Case Study Research:

A Theoretical Overview, Systematic Review, & Analytical Examination regarding Rosenzweig's Delusions

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract:

This master's thesis will introduce the case study method from various perspectives. In order to carry out a systematic review and an analytical examination regarding Rosenzweig's delusion the paper provides firstly a comprehensive introduction about the case study method from a theoretical viewpoint. In this context the current opinion, challenges, and available designs are reflected in great detail. By doing so a knowledgeable foundation is created, as several renowned researchers' concepts and opinions are integrated. The theoretical chapter demonstrates various developments of the case study method, which have promoted this scientific approach.

The focus of this paper lies on analysing case studies, which were published between the years of 1995 and 2009 in five selected management journals. By using the method of a systematic review, case studies are examined extensively regarding their general and thematic contributions. The main objective is particularly to provide a broad knowledge-base on the basis of the articles' contributions. Hereby, the 120 identified articles are firstly introduced from a descriptive perspective, which allows to report about general information. Afterwards 75 of the 120 studies, which show clear attributes of real case studies, are analysed thematically.

The second research objective is to investigate representative case studies from the 75 articles including sample whether they are affected by Rosenzweig's delusions. In this context the articles will be analysed in terms of four delusions, which are especially related to the case study method. This analytical analysis aims to illustrate how the researchers addressed issues related to the quality of the used data or the Halo Effect.

In total the analysis illustrated the distribution of the articles over the years and across the journals. Moreover, it was reported which industries, countries, and topics were examined in the context of the sample. Whereas a clear focus on certain countries could be reported, it could not be observed in terms of the investigated topics, as those were covered equally across the journals.

The analytical analysis about the potential containment of delusions illustrated that the studies often rely on data sources such as interviews or journal articles, which tend to include the Halo Effect. However, the required scientific quality regarding the overall data is warranted by using the triangulation approach. These sources are significant for the case study method in order to gain deep insights, as no other method is able to achieve this properly and therefore their use is necessary.

Keywords:

Case Studies, Systematic Review, Delusions, Strategic Management

Location:	Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics

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1 INTRODUCTION

This master's thesis will introduce the case study method from various perspectives in great detail. Hereby, many theoretical aspects and issues regarding case study research are reported and contrasted before carrying out a systematic review of a case study sample in the field of strategic management. Finally, articles from the used sample will be analysed broadly regarding four selected delusions of Rosenzweig, which are related to the method. With regard towards the proposed targets, this paper aims to create at first a solid theoretical knowledge-base about the case study method, which provides the foundation for the further analyses of the sample.

The scientific field of management research and especially the subjects of strategic management and organizational performance have been of particular interest to me. In the past, the strategic management research has been investigating concepts such as strategy processes, top management, corporate strategies, financial models, market entry methods, and industrial analyses. Furthermore, the construct of organizational performance has also been a central field of research and specifically the relationship between strategy and performance (Furrer, Thomas, & Goussevskaia, 2008). During my studies I dealt regularly with a large number of case studies in the field of strategic management and organizational performance. Illustrative case studies enabled me constantly to gain deep insights into the complexity of strategic management in practise, as the vast majority of case studies use real company cases in order to point out certain phenomena of related theories (Gibbert, Ruigrok, & Wicki, 2008). The fact that the field of strategic management is very multifaceted and that case study research offers a wide coverage of diverse study areas and companies, aroused my interest and motivated me to examine the case study method in more depth.

Due to this diversity and my interest the emphasis of this thesis is placed on analysing case studies, which were published between the years of 1995 and 2009 in five selected management journals. By using the approach of a systematic review the case studies will be examined extensively regarding their general and thematic information and contributions.

The main objective of this study is particularly to provide a broad knowledge-base on the basis of the findings of the reported articles. Hereby, the 120 identified articles will be firstly introduced from a descriptive perspective, which allows to report about general information such as examined industries, countries, or topics. Afterwards 75 of the 120 articles, which show clear attributes of real case studies, will be analysed thematically and extensively. By explaining the exact procedure regarding the search strategy and data collection, the paper ensures transparency and hence the replicability is warranted (Jones & Gatrell, 2014).

Based on this intention the paper's contribution is to summarize the identified, widely differing findings of the case studies. The analysed case studies are chosen out of five well-known management journals during the above-mentioned period of time. Hence, this research perspective in this paper is able to provide a review across the boundaries of many industries, countries, and particularly researched themes. The data will cover previously conducted case studies in a broad perspective rather than shedding light on studies that focus merely on a single phenomenon in one individual industry. As only the selection of the five journals was actively defined, it could not be influenced which case studies will be analysed in the course of this study. Therefore, the emphases of the studies and coverage of investigated topics was not determined in context of the analyses.

After generating a comprehensive overview about the current situation, challenges, and other theoretical conspectus of case study research, the first research question will be answered. The first research objective of this paper is to contribute a general view about what has been investigated and published in the five journals between 1995 and 2009 by extracting data from each case study. The collected and analysed data will then be classified in order to provide a systematic and well-structured review. Among other aspects the individual field of research, analysed industry, country, and main contributions will be reported.

The second research objective is to examine representative case studies from the sample of 75 papers in order to assess whether they are affected by Rosenzweig's delusions. In this context the articles will be investigated in terms of four delusions, which are especially related to the case study method. This analytical analysis aims to illustrate how the researchers addressed issues related to the quality of the used data or the Halo Effect.

In order to achieve the above-presented objectives, the paper is structured as the following. The first chapter focuses on the theoretical background of case studies and reviews previous literature in order to illustrate different kinds of assumptions and concerns, which are central elements to case study theory. In this context Rosenzweig's (2007) viewpoint towards pseudoscientific tendencies in the field of business management will be integrated in the theoretical section. He argues, that many procedures in the management research include the Halo Effect and other delusions, which affect a study's rigorousness and how people perceive firm performance. Thus, his book provides a valuable, critical, and complementary contribution to the other theoretical point of views.

Afterwards definitions concerning case studies will be presented before introducing different types, designs and approaches of case study as method. As the generalizability of case study findings has always been controversial among researchers in terms of building theory, the paper will give a brief summary about the current opposing perspectives.

In the following chapter the proficiency gained through the theoretical background introduction is subsequently used as a basis in order to understand and clarify the further proceeding concerning the examination of the case studies. The analyses of the case studies includes a classification of the studies that creates the opportunity to observe research emphases and trends during the period of consideration.

Afterwards, representative studies will be investigated analytically regarding four of the nine delusions. Finally, the study will discuss and conclude the earlier generated findings while also providing recommendations for potential future research developments, which are based on the limitations of this study.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this section of the paper the most central features of case study research are presented. More precisely among other things the definition of case study and case study designs will be introduced. After the introduction, the major concepts of this qualitative research method and the current concerns in the literature regarding conducting case study research will be reviewed.

2.1 Definition and Background of Case Study Research

The modern social case study approach has its origin in the fields of sociology and anthropology (Creswell, 2007: 73; McPhee, 1990). Gerring highlights in his book the role of the case study method in the nineteenth century, as it was arguably not only the first, but also the dominant method of social science (Gerring, 2007). Two centuries ago Frederic Le Play provided with his pioneering work the foundation for several case studies across many disciplines of social science. Since that, case studies became more and more significant as a research method in the scientific fields (Creswell, 2007: 73; Gerring, 2007: 1-5), but the method has been encountering problems, which prevented the complete reduction at first towards the scepticism regarding for example cross-case econometrics. However, once scholars started to tackle the problems and scepticism, the method increased its attractiveness, but against presumptions case studies have still not been generally accepted as a methodology at that time (Gerring, 2007: 1-7). Even a few decades ago, case study research was not considered as a formal method, but rather as supportive force during the exploratory stage of other more accepted research methods (Gerring, 2007: 5-8; Yin, 2014: 15-16).

In spite of everything, several researchers developed and explored recently a range of approaches of qualitative case study research (Creswell, 2007: 73-76). For example Stake (2006) illustrates the design of multicase studies by developing a step-by-step approach, which builds up on previous examined designs of single case studies. There have been further contributions about qualitative, but also quantitative approaches in terms of case study development, that provide an individual in-depth understanding related to the various scientific disciplines with different emphases. These continuous investigations enable the

scholars today and in the future to choose and refer to an ever-increasing range of methods and approaches. This is substantial in order to reach the full acceptance and legitimization of case study research as a scientific method (Creswell, 2007: 73-76).

Case study analysis has been playing an essential role across numerous scientific fields and also in organizational and management research. The definition of case study as a qualitative method varies between researchers due to several distinctions (Creswell, 2007: 73; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 115, 117; Gibbert *et al*., 2008;). Some researchers regard the case study research not as a methodology, but rather as a conscious selection of a bounded case. Yet other scientists view it as a strategy of inquiry, a methodology, or a comprehensive research strategy (Creswell, 2007: 73-75; Yin, 2014: 15-19). Yin (2014: 15-17) provides a twofold definition of case study research, which obtains the scope and the features for an all-encompassing case study research. According to him a case study is an empirical inquiry, which analyses a case in-depth by considering the real-world context, even if the boundaries between the two objects are not clearly recognizable. His definition also considers the integration of multiple sources of evidence, as the right definition ensures the suitable implementation of the research design (Yin, 2014: 15-17).

Whereas Yin (2014) looks at case studies rather as a strategy of inquiry, Creswell (2007) regards this type of research as a methodology of exploration. He defines case study research as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (…), and reports a case description and case-based themes" (Creswell, 2007: 73).

When conducting a case study it is central to determine the unit of analysis by defining and bounding the case (Creswell, 2007: 73; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 115; Yin, 2014: 31-34). In case study research the unit of analysis can be either an individual object for instance a person, event, program or activity or the investigation observes more than a single bounded system (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 118; Yin, 2014: 31-34). The unit of analysis differs across the scientific disciplines. While sociology analyses mostly a social group and psychology an individual, the economists examine special phenomena such as firms or larger agglomerations (Gerring, 2007: 1). After the unit of analysis is defined, it is essential to differentiate the relevant study population and observation time from the insignificant population and period. In this manner the extent of data, which will be collected, is determined (Yin, 2014: 33-34).

In general the application of this qualitative approach creates the opportunity to gain novel insights, which promote the testing of existing or the creation of new theoretical concepts (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 73-75; Gibbert *et al.*, 2008; Hoon, 2013). Theory testing and building can be particularly achieved by examining case study findings, as they are most suitable for answering research questions regarding the "why" and "how" (Gerring, 2004; Hoon 2013; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2014: 11). Through the observation of a certain pattern amongst a

study population, researchers seek to understand occurring phenomena in a real-life setting, while also considering the individual contexts of each case (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 73; Hoon, 2013).

2.2 Current position regarding case studies

Primarily, case studies have been regarded as critical in terms of their ability to generalize the findings, to build and test novel theories and to summarize a greater number of studies. Those concerns have been answered and tackled by a number of researchers such as Yin (1981) and Flyvbjerg (2006). This section will address the concerns, which are discussed by various scholars across scientific disciplines, in terms of conducting case studies and dealing with the results.

The latest success story of case study as a research method is owed to the significant contributions of well-known qualitative scholars, who have been developing the methodology of the case study approach further, so that its popularity has been increasing ever since (Creswell, 2007: 73; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). The methodology of case studies has been further explored and experienced more in-depth enrichments. For that reason it is viewed by several researchers as an individual qualitative approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Among other researchers the renowned scholars Robert Yin (2014) and Robert Stake (1995, 2006) forwarded the qualitative case study approaches by exploring and providing a variety of more sophisticated research designs and methods. Hence, nowadays scientists are able to select an exactly fitting research design for their case study in order to experience novel explorations or to test hypotheses. This differentiates the case study approach from other qualitative approaches (Merriam, 1998: 28-29).

A lot of knowledge in the current empirical world has been widely gained via the usage of case studies. Furthermore, case studies are among the most interesting published articles in academic journals (Flyvbjerg, 2011: 302; Gerring, 2007: 2-3). Despite the high popularity of the case study approach and its extensive application, it is suffering under the low acceptance within many academic disciplines and is partly ignored (Flyvbjerg, 2011: 302). Gerring (2004, 2007: 5-8) describes this contrast as a paradox. According to Gerring (2004) the proponents implement and conduct case studies, however, they are permanently struggling by verifying their applied methodology. Therefore, Gerring (2004) uses the term of a "curious methodological limbo", which illustrates the current stage of the case study approach in the academy.

Rosenzweig (2007) regards studies, which analyze firms and their performance, as critical simply due to the fact, that those provide often pseudoscientific explanations in terms of performance developments. Referring in his book to various case studies and other business bestsellers, he notes that many researches are using simple phrases and explanations and thus do not keep the promise to provide answers to the question what leads to high performance. Based on his observations he developed nine delusions, which include the main

delusion of the Halo Effect (Rosenzweig, 2007: 10-12). Case studies, which investigate a firm and its performance tend to exaggerate when examining highs and lows in performances. In the field of business management it is obvious that one cannot make laboratory experiments and therefore one has to observe phenomena retroperspectively. However, many phenomena in this field are simply not measureable objectively for example a firm's leadership or culture. Consequently, Rosenzweig concludes that those not measureable attributions of an organization are often evaluated and assessed based on concrete numbers such as the profit or the revenues. Case studies cannot commonly evaluate an organization's high performance directly, but by using simplistic phrases they attempt to get a grasp (Rosenzweig, 2007: 15, 34).

The Halo Effect describes the phenomenon when one concludes about something on the basis of a general impression, even if this is not directly measureable, and therefore the traits were partly presumed and vague. Hereby, the intention is to offer a consistent and coherent story and picture of a firm. Exemplary can be that a company, whose performance is superior to others, is attributed to have an excellent manager, culture, quality, and decision process and the other way around (Rosenzweig, 2007: 50-54). Rosenzweig illustrates that clearly by the example of top managers. Once the performance is good, the success is attributed to the great leadership and the firm's managers are seen as confident winners. On the contrary, when a firm's fortune is low the managers are arrogant losers. Overall, it seems to be obvious that an evaluation of a firm and its managers and other deep-rooted characteristics correlate highly with the financial performance (Rosenzweig, 2007: 48, 60-62).
In order to adjust the Halo Effect, a case study should involve independent variables by connecting them to dependent ones. Testing hypotheses by using carefully selected data for example annual reports and not journalistic storytelling articles might correct the Halo Effect (Rosenzweig, 2007: 65-67).

Robert Yin (1981, 2014: 19-23) and Bent Flyvbjerg (2006, 2011: 301-316) indented with their investigations to examine the main claims and concerns, which were directed against for instance the generalization of case study's findings, contributions, and implications. By doing so, especially Flyvbjerg (2006, 2011: 301-316) analysed the origin of such statements and their justifications. In his article "Five misunderstandings about case-study research", he deals with each of the five by himself selected individual misunderstandings by illustrating the central claim and correcting it according to his point of view afterwards.
In a general sense, it is a reasonable strategy to respond to conflicting literature. As Eisenhardt (1989) points out, it is important, because by dealing with conflicting point of views, the confidence and acceptance regarding the validity and generalizability of the findings will be significantly promoted. Moreover, the conflicting literature demands and promotes the scholars to think beyond the borders of original thinking and their comfort zone. As a result, more in-depth insights can be generated for both contradicting perspectives, which sharpens the knowledge in a discipline (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Themes	Citations	Relevant Researchers
Rigorousness	"(...) a case study author may emphasize the more fundamental types of validity at the expense of external validity, without diminishing the case study's overall rigor, (...)" (Gibbert *et al*, 2008: 1472)	Gibbert & Ruigrok (2010), Gibbert *et al.* (2008), Yin (2014)
Theoretical & concrete case knowledge	"(...) context-dependent knowledge is, therefore, more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals." (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 224)	Flyvbjerg (2006), Yin (2014)
Disproportionate efforts & comparative advantage	"While case studies (...) use quantitative data, a key difference with other research methods is that case studies seek to study phenomena in their contexts, rather than independent of context." (Gibbert *et al.*, 2008: 1466)	Stake (1995, 2010), Tsang (2014), Yin (2014)
Bias towards confirmation	"(...) falsification is about theory testing. (...) concerns the rejection of hypotheses based on case evidence, regardless of whether the theory in question is modified as a result." (Tsang, 2014: 7)	Flyvbjerg (2006), Gerring (2007), Stake (1995, 2010)
Observation of successful cases & case selection	"Even if a practice is frequent among organizations with high performance, it does not follow that the practice is linked to success." (Denrell, 2003: 231)	Denrell (2003, 2005), Flyvbjerg (2006), Rosenzweig (2007)
Generalizability	"(...) theory building from multiple cases typically yields more robust, generalizable, and testable theory than single-case research." (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007: 27)	Flyvbjerg (2006), Gibbert *et al*, (2008), Stake (1995), Tsang (2014)
Summary of case studies in presence of narratives	"Often it is not desirable to summarize and generalize case studies. Good studies should be read as narratives in their entirety." (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 241)	Eisenhardt & Graebner (2007), Flyvbjerg (2006)

Table 1: Overview of controversial themes regarding case study research among researchers.

Below, this section of the paper will explain more precisely the main controversial subjects about case study research as a methodology. In this context the most relevant literature will be introduced.

Rigorousness

It is a common point of view that other research methods show compared to the case study approach a higher rigorousness. Yin (2014: 19-20) argues that this is due to two factors. On one hand, some case study researchers have caused and aggravated the concerns about the rigorousness by themselves, as sceptics might get the impression that some scholars conducted case studies carelessly. This seems to be particularly conspicuous, as they do not apply systematic approaches and procedures or do not avoid ambiguity and therefore a study's results might lack rigorousness. The application of unsystematic procedures is in Yin's opinion by the virtue of a low number of methodological papers, which illustrate how to follow a systematic and standardized procedure, whereas other methods have several guidelines (Yin, 2014: 19-20).

