoliberalism, during a financial crisis [61].

## Limitations of potential methodological tools

One limitation has been the discussion narrative has primarily taken place through the lens of the neoliberal paradigm, effectively, there's been 'epistemic violence' [62] removing the possibility of any discourse, other than that allowed by neoliberal intellectuality.

The SNA section of this discussion has brought to the fore how externalities in the form of socio-political-economic influences, can have a dramatic effect upon evolutionary organisational development. Using the approach of Chu et al. [53] longitudinal study, one can see how globally, businesses small and large might have been prepared to do business in ivory in the late 1980s. However, the business and market became widely educated in the source of most ivory, beautiful animals needlessly slaughtered for profit. Currently, in the early 21st century, such practice is viewed as unacceptable, the ivory trade being driven underground, becoming an illicit contraband. Enterprises had to respond quickly to the opprobrium of being seen to be associated with the buying and selling of ivory. Effective governance and ethical policies quickly evolved on a needs must, neoliberalism basis. Practices which were propagated by email, whose use was still in its infancy at this time, and by the 'social network' of the current affairs and news broadcast media global network. We can now see that education is a significant contributory factor to the policy transfer aspects of 'social networking'. Reinforcing its substantive effect upon the evolutionary approach of an organisation, as detailed in SNA [63,64].

Education regarding the evolutionary development of a business sense of direction, is ethos, its efficacy can be delivered in different settings. It could be large groups, the socio-political-economic demographics of group participants may have a bearing on the responses given. Was the education experiential or directive, was the education session 1 hour or 2, one day or two. Was it a residential, in-house, a third party location, all these factors could have influenced the responses given? There's also the ontological and epistemological position in how the researcher chooses to record the data, select the data, interpret the data, discard some data and finally present the remaining data. Who says that a qualitative analysis re-interpreting discourse spoken during semi-structured or biographic-narrative interpretative method interviews (BNIM), [65], analysed using NVivo10 computer software, is the best way.

## Limitations of Potential Studies

The use of a sociogram to visualise SNA research data carries the limitation that the graphs presented in the sociogram represent one particular snapshot in time regarding the evolutionary development of the organisation. This limitation would be alleviated by using various software that is available online to create a video, depicting the evolutionary path of an organisation overtime. This video would use various cultural shifts in the locale of where a business is based, along with major socio-economic-political events which have occurred on a regional or global basis [53]. A halfway house to producing a video of the evolutionary trajectory, is for strategic business leaders to draw their own perception of their businesses evolutionary path, depicting

<sup>5</sup> 'Roll with It' and 'Curveball' are two interactive games that have been designed by a project team at Leeds Metropolitan University. They are pedagogical tools to assist in the teaching of Research Methods. They can be adapted to virtually any social science discipline, including researching the effects of education on evolutionary organisational development.

as nodes, various events which caused the evolutionary approach to change. These nodes would be social significant events in the organisations development, such as change in personnel, legislation, technological advances and cultural shift, for or against a certain type of management practice. The sociogram drawn by the researcher using SNA, could be compared to a strategic leader's picture drawn giving their view, for comparative analysis; *‘...thereby obtaining rich information on both the actual and perceived social surroundings of respondents as in McCarty, Molina, et al. [66].*

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