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## ÉDITORIAL / EDITORIAL

### Le management de la recherche en management

Radu Vranceanu

Que la recherche européenne se porte mal par rapport aux autres zones industrialisées, cela ne fait pas de doute. Le Sommet de Lisbonne, en 2000, a bien identifié le problème et proposé des pistes pour augmenter le volume et l'intensité de la recherche. Si sur le plan des dépenses publiques, la marge de manœuvre des gouvernements n'est pas très forte, plusieurs pays européens cherchent actuellement à mettre en place une gestion de la recherche qui associe plus fortement la rémunération des chercheurs à la performance. La recherche française en économie et gestion est soumise au même changement de contraintes. Le ministère de l'Éducation renforce, année après année, les critères de qualification des jeunes docteurs au statut de maîtres de conférence. Parmi ces critères, la liste des publications du candidat semble prendre une place importante. Le CNRS propose un classement des revues, dont le nombre d'étoiles indiquerait la qualité du support. Une nouvelle Agence Nationale pour l'Évaluation de la Recherche vient d'être mise en place. Très probablement, dans son travail d'évaluation, celle-ci utilisera des mesures bibliométriques. Si les écoles de commerce ne sont pas soumises aux mêmes règles administratives, elles ne sont pas exemptées de cette course à la performance, notamment en publication, car les classements nationaux et internationaux qui guident de plus en plus le choix des étudiants et recruteurs prennent souvent en compte ce critère.

Dans ce contexte, nombreux sont ceux qui dénoncent une fascination pour la publication et soulignent ses dérives. En effet, on constate depuis peu une prolifération des articles cosignés, le "sautonnage" des travaux pour obtenir plusieurs publications, une obsession pour les recherches à la mode, un certain manque d'esprit critique dans la recherche elle-même : on entend de plus en plus des chercheurs justifier leurs hypothèses par le fait que "cela a déjà été publié", sans manifester une vraie curiosité par rapport à leur pertinence. Mais ces dérives ne doivent pas nous empêcher de voir l'évidence : si splendide soit-elle, une idée nouvelle lorsqu'elle reste dans le tiroir du

chercheur, n'a aucune valeur sociale. Il est vrai, qu'Internet permet aujourd'hui de rendre accessible à un coût infime toute information. Cependant, dans cette immense masse de publications en libre accès, il est presque impossible de retrouver les plus pertinentes. On peut toujours cibler les auteurs les plus réputés, avec le risque qu'aucun auteur débutant mais créatif ne soit jamais repéré. Les seuls vecteurs puissants de transmission d'idées nouvelles demeurent les revues académiques à fort impact et les ouvrages édités par une grande maison d'édition. Malgré ses limites, le filtre des rapports anonymes fournit une garantie forte de qualité.

De surcroît, si nous voulons que notre idée soit accessible au monde entier, il faut qu'elle soit présentée en anglais. Ne nous berçons pas d'illusions : les langues européennes continentales sont et seront inconnues à la majorité des chercheurs internationaux. En France plus qu'ailleurs (Allemagne, Italie, pays scandinaves), la fierté d'écrire dans la langue nationale est devenue un frein important à la diffusion de la recherche française. Heureusement, les jeunes chercheurs sont prêts à jouer le jeu de la communication en anglais. Le fait qu'il n'y ait aucune revue française de gestion et d'économie publiée intégralement en anglais demeure toutefois un handicap important pour la diffusion des recherches françaises.

Pour rendre la recherche française en économie et gestion plus performante, le lien entre performance et récompense doit être maintenu, voire renforcé. Pour freiner les dérives issues d'une place presque exclusive donnée au nombre de publications dans l'évaluation des chercheurs, il faudrait insister davantage sur l'impact de la recherche. En sciences de l'ingénieur, cet impact peut être estimé par différentes mesures, dont la brevetabilité. En sciences sociales, ce concept n'existe pas et la mise en œuvre d'un principe de gestion innovant par les entreprises, peut prendre de nombreuses années. Aucun système de gestion de la recherche ne peut s'accommoder de délais si longs. La seule mesure de notoriété observable à court terme, est la prise (suite p. 4) ■■■

# THE EMERGENCE OF A REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY: LESSONS FROM IKEA

Jérôme BARTHÉLÉMY



✦ [barthelemy@essec.fr](mailto:barthelemy@essec.fr)

Jérôme Barthélémy is an Associate Professor of Strategic Management at ESSEC Business School in Paris. He is also a visiting scholar at Stanford University. His research on outsourcing has appeared in journals such as MIT Sloan Management Review, Journal of Management Studies, Academy of Management Executive, Information & Management.