Creswell (2007: 45) attaches a significant importance to the rigorousness, because in his view it is indispensable for a well-conducted qualitative study. He highlights the use of multiple data sources in terms of their collection and the multiple data analysis of various dimensions on different levels. Furthermore, the procedures should be revised for instance by means of experts in order to increase the rigor (Creswell, 2007: 45-46).

In the article "What passes as a rigorous case study?" Gibbert *et al.* (2008) examine procedures how scholars are able to conduct methodologically rigorous case studies in connection with the academic discipline of strategic management theory. They analyse different types of validities and the reliability, which influence the rigor of a study directly and hence have to be considered by the researcher. Compared to Yin (2014) they identify other reasons that threaten the rigor of case studies. At first, the close relationship of the case study approach to the real management practise is mentioned. Gibbert, Ruigrok, and Wicki refer to the close interference between the conduction of case studies and the practical management. Obviously, this is a major advantage of this methodology, as it is able to gain deep insights and create managerially knowledge. But the authors highlight that this close interaction often takes place at the expense of the rigor. Moreover, case studies are carried out frequently in the early stage of a new theory for instance in management. In this critical period many factors, variables, and relationships are usually uncharted. Therefore, initially mistakes regarding the methodology and procedure might be harmful when it comes to test these factors later (Gibbert *et al.*, 2008).

In a later paper Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010) paid special attention on what rigorous actions are used for and how scholars can apply best practice regarding these actions to achieve the highest level of rigor. Some claims of the study correspond with those of Yin (2014) and Gibbert *et al.* (2008). However, among other things, the article explored that the authors, who are more concerned towards the rigor of their study, do not follow a traditional standardized procedure.

They conclude, that scholars should be vigilant about the balance between provided data and explained data. By illustrating how they used and adapted the original data of the research actions, the procedure is more comprehensible and thus the rigorousness is warranted (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010).

Regarding rigorousness Rosenzweig states that the quality of the used data and sources has to be high. Therefore, one can integrate a great amount of data, but the quality is for a rigorous case study essential and not the quantity. Moreover, a scholar has to ensure that the data does not contain any Halo Effects (Rosenzweig, 2007: 100-101). Case studies, which refer to journalistic articles or retrospective interviews, tend to take over the Halo Effect and risk their rigor due to the low validity. This poses a risk, as rigorous science is usually addressed for scholars, whereas managers often refer to storytelling studies, which seem to be rigorous, but do rather overlook non-fitting facts regarding the story in order to be convincing (Rosenzweig, 2007: 127-135).

Theoretical & concrete case knowledge

According to Bent Flyvbjerg it is incorrect to assume, that concrete case knowledge is less important than theoretical knowledge. Flyvbjerg relates to the process of human learning, whereby it is vital for a rule-based beginner to acquire context-dependent knowledge. Particularly, case studies generate this type of knowledge and allow beginners to turn into an expert during the learning process. Consequently, in Flyvbjerg's opinion the exploitation of case study is a research, teaching, and also a learning method. Basis of textbooks deliver mostly context-independent or so-called rule-based knowledge and do not provide any additional competencies, but rather basics. Case and other experience-based methods combined with the related theory are according to Flyvbjerg constituting a rather highly effective contribution in the human learning process than only theoretical knowledge alone. Based on these assumptions Bent Flyvbjerg corrects the claim and states, that "(…) context-dependent knowledge is therefore more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals." (Flyvbjerg, 2006, 2011: 302-304).

Case studies in context of the human learning process are connected with teaching cases. Robert Yin (2014) addresses in his book the matter of fact, that in order to illustrate a certain concept clearly, it might be more effective for an instructor to intentionally modify some facts. In this connection, for instance students would be easier able to understand the presented theory via an illustrative case. This procedure might be useful and acceptable in terms of teaching, however, it is absolutely forbidden in research. All data, findings, evidence and conclusions have to be conducted and presented truthfully and without any bias. The bias and falsification of data regarding case studies only harms this method, as it lowers the level of rigor and traceability (Yin, 2014: 20).

This is in the same line with Rosenzweig, who notes that business articles and case studies pay attention to create coherent stories. Because of this and a retrospective view on a company's performance, those papers tend to reinterpret the past by adjusting the occurrences. Many examples provided by

Rosenzweig point out that the analysts of journals interpret a firm's great or bad performance in a way, which confirms and suits to their statement and opinion (Rosenzweig, 2007: 33-34).

Disproportionate efforts & comparative advantage

Another concern regarding case study research might be the high efforts when conducting this method. In the past the collection, observation, analysis and interpretation of the data covered a long period of time (Stake, 1995: 45-46; 2010: 29; Yin, 2014: 21). Yin points particularly ethnography and participant-observation as data collection methods out, which both require a lot of time and hence delay the implementation of a case study. Those two mentioned methods are, however, not the only ways of data collection nowadays (Yin, 2014: 21). Moreover, a long-term case analysis results frequently in a large amount of confusing data and documents, which consequently complicates the application of the investigation.

Yin illustrates many components, such as reporting formats or overall structure, these days, which are available for scholars to conduct a case study. By composing the study before its conduction, the researcher is able to optimize his efforts for example in terms of time (Yin, 2014: 178-179, 183-194).

A further issue among scholars is whether case study research possesses a comparative advantage over other methods. Although the case study approach experienced higher acceptance in the past as mentioned earlier, other methods such as experiments were more favoured especially in the beginning of the 21st century. Robert Yin explains that experiments are able to "establish the effectiveness of various treatments or interventions", but case studies rather not (Yin, 2014: 21). However, according to various researchers the case study method's comparative advantage is to provide in-depth insights. These insights can be offered since this approach enables researchers to address the most essential questions in order to deliver an understanding: "why" and "how" (Stake, 2010: 19-20; Thomas, 2011: 4; Yin, 2014: 21). Therefore, case studies should not be only considered as an additional adjunct of other methods, but at least as a complementary method (Yin, 2014: 22).

Concerning the comparative advantage of case studies, Tsang highly values the generalizability of case study findings compared to quantitative studies. The theoretical generalization, falsification and empirical generalization are in his sense the merits and at the same time the comparative advantage of the method due to the large number of different available research designs. Those three merits, and particular the issue of generalizability are very controversial in the academic disciplines (Tsang, 2014).

In the further course of this paper, the ability of case studies to generalize their findings and their classifications will be explained in more detail.

Bias towards confirmation

Stake (1995, 2010) refers to subjectivity and points out, that it does not have to be associated negatively necessarily. According to him, several researchers do not regard subjectivity as failing in qualitative research generally, but more as an indispensable component of understanding human activity. On the other side, this process of understanding might lead to misunderstandings, which are owed to misinterpretations of data and insufficiencies induced by their researchers. This might affect the validity of a study and so far there is no clear procedure how to avoid this exposure (Stake, 1995: 45; 2010: 29).

Also Bent Flyvbjerg (2006) takes up this topic by connecting the issue of subjectivity with the bias towards verification. Qualitative methods have the potential to mislead researchers in order to judge more arbitrarily due to the subjectivity and individual interpretation. However, Flyvbjerg regards this criticism rather as a lack of knowledge, as it has been for instance proven, that the case study method is as rigorous as quantitative methods.

Flyvbjerg and other researchers want to clarify urgently that other methods are also affected by subjectivism like the case study method. Particularly, he links this concern to the bias towards verification, which is in his opinion another misunderstanding that does not only relate to case studies. The impact of experience of a researcher shows rather a bias towards falsification than verification of preconceived notions and that characterizes the method of case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2006; 2011: 309-310). In reference to Karl Popper, Gerring and Flyvbjerg define falsification respectively falsifiability as an approach by which scientific propositions are texted and classified in terms of the degree of falsifiability (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Gerring, 2007: 74-75). The concept of falsification implies the rejection or feasible revision of an individual hypothesis or proposition, if the observed bounded system does not confirm the earlier introduced proposition generally (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Gerring equates the term of falsifiability with riskiness, by which he describes a case study as highly risky, when the original proposition is tested across many cases and most likely to be falsified. Some studies' hypotheses are very abstract and ambiguous designed in order to pass the most stringent testing even when facing a large case population. On that score, general and vague claims are less risky and thus pass a potential falsifiability test, but are by far not applicable to other cases (Gerring, 2007: 74-75).

Eric Tsang highlights the theory testing function of falsification. Hereby, a proposition will be declined if the cases prove something else. In that case the falsification contributes to the theoretical generalization and theory development, as hypotheses that are not applicable across various cases will be corrected in order to achieve the generalizability (Tsang, 2014). Further clarifications concerning this matter will be discussed below.

Observation of successful cases & case selection

An additional issue when using the case study method is addressed by Jerker Denrell, which is not dealing with the procedure itself, but rather with the selec-

tion of the case populations. In his article "Vicarious Learning, Undersampling of Failure, and the Myths of Management", he illustrates that many books and business presses focus on successful organizations and do not choose the cases randomly. During a selective process many cases are excluded from the relevant samples and this can entail potential risks in a learning process, as failure is undersampled. Focusing only on successful cases might create a false impression towards relevant indicators for an organization's performance. For example risky actions could seem to be an essential factor for a superior firm performance, when observing only the restricted population. But this might be not the case when considering the full population and therefore challenge the bias. Denrell concludes that this bias leads to a distorted organizational perception of organisational actors and this influences the managerial practices directly (Denrell, 2003, 2005).

In a later article Denrell calls this phenomenon selection bias, by which a chosen sample will be investigated, which is not representative for the whole population. In this paper he suggests to conduct benchmarking by also considering an organization's internal failure or less-than-successful, but also of other external companies. By applying a statistically method, which includes less successful and successful cases, researchers are able to correct the selection bias. According to Denrell formal statistical tools enable researchers and managers to learn tactics and strategies of successfully performing companies in an undistorted way (Denrell, 2005).

Focusing only on successful cases, which are selected only due to the dependent variable of a successful performance, is also to Rosenzweig a delusion. In order to identify relevant factors how to achieve superior performance one has to consider also non-successful cases, otherwise it is not possible to explore distinguishing features (Rosenzweig, 2007: 92-93). According to Rosenzweig managers have to realize that success is not permanent due to the dynamic competition. Additionally, it has to be kept in mind that successful companies execute diverse strategies simultaneously. However, that does not indicate that everything is done perfectly in best practice and thus one should not conclude that all applied practises lead to a successful firm (Rosenzweig, 2007: 103-104, 121-124). Managers should understand that success of a company is relative to the competitors and not absolute, consists mostly out of many short-term successes and not one lasting one, that the line between failure and success is small, and that oftentimes simply the factor of luck determines a firm's success (Rosenzweig, 2007: 158). Regarding success Rosenzweig cites appropriately Tom Peters, who stated regarding the temporariness of a firm's success the following: "To be excellent, you have to be consistent. When you're consistent, you're vulnerable to attack. Yes, it's a paradox. Now deal with it." (Rosenzweig, 2007: 156).

Kathleen Eisenhardt raises another issue concerning the selection of cases. She considers the limited capacity of a scholar as a significant reason and therefore she suggests the selection of extreme cases, which illustrate the specific phenomenon transparently. This approach is particularly suitable for theo-

retical sampling in order to widen a theory, whereas the traditional hypothesis testing follows a random case selection (Eisenhardt, 1989).

There are various methods across the disciplines how the sampling – strategic case selection – can be conducted and they have a significant influence on the generalizability of a study. Flyvbjerg introduces different types of case selection such as stratified, random, extreme, critical and paradigmatic selections. He points out that a case can be simultaneously follow more than one strategy. This might allow substantial divergences in the interpretation based on different perspectives and conclusions depending on what type of case it considers (Flyvbjerg, 2006, 2011: 306-308).

Generalizability

The previous mentioned concerns and misunderstandings are certainly of importance and should be considered by scholars when conducting a case study. However, one of the most controversial and discussed issues across disciplines is the generalizability of a case study's findings and therefore many researchers state their opinions towards the generalizability.

Gibbert *et al.* illustrate generalizability as an intuitive belief, that a phenomenon is not only valid in a specific context, but that a theory is valid in various settings. Whereas they question both single and multiple case studies to be statistically generalizable (Gibbert *et al*., 2008), Flyvbjerg and Yin particularly question this regarding single case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2014: 20).
Yet, among other scholars Robert Yin makes reference to the method of experiments. When performing a single experiment, the inability to generalize becomes also obvious and based on that he refers to multiple studies (Yin, 2014: 20). Hereby, a particular phenomenon is tested through various contexts due to the diversity of available research designs. Gibbert *et al. and* Yin place great emphasis on the clarification, that a single case study is only generalizable to a theoretical hypothesis, but not to a whole population. It merely allows the analytical generalization of theories, but without the statistically extrapolation of probabilities (Gibbert *et al*., 2008; Yin, 2014: 21).

Based on this Eisenhardt explains, that case studies are able to generalize analytically in order to develop theory by conducting a cross-case analysis. The involvement of a few case studies, which follows the approach of multiple case studies, is able to build theories and to generalize (Eisenhardt, 1989). This argument has also been consolidated by Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), who suggest the use of more than one case. They recommend this, as it has the potential to enhance significantly the quality of a theory during its development.

Recently, Tsang (2014) investigated the method of case study in terms of generalization, as he identified the lack of generalizability as devastating to the method. In his paper he distinguishes generalization from related concepts in order to clear up about the generalizability of case studies. His conclusion is, that quantitative studies might be slightly more generalizable when testing the whole population from the initial sample. However, when testing hypotheses

across different populations case study results are not less generalizable. In Tsang's point of view case studies have merits compared to quantitative methods with regard to generalization such as identifying disconfirming cases. He regrets, that among other authors Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (2014) merely focus on the merit towards generalization of theory, but that the literature has not been addressing adequately other merits (Tsang, 2014).

Sometimes it is valuable in terms of the generalization of a study to conduct an intrusive research (Gibbert *et al.*, 2008). However, an overgeneralization and universalization of a research holds the risk of losing the attention away from the individual case. This means that deep insights and novel knowledge might be dropped at the expense of the generalizability (Mir & Watson, 2000). Another risk of an excessive concentration towards generalizability might lead to the negligence of the other three criteria, which are relevant for the rigor of a study. Among other researchers Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010) indentified the internal validity, construct validity and reliability as equally important, which will be introduced later in more detail.

Stake adds another perspective on generalization. According to him, one single case study enables people to add one more experience and thus they are able to modify their old, general generalizations. He distinguishes between naturalistic generalization, which arrives from a person's personal experience, and propositional generalization, that is received by a person from others. Based on this differentiation Stake suggests, that researchers should focus more on assisting the reader to make own naturalistic generalization than only developing and promoting the propositional generalization (Stake, 1995: 85-88).

In his article about the misunderstandings, Bent Flyvbjerg (2006, 2011: 304-305) agrees with much of what has been presented above. However, he mentions that particularly the case selection influences the generalizability of a study. Flyvbjerg identified a current misunderstanding in terms of generalization, which claims that "one cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development". As Stake (1995) Flyvbjerg views a hardly generalized study as an opportunity for a reader to broaden his knowledge even if it is not following formal procedures. Formal generalization, as the major source of scientific progress, is overrated. When observing other scholars it can be noticed that despite calling for strict compliance with the rules implementing scientific research, they often practice divergently. People gain knowledge not only through formal generalization, but also through a descriptive case study, which does not strive for any generalizability. Based on this argumentation Flyvbjerg adjusts this misunderstanding by claiming: "One can often generalize on the basis of a single case, (…). But formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas "the force of example" is underestimated" (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 228).

Summary of case studies in the presence of narratives

Narratives are commonly part of case studies to mediate and illustrate the complexities of real cases. Although narratives certainly are substantial for case studies, it is challenging to summarize them and develop general propositions or theories based on them. The case study method supporters consider this "inability" rather as a positive indicator for the identification of a complex and highly problematic phenomenon than a negative sign. Flyvbjerg therefore questions the popular thinking of the indispensable summarizing of case studies in order to pave the way for the generalization of the findings (Flyvbjerg, 2006, 2011: 311-313). Peattie (2001) recommends the abandonment of the ambition to summarize a case study. In her opinion the value of a case study concerning the particular context runs the risk to be lost out of the researcher's sight. According to Peattie practitioners are more interested in the cases than in a summary, which enables a high-level generalization of theory.

Flyvbjerg views a case as a story, which is a result itself and for that reason he considers the summary of a presented case as unnecessary. In this way the reader is able to experience and explore the reality by himself and proceed in his learning independently of external propositions and summaries. Based on this assumption Flyvbjerg finalizes that it should not be essential and worthwhile for scholars to aim towards a summary and generalization of their studies, because a narrative case can also be meaningful for scientific disciplines and practitioners (Flyvbjerg, 2006, 2011: 311-313).

Eisenhardt and Graebner also examined how to present qualitative data of single case studies and how to summarize them. According to them single cases include narratives, which integrate a story and the related theory, in order to provide evidence. Whereas this overall comprehensive narrative can be presented in terms of a single case study, it is hardly feasible for multiple-case researches. When using a broad number of cases it is challenging to illustrate equally the theory and the empirical evidence. The risk is to provide only factual information at the expense of extensive narratives, which might be expected by the readers. Hence, Eisenhardt and Graebner suggest creating an overarching theory, which involves the majority of case evidences. Since it is a fairly complex issue to cover all theoretical propositions of every case, the authors refer to the use of extensive tables. Those visual devices are suitable to summarize case evidence (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

This section aimed to report the current situation regarding the most relevant concerns and misunderstandings, which the case study method faces. After presenting in the next section substantial definitions and components of this qualitative method, the paper will in the following provide a systematic review of selected case studies, which were published between 1995 and 2009 in five renowned management journals. Hereby, I will follow the advice of Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) to use tables in order to extract and illustrate the main findings of the case studies. Therefore, one can recognize that the theoretical section of this study provides the necessary knowledge in order to carry out the analyses.

