ABSTRACT

Since the 1930's academics within the field of management have been discussing the relationship between research and managerial practice. This study sets out to contribute to that discussion and investigate if such a link does exist. This study set out to investigate the relationship between published research, the teaching of management and management practice. It was hypothesised that there was a link between the three, which would result in improved performance by managers.

The first step in this study was to examine the content of management research published in highly ranked academic journals using a taxonomy in order to create a map of the journal content. The content analysis produced a pointer toward the usefulness of the published research for management teaching and managerial practice.

The second step in this study developed a questionnaire to investigate the reading habits of academics, they were also asked to rank the journals importance to teaching as well as the usefulness of the content to teaching and managerial practice.

The final step included a questionnaire to managers. This instrument identified managers reading habits and learning experiences. They were also asked to comment on the most important influence in their managerial work.

The result from this study shows that most published research is based on "the scientific method" or positivism. It is a focus on empirical research in most publications and studies are normally small, safe research studies using sound, accepted quantitative methods. Field studies, longitudinal research, and qualitative methods are only used in very few published articles. However, in the literature review one can detect a strong rejection of logical positivism as an underlying philosophy for management research.

The academic questionnaire revealed that academics did not read journal articles regularly nor use the material in teaching to any great extent. Further there were no differences between different types of academics, based on such things as sex, level of education and position.

The management survey found that managers do not read academic research, further findings indicate that managers gain most of their knowledge on the job and the occasional short seminar.

The findings in this study suggest that at best there could be a very weak link between published management research, teaching and practice.

Published research in highly ranked journals, according to this study, suggests that research is done for other reasons not related to teaching and improving managerial practice. The hypotheses set out in this study have not been supported by this research.