IKEA a révolutionné le marché de l'ameublement. L'histoire de cette entreprise suggère que des stratégies de rupture peuvent être développées de manière progressive et en réaction à l'évolution de l'environnement.

✦ DU MÊME AUTEUR,  
VIENT DE PARAÎTRE



✦ **Barthélémy J.**  
Stratégie d'externalisation  
(3<sup>e</sup> édition), Paris (France) :  
Dunod, 2007, 204 p.

IKEA is currently the world's largest furniture retailer. It has been described as a "rule breaker" along with firms such as Dell and Southwest Airlines. IKEA's success can be attributed to the fact that it simultaneously managed to achieve cost leadership and differentiation by redefining organizational practices in the furniture business. On the one hand, global sourcing of furniture and customer self-service result in low costs. Indeed, most of IKEA's furniture are sold in flat packages that must be picked up, transported and assembled by customers. A portion of what IKEA saves on low cost components and customer self-service is then passed on to customers in the form of low prices. On the other hand, well-designed furniture and unusual shopping experience result in superior value for money.

For all the analysis IKEA has generated, one topic has remained virtually unexplored. How did IKEA's revolutionary strategy come about? An in-depth examination of the history of IKEA reveals that its strategy was not brought about deliberately through a process of formulation followed by implementation. Ingvar Kamprad started with a very general idea and IKEA's strategy emerged as he proactively developed a viable course of action and reactively adapted to unfolding circumstances. Thus, several useful lessons can be learned from the story of IKEA.

## 1. Start with a clear vision and improve it over time

Most successful strategies are based on a clear vision. While it is important to have a sense of direction from the outset, an incremental approach may also be used to improve a vision over time. Today, the essence of IKEA's strategy consists in "offering a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices that are so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them." When Ingvar Kamprad started in the furniture business in 1948 however, his aim was to sell furniture as cheaply as possible. It took several years for quality and design to become part of his vision.

## 2. Constantly experiment and don't be afraid to make mistakes

Most of the specifics of IKEA's strategy emerged through a process of trial and error. Ingvar Kamprad tested a large number of different approaches on a small scale. For instance, the initial decision to sell furniture was not totally deliberate. In the late 1940s, IKEA was a mail order company that used to sell goods such as Christmas cards, pens and picture frames. Ingvar Kamprad introduced the first piece of furniture in his mail order catalogue to imitate a successful competitor. It is only because the "test furniture" was a huge success that he decided to focus on furniture and ended up discontinuing all other products. If an approach did not work, he refrained from using it again. For instance, over 90% of the products sold by IKEA are currently sourced from outside suppliers. In the 1960s, IKEA used to own a television manufacturer. The cumulative losses of that subsidiary were huge and ended up threatening the very existence of IKEA. Thus, the decision was made not to be involved in manufacturing any more.

## 3. Always try to turn problems into opportunities

Some of the most groundbreaking ideas emerged when IKEA was the back against the wall. For instance, Ingvar Kamprad made the pioneering decision to source furniture from communist Poland as early as 1961. Since manufacturing costs were 50 percent lower in Poland than in Sweden, this decision looks brilliant in hindsight. However, it was not a deliberate one. In the 1950s, Swedish furniture retailers and manufacturers had an agreement to keep prices high. Because IKEA's strategy consisted in selling furniture at considerably lower prices than its competitors, the Swedish retail cartel gave local furniture manufacturers the following ultimatum: "If you sell to IKEA, we will no longer buy from you." Most manufacturers didn't dare defy the retail cartel and refused to do business with IKEA. Thus, looking for suppliers outside Sweden was the only way for Ingvar Kamprad to overcome a boycott that could have led IKEA to bankruptcy.

## 4. Make the most of other people's ideas

A lot of people think that coming up with a new concept is a prerequisite for developing a revolutionary strategy. To the contrary, the story of IKEA suggests that it may be more important to recognize and tap existing concepts. For instance, self-assemble furniture is the cornerstone of IKEA's strategy. It is not Ingvar Kamprad but one of his first employees who came up with this revolutionary idea. At least one other Swedish company used to sell knock-down furniture kits before IKEA. However, its managers failed to acknowledge the potential of their new concept.