2.3 Purposes, approaches and designs of case studies

The previous section revealed the main concerns regarding the case study method and illustrated the evolutionary process, which the method experienced. Many scholars have been developing a broad range of novel components and procedures in order to enable researchers to use the exactly needed tools. In order to structure the various definitions and types of case studies, which vary among the researchers considerably, the paper intents to give an overview by dividing the concepts regarding purposes, approaches, and designs.

Merriam (1988)	Stake (1995)	Bassey (1999)	Mitchell (2006)	Yin (2009)
• Descriptive • Interpretative • Evaluative	• Intrinsic • Instrumental • Collective	• Seeking a theory • Testing a theory • Storytelling • Drawing a picture • Evaluative	• Illustrative • Social analytical • Extended (over time) • Configurative, idiographic • Disciplined configurative • Heuristic • Plausibility probes	• Critical • Extreme or unique • Longitudinal • Representative • Revelatory

Table 2: Types of case study definitions following different researchers (Thomas, 2011: 91).

These tools or procedures can be arranged precisely according to a particular research subject in terms of their purpose, approach, and process. Therefore, there are various numbers of possibilities to carry out case study research nowadays and the different components of a research design will be presented and introduced in the following.

2.3.1 Purposes of case studies

Each case study has its individual purpose, which provides information why the research has been conducted. They vary broadly with respect to their theoretical and practical orientation and due to this fact different scholars focused and identified distinct purposes (Stake, 2006: 8; Thomas, 2011: 89-97). Robert Stake provided a well-known and accepted classification of cases particularly regarding the purposes. This classification has been adopted by researchers like Thomas (2011), Gerring (2004, 2007), and Creswell (2007), who refer to it when illustrating different types of purposes. In accordance with his classification cases can be intrinsic, instrumental or collective (Stake, 1995: 3-4). Thomas (2011: 97-110) adopted Stake's leading classification by adding to the three original categories the evaluative, explanatory, and exploratory perspective. When analysing the different categories of Thomas (2011), it is observable that there are five instead of three classes of purposes compared to Stake. However, Stake (1995) clustered the same content and categories content-wise in fewer groups and thus the overall classification is corresponding.

Purposes	Citation	Relevant Researchers
Intrinsic & exploratory case study	"The final type of case study design is an intrinsic case study in which the focus is on the case itself (…) because the case presents an unusual or unique situation." (Creswell, 2007: 74)	Creswell (2007), Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008), Stake (1994, 1995)
Instrumental case study	"In what we may call instrumental case study, a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else." (Stake, 1994: 237)	Stake (1994, 1995), Thomas (2011)
Collective case study	"(…) researchers may study a number of cases jointly in order to inquire into the phenomenon, population, or general condition. (…). It is not the study of a collective but instrumental study extended to several cases." (Stake, 1994: 237)	Stake (1994, 1995), Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008)

Table 3: Overview of different purposes of case studies.

Intrinsic & exploratory case study

Single case studies with an intrinsic intent or purpose are mainly interested in the case itself. When carrying out an intrinsic case research, the emphasis and focus are not defined and determined at the outset. Consequently, the particular research design, theory and method have not been selected in advance (Grandy, 2010, 2010a; Stake, 1994, 1995: 16, 36-37, 63-64, 2006: 8).

An intrinsic case study examines a certain case, which is not representing a population and hence it does not aim to explain or understand a preassigned issue. According to Stake a case study is intrinsic because of its fundamental focus and uniqueness in terms of its topic or situation. Moreover, the case is only used due to the interest in it itself. Thus, it is aiming to gather deep insights and knowledge rather than developing a theory (Creswell, 2007: 74; Stake, 1994, 1995: 3-4). This type of intent follows often a narrative and descriptive research design and considers the unique context. The context plays an essential role within an intrinsic case study. This is obvious, as an intrinsic case is a single case analysis, that analyses an individual unit such as a person or firm and this is why the context has to be considered in order to make inferences. However, since it is dealing with a very specific single case, it loses its efficacy of generalization (Stake, 1994, 1995: 16, 36-37, 63-64). Thomas (2011: 98) understands the intrinsic purpose as curiosity-driven, since the conduction of a study is mainly motivated by personal interests. The reader is able to reflect the case without any barriers and as a result, is able to make his own conclusions.

Stake (1995) views the intrinsic case study as an approach to explore new knowledge and insights based on the uniqueness of a single case combined with its context. Whereas Thomas (2011) separates and distinguishes between the intrinsic and explorative purpose, Stake (1995) considers them as interconnected (Grandy, 2010a).

Yin (1984: 133, 2014: 215) identifies also an exploratory purpose of case studies. However, he regards the exploratory mode rather as a prelude to a subsequent different type of study. Hereby, the exploratory case study's task would be to investigate whether an issue is worth or promising enough to be studied.

Other scholars such as Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) label intrinsic case studies as intensive case studies. They build up on the distinction of Harré, who differs between intensive and extensive research. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008: 118-122) emphasize the ability of intensive studies to learn how specific cases function by considering all details. Through the individual interpretation and sensemaking process of a case, the scholar is enabled to explore a case in-depth in order to be able to explain holistically a phenomenon over a period of time. Furthermore, Eriksson and Kovalainen agree with Stake and other researchers that this type of case study purpose is not aiming to produce generalizable knowledge. Moreover, the authors note the complexity of relationship between theory and empirical investigation. In their opinion researchers should rather focus on understanding the case than drawing theoretical conclusions prematurely (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 118-122).

Instrumental case study

Another classification of case study purposes is developed by Stake, which is known as instrumental case study. Compared to the intrinsic purpose, the instrumental purpose builds up on the analysis of a single case, but is not primarily interested in only the case itself. The single case is rather seen as a supportive factor, which contributes to a better understanding and provides insights in a theory or issue, which was supposed to be examined in advance (Stake, 1994, 1995: 3-4, 16-19). Furthermore, a case study that follows the instrumental purpose is able to redraw generalizations and develop theory. If one contrasts the intrinsic and instrumental case study, one recognizes that they use the same case, however, the purpose is different. In comparison to the intrinsic purpose, the instrumental approach implies the consideration of a case by which the researcher has determined the design and purpose of the study before its implementation around the related established theory (Grandy, 2010). Therefore, a scholar has a purpose in mind and the study is used as method, instrument, or a means to the end and not only conducted because of an interest in a topic (Thomas, 2011: 98-99). The purpose in this context is mostly to provide knowledge and answers to an issue or research question that is beyond an individual case (Stake, 1995: 18, 2006: 8). Summarizing Stake's idea of instrumental case studies, it can be said that it is a study by which a scholar analyses an issue, which has been identified beforehand. On this basis, one-bounded cases will be selected in order to address the research question and demonstrate the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007: 74). According to Stake case studies with an instrumental purpose are particularly able to address research questions, which are evaluative or explanatory. Yin (1984: 133) described more precisely that explanatory case studies deal with plenty different perspectives of a causal argument. Cases with an instrumental purpose allow a researcher to gain deep insights into the relationship between cause and effect or judge about the efficiency of a process (Stake, 1995: 18-20; Yin, 2014: 215-217).

Here again, Thomas (2011) regards evaluative and explanatory purposes as own categories. By using an evaluative case study the researcher intends to examine how a phenomenon is performing after it faced change for example through innovation. Hence, a case might be evaluated numerically based on terms of performance before and after a significant modification. The explanatory function and purpose is the strong driving force of case studies and has been broadly recognized by researchers across many disciplines. This is due to the competitive advantage of the method simply because it allows the understanding of how and why certain phenomena occur. However, even if this explanatory purpose is fundamentally and part of every case study, Thomas dedicates this purpose an own category (Thomas, 2011: 99-104).

Collective case study

The third and last category according to Stake is the collective purpose, which is even less interested in an individual case. Collective case studies examine a large number of cases to gain insights into a phenomenon. In Stake's opinion a collective study is an instrumental study, which considers several cases. There-

fore, the approach follows the purpose of representing a larger population, as it involves more than one case. An individual case is selected for a larger collection in order to contribute its insights towards a greater general understanding and theorizing. Hereby, the cases do not have to be necessarily similar. The main emphasis lies on understanding the individual cases of a case collection by following an instrumental purpose and thus the diversity and redundancy are not decisive (Stake, 1994, 1995: 3-7).

As mentioned above intensive case studies can be intrinsic or instrumental, however, their purpose is mainly to gather as many insights as possible out of one or a few cases. The opposite approach is called extensive case study research, which intends to recognize patterns across a large population of cases. Eriksson and Kovalainen mention that this purpose focuses on several cases as instruments, but not on one case only, because it is intrinsically interesting. Usually when carrying out a collective case study the researcher intends to offer a cumulative narrative in order to provide a comparison. It should be mentioned, that what is declared by Stake as a collective case study, is labelled by other researchers as multiple or cumulative case study research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 118, 122-124).

The advantages and different designs of single and multiple case studies will be introduced in detail below in this paper. However, the presented three categories – intrinsic, instrumental, and collective - developed by Stake (1995), which can be seen as case study types or designs that follow a different purpose, are rather heuristic than functional. Stake states that his classification is limited, but the classification depends on a case study's emphasize variation regarding the purpose and its methodological design (Stake, 1994: 238). Researchers such as Thomas (2011) developed their own classifications regarding the purpose of case studies, which build often up on Stake's findings and draw only more subtle distinctions between potential purposes. Therefore, they do consist of more categories, but concerning the contents they cover similar concepts.

2.3.2 Approaches of a case studies

The previous section exemplified the different categories of purposes, which a case study can follow and target. In this context a scholar determines the objective of the study by thinking why a research is conducted for instance due to the intrinsic interest in a study or in order to explore, explain, or evaluate an issue. After defining why a study is conducted the next step is to specify how it will be implemented. In this process an approach will be selected, which provides required setting in order to achieve a study's objective. This can be attained by approaches such as testing existing theory, developing novel theory, or carrying out experiments (Thomas, 2011: 111). Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008: 122-123) point out that particularly in business research the extensive case study's approach and aim is to build novel or to test existing theoretical frameworks. The diverse types of case study approaches will be described hereafter.

Theory development & building

Theory development based on case studies is highly popular and considered to be particularly interesting, even if it is time-consuming and challenging (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2014: 38). This approach of developing a theoretical framework from case-based evidence is based on one or many cases and intents to set up frameworks, testable hypotheses, or propositions (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Novel theories are premised on an innovative idea in terms of a phenomenon and it will subsequently subjected to a more rigorous analysis (Gerring, 2004). When a case study's approach is to build theoretical concepts, the structure and sequence of the study's sections is supposed to follow this logic. Each section of a research contributes a part to the whole theoretical argumentation, which increases the comprehensibility. This approach is particularly relevant for case studies that intend to develop a theory and follow an explanatory or exploratory purpose (Yin, 1984: 133; 2014: 39).

The approach of theory building aims to develop a framework of propositions that illustrates an issue or phenomenon. The theory development based on case studies goes beyond the exploration, as it does not refer to existing theoretical concepts. Rather novel ideas are developed that arise from the individual interpretation of a scholar (Thomas, 2011: 112). The exploratory and generative approach is able to create new theory, as it is a path-breaking research approach (Gerring, 2004). Kathleen Eisenhardt (1989) provided an approach about how to develop theories from case study research by illustrating the whole process. The method, which is closely connected to empirical data, is especially appropriate for new academic disciplines that cannot refer to pre-existing theoretical knowledge. The iterative process consists of various steps such as selecting cases, analyzing data, creating hypotheses, and comparing with literature, and uses multiple data sources and cross-case searching tactics. Even if this is a very demanding approach, it is a great way to create new theory based on detailed insights. However, researchers, who use case studies to develop theory, have to be aware that theory should not be too complex and thus the data should not be too voluminous. Furthermore, scientists often generate theories, which are modest and not generalizable, because they should be valid, testable and novel. But based on this they are often no grand respectively significant theories that apply to a whole organization (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Theories, which build up on case studies, are facing challenges, since they have been becoming increasingly popular. However, the challenges can be solved by a clear argumentation language and a suitable research design. Among other challenges Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) identified that researchers have to justify their approach of theory building precisely and pay attention towards the selection of analyzed cases. It is significant to illustrate the empirical evidence, which is the foundation of a theoretical framework and proposition. Especially tables enable a scholar to present the used empirical data clearly and additionally the researcher should explain clearly his procedure in order to make the theoretical arguments traceable. If researchers tackle those challenges by illustrating clearly the procedure of theory development, then the qualitative evidence will lead to a deductive research.

Approaches	Citations	Relevant Researchers
Theory development & building	"Overall, tying the emergent theory to existing literature enhances the internal validity, generalizability, and theoretical level of theory building from case study research. While linking results to the literature is important in most research, it is particularly crucial in theory-building research (…)." (Eisenhardt, 1989: 545)	Eisenhardt (1989), Yin (2014)
Theory testing	"The view taken here is that PCS (Prospective Case Study) design, where the formulated testable propositions indeed function as documented "predictions" of future outcomes, may provide additional rigor and legitimacy to the case study methodology in deductive theory testing." (Bitektine, 2008: 163)	Bitektine (2008), Gerring (2004), Johnston, Leach, & Liu (1999)
Illustrative	"Some case studies aim first and foremost to illustrate a phenomenon. In the same way that an illustration in a book brings the text to life, so an illustrative case study makes a topic more real for the reader. The subject comes to life." (Thomas, 2011: 118)	Flyvbjerg (2006), Thomas (2011)
Interpretative	"We cannot be sure that a case telling its own story will tell all or tell well, but the ethnographic ethos of interpretive study, seeking out emic meanings held by the people within the case, is strong." (Stake, 1994: 239)	Bitektine (2008), Stake (1994)
Experimental	"(…) even the best studies of business, ones that carefully follow stringent research methods, (…), can never achieve the precision and replicability of physics, then all the claims of having isolated immutable laws of organizational performance are unfounded." (Rosenzweig, 2007: 126)	Gerring (2007), Rosenzweig (2007), Thomas (2011)

Table 4: Overview of potential approaches of case studies.

Theory testing

The approach of theory testing assumes that a scholar is examining a particular phenomenon and in this context one uses and refers to an already existing explanatory and theoretical framework. Consequently, this existing theory is tested by the data of a case study (Thomas, 2011: 115-118). In order to be able to test a theory, it has to be developed beforehand, so that other researchers can verify it. According to Gerring (2004) social science has unfortunately aimed to test theories only lately. Hereby, a researcher intends to verify or falsify already existing hypotheses with an existing theory by selecting cases. Therefore, Gerring divides the methodologies used in social science regarding theory building and testing in exploratory, which has been discussed before, and confirmatory respectively disconfirmatory. Whereas, the approach of theory building is based mostly on a single case study, it is necessary for theory testing to refer to multiple case units in order to be able to confirm or disconfirm a theory confidently. A confident testing is especially feasible, if the researcher uses cross-unit research designs instead of single-unit designs, as the room for interpretation regarding the testing is restricted (Gerring, 2004).

Johnston, Leach, and Liu created a systematic case methodology, which allows the testing of theory, that confirms or disconfirms theory. This more systematic approach is needed in order to test theory with case studies regarding their confirmability. When following this approach, it can be guaranteed that it is more theory-based, rigorous, objective, and systematic and therefore it addresses the traditional criticism. Johnston, Leach, and Liu suggest three elements, which are essential when implementing the case method in order to examine issues of explanatory or confirmatory kinds. At first, the case study has to develop hypotheses based on the specific theory. Afterwards the study creates a rigorous research design that enables the scholar to investigate the hypotheses. Hereby, the unit of the study, the suitable cases, and the used data are determined. In the final step the independent evaluation of the findings based on earlier identified criteria takes place, which assesses possible biases. This can be done for instance by introducing the findings to an outside auditor, who assesses the logic (Johnston, Leach, & Liu, 1999).

Usually a theory testing case study follows a deductive approach. Mostly, a retrospective research design is used by which the researcher knows the outcome already when developing the hypotheses and thus the validity is questionable. This is due to the fact, as the hypotheses are created based on well-known theories and they are often supposed to confirm a particular theory. Hence, hypotheses and data, which do not support a proposition, are left out by the researcher and this affects the generalizability and construct validity of a study. Based on this fact, Bitektine suggests a prospective longitudinal study design by which the hypotheses and evaluation criteria are developed beforehand. The researcher, when creating the hypotheses, does not know the outcome, as the data needs still to be gathered. As a result it might be that propositions are not confirmed by the results. However, non-confirmation can lead to significant insights. Overall, a prospective case study design is better able to test theory, as it is free of biases and increases the validity (Bitektine, 2008).

Illustrative

Another approach aims to illustrate a particular phenomenon in order to highlight certain topics more clearly. Mostly, differences to related topics can be properly mediated by demonstrating distinctly a phenomenon via a traceable and understandable case narrative as mentioned above. Therefore, a reader is able to start a sensemaking process and connect different concepts and experiences to each other. This approach of illustration is supported by analyses, which assist the reader to understand the case in more detail. The illustrative approach can be found in many case studies, as they intend to explain a concept or build a theory. Thus, the demonstrative method can be seen as an underlying approach, which supports another approach such as theory building (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Thomas, 2011: 118-124).

Interpretative

The classic approach of case studies is the interpretative type, which can be integrated in the aims of case studies proficiently (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 119; Thomas, 2011: 124). The scholar acts as an interpreter, who designs and investigates a case and its data. The details of a case are interpreted and help to understand the deep reasons and meanings behind the case clearly (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 120; Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Interpretive case study approaches intend to create meanings. This is achieved by interpreting and reflecting data several times through a scholar, who revises various potential meanings based on the gathered data. According to Stake naturalistic or ethnographic caseworkers look for natural settings and phenomena of value in order to provide the basis. This basis can consequently be reflected and the identified meanings can be interpreted (Stake, 1994).

In Bitektine's point of view there is a concern with this interpretative approach. As the interpretation is an individual matter that differs across researchers, it affects directly the reliability. The used data can be interpreted differently by a scholar in order to suit to a preferred theory or outcome. This would imply that a researcher has a bias towards a theory or outcome and Bitektine suggests three techniques in order to overcome this bias: competitive case analysis, hypothesis outsourcing, and hypothesis blinding (Bitektine, 2008).

Experimental

Gerring (2007: 213) defines an experimental research design or approach, as "a design where the causal factor of interest (the treatment) is manipulated by the researcher. May also incorporate a randomized control group". He views the observational research design respectively approach as the contrast approach. The experimental approach is mostly not used in social disciplines. This is due to the common belief that the advantages of original and true experiments will be vanished when social disciplines start their real observations. According to Gerring this view is incorrect, as the experimental approach should be integrated into other observational approaches. This is because case studies are

often seen as quasi-experimental, as they examine a small number of cases, which are closely related, over time, rather than many heterogeneous cases (Gerring, 2007: 11-12).

It is difficult for researchers in the field of management to examine the drivers for performance through experiments. Other disciplines such as chemistry or physics are able to experiment and study phenomena by try and see in controlled laboratorial settings. Some questions in management might be feasible regarding experiments (Rosenzweig, 2007: 12-13). In the real business world organizational behaviour is not predictable, because only contingency and uncertainty are present instead of certainty and causal relationships. This is due to the various incalculable amounts of variables, which make experiments in organizations uncontrollable (Rosenzweig, 2007: 124-126). Investigating strategic initiatives in big corporations such as mergers and acquisitions is associated with a large amount of resources and various types of risks. Therefore, researchers in social science can conduct quasi-experiments, which are not equally regarding the scientific inquiry of natural science. This approach is basically the only reasonable method, as one cannot implement 100 acquisitions for a study. Consequently, the observation of already implemented acquisitions is the most appropriate way and allows extracting key variables, which determine the success of an outcome (Rosenzweig, 2007: 14-15).

Experimental case studies intend to focus on two variables: variable A will induce a change and variable B will be affected by the change. Therefore, an experiment group (variable B) will be observed and the behavioural changes will be measured by changing variable A. In order to conduct a rigorous and thorough case study it is recommended to use other sources of information and different perspectives on a case. The experimental approach alone does not consider multifaceted views, as it focuses only on the variables, and thus it does not provide a polyhedron of understanding (Thomas, 2011: 129-134).

2.3.3 Basic case study designs & distinctions

The existence of diverse research designs for case studies has already been mentioned previously. This is due to the broad range of methodological options and variations. The variations refer to the number of cases, the temporal focus, and the spatial or locational variation (Gerring, 2004, 2007: 27-29).
Various scholars such as Yin (1984, 2014), Thomas (2011), and Gerring (2004, 2007) have created their individual classifications of designs and used different terms. However, all have in common that they distinct firstly between single and multiple designs, which are defined by Yin (1984: 41-42, 2014: 50) as basic types of case study designs, and other sub-distinctions regarding for instance the temporal variation.

In this section the single and multiple case designs will be illustrated, before presenting other possible typologies of research designs.

Basic types: single & multiple case designs

According to Yin and his developed matrix (Figure 1) every case aims to examine the individual context irrespective of whether it is a single or multiple case design. The variants of single or multiple design, which is the primary distinction, can differ regarding the unit of analysis and design situations and based on that classification four basic types can be identified: holistic and embedded single case designs and holistic and embedded multiple case designs (Yin, 1984: 41-42, 2014: 50).

In Yin's point of view the single case study is suitable when dealing with a critical, common, revelatory, extreme, or longitudinal case (Yin, 2014: 51-53). It can be distinguished between a holistic and a more complex called embedded case design. As illustrated in the figure below, an embedded study deals with a single case, but analyses also incorporated subunits of the whole analysis, whereas a holistic design only examines the overall case without any subanalyses. The examination of subunits within embedded designs enables the scientist to gain deeper insights by a more extensive analysis, as long as the whole holistic perspective is not shifted (Yin, 2014: 53, 55-56).
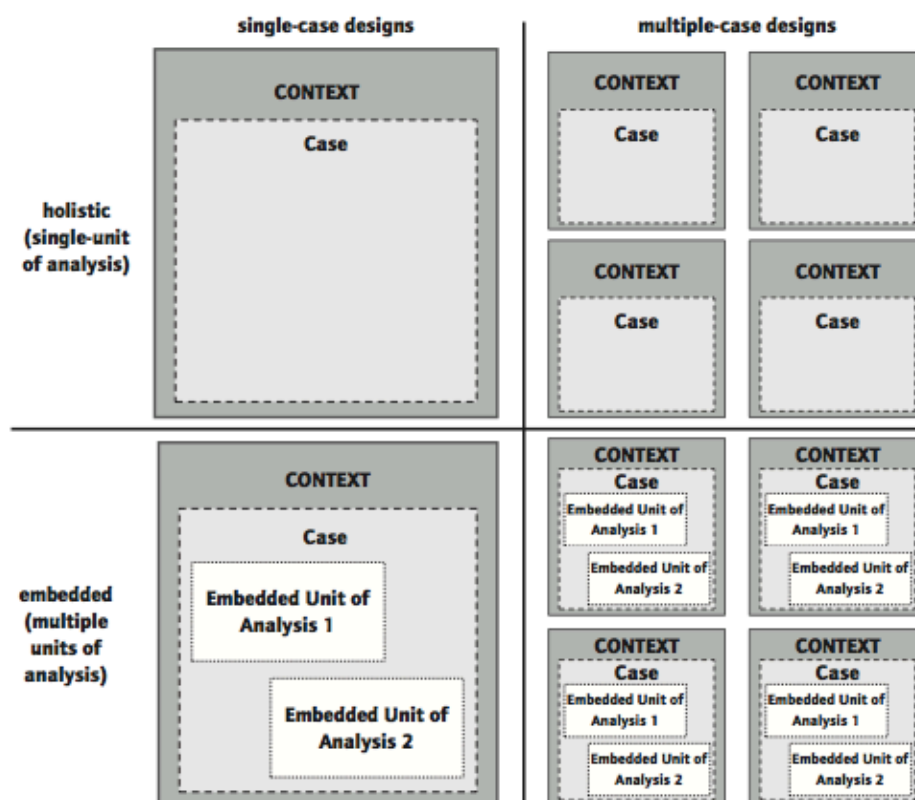
Figure 1: Basic types of designs for case studies (Yin, 2014: 50).

If a study examines and involves more than a single case it follows a multiple case design, which is also known under the terms of collective, multisite or multicase, comparative or cross-case studies (Merriam, 1998: 40; Yin, 2014: 56). Compared to single case designs multiple designs are more robust, simply because they analyse many cases. The robustness is only increased due to the

replication logic. A researcher can choose cases that provide similar findings - literal replication - or one selects cases that lead to contrasting findings, but that were expected - theoretical replication. For both types of replication a prior knowledge is essential in order to be able to select the relevant cases (Yin, 2014: 57-62). Therefore, multiple case designs are rather able to generalize due to the greater variation among the cases and enhance the external validity, which will be illustrated below (Merriam, 1998: 40). However, the multiple designs cannot examine extreme, critical, and revelatory cases as satisfying and the conduction of this design is highly time-consuming (Yin, 2014: 57).

Figure 1 illustrates that multiple case designs can also be divided into holistic and embedded designs depending on the research question and examined phenomenon. A multiple embedded design investigates each individual case study by gathering data via for instance surveys and analysing the individual data exemplarily quantitatively. As a result it might be to find some case sites, which provide literal findings, whereas others supply contrasting results. Hence, the individual cases vary regarding their replication, but they are all relevant to address the research question. In general multiple case designs should be preferred, as they are not as vulnerable regarding criticism based on the stronger theoretical replication (Yin, 2014: 50, 62-64).

Other distinctions of case study designs

Additionally, to single and multiple case designs one can identify other possible distinctions. Among others one attribute is referring to the feature of time. Here again, the definitions and allocations vary among the scholars. Thomas (2011: 145-157) associates single case designs with snapshot, diachronic, and retrospective and multiple designs with parallel and sequential studies. Other scholars do not make distinctions regarding those attributes between single and multiple case designs.

Leaving this individual distinction aside, case designs can either have a retrospective or prospective design. Former mentioned perspective analyses a phenomenon, which took place in the past, by gathering data via archival records (Bitektine, 2008; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Thomas, 2011: 146). The opposite is the prospective study design by which propositions are set up before the data is gathered and one does not know the future outcomes beforehand. Therefore, the outcomes are observed during the period (Bitektine, 2008).

Another distinction can be made regarding the length of the observation. Longitudinal or diachronic designs examine a phenomenon and its changes over time. However, the main attribute of longitudinal studies is that they study the same single case more than once in time. This design is particular appropriate if one intends to illustrate a situation before and after a change (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 27-28; Thomas, 2011: 149-152; Yin, 2014: 53). Rosenzweig mentions, that longitudinal designs are particularly suitable in order to illustrate causality. Hereby, one can isolate the impact of one variable on an outcome and as a result it also supports the researcher not to make simple conclusions on too obvious correlations based on two variables (Rosenzweig, 2007: 72-75). On the

contrary is the cross-sectional respectively snapshot design, which observes a phenomenon only at a single point of time (Thomas, 2011: 146-149).

Finally, Thomas (2011: 155-157) illustrates that case study designs particularly multiple designs can be conducted as parallel or sequential studies. Parallel designs examine cases simultaneously, whereas, sequential studies deal with cases, which take place successively and influence each other during the period of observation.

2.4 Tests to develop a study's rigor and validity

When carrying out a case study it is expected that the research is methodological robust and rigor. Otherwise a research cannot be considered as relevant (Gibbert *et al.*, 2008; Johnston, *et al.*, 1999; Tsang, 2014). There are four criteria respectively tests, which have been developed by different scientists such as Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (2014): internal validity, construct validity, external validity, and reliability (Table 5). A research design can therefore enhance the quality and rigor when considering the criteria (Bitektine, 2008; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2014: 45). These tests are widespread among researchers and disciplines, but the Gibbert *et al.* (2008) focused for example particularly on the field of strategic management when developing research strategies for improving the rigor. In the following section the four criteria will be introduced more precisely.

Tests	Case Study Tactic
Construct validity	• use multiple sources of evidence • establish chain of evidence • have key informants review draft case study report
Internal validity	• do pattern matching • do explanation building • address rival explanations • use logic models
External validity	• use theory in single-case studies • use replication logic in multiple-case studies
Reliability	• use case study protocol • develop case study database

Table 5: Types of validity and reliability (Yin, 2014: 45).

Construct Validity

The construct validity is given when a study examines what it was supposed to investigate initially. Thus, the quality of operationalization of the concepts is in the focus and it is analysed regarding the correct application of the measures

for the concepts (Gibbert *et al.*, 2008). As mentioned earlier, case studies have often been criticized to be biased and to follow not adequately certain formal and operational procedures when for example gathering the relevant data (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2014: 46). In order to enhance the construct validity, a scholar should make use and refer to multiple sources of evidence. The use of various types of data sources is commonly known as the triangulation strategy. Hereby, different data sources are applied for example interviews, archival sources, or observations (Bitektine, 2008; Eisenhardt, 1989; Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). Other methods to increase the construct validity intend to set up a chain of evidence, which allows the reproduction of the presented argumentation from the beginning in terms of the research question to the end with respect to the conclusions. Another tactic is the revision of the case study draft by a key informant. It is recommended to take the construct validity already into account when gathering the data (Yin, 2014: 47), because it aims to monitor precisely the reality by formal and comprehensible procedures (Gibbert *et al.*, 2008).

Internal Validity

The second criterion is called internal or logical validity. This validity applies particularly to explanatory or causal case studies, as they aim to clarify a causal relationship between phenomena and variables. Concerns regarding the internal validity arise when a causal relationship is wrong due to the non-consideration of other variables or making wrong inferences regarding not observable events (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010; Johnston *et al.*, 1999; Yin, 2014: 46-47). As case studies integrate the context to create causality it is not adequate to just assume the co-variation of variables and a result. (Gerring, 2007: 172-173). Gerring (2007: 43) notes that it might be easier to establish this type of validity among a smaller population of cases than a more extensive range. However, this might not always be the case.

Therefore, a study is examined on the causal relationship between the used variables and the presented findings. A study will be robust if the procedure, explanations, and inferences are logical and plausible (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010; Gibbert *et al.*, 2008). According to Yin this validity can be enhanced during the data analysis phase and as all other criteria it should be conducted through the whole process of research in order to improve the rigor (Yin, 2014: 46, 47-48).

There are tactics in order to obtain the internal validity of a case study. By integrating the tactics of pattern matching, explanation building, addressing rival explanations and using logical models into a study the internal validity will be created (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010; Yin, 2014: 47-48). In order to increase the transparency, traceability, and verification of inferences a researcher should apply process tracing. Hereby, multiple types of evidence are analysed and thus the internal validity is increased (Gerring, 2007: 173).

External Validity

Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010) call this criterion also generalizability due to the fact as both terms are interconnected. Whereas the internal validity focuses on the

degree of a study to which a causal inference is guaranteed, the counterpart called external validity reflects to what extend a study's findings are generalizable to other domains respectively people or situations. There are different types of generalization, which are not always achievable, however, researchers should principally aim to achieve it. Those types such as statistical or analytic will be briefly introduced in the next section (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010; Gibbert *et al.*, 2008; Yin, 2014: 46). The external validity depends on the type of the original research question, as this affects the generalizability directly. Therefore, the extent of external validity will be influenced highly during the research design phase when developing the leading research question (Yin, 2014: 48).

Gerring (2007: 43) highlights that the external validity refers to the representativeness between an investigated sample and its population. However, this ability depends to a large extent on the case sampling and selection procedure. In this context a case study research is consequently more vulnerable to this validity than cross-case research, which examines various cases that might sample randomly.

Reliability

The testing and measurement of a study regarding the reliability intends to illustrate the reproducibility of the procedures and operations of a study and its findings (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). A high reliability implies that a later researcher is able to conclude the same results, as the original scholar when following the identical procedures. Thus, the reliability aims to enhance the quality of a study by reducing potential biases and other errors (Yin, 2014: 48-49).

It was mentioned earlier that external reviewers have often questioned the case study method in terms of reliability, because scholars did not provide procedure documentation sufficiently in the past. Therefore, the replicability of a study was not warranted, but by establishing a case study protocol and a database the reliability can be enhanced (Yin, 2014: 49). This increases the transparency through a clear clarification of all conducted steps and enables the replication of a research (Gibbert *et al.*, 2008). When conducting interviews for example, a researcher should keep all tape recordings and transcripts simply due to the fact, as this material is able to provide access to information about detailed social interaction (Peräkylä, 1997: 203).

This section illustrated tests, tactics and actions in order to improve the validity and reliability of case studies, which altogether strengthen a study's rigor (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). A researcher should focus on all measures to minimize random and systemic errors. It should be mentioned that the three types of validity depend on each other and have a hierarchical relationship. This is because a study would not be external valid if it misses its internal and construct validity. Even if the validity types are closely connected, many scholars as Eisenhardt (1989) focus mainly on the external validity. Others such as Mir and Watson (2000) mention that emphasizing too much on the external validity endangers to lose sight of a case itself and its details (Gibbert *et al.*, 2008).

2.5 Generalization

The concept of a case study's generalizability has been mentioned in this paper repeatedly. In this section the different types of generalization developed by Stake will be introduced.

A single case or a small number of cases are in a general point of view not a good foundation for potential generalizations, as after further observations of a certain situation the conclusions usually have to be modified. Stake (1994; 1995: 7) names this type "petite generalizations" by which an inference is refined permanently even during a case study. The counterpart is the "grand generalization", which includes known concepts and modifies them such as a variability and thus it increases the confidence of the generalization. He also highlights that case studies aim to focus rather on particularization than on the generalization of the findings. Before one generalizes from a case, a scholar should first understand the particular uniqueness of a case (Stake, 1994; 1995: 7-8). Therefore, particularization highlights the unique details of a single case, whereas generalization intends to connect the inferences from a single case to others. If a researcher only pays attention towards the generalizability, he might not understand the particular of a case (Stake, 1995: 7-8).

As mentioned above a single case is not suitable in order to be generalized, however, it can provide general knowledge to the reader. This is simply because the reader knows various other cases and hence is able to connect a single case to others. Hereby, a reader generalizes by himself and refines individual already existing generalizations. This is called "naturalistic generalization" by which an individual uses sources of input to gain experience in order to generalize. The counterpart is the "propositional generalization" and this refers to propositional knowledge suggested by the researchers that aims to refine the existing generalizations (Stake, 1995: 85-87).

Tsang (2014) determines that case studies are widely viewed as an exploratory tool, whose generalizability is broadly controversial. Eric Tsang distinguishes between theoretical and empirical generalization. The empirical generalization refers to whether a case and its phenomena is generalizable towards a wider population. For example by using the statistical or within-population generalization, which is a type of empirical generalizations, a researcher investigates a large, random sample that shares attributes with the whole population and hence, infers justified findings of the examined data on the whole population.
The contrary term of empirical generalization is the theoretical generalization, which is also known as analytical generalization according to Yin. Hereby the relationship of variables within a case will be observed and explained often empirically. A small number of cases are the basis for theory generalization or building. Instead to generalize to the sample and population from which the case originates as empirical generalization does, the theoretical generalization aims to generalize mainly to theory (Tsang, 2014).

It should be mentioned that there are two different camps with different opinions regarding the generalizability of case studies. The positivistic stream has the

point of view that causal relationships are unique due to the individual context of a study and that they give a deep understanding. Furthermore, positivists develop propositions in order to test or find certain phenomena also in other cases, which allow them to identify general patterns. If a causal relationship is not replicatable to other cases then a case is not generalizable. However, the difference to interpretivists is that interpretivists pay not as much attention towards validity simply because they do not define validity by generalizability. They rather focus on the credibility and procedure in order to create validity and not on the repeatability of a study. They connect phenomena of certain cases by using a belief system to other cases, which is called taxonomy (Lin, 1998).