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# STATISTICAL SOFT MODELING FOR STUDYING NETWORKS OF CAUSALITY BETWEEN LATENT CONCEPTS IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Vincenzo ESPOSITO VINZI

✦ [vinzi@essec.fr](mailto:vinzi@essec.fr)

Vincenzo Esposito Vinzi is Associate Professor of Statistics by the Department of Information Systems and Decision Sciences at ESSEC Business School in Paris. He is Vice President of the International Society for Business and Industrial Statistics, an elected Council member of the International Association for Statistical Computing and the scientific secretary of the International Federation of Classification Societies. He won the Pierre-Vernimmen-BNP Paribas "Teaching Awards 2005" (Visiting Professors category) for the quality of his courses at HEC School of Management in Paris. His research interests (more than 60 papers and books) focus on methodological developments in Multivariate Statistics and Data Analysis with applications to business and industry. He is Associate Editor of the international journals *Computational Statistics and Data Analysis* (Elsevier), *Computational Statistics* (Physica-Verlag). His most recent work will appear in the book "PLS Methods: Theory and Applications" (co-authored by M. Tenenhaus) by Springer USA.

L'utilisation de modèles statistiques pour l'étude de réseaux de causalité entre variables latentes est devenu un sujet de grand intérêt dans le domaine de la gestion. Cet article présente un aperçu des recherches menées par le professeur Vincenzo Esposito Vinzi pour ce qui concerne l'approche des Moindres Carrés Partiels aux équations structurelles. Il met l'accent sur certains développements déjà réalisés mais aussi sur des questions ouvertes de la méthode qui correspondent à des applications spécifiques dans de nombreux secteurs de la gestion et de l'industrie.

The collection and the analysis of multiple sets of information related to diverse dimensions of intangible phenomena has become an important line of study for explaining performances in business and industry as a complement to traditional indicators. The development of integrated statistical "soft" modelling offers new possibilities for improved analysis with the aim to estimate and interpret causal links between the involved blocks of variables.

Actually, this is an interdisciplinary subject involving Statistics, Management, Sociology, Psychology and other related disciplines. This subject owes much of its success to its taking into account that most often the phenomena of interest in areas related to business and industry are multidimensional intangibles and can not be measured by an error prone single indicator. For instance, people's voice (such as satisfaction, attitude to buying, perception of quality or value, sensory assessment) is better meant as an intangible multi-faced concept (latent variable) that is not directly observable and must therefore be inferred from data that are measurable (manifest variables). The latent variables are then related to each other by means of a network of causal relationships whose structure is usually proposed by the theory that drives the decision making process. The statistical approach to the estimation, the assessment and the interpretation of a causality network is named Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), a commonly used tool for theory testing.

Two main statistical approaches are available for SEM: the classical covariance structure based analysis, also known as LISREL (Linear Structural Relations), with a focus on the explanation of relationships between latent variables, and the PLS (Partial Least Squares) component-based methodology, also known as PLS-PM (PLS Path Modeling), with a focus on the explanation of variability of both the manifest and the latent variables.

The two approaches are more complementary than competing. The choice of one rather than of the other should depend on the purpose of analysis, the nature of data and the research context. PLS-PM is considered as a "soft modeling" approach as it is claimed not to require strong assumptions to hold (with respect to the data distribution, the sample size and the measurement scale). Moreover, PLS-PM provides a direct and easier to interpret estimate of the latent variable individual scores coherently with its prediction-oriented nature and flexible optimising criteria that permit an interplay between theoretical hypotheses and empirical data. Since a few years I have been concentrating my research activity on addressing methodological issues related to the PLS approach with the aim to dig deeper in its statistical properties, to enrich the availability of interpretation tools for the benefit of both researchers and practitioners and to finally develop a flexible and general approach for the analysis and the exploration of multi-block data structures often encountered in real practice.

Among the most recent and interesting developments that broaden the scope of soft modeling, the analysis of a causal network in presence of a group structure deserves a major attention. Traditionally, any soft modelling approach assumes homogeneity over the observed sample: a global model is estimated on all the units. In many real cases, such as when modelling customers' behaviours and choices, local models permit to exploit customer heterogeneity in defining targeted and more efficient strategies. Heterogeneity may be "observed", i.e. related to a known group structure defined by directly observed variables, or "unobserved", i.e. related to a latent discrete moderating factor.

When a classification of the statistical units is known a priori (e.g. the age or the gender distribution of customers), a model is generated for each class and the significance of the difference between models is assessed and interpreted.

In case of unobserved heterogeneity, instead, the classification is not known a priori and the statistical approach aims to capture the heterogeneity by splitting the sample into a feasible number of classes whose specific models show a better performance and a more effective interpretation than the single global model.

The research streams sketched in this article have clear application relevance as they emerge from previous experiences in various domains: the design and the analysis of customer satisfaction surveys for companies selling commodities or providing services, the evaluation of the impact of different policies and regulations issued by governmental institutions and public bodies, the analysis of sensory assessments by expert panels or groups of consumers in the food and the cosmetic industry.

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■ ■ ■ (suite p. 1) en compte des citations, telles qu'enregistrées par REPEC, Google Scholar ou ISI Web of Science.

Enfin, pour renforcer la recherche, les institutions doivent se doter de politiques de recherche claires et de moyens spécifiques. Il faut bien définir ce qu'est la recherche, et surtout ne pas mélanger les catégories. Une définition trop large, qui inclurait toutes les productions intellectuelles, rendrait impossible la poursuite de l'excellence. Tous les acteurs – publics, entreprises, administrations – doivent prendre conscience de l'utilité des efforts en recherche des institutions universitaires et les soutenir, par-delà le simple soutien moral, sous peine que le futur mode de développement économique et social européen ne devienne qu'une réplique terne du modèle américain.

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### REMISES DE PRIX/AWARDS

**Professor Stoyan SGOUREV** has won the **Richard Beckhard Prize** for his paper entitled: "Improving Capabilities through Industry Peer Networks" which appeared in the volume 47 of the MIT Sloan Management Review.

**Professor Ashok SOM** has won the **Award of Excellence** for his paper entitled: "SHRM and Firm Performance during Economic Liberalization in India" which was presented at the 2006 Academy of Business & Administrative Sciences (ABAS) held May 30-June 1, 2006, in Limassol, Cyprus International Conference.

### DIPLÔMES/DEGREES

Le **Professeur Francis DECLERCK** a obtenu, en mars 2007, l'Habilitation à Diriger des Recherches, délivrée par l'Université de Montpellier.

### OUVRAGES RÉCENTS / RECENT BOOKS



- **Cerdin J.L.**  
S'expatrier en toute connaissance de cause.  
Paris (France) : Eyrolles, 2007, 171 p.



- **Dornier P.P., Felder M.**  
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Paris (France) : Les Éditions d'Organisation, 2007, 501 p.



- **Darmon R.**  
Leading the Sales Force.  
A Dynamic Management Process.  
Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 2007, 381 p.

### 10 ANS DE RECHERCHE À L'ESSEC



À l'occasion du centenaire du Groupe ESSEC, le Centre de Recherche a publié les « 10 ans de recherche à l'ESSEC ». Ce document regroupe une sélection des principales publications des professeurs sur les dix dernières années.

Contact : [research.center@essec.fr](mailto:research.center@essec.fr)

### UNE SÉLECTION DES TRAVAUX DE RECHERCHE DES PROFESSEURS PERMANENTS DU GROUPE ESSEC PRÉSENTÉS DANS DES CONFÉRENCES INTERNATIONALES / RESEARCH PRESENTED TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

- **Cerdin J.L.** "Towards an International Community of Careers Scholars: Notes from the Field". Academy of Management 2007, August 03-08, 2007, Philadelphia, USA.
- **Chevillon G.** "Finite Sample Distributions of Estimators and Predictors of Non-stationary Processes". 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Congress of the European Economic Association, August 27-31, 2007, Budapest, Hungary.
- **Esposito Vinzi V.** "Fuzzy PLS Path Modeling for Latent Class Analysis: Capturing Unobserved Heterogeneity in Consumers' Preferences" International Symposium on Business and Industrial Statistics (ISBIS 2007), August 18-20, 2007, Island of Azores, Portugal.
- **Metiu A.** "Beyond Orality and Literacy: Letters and Online Interactions" Academy of Management 2007, August 03-08, 2007, Philadelphia, USA.
- **Potin J.** "Intra-industry Specialization and Growth in an Heckscher-Ohlin World, 1976/2000". 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Congress of the

European Economic Association, August 27-31, 2007, Budapest, Hungary.

- **Sgourev S.** "Leaving in Droves: Exit Chains in Network Attrition" Academy of Management 2007, August 03-08, 2007, Philadelphia, USA.  
"Predicting Unpredictability: The Emergence of an Electoral Surprise". American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, August 11-14, 2007, New York, USA.
- **Thiéart R.A.**  
"Strategic Choice, Chance, and the Persistence of Determinism: An Empirical Investigation". Academy of Management 2007, August 03-08, 2007, Philadelphia, USA.
- **Vranceanu R.**  
"International Remittances and Residents' Labour Supply in a Signaling Model". 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Congress of the European Economic Association, August 27-31, 2007, Budapest, Hungary.