2.6 The nine delusions of Rosenzweig

Previously, some of the nine delusions of Rosenzweig were already integrated in order to provide an additional point of view regarding the case study method. It is the intention of this paper to illustrate whether the sample of case studies contains to a certain degree four relevant delusions of Rosenzweig. In order to offer a suitable knowledge basis the following chapter aims to introduce all nine delusions, which have been addressed to a large extend in the prior chapters. Moreover, those delusions will be interpreted individually, which paves the way for future researches that might use the delusions beyond their original context of performance explanations.

The nine delusions embody issues that should be avoided and considered when conducting case studies. Table 6 indicates that according to Rosenzweig (2007) many articles seem to be credible, as they are based on extensive, but still questionable data. Those management writings intend to look robust, rigorous, and credible, however, they often build up on the wrong assumption that decision-making takes place under the condition of certainty (Rosenzweig, 2007: 124-126).

Therefore, it is essential for the readers of management books and studies to consider whether the individual research contains potential delusions. By reading critically the reader is able to avoid drawing wrong personal conclusions based on the questionable assumptions presented in a study.

In order to evaluate case studies and other scientific papers, which are not only related to performance explanations, in terms of the delusions the nine aspects have to be slightly adjusted. Below the nine delusions are briefly introduced and it is illustrated to what a researcher should pay attention when one intends to reduce the influence of a delusion. By doing so, future researchers can recognize the presence and degree of the delusions, which affect the rigor of a study. This research carries out an analytical analysis that examines four to the case study method highly related delusions. Hereby, representative case studies will be investigated in terms of the containment of the four delusions and this allows to infer how researchers address issues regarding the quality of used data and potential Halo Effects.

Delusions	Definition
Delusion 1: The Halo Effect	"The tendency to look at a company's overall performance and make attributions about its culture, leadership, values, and more. In fact, many things we commonly claim drive company performance are simply attributions based on prior performance." (Rosenzweig, 2007: xi)
Delusion 2: The Delusion of Correlation and Causality	"Two things may be correlated, but we may not know which one causes which. Does employee satisfaction lead to high performance? The evidence suggests it's mainly the other way around – company success has a stronger impact on employee satisfaction." (Rosenzweig, 2007: xi)
Delusion 3: The Delusion of Single Explanations	"Many studies show that a particular factor - strong company culture or customer focus or great leadership – leads to improved performance. But since many of these factors are highly correlated, the effect of each one is usually less than suggested." (Rosenzweig, 2007: xi)
Delusion 4: The Delusion of Connecting the Winning Dots	"If we pick a number of successful companies and search for what they have in common, we'll never isolate the reasons for their success, because we have no way of comparing them with less successful companies." (Rosenzweig, 2007: xii)
Delusion 5: The Delusion of Rigorous Research	"If the data aren't of good quality, it doesn't matter how much we have gathered or how sophisticated our research methods appear to be." (Rosenzweig, 2007: xii)
Delusion 6: The Delusion of Lasting Success	"Almost all high-performing companies regress over time. The promise of a blueprint for lasting success is attractive but not realistic." (Rosenzweig, 2007: xii)
Delusion 7: The Delusion of Absolute Performance	"Company performance is relative, not absolute. A company can improve and fall further behind its rivals at the same time." (Rosenzweig, 2007: xii)
Delusion 8: The Delusion of the Wrong End of the Stick	"It may be true that successful companies often pursued a highly focused strategy, but that doesn't mean highly focused strategies often lead to success." (Rosenzweig, 2007: xii)
Delusion 9: The Delusion of Organizational Physics	"Company performance doesn't obey immutable laws of nature and can't be predicted with the accuracy of science – despite our desire for certainty and order." (Rosenzweig, 2007: xii)

Table 6: The nine delusions and their definitions (Rosenzweig, 2007: xi-xii).

With regard to the first delusion of the Halo Effect, it is essential to discover whether tangible and objective data in terms of financial performance indicators are used by the researchers in order to explain vague features of a study. Rosenzweig points out that the Halo Effect cannot be even reduced by large-scale samples, which means that multiple case studies that refer to interviews are running risk in this context (Rosenzweig, 2007: 52-55, 64).

The second delusion of correlation and causality should be assessed by referring to how the researchers integrated independent and control variables. Rosenzweig (2007: 72-75, 77) mentions the higher importance of causality rather than correlation in terms of studies and that the causality can be achieved by observing phenomena via the usage of longitudinal research designs. In

order to illustrate the causality for example when explaining performance, one should avoid referring to data, which is related directly to performance.

Often pseudoscientific studies provide only single explanations, which is addressed by delusion three. Originally Rosenzweig (2007: 80-82) associates this particularly with performance explanations, whereby a researcher presents only one explanation for changes and does therefore exclude other relevant factors. Since the here examined studies dealt also with other topics, the studies were generally investigated whether they provide only a single explanation. In such cases a focus on only a single explanation should be mentioned in the section of a study's limitation. However, often it is not done due to the fact that the research should seem to be rigorous and scientific.

The Delusion of connecting the winning dots can be identified if an article selects the sample or single case based on a dependent variable such as firm outcome. Hereby, an article would run the risk of focusing only on successful cases and consequently, miss other valuable insights. This focus is vulnerable to Halo Effects (Rosenzweig, 2007: 92-93, 97). As a result, a general selection bias is especially in the focus and not only towards success when evaluating the researches.

Rosenzweig (2007: 100-101) highlights with the delusion of rigorous research the importance of high qualitative data. In his opinion studies can integrate as many sources and data as possible, but if the quality is not warranted due to the inclusion of Halo Effects, the study cannot be regarded as rigorous. Based on that assumption the articles' sources of data should be examined for the presence of Halo Effects.

In context of successful case studies, the articles should be investigated for statements of the researchers in which they clarify that a phenomenon such as success, competitive advantage, or capability is not a lasting condition. Those statements regarding the delusion of lasting success are often not clearly identifiable (Rosenzweig, 2007: 101-105). However, if a study addresses topics regarding changes in a dynamic environment and other similar indicators, then it could be regarded as free from this delusion.

Furthermore, a study, particularly comparative multiple studies, should mention a statement towards the delusion of absolute performance. When an article investigates for example foreign subsidiaries in a certain country and compares the performance to others, the author should respond in a way to the delusion of absolute performance (Rosenzweig, 2007: 111-116). Hence, authors should note that a firm's actions should also improve relatively to the competitors, as otherwise it might forfeit its position.

The delusion of the wrong end of the stick can be observed when researchers identified the wrong cause for a phenomenon. It might be that one implemented strategy by a company is not necessarily the reason or responsible for the success, as the success can be also the reason in order to implement this strategy (Rosenzweig, 2007: 121-124).

The last delusion of organizational physics is present if a study or scientific paper does not consider the uncertainty in the business world. Rosenzweig (2007: 124-126) states that studies in social science cannot predict future organizational behaviour as those experiments are uncontrollable. Hereby, the articles' focus on historical data or future developments can be identified and whether the authors transfer the findings based on historical data to predict future developments.

Based on those delusions and criteria books, scientific and journal articles, and case studies and be investigated. It can be recognized that not all nine delusions are affecting case studies, but rather for instance management books. Thus, the analytical analysis below will not refer to all delusions, but merely on the most relevant ones, which influence the case study method directly.

The previous chapters provide a solid knowledge base regarding the theory, challenges, and delusions of case studies. In the next chapter 120 case studies will be analysed descriptively and 75 thematically, before finally analyzing analytically representative studies of the sample in terms of four delusions of Rosenzweig. For those following analyses the introduced theoretical aspects are a considerable and necessary foundation in order to comprehend the illustrated argumentation.

3 METHODS

3.1 Research method – systematic review

This paper undertakes a systematic review in order to examine strategic management articles transparently and systematically. Generally, a systematic review intends to summarize and integrate the main contributions of various studies in order to illustrate what has been researched in a certain field. By using extraction forms this method can conduct firstly a descriptive analysis, which presents general information about the relevant studies. Moreover, a thematic analysis provides the actual review about the core contributions and findings (Jones & Gatrell, 2014; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003).

This paper aims to cluster the findings of all studies, which can be regarded as actual case studies, in order to create a systematic and comprehensive overview of the current knowledge in the various subfields and disciplines of strategic management.
By extracting various information from the articles the paper pursues the following themes and contributions:

1. Distribution of articles in the five journals (total & periodical)
2. Investigated topics in each journal over time and potential thematic shifts
3. Overall topic distribution over time
4. Investigated industries and countries
5. Main findings of each study according to categories
6. Statements towards generalizability

Through the adjustment of this review method the analysed articles (1995-2009) can be categorized in terms of their topics and thus present a reliable and detailed knowledge base. Below, the scope of the study will be determined by describing the search strategy and data collection. When applying a systematic review it is essential to report the procedure in great detail in order to allow the replication of a study. Different data was extracted and put into a so-called data-extraction form. This sheet supports not only the phase of analysis, but also simplifies the visualization of the examined data (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003).

The structure of the next chapters is the following. Firstly the descriptive analysis will be carried out whereby the total number of the 120 identified journal articles will be part of the investigation. In this context general information, which will be introduced in more detail later, are presented of the whole sample in order to provide more meaningful and significant results. Afterwards the main findings of articles, which follow highly a case study approach and do not show signs of empirical research, are reported in the chapter of the thematic analysis. Thereafter, chapter five will undertake a closer examination regarding Rosenzweig's delusions. Hereby, the focus will be on certain delusions, which are particularly relevant when carrying out case study research and thus exemplary studies from the sample will exemplify how researchers addressed certain issues.

3.2 Search strategy and data collection

In order to gather and extract the data, a systematic review strategy was developed in the beginning of the research. The research strategy was compiled in accordance with the general methodology of the systematic review and with the needs to fulfil certain necessary requirements for this study:

1. The review's focus lies on five selected strategic management journals, namely: *Journal of Management Studies (JMS), Strategic Management Journal (SMJ), Organization Science (OS), Academy of Management Journal (AMJ),* and *Administrative Science Quarterly (ASQ).* Those five journals were selected due to their listing in the *Financial Times Research Rank* ("45 Journals used in FT," 2012).
Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003) mention that researchers in the management field do not evaluate the quality of each individual article before the selection, but rather rely on the quality and reputation of the journals. This statement also applies for this paper, as the five journals were selected due to the mentioned listing. Therefore, the quality assessment of each individual case study was not a primary selection criterion.

2. After the non-random selection of the magazines the relevant period of observation for this study was determined. In order to limit the scope of the study, it was decided to focus on all articles, which were published in the mentioned management journals within the time period of 1995 and 2009.

3. Using *Web of Science*, which is an online scientific citation indexing service maintained by *Thomson Reuters*, access was gained to multiple databases. The keywords were constructed into search strings in the search engine. The keywords were: case stud*, strategic management OR strategy, SMJ, ASQ, ORG SCIENCE, AMJ, JMS.
The following illustrates the search settings, which identified the used articles for this study: "SMJ OR AMJ OR ORG SCIENCE OR ASQ OR JMS AND case stud* AND strategic management AND strategy".

4. Based on the search engine strategy 125 articles were identified (see Appendix). As this study's purpose is to analyse case studies, which examined industries, companies, or referred to practical issues, the number of articles that were finally investigated in terms of the descriptive analysis due to their relevance was 120. The other five studies dealt with very theoretical aspects about the case study method itself and were thus partly considered in the theoretical section of this paper. However, they were not integrated in the analyses of the case studies (mentioned namely below).

5. Shortly after the access was given to the 120 case studies, the process of the data extraction was initiated. Using an Excel sheet, each case study was studied firstly regarding general publishing information: author, title, year of publication, and the name of the publishing journal. Additionally, the following data that are relevant in order to create a knowledgebase about what has been researched in the field of strategic management were gathered:

    *   **Country:** Refers to the national origin of the examined company or companies. Thus, if a study investigated for example a British-based conglomerate with the focus on its international operations, the recorded country was the UK. As "multiple" countries studies were identified, when analysing more than two countries due to a multiple case study, whereas studies with two countries were marked with i.e. "US & UK" and labelled "binational". Some papers did not mention the national origin of firms, which were consequently marked with "N/S" (Not Specified).

    *   **Industry:** If mentioned, the information about the individual industry affiliation of a company was absorbed. As this study's attempt is to provide a comprehensive review, the often very detailed sub-sector affiliations were correlated at a higher level – industry and sector – resulting in a broader, more general, but clearer correlation and classification. Hereby, the categorization of the industries followed the *Industry Classification Benchmark (ICB)*, which was set up by the *Dow Jones* and *FTSE*. This taxonomy provides 10 main industries with the corresponding sectors. However, for this research this taxonomy has been extended by the industry of "Public Services". This is simply due to the reason that the *ICB* classification does not include governmental institutions, which were also part of this study ("Industry Classification Benchmark", 2012). Moreover, studies not stating the industry at all or not precisely enough in order to be assigned to a specific industry sector were labelled with "N/S". Papers analysing more than one industry are characterized with the "multiple" marking and do hence not provide any sector information ("-").

    *   **Focus and main finding:** Hereby, each case study was summarized regarding its focus and the main contribution. Based on the 120 considered studies and the resulting short summaries the knowledge-base can be created, which illustrates the focus and shifts of researched themes and issues in the field.

- **Generalizability:** This study also intends to provide information whether the authors of the case studies make references towards the generalizability of their study and if so, how they refer to that. For that reason the studies were searched and scanned on the basis of the keywords "generali*" and "limit*". Furthermore, the sections of the studies about the methodology, limitations, discussion, conclusion, and future research were particularly examined whether any statements towards the generalizability exist.

6. After extracting the relevant data and information as described above, the 120 case studies were clustered into 13 categories. This process is based on each individual summary of a study's findings and according to that a study was assigned to the most appropriate category. The chosen procedure is thus rather subjective, however, in order to enhance the robustness and validation, the categorization process was repeated and revised. A third person categorized the studies based on the summaries independently. In cases of inconsistencies and deviations regarding the categorization, the different viewpoints were discussed and resolved in order to warrant a clear classification. This step affects the replicability of the study. A different categorization of a study influences the conclusions regarding the overall development of the field of strategic management. However, the findings based on the categorization can be presented confidently, as this step was conducted in the best possible way.

7. By now the gathered information provide a broad foundation for both the descriptive and thematic analysis. The descriptive analysis therefore integrated the general information about the total number of the 120 articles in order to create meaningful findings about development in the field. However, a closer look at the articles reveals that only 75 out of 120 can be rather regarded as case studies. Eisenhardt (1989) considers studies as case studies if they integrate between four and ten cases. Of course there is no ideal number, but according to many researchers a case study examines rather between one and 20 bounded systems. Based on this assumption and in order to restrict the number of articles for the thematic analysis all articles, which examined more than 20 cases or showed empirical signs were excluded. Hence, the descriptive analysis considers the whole sample of 120 studies, whereas the thematic analysis only reports the 75 real case studies.

This section described the applied search strategy and data collection to a great extent. It illustrated the exact procedure by elaborating on each individual step and due to the comprehensibility and transparency the systematic review might be replicable always taking into account the subjective classification of the individual studies.

3.3 Descriptive analysis

Based on the gathered, categorized data and information it is possible to provide in the following a systematic review about what has been studied. This analysis particularly focuses on the various themes in the field of strategic management between 1995 and 2009, which were published in the five academic business journals. At first the analysis will illustrate the general information about the 120 case studies, whilst the detailed findings of the 75 case studies will be presented in the next chapter.

When applying the defined search strategy for the studies regarding the citation index *Web of Science*, the number of original listed and suggested studies was 125. When examining each article during the process of the data-extraction it became obvious that the study of Numagami (1998) published in *OS*, and the four researches of Boyd, Gove, and Hitt (2005), Gibbert, Ruigrok, and Wicki (2008), Mir and Watson (2000), and Jobber and Lucas (2000) in *JMS* would not be considered in the systematic review of this study. Focusing on theoretical issues of the field or the method, the articles do not provide relevant data.

Academic Journals		Absolute	Relative
Journal of Management Studies	(JMS)	53	44,2%
Strategic Management Journal	(SMJ)	28	23,3%
Organization Science	(OS)	25	20,8%
Academy of Management Journal	(AMJ)	10	8,3%
Administrative Science Quarterly	(ASQ)	4	3,3%
Total		**120**	**100,0%**

Table 7: Distribution of studies across the examined journals.

Therefore, 120 case studies were finally considered for the analyses. As illustrated in table 7 the majority of the examined papers were published in *JMS* (53), followed by *SMJ* (28), *OS* (25), *AMJ* (10), and *ASQ* (4).

This disproportionate distribution has the consequence that especially the orientation of examined topics of *JMS* compared to *ASQ* affects highly the results of the study due to its relatively weighting. However, as the method follows a systematic review based on a citation index, the distribution in terms of articles among the journals was beyond the paper's influence.

Besides the total number of studies on the basis of each magazine (Table 7), the periodical distribution and development of the articles can provide interesting insights. Figure 2 illustrates in great detail when and where the 120 articles were published. Following figure 2 it can be observed that in the period of 2001-2003 the most case studies were published. Furthermore, one can recognize the relative constant publishing quote of *JMS, AMJ* and *SMJ*, whereas particularly the *OS* journal shows a greater variation.
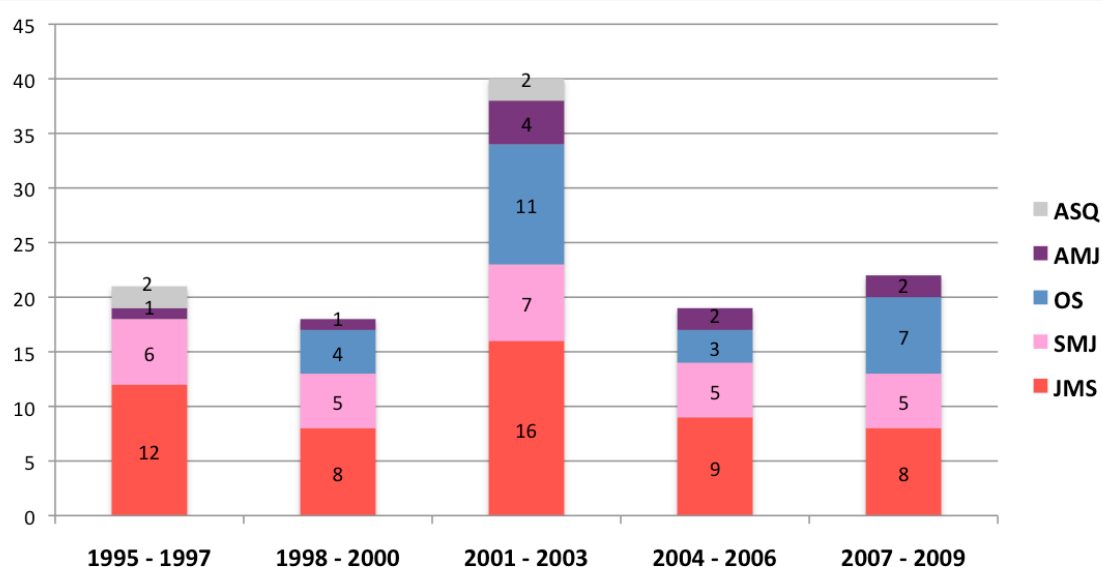
Figure 2: Periodical distribution of studies in the journals.

In the following the investigated industries and countries will be exemplified in more detail. The explanations above described how the data was extracted and clustered from the sample. Based on the *Industry Classification Benchmark* (2012) the industries and sectors listed in table 8 were registered. The table also includes studies, which examined more than one industry ("Multiple") or that did not state that information at all or not precisely enough ("N/S"). With regard to the table it seems that almost 30 percent of the studies used data from at least two industries. An example is the study of Frynas, Mellahi, and Pigman (2006), who dealt with the first mover advantages in the global economy by analysing *Volkswagen* in China, *Shell-BP* in Nigeria, and *Lockheed Martin* in Russia. Whereas this is a proficient example for an as "Multiple" declared study, the paper of Shrader (2001) simply states that it examines high-technology manufacturing firms, which is probably due to the large sample, and thus it is assigned to the category of "N/S".

Basic Material	**7**
Chemicals	3
Forestry & Paper	2
Industrial Metals & Mining	2
Consumer Good	**14**
Automobiles & Parts	7
Leisure Goods	3
Personal Goods	2
Food Producers	1
Household Goods & Home Construction	1
Consumer Service	**5**
Food & Drug Retailers	2
Media	2
Travel & Leisure	1
Financial	**9**
Financial Services	8
Banks	1

Health Care	**6**
Pharmaceuticals & Biotechnology	3
Health Care Equipment & Services	3
Industrials	**11**
Support Services	6
Aerospace & Defence	2
Construction & Materials	1
General Industrials	1
Industrial Transportation	1
Oil & Gas	**3**
Oil & Gas Producers	3
Public Service	**7**
Education	3
Governmental	3
Postal Service	1
Technology	**8**
Software & Computer Services	4
Software & Computer Services, Technology Hardware & Equipment	1
Technology Hardware & Equipment	3
Telecommunication	**1**
Telecommunication	1
Utilities	**1**
Electricity	1
Multiple	**35**
N/S	**13**

Table 8: Overall numbers of examined industries with related sectors.

Leaving the "Multiple" and "N/S" studies aside, it is interesting to recognize that most of the case studies are equally dispersed among the sectors. However, the sectors of "Automobiles & Parts" and "Financial Services" were obviously of particular interest to many researchers.

	JMS	SMJ	OS	AMJ	ASQ
Basic Material	6%	7%	4%	10%	
Consumer Good	13%	7%	12%	20%	
Consumer Service	6%	4%	4%		
Financial	6%	4%	16%		25%
Health Care	4%	7%		20%	
Industrials	8%	4%	16%	10%	25%
Oil & Gas	2%	7%			
Public Service	8%	4%	4%		25%
Technology	8%	4%	4%	10%	25%
Telecommunication		4%			
Utilities	2%				
Multiple	28%	46%	24%	10%	
N/S	11%	4%	16%	20%	

Table 9: Relatively industry coverage per journal.

Many diverse sectors and fields have been investigated, however, it is worth noticing that among the journals, which published relatively more such as *JMS*, *SMJ*, and *OS*, a broad range of industries were covered equally (Table 9). This might be surprising, as one could have expected that journals might be specialized and focused not only on particular topics and issues, but possibly also on certain industries and sectors.

Below, the countries in which the case studies were examined will be briefly illustrated. The categorization is driven by single countries, which were clearly mentioned and to recognize. Beyond those, studies were labelled as "Multiple" when referring and analyzing firms from many different countries such as the research of Doh and Guay (2006), who explored the differences in Europe and the United States in terms of corporate social responsibility. With "N/S" were articles marked, which did not declare which country the case company was originally from or if the information was not unambiguously available. The study of Pitcher and Smith (2001) is paradigmatic for many studies, which kept the data like name or national background of the investigated firm anonymous. Other studies did not refer to a single country, but mentioned only a continent or other supranational territories such as Carlsen (2006). In his article about organizational development he only reveals that he examined a Scandinavian-based company by using the pseudonym of "Calculus".

Despite the high share of studies, which did not deal only with one country and indicated that clearly, Figure 3 evidently visualizes the domination of Western industrialized countries within the examined sample. Moreover, the English-speaking countries respectively economies and industries were investigated preponderantly, which might be due to the journals origin.
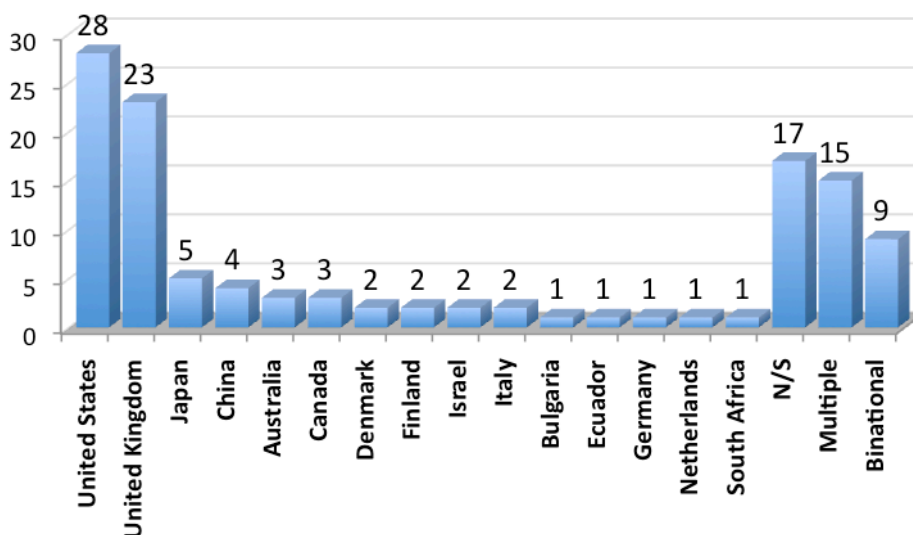

Figure 3: Distribution of countries related to the examined case studies.

In sum, 32 out of 120 studies did not either deal with one country or did not state this information. The "Binational" column (Figure 3) refers to researches, which explored phenomena and case studies in exact two countries or economies. As observable in table 10, most studies (6) combined either the USA or the United Kingdom with another nation. Only two binational studies - one about Japan and Korea and one about the German Democratic Republic and Hungary – investigated non-related countries regarding the USA or GBR.

Binational	
USA & GER	2
USA & GBR	1
USA & JPN	1
USA & AUS	1
GBR & ITA	1
GBR & GER	1
JPN & KOR	1
GDR & HUN	1

Table 10: Binational studies.

Overall, whereas the case studies examined a rather diverse thus broad range of industries, it can be noted, that they on the other hand focused highly on English-speaking countries. Among the top-six of the most researched countries are four English-speaking nations and this tendency also applies for the binational studies. Based on the listed numbers the studies focusing on English-speaking countries account for 54 percent (65 out of 120): the USA, GBR, AUS, CAN, and ZAF. However, as mentioned above, this might be a consequence due to the origin and focus of the five academic business journals.

So far the available data was explained and visualized regarding the distribution of articles among the journals in total and over time and moreover, about the investigated industries and countries. In the following the studied topics of the sample will be reported based on the above stated explanations regarding the categorization process. Altogether 13 categories have been identified to which all 120 articles were assigned. Those 13 groups embody major categories, which include subgenres. However, in this section only the occurring main categories will be illustrated, as the subgenres will be presented together with the major findings and contributions of the sample in the next section.

After listing all existing main categories two figures will provide an overview in terms of dominant topics in each journal and the overall topic shifts among all journals from 1995 to 2009. Finally, all categories will be displayed in a matrix in order to illustrate whether a category can be associated with micro-macro and internal-external issues.

Table 11 clarifies the emphasis of the 120 case study sample. The majority of the case studies were aligned to study phenomena, which affect the performance of an organization. Keeping that in mind and the whole context related to the field of strategic management, it is not surprising that many of the registered categories deal with internal firm issues on the micro or macro level, as it will be illustrated later (Figure 5). Thus, the dominant issues were linked to the categories of "Capabilities", "Organizational Form & Fit", "Strategy", and "Leadership".

Main Category	Absolute	Relative
Capabilities	18	15%
Organizational Form & Fit	18	15%
Alliances & Networks	14	12%
Strategy	14	12%
Leadership	13	11%
Internationalization & FDI	9	8%
Resources	8	7%
Top Management Team	6	5%
Stakeholders	5	4%
Innovation	5	4%
Divestment	5	4%
Mergers & Acquisitions	3	3%
Management Control Systems	2	2%
Total	**120**	**100%**

Table 11: Researched topics of case studies according to main categories.

In total, the listed main categories cover a broad range of different aspects. When giving a closer look on each journal (Table 12) the dominant issues and topics are recognizable. It should be mentioned that some categories have the same amount of examined case studies thus the alphabetical order determined the ranking among categories with the equal number of studies. Furthermore, it is obvious that in the case of the journal *ASQ* no significant conclusions can be made due to the small sample.

However, considering table 12 it is noticeable that the above-mentioned impression is confirmed. Under the top-tree categories are mainly internal organizational concerning topics such as "Leadership", "Organizational Form & Fit", "Strategy", and "Capabilities".

Journal	Total	1st Rank	2nd Rank	3rd Rank
JMS	53	Strategy (10)	Leadership (8)	Org. Form & Fit (7)
SMJ	28	Capabilities (8)	Alliances & Networks (3)	International. & FDI (3)
OS	25	Org. Form & Fit (7)	Alliances & Networks (4)	Capabilities (4)
AMJ	10	Alliances & Networks (2)	Leadership (2)	Org. Form & Fit (2)
ASQ	4	Capabilities (1)	Leadership (1)	Org. Form & Fit (1)

Table 12: Top 3 dominant categories of each journal.

Therefore, it is not the case that only one academic journal focused particularly on those topics, but rather all five magazines dealt with those. In fact it seems that the journals and researchers paid attention towards those internal issues, which can lead to superior firm performance, over the 15-year period. Whereas

table 12 takes the dominant main categories on the basis of each journal into account, the following figure illustrates the shift regarding one category during the periods. Figure 4 shows all 13 main categories, whereby each category's column is divided in periods ranging for instance from 1995 to 1997. Hence, viewing at the column of "Strategy" one is able to conclude that most articles in the category were published during the period of 2001–2003. This figure gives additional information about the period when the articles of each main category were released and also which category experienced a high or low level of attention during a particular period. Overall, the graph visualizes shifts regarding the number of article publications within the five periods.
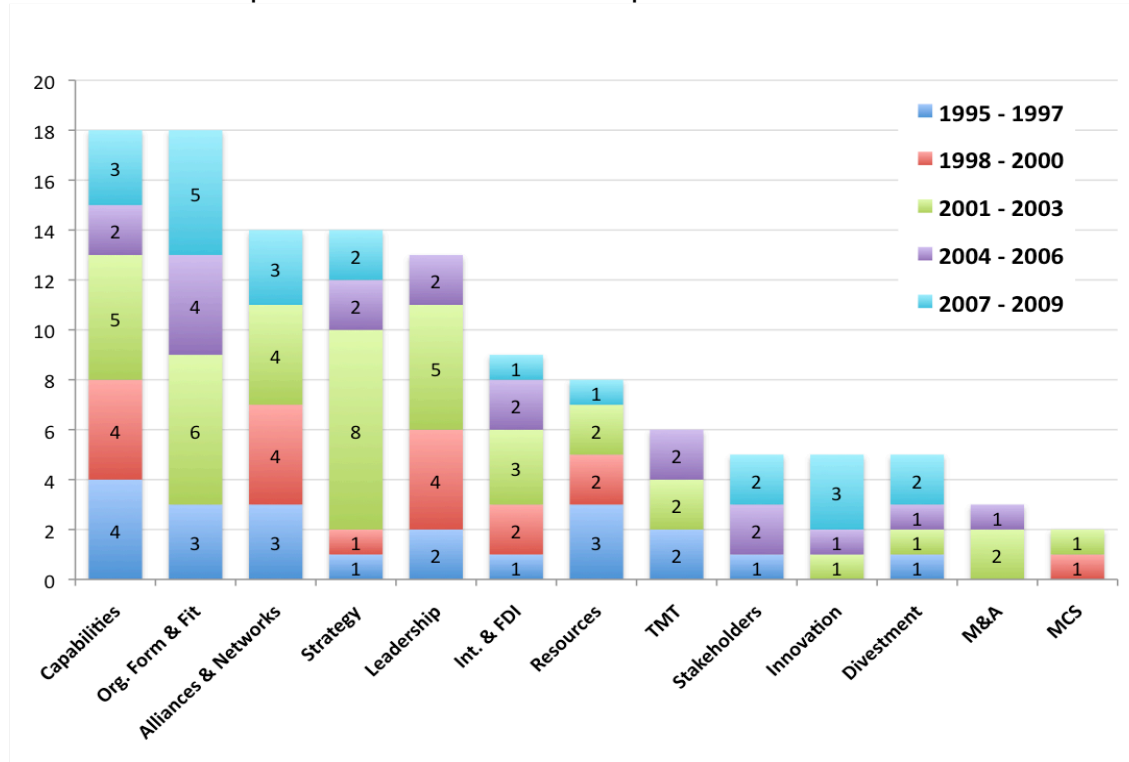

Figure 4: Main categories divided in periods illustrating the shifts of emphasis.

Finally, at the end of this section, the main categories are displayed into a matrix. The matrix is constructed as the following: whereas the horizontally aligned axis indicates whether a category refers to internal or rather external factors of a firm, the vertical axis focuses on the level of analysis. This might cover the company as a whole or its environment (macro-level) or is related to a firm's individuals (micro-level). The purpose of figure 5 is to exemplify which categories dealt with the internal-micro, internal-macro, external-micro, and external-macro level of analysis. Furthermore, it supports and simplifies the presentation of the main findings and contribution in the next chapter due to this implemented classification. Once again the categorization is a subject of subjectivity, as some capabilities such as sensemaking can also be assigned to the micro level. It might also be possible that articles, which are listed under the category "Capabilities" and thus are connected with the macro-level, can also be viewed as related to the micro-level. Also the "Stakeholders" category can be discussed controversially due to the fact that stakeholders are not necessarily only external parties. However, the classification of the articles can still be seen as justifiable and comprehensible, as the vast majority determined a study's affiliation.

The matrix illustrates that the majority of the main categories are dealing with macro-level related issues, which concern the internal and external. One can observe a discrepancy, as six categories (including 68 articles) deal with the internal aspects and four studies (containing 31 case studies) with the external. No category was classified as micro-external, which is obvious, as individuals from the external environment (micro-external) can apparently not influence the strategic management of a firm or other related issues. Usually, they join forces in order to increase their influence on a firm such as stakeholders do.

```
Macro | Capabilities (18)                  | Alliances & Networks (14)
       | Org. Form & Fit (18)               | Internationalization & FDI (9)
       | Strategy (14)                      | Stakeholders (5)
       | Resources (8)                      | Mergers & Acquisitions (3)
       | Divestment (5)                     |
       | Innovation (5)                     |
       |------------------------------------|
       | Leadership (13)                    |
       | TMT (6)                            |
       | Management Control Systems (2)     |
Micro  |                                    |
         Internal                              External
```

Figure 5: Matrix classification of studies regarding focus on internal-external & micro-macro level of analysis.

This section provided a descriptive review by illustrating general information about the sample of case studies. Furthermore, the main categories, in which the 120 case studies were divided in, were introduced. This classification allowed to give an overview about what topics have been studied in the five journals between 1995 and 2009. Also potential shifts were highlighted visually. Overall, it can be concluded that the vast majority dealt with internal-macro level analysis particularly related to capabilities, organizational form & fit, and strategy. This phenomenon could be observed almost during the whole period and across most academic journals.

3.4 Generalizability

This paper introduced already previously the theoretical perspective towards the generalizability of case studies regarding the views of researchers such as Tsang (2014), Lin (1998), and Stake (1994, 1995). In this section the opinions and statements, which were given in the 120 reported case studies, will be briefly exemplified. However, not every paper's view will be presented individually, but some are representative and exemplary for the sample. As regards the statements it can be said, that those explanations, which referred to the generalizability of the findings, were often of similar nature.

According to the analysis of the total sample of the 120 articles, it was found that 49 articles did not state anything or not clearly whether the findings and implications are generalizable. Therefore, after following the above described search strategy the articles were labelled as "N/S" (not specified). The studies of Takeishi (2002), Schaefer (2007), Danneels (2997), and Schuler (1996) can be mentioned as examples for this group of papers. Those articles are paradigmatic for a group of 49 articles that did not respond to the generalizability.

Whereas 49 papers did not refer to a study's generalizability, the other 71 regarded their studies as either not, limited, or fully generalizable. Hereby, 12 studies indicated to be generalizable to other firms, industries, or countries. It is observable that the requirements for a study to be generalizable deviate among the authors. Multiple case studies such as conducted by Ozcan and Eisenhardt (2009), Barker, Patterson, and Mueller (2001), and Andriopoulos and Lewis (2009), were in their point of view generalizable due to the higher robustness and as the findings are comparable among each other. Gioia and Thomas (1996) stated that they created the generalizability of the study due to the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The study of Homburg, Krohmer, and Workman Jr. (1999) conducted a cross-country and industry study, which therefore allows a greater generalizability. Overall, even if those studies mention their generalizability towards other cases, they also quote that they might not be fully generalizable and that future research might provide that. Thus, a statement towards the confirmation of an article's generalizability was simultaneously relativized.

The majority of the studies (59), however, considered the findings as limited or not generalizable. This was simply due to the research design and the focus on a narrow sample. Many studies like Schweizer (2005), Regnér (2003), Burgelman (2002), or Sommer, Loch, and Dong (2009) explained that one should not generalize based on their study due to the limited number of investigated organizations. Other studies were based on interviews of managers and thus followed a very descriptive approach, which also restricts the ability to generalize (Marginson, 2002; Sabherwal, Hirschheim, & Goles, 2001). Articles, which focused only on one industry, were also often viewed by their authors as restricted, as the generalization towards other industries is not possible (Amit & Zott, 2001; Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998). Others such as Salvato (2003), Elenkov (1997), Ferner (2000), and Mezias (2002) considered the concentration

on one country and its context as restrictive, as other more or less advanced countries might affect a research's results. Some researchers highlighted that the unique characteristics of an industry combined with the not random selection of the cases lower the overall generalizability of the findings (Shrader, 2001; Carmeli & Tishler, 2004; Elenkov, Judge, and Wright, 2005).

However, even if some studies recognize their limitations in terms of their generalizability, they also highlight their contributions and advantages. Laamanen and Wallin (2009), Ogbonna and Wilkinson (2003), Tripsas (2009), and Jones and Smith (1997) mention their focus on one industry/organization/country, but add that this focus allows gaining deep insights and understanding. Those insights can contribute and develop an emerging theory in the field, as these deep insights are mostly extracted from single case studies. This function was among other authors emphasized by Pajunen (2006), Denis, Lamothe, and Langley (2001), Salk and Shenkar (2001), and Coupland and Brown (2004).
In the same line with Rosenzweig is Truss (2001) assessing the generalizability of his study. He explains that the focus on a single case is restrictive, however, investigated a successful case is even more difficult to generalize.

This short overview regarding the generalization of the cases, illustrated the most common statements and points of view of the authors. The main insight is that most of the papers offer a limited or no generalizability, whereas only a small minority considers the papers rigor and valid in terms of generalization. However, even those articles do not present this claim clearly, as they relativized a potential generalizability of the findings.

4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

In the beginning of this paper, various theoretical aspects regarding the case study approach were introduced and described. Those provided a general understanding about the research approach and obtained a good introduction for the case analyses. In this chapter 75 articles will be introduced in great detail by reporting their individual contributions and findings. The focus lies only on 75 studies and not on the whole sample of 120, as 45 articles follow rather empirical approaches. Thus, only actual case studies are part of the thematic analysis so that a clear, comprehensive, and indispensable overview can be offered. The structure of this chapter follows the illustrated arrangement of figure 5. Therefore, the articles of the internal-micro quadrant will be firstly introduced, before continuing counterclockwisely. However, the last quadrant about the external-micro level does not contain any studies and hence the paper will not relate to it.

4.1 Internal-Micro Quadrant

The internal-micro quadrant embodies studies, which explored exemplary topics regarding individuals or smaller groups such as top managers. Hereby, the focus can lie on the composition of a team, how the top management team's (TMT) thinking affects a firm outcome or style of leadership, or how management control systems influence the managers' personal perception.

4.1.1 Management Control Systems

To start with, the first presented main category is "Management Control Systems". Management control systems (MCSs) can influence future strategy ideas and formations of a company. Studying a British-based telecommunication company Marginson (2002) analysed the connection between MCSs and a firm's strategy process. During a strategy process the control systems are increasingly used to change and implement a strategy. Hereby, control systems such as value systems, administrative controls, and key performance indicators are applied at different levels of the management. These systems affect how and what decisions managers will take, as managers interpret each system individually regarding the strategy.

The other case study focuses on formal bureaucratic control systems such as budgeting or investment appraisal in terms of HRM in British and German multinational corporations. Those formal systems interact with less formal types of control respectively social or informal systems and their dependent combination results in a complete MCS. Those systems consist of political processes in a firm, which create tensions regarding the autonomy and control of its managers. The social control systems build value systems and understandings among the different interest groups and thus the informal structures make the formal systems operational (Ferner, 2000).

These articles were about "Management Control Systems", how they affect the decision process regarding strategy and about the structure of such a system. In the following the category of "Top Management Team" will be presented.

4.1.2 Top Management Team

Robbie and Wright (1995) carried out a research about changes in a firm's management and ownership composition. By making a survey in the UK it was found that management buy-ins affect the restructuring of an organization. Management buy-ins face often asymmetric information and control by investors and financial institutions, which complicate the decision-making process. Hence, managers became disillusioned due to the non-existing support of the team and the venture capitalists. It is essential that firms and their new hired managers fit together, otherwise changes in the team structure are unavoidable. To sum it up, while voluntary restructurings and management buy-outs profit of their knowledge about the current firm, management buy-ins face the challenge to gather information in the new firm in order to overcome difficult and critical times (Robbie & Wright, 1995).

In Britain the practice in management or organizations has changed, which was often induced by changes in the orientation and conflicts in the management teams. The initiating specialists were able to do so due to their status and position. Furthermore, their orientation regarding strategy was based on their background so that a firm's focus was more on production, marketing, and financial control depending on the individual. However, not everything changed in British management practices. While production and related issues were considered as important for the future, the firms also build up the centralization and moreover, decreased significantly the influence of the middle and low management. Therefore, the study of Bresnen and Fowler (1996) illustrates by describing trends in British management practice, that organizational change is affected by a firm's composition in terms of generalists and specialists.

Leaving turnarounds and practices aside, the TMT structure can also change naturally regarding demography and diversity. Those developments affect directly an organization's performance, strategy, structure, and innovative capability. Diversity can refer to a member's tenure, age, experience, and functional background. However, previous studies had mainly methodological difficulties to connect a TMT's diversity to firm outcome. When researchers apply qualita-

tive large-sample and longitudinal case designs the relationship can be proven. Pitcher and Smith (2001) particularly illustrated that the personality and power have a high influence on heterogeneity proxies for cognitive diversity. They promote a triangulated multimethod research, which is able to capture insights and effects about the relationship between TMT's structure and firm outcome.

The three reported studies, which are categorized under "Top Management Team", dealt with a team's composition and structure. They related the theme to a firm's performance, and strategy, but also researched how changes in TMTs are indicated and how the effects can be better investigated methodologically. Below the category of "Leadership" reports the findings of case studies, which examined various aspects regarding leadership styles.

4.1.3 Leadership

Whereas, the category "Top Management Team" was about the composition of TMTs the following deals with "Leadership" meaning what managers can do and how.

By analysing *Oticon*, a Danish hearing aid firm, Lovas and Ghoshal (2000) found that the top management under the influence of human and social capital is able to determine the direction and the outcome of evolutionary processes within a company. The model of strategy as a guided evolution illustrates that the top management is shaping administrative systems, which repeat the processes of natural selection. Furthermore, the managers lead the process, as they determine the strategic direction and purpose of the evolutionary process. Overall, the study's model indicates an organization's superior performance if it has the ability to shape the appropriate strategy by simultaneously exploring and exploiting its social and human capital in the long-term.

The article of Denis, Lamothe, and Langley (2001) examines the process of strategic change in organizations with shared leadership. By analysing Canadian health care organizations it was noted, that strategic change in pluralistic contexts is often irregular and unpredictable. Yet, it can be initiated when a unified collective leadership can be realized in which everyone has a complementary position. It should be mentioned that this constellation is very fragile due to the separated power structures and differing goals of each individual. This is particular the case when organizations merge and thus the more diverse and pluralistic a firm's leadership is, the higher is the need for stabilization through for example the social embeddedness, time, and formal position.

Siggelkow (2001) investigated the fashion firm *Liz Claiborne* by using a longitudinal approach. The case illustrates, that when changes take place in a firm's environment it is not sufficient to make small, incremental adoptions internally. The mental maps of the managers have to be able to implement larger and more systemic change initiating steps. Environmental change can be either fit-destroying or fit-conserving to which a firm's managers response unequally. Fit-

conserving change is not challenging the internal logic of existing system of choices, whereas fit-destroying changes do.

A case study of the Finnish paper industry concluded that the management has to decide between more advanced or more conventional and assessable production technologies. This decision is frequently governed by situational factors and less by the actor's personality or habitual actions. This is essential to know when investigating why managers modify their procedure in this context of technological change. Situational determinants like increases in material resources or competitive pressures mostly result in the case of the paper industry in decisions towards advanced production technologies, as they might create new capabilities and opportunities. Thus, in order to implement technologies in accordance with the environment no changes in the management seem to be necessary when many situational factors concurrence (Laurila, 1997).

So far some articles dealt with different perspectives around initiating change. Noon, Jenkins, and Lucio (2000), however, discover that change attempts are often driven by traditional managerial thinking and not by applying new approaches. When managers initiate change techniques they can choose among various techniques such as downsizing or teamwork, which are in many cases in conflict with each other. Often managers tend to implement already used, old, traditional management techniques by simply repackaging them. By doing so the study of the *Royal Mail* in the UK illustrates that this propensity does not solve a firm's problem and rather preserves issues of control and autonomy. From a scientific view it could be concluded that instead of moving on, the management theory is rather rediscovering itself, which is not an issue for the practices, but rather for the academics, who favour the idea of progress.

The implementation of change initiatives is necessary for a firm in order to avoid the case of crisis situations. However, often it might be too late already. Therefore, Meszaros (1999) analysed American chemical firms on how they make preventive choices, which reduce the likelihood of accidents. Firms are able to decrease and prevent the probabilities of catastrophic risks ex ante by their organizational major decision processes and heuristics. When the survival of a firm is threatened the firms assessed the urgency and feasibility. While interdisciplinary teams analysed firstly the situations and developed ideas, the decisions were made by the TMT by only regarding the team's test, threshold-based heuristics, which was often not even conducted probably. Overall it can be said, that risks, which are not considered to be serious in the beginning, will not be tackled. On the other side, risks that pass the initial, subjective threshold test and even if they have a low assessed probability will be taken seriously.

Leaving the phenomenon of change aside, the study of Witcher and Butterworth (2001) explores the policy management style of *Hoshin Kanri* in Japanese-owned subsidiaries in the UK automotive industry. *Hoshin Kanri* is employed in most internationally orientated Japanese-owned firms, which are in the responsibility of foreign managers. It can be characterized, as a combination of operational and strategic management that connects the overall goals of quality, cost, delivery, and education with the operative management and is aimed to

achieve improvements. Furthermore, it integrates the concepts of Japanization and total quality management. *Hoshin Kanri* follows a method of participation by which targets are developed through a process of review. The sample of British subsidiaries showed alignment, integration of policy in the operations, and a focus by the use of total quality management and lean working. Even if the firms were managed by Western managers, they had to follow the Japanese influenced management style.

The presented studies concentrated on many significant aspects with regard to TMTs, management control systems, and leadership. Those three categories were classified as internal-micro level specific, as the TMTs and leaders of firms usually only constitute a small proportion of an organization, so that they can be seen as individuals (micro). The next section will report the articles that explored internal-macro level issues such as resources or capabilities.

4.2 Internal-Macro Quadrant

This section focuses on all articles that are related to internal issues on the macro level and thus towards the firm as a whole or its environment. The emphases will be on "Organizational Form & Fit", "Capabilities", and "Strategy", but also on other themes regarding "Resources", "Divestment", and "Innovation".

4.2.1 Organizational Form & Fit

An organization's form is essential for its success, as the structure and alignment with the external environment influence the efficiency, resource allocation, and other basic aspects. With this in mind the structure affects the identity, culture, success of change initiatives, and is also subject of technological changes.

Not only external forces as illustrated by Zilber (2006) have impact on meaning systems of a firm or the culture. An organization's strategy and structure by themselves can also affect the culture. The following study examined a British-based chocolate confectionery manufacturer and noticed that not the intended management strategies were causing changes in the culture, but rather the unintended effects of divisionalization and diversification. As the corporate culture perishes in a subsidiary, the study reveals that the resulting conflict between the corporate structure and strategy of the cooperation led to tensions in the subsidiary (Rowlinson, 1995).

A culture, which is integrated in an organization's form and structure, should also concentrate on the firm's employees. Plakoyiannaki, Tzokas, Dimitratos, and Saren (2008) explored how important an employee-oriented culture can be for the customer relationship management (CRM). Customers are playing a central role for a firm's performance and thus the CRM process intends to optimize all processes related to value creation. This research of a company in the UK automotive service sector indicates that an employee-oriented firm, which

pays great attention to values and behaviour, optimizes its CRM processes to a high degree. Overall, an employee-orientated organizational culture, which consists among other things of trust, family-atmosphere, and empowerment, has the potential to enhance the information and value creation of the sub-processes of the CRM. However, every firm has to explore whether this orientation fits to its structure and whether one is willing to promote the organizational form of high-involvement, which might be desirable in the service sector.

The identity of an organization and its culture are interconnected. Therefore, the development and transformation of an organization itself and its identity is linked as well. Daily processes and works author and shape an identity, which influences the organization, which is known under the term of dialogic imagination of practice. As the case of a Scandinavian-based professional service firm illustrates, the instantiating of project experiences, dramatizing of trajectories of practice, and the reframing are different types of authoring and differ in their way how they influence the development of an organization. As a result managers should focus on the present practices and question the current methods by permanently looking for desirable goals in order to develop and transform the identities and the organization positively (Carlsen, 2006).

Building up on the concept of identity, Coupland and Brown (2004) evaluated e-mail exchanges, which were published online in the forum of the *Royal Dutch Group* in order to explore how the organizational identity was created. The researchers reasoned that organizational identities can be constructed through a process of describing, questioning, contesting and defending by a firm's stakeholders in debates. Through a permanent discussion, multiple identities will be shaped circuitously by notional insiders and outsiders. Therefore, an organization's identity is not determined by its top managers, but can rather be characterized as permanent discussions and negotiations about identity issues.

Organizational identities might face the situation in which they are challenged when a firm intents to implement new technologies. The study of Tripsas (2009) analyses a digital photography company and how an identity deals with a challenging technology. Identity-challenging technologies differ from an organization's identity and hence they are difficult to capitalize. Managers face the challenge when following a new technology whether it might constitute an identity challenging technology and consequently shift the identity. An organization's identity screens the environment for technologies, but if the technology does not correspond to the identity, the opportunity will roll by. Generally, an organization's members accept rather technologies that coincide with the identity and thus attempts to shift an identity, which means also changing routines and beliefs, are difficult to carry out.

Besides cultural and identical issues the quadrant contains also articles related to other topics. By conducting a multiple case study Sabherwal, Hirschheim, and Goles (2001) examine how alignment between ISs, strategy, and structure can emerge. The alignment between business and information system (IS) strategies and structures evolve in different ways and dynamic changes of structure and strategy have the potential to influence the performance of an or-

ganization. Synergies can be achieved if the IS and the organization itself fit. Often the strategic IS management profiles were not changed for a while, which indicates low alignment, but the managers did not see a need for strategic changes. Furthermore, the managers avoided occasional revolutionary changes due to inertia. However, the firms made total revolutionary changes in the strategic IS profile, which have been followed for a longer period of time. Revolutions in order to achieve alignment can go too far or not be sufficient enough and thus need further adjustments. Overall, managers have to control current alignment patterns in order to avoid future misalignments and failures.

On the subject of embeddedness one can consider also the perspective of a corporations structure, which has to integrate subsidiaries. A subsidiary's internal embeddedness influences its strategy and performance. The operational, capability, and strategic embeddedness enable a subsidiary to manage and change the strategic restraints of its corporation. A subsidiary creates relationships to other units of the main corporation as a part of its distinctive strategy and influences consequently the MNC. This proactive behaviour of strategy development can create positive effects for both the subsidiary and the corporation, and thus should be ensured by an organization's structure. Based on an in-depth case study of a firm in the automotive industry Garcia-Pont, Canales, and Noboa (2009) explore that through developing and adapting a subsidiary's embeddedness it might become a subsidiary strategy.

The next study of Siggelkow (2002) researched *The Vanguard Group* in order to explore the evolutionary processes, which end in organizational fit. A firm's core elements are developed by going through the processes of thickening, patching, coasting, and trimming. Hereby, elements are corrected, deleted or adapted if they do not fit to the new situation of a firm. A firm goes through many processes in its history, as the environment changes and has to adapt its portfolio of core elements. This can be observed by analysing the developmental path, which differs among organizations. For example a firm can develop its core elements firstly through thickening followed by patching. When a new element is available the process of coasting begins. Those paths, therefore display the development paths of firms, which transformed themselves from a poor to a good performer. It is essential for an organization's performance to achieve the right configuration and fit among the core elements. The paths with the four processes help to classify various organizations regarding their development in terms of the core elements.

An organization's form, function, and competitive advantage face permanent changes particularly in turbulent environments. Rindova and Kotha (2001) investigate *Yahoo!* and *Excite* in order to discover the process of adaption and transformation. According to the study the firms morphed themselves frequently and permanently in order to renew their competitive advantage, which is especially in the Internet industry short-lived. Continuous morphing is necessary when the environment changes constantly. Hereby, a company initiates changes regarding resources, capabilities, and products in order to regain or renew its sustainable competitive advantage. This process of morphing is accompanied by steadily learning efforts about a company's organizational form and

capabilities and moreover, the managers should pursue to keep an organization as strategically flexible as possible. However, as the study was conducted in the early stage of the Internet industry the two firms had to ensure the flexibility of the organizational form in order to conduct the process of morphing particularly at that time.

Change programmes such as total quality management (TQM) and business process re-engineering (BPR) are the latest techniques of management innovations. However, they cannot change anything within an organization if the firm's culture, form, or structure are not involved. By applying these techniques a firm might turn into a competitive world-class competitor, but this study of De Cock and Hipkin (1997) explores the phenomena beyond these techniques, as those are relatively short-lived, amorphous and their success context-dependent. According to the study TQM and BPR are occasioning change, but do not provide answers to organizational issues. Thus, managers need other techniques regarding a change programme, which integrates practical experience. Overall, the TQM and BPR approaches are initiating a change programme, however, do not lead it. Managers have to realize that the success of those programmes depends on what is done by the people. Only then an organization's form, culture, and structure will change and adapt towards the new management techniques.

Andriopoulos and Lewis (2009) analysed five firms in the product design industry. Often an organization's success depends on its innovative capability and how the innovations are explored and exploited. Managing the knowledge process can lead to synergies, but also to tensions - organizational ambidexterity - as one has to focus on the exploitation of current knowledge whilst also promoting the exploration and development of new knowledge. There are different approaches that allow the optimal integration of the exploitation and exploration activities regarding innovations. However, ambidextrous firms can be characterized of having nested paradoxes such as strategic intent, customer orientation, and personal drivers, which all have to be managed on different organizational levels in order to optimize the balance of the exploitation and exploration activities.

As illustrated, the main category "Organizational Form & Fit" included a broad range of different perspectives. It began with articles that linked culture, identity, and IT to the structure and form of a firm. Additionally, insights were provided about the aspects of embeddedness and alignment and how the core elements are connected to the evolution of a firm. Finally, the importance of the right balance between exploitation and exploration activities was addressed.

4.2.2 Capabilities

An organization can create the best conditions in order to ensure the development of its capabilities. In this main category articles are listed, which refer to organizational learning, information seeking, and other aspects, whose benefits help a firm to improve its competitive position.

A firm's sustainable competitive advantage can only be maintained if the firm simultaneously develops and manages capabilities in order to facilitate its current strategy. This study investigated the electronic commerce strategy formation and implementation of the Ecuadorian stock exchange. According to the analysis capabilities were developed through a progressive approach to foster the new strategy. This capability development was particularly promoted through certain key resources such as leadership, culture, IT, long-term view, and networks, which are generally difficult for competitors to imitate. The development process itself needed different other capabilities during various stages. In the case study the capabilities regarding benchmarking, learning, absorbing knowledge, and training supported the process of implementing the strategy during the initial phase the most, when the direction of the strategy was determined. Other capabilities such as integrating resources, experimenting, investing, and internal commitment were more useful during the other stages, when capabilities were further developed and integrated (Montealegre, 2002).

In the same line of capability development is the article of Laamanen and Wallin (2009) about longitudinal case studies of network security software firms. By analysing the evolution of three firms the study notes that the capability development depends on factors regarding the managerial cognition. Thus, operational capabilities depend on instrumental cognitions, which determine how a capability will develop itself. Capability portfolios illustrate that the attention of the management changes from capability to capability and this influences, which capabilities will be promoted (operational capabilities). Due to a manager's limited capacity, it is essential to identify the capabilities, whose development is important in terms of a firm's growth. Regarding the capability constellations it seems that in unstable environmental situations firms bolstered the concurrent building of firm-specific and firm-addressable capabilities.

The article of Maritan and Brush (2003) researches the transfer of superior intrafirm capabilities respectively flow manufacturing practises across heterogeneous plants of one corporation. Firms strive to develop their capabilities in order to adopt new practices, which improve the overall competitive situation. However, some factors have to be kept in mind, which might influence the success of implementation. For example the resource endowment, characteristics, structure, and history of a plant and its managers are essential when those capabilities have to be transferred and implemented. Furthermore, this process of transfer should be tailored to the plant and not simply be replicated across a corporation. Otherwise the heterogeneity of the plants will inhibit the internal transfer and not lead to a unique competitive advantage.

Another not directly related perspective of capabilities might be intrafirm conflicts. The classification of the following two articles towards "Capabilities" might arguable, however, one could reason that a firm needs this capability in order to benefit of intrafirm conflicts otherwise those tensions might harm the company. Asking the employees of a transportation company Jehn (1995) investigated the benefits and downsides of intragroup conflicts at the group and individual level. Intragroup conflict has the potential to be beneficial regarding the outcome. However, whether a conflict is prosperous or harmful for an outcome depends

on the group's task for example the outcome of groups dealing with routine tasks suffered from conflicts. Also relationship conflicts among the group members seemed to be contra-productive. Furthermore, an outcome's success under conflict depends on the type of conflict, the task interdependence, and existing group norms. Surprisingly, norms, which were supposed to promote open debates, lead to relationship conflicts that were decreasing the individual's satisfaction.

Conflict cannot only emerge within a group, but also within a whole corporation with diversified units. When diversified corporations implement strategies to manage government relations across their units conflicts can arise naturally. Shaffer and Hillman (2000) identified three types of intrafirm conflicts and offered solutions in order resolve them by studying three US corporations. Conflicts can be about prepolicy, postpolicy, or external public policy issues. Despite the conflicts, a corporation must be able to make decisions and to resolve the conflicts between divisions. The conflicts are often driven by different opinions regarding the business-government strategies as the business units aim to be specialized with high individual expertise, while the corporation intends to keep control and coordination tasks. Analysing the cases the authors conclude that highly diversified corporations, whose units resort to the same source of resources, use a centralized authority structure in order to resolve conflicts.

Another aspect regarding capabilities is addressed by Dyerson and Mueller (1999), who found that managers have to ensure the flow of knowledge and information between a firm and its divisions, but also its partners in order to create technological capabilities. Firm-specific knowledge is significant to create organizational capabilities. In this context managers have to span the difference between organizational and localized learning and furthermore, manage the flow of knowledge internal and external. In order to create technological capabilities a firm has to use effectively the internal knowledge (appropriation), promote the integration of the knowledge ("teamworking"), and acquire and exploit external knowledge. In total the management has to value localized learning, which also influences teamworking. By paying high attention and offering suitable conditions for all participants a company can create the optimal atmosphere in order to build the technological know-how and capabilities.

The study of Thomas, Sussman, and Henderson (2001) continues this argument by examining the US army's *Center for Army Lessons Learned*. A firm's performance is affected by its learning capability, which augments the knowledge base. Thus, a firm can achieve a competitive advantage especially in dynamic environments. The article recommends that strategic learning, by which conclusions are drawn regarding current practices, should be followed in order to assist the implementation of future strategies. Gathering and leveraging targeted information and the interpretation by diverse experts through a strategic knowledge distillation presents a capability that generates, stores and transports knowledge across a whole organization.

Continuing on sources for learning Lam's article (2003) sheds light on the organizational learning of multinationals. Particularly, she focused on R&D networks

of Japanese and American multinational enterprises (MNEs) in the UK. MNEs show different national patterns of organization and innovation due to their different national backgrounds. In this research MNEs were examined and especially their global R&D networks and learning in the UK. As the US companies were able to manage and coordinate their dispersed learning activities globally, they were participating in the local innovation networks. Compared to the US firms the Japanese were less able to profit from such networks in terms of learning due to their tight embeddedness in systems. Thus, it can be said that the home-based institutions determine the ability of MNEs of transnational organizational learning. Those differences in social embeddedness lead to different strategies and organizational forms, which affect the learning ability.

Companies develop capabilities in order to create ventures and businesses and to adapt them to changes in dynamic environments by using corporate venture capital, alliances, and acquisitions. Keil (2004) examined this capability in detail by observing firms in the information and communication technology industry. External corporate venturing means that existing firms set up new activities or projects by using external partners. Hereby, the external corporate venturing capability, which is a result of two ongoing complementary learning processes, plays a major role. The companies acquire knowledge about "how to manage external corporate ventures outside of the actual venture" from outside even if it is challenging to adapt it to the firm-specific context. The other learning process, learning-by-doing adapts the acquired knowledge to the individual context of a firm. Companies that follow this learning path have to realize that the success depends on the structure and the resource endowment. However, potential restrictions could be compensated by networks.

Companies source complementary components either within-firm (make) or interfirm (buy). This complementary sourcing can be simultaneously conducted and is particularly common when a firm and a supplier have common interfirm expertise about a component. Furthermore, this can occur within a firm when different units share also the same expertise. As the example of metal stamping and powder metal firms illustrates the companies can gather firstly expertise about components, but tend in the following to outsource them as soon as they have adequate knowledge about them. By doing so a company achieves and increases its flexibility and based on the gathered knowledge the firm improves the coordination regarding the outsourced activities. Therefore, a firm is able to gain expertise about various types of knowledge of its suppliers when producing it eventually in-house. However, it must have the absorptive and learning capabilities in order to do so (Parmigiani & Mitchell, 2009).

Capabilities are not only essential in order to gain directly a competitive advantage, but also indirectly. The study of Sharma and Vredenburg (1998) identified valuable organizational capabilities, which were developed and created as consequence of a proactive corporate environmental strategy. By observing the Canadian oil and gas industry the researchers noted that corporations gained capabilities regarding the stakeholder integration, higher-order learning, and continuous innovation and that those often enhance the competitiveness of firms. Particularly, these capabilities emerge due to the self-reported envi-

ronmental activities and a firm's reputation, innovations, cost, and employees can benefit from that. These findings should motivate managers to focus more on the development of organizational capabilities, which can lead to more sustainable competitive advantages.

In this chapter several aspects regarding capabilities were introduced. Some articles were part of this chapter even if they might not be related to this category, however, they suited to this group most likely. The main focus lied on information gathering methods of organizations regarding the future and uncertainties. Moreover, the studies explored different perspectives towards organizational learning and how those capabilities can create better performance.

4.2.3 Innovation

The earlier category dealt with capabilities, which are driving forces in a company for innovative developments.

Networks have to potential the influence the innovative activities of connected companies. As an example the case of the architect, Frank O. Gehry, can be mentioned. He adopted the digital 3-D representations, which consequently diffused within a project network among many firms. By analysing this case study it is recognizable that one innovation that changes a central function of a system, can bolster various wakes of innovation regarding practices or knowledge via a project network. Particularly, the creation of trading zones where tools, techniques, governance, and management could be exchanged and communicated increased the interactions among the partners and this led to higher innovative activities. This one adoption embodies a path-creating innovation that stimulated other different communities to innovate. As a result, this significant change was able to influence various innovations, work practices, and knowledge bases in heterogeneous communities (Boland, Lyytinen, & Yoo, 2007).

In a more knowledge-intensive economy innovative knowledge is essential for firms in order to create value. In management consulting organizations the appropriate structure has to emerge and become embedded, which allows innovative practices. The combinable dimensions of differentiated expertise, defensible turf, organizational support, and socialized agency are shaping the knowledge-based innovative structures via various pathways. Knowledge-intensive firms develop and test new practices in their firm and they employ a catalyst for innovations. The knowledge, which the individuals use for their innovations, emerges from networks, hierarchies, and markets, but they have to legitimize the new innovation. Even though the individuals shape the organizational structures and implement new expertise by trying to legitimize the emergence of knowledge, the overall approaches of a consulting organization are aimed to serve the client. Thus, new emerging expertise should not be interpreted too differently, as the goal cannot be achieved (Anand, Gardner, & Morris, 2007).

The reported case studies illustrated the essential role of innovative activities for firms. The sources of innovations were especially highlighted and how the activities are influenced by an organization's structure or diversification.

4.2.4 Resources

This category introduces articles that examined an organization's resources in terms of human resources (HR) and IT. Whereas, the classification of HR is comprehensible, the one of IT is simply due the fact that the articles refer to tangible and intangible investments and thus are connected to resources.

The resource of IT yields for companies and organizations benefits. Investigating the role of IT regarding the project of the development of the American *B-2 "Stealth" bomber* it can be noted that IT systems allow a high coordination of activities in context of virtual cooperations and networks. Projects between firms or within an organization require appropriate coordination activities, which allow the exchange of information and a communication between all partners. This can be facilitated by the IT via systems, which provide a database and analysing tools. As a result the ISs might decrease the costs of a product, the coordination, and communication, increase the efficiency regarding the governance, and allow making decentralized decisions. These results might employ to all virtual projects and corporations and have the potential to increase a project's performance (Argyres, 1999).

Another resource refers to human resource management. HRM influences high performance work practices and thus it can also affect a company's performance. By examining *Hewlett-Packard's* HR policies the research reveals that the firm does not apply only best practice HRM due to a deviation between intention and practice. Based on this deviation, fit was not reached everywhere in the firm's HRM system, but still arrived at a high level of financial performance. Formal HR policies deviate, but interact with informal practices and thus the success of the relationship between performance and HRM depends on group dynamics, as they can promote but also constrain the implementation of formal policies. Therefore, issues regarding the implementation of formal policies lead to their informal interpretation in terms of culture and context and this unpredictable behaviour can affect the performance. Hence, Truss states that one can only assess whether HRM is influencing performance when translating the HRM policy in practice (Truss, 2001).

When HRM should improve a firm's performance an important factor is that the companies should do everything feasible in order to maximize the utilization of its HR. However, according Lane (2000) women experience often complex employment disadvantages due to gender inequality. Investigating national health service (NHS) nursing this study identifies gender-based disadvantages and also its sources. Disadvantages do exist not only in the general workforce, but also in the single, which is more difficult to recognize. Managers' decisions are influenced by their attitudes about women, their work, and the institutional arrangements and consequently, this determines the women's' chances. Thus,

women can often not decide about their career advancement due to many interactive factors. Managers, however, should try to identify the disadvantages, promote equity through an effective strategy, and develop long-term career planning systems, as the firm as a whole would profit in the long-term.

The last articles examined how HRM can affect the performance whilst the following paper focuses on different styles of HRM. HRM can either follow the soft or hard approach. The two models are opposing, as the soft approach believes that an employee's commitment to work is the best for a company's performance, which indicates values, training, high trust, low control, and high autonomy. Contrarily, the hard model views the employees simply as resources, which are needed to implement a strategy and its goal, and thus implies tight control. The study about eight organizations in the UK concludes that no company followed only one model. Interestingly, the firms think that they strive for the soft approach, however, the employees perceive actually rather the hard commitment control. Hence, the existence of a gap between reality and rhetoric could be observed, which should be considered by the managers in order to comply with both sides' requirements and needs (Truss, Gratton, Hope-Hailey, McGovern, & Stiles, 1997).

Furthermore the HRM is able to initiate changes regarding an organizational culture. Ogbonna and Wilkinson (2003) observed a company in the UK food retail industry in order to explore the effects of cultural changes on human resources, especially on managers. The change of an organizational culture has effects on the firm's managers and on the entire human resources, as they have to adapt their cultural orientations towards the new culture. In the British firm the managerial behaviour changed regarding surveillance, threat of sanction, and direct control rather than their values. The directors intended to promote trust, mutual change, co-operation, and common purpose among the managers through different measurements, and thus change the culture positively. However, the middle managers perceived the change as restructuring with less autonomy and higher control, as they interpreted the new culture differently. Therefore, it can be said that initiating cultural change in context of restructuring to enhance performance, is not likely to be implemented as initially intended.

The presented articles clearly indicate that managers should optimize the utilization of the applied resources. The optimized allocation affects an organization's workforce and efficiency and therefore the overall outcome.

4.2.5 Strategy

Strategy is essential for companies, as it plans how to achieve future goals under uncertainty. The following articles deal with various perspectives regarding strategy in the field of strategic management.

To begin with, the study of Knights and Morgan (1995) focuses on the development of the corporate business strategy regarding theory and practice by examining the UK financial service industry. Previously, the rational and pro-

cessual approaches were not able to describe this, as they concluded that the development follows a progressive development. According to this study, strategic management develops discontinuously and rather accidentally, simply due to the fact that financial services did not consider strategic management discourses regarding internal and external environments. An example of the abandonment of an insurance firm's IT strategy due to market changes illustrates that the overall corporate strategy influences the inter-organizational strategies at lower levels highly.

The strategy is increasingly influenced by management consultancies, which belong to the knowledge industry. Fincham (1999) explores the relationship between clients and consultancy firms by examining the role of the consultants during change management. There is an emerging approach, which connects the strategic and structural view regarding this relationship, as it might create complementary insights how consultants can affect a firm's strategic change. Hereby, the relationship is not depending on fix factors, but is rather an open-ended and equal one by which both parties have the same power. If the parties separate the knowledge and expertise in internal and external, tensions will emerge and log the process of change.

The next article of Grant (2003) deals with the strategic planning process and analysed eight oil and gas corporations. In turbulent environments multinational and multi-business organizations use strategic planning systems in order to co-ordinate their decentralized strategy formulation under conditions of high uncertainty. These systems ensure that the performance targets are met by the different units in accordance with the guidelines. The study illustrates, that the planning processes of multinationals are nowadays more decentralized, less staff driven and more informal, whereas the plans are more goal focused, short-term, and less precise regarding the allocation of resources and the implementation. Overall, the planning systems have advantages for the managers and for the corporation: it creates a structure with time schedules, determines the responsibilities, and sets goals for the organization. On the other hand it allows the managers sufficient scope for experimentations, initiatives, and entrepreneurship.

Uncertainty is also an aspect of the following article. One might assume that firms, who face regulatory uncertainty, would postpone their investment decisions. However, according to Hoffmann, Trautmann, and Hamprecht (2009) German companies in the power generation industry were rather motivated to secure competitive resources, leverage complementary resources, and reduce institutional pressure when facing uncertainty from the European CO_2 Emission Trading Scheme. Overall the cases illustrate, that due to the institutional pressure, the firms rather accelerated their investments in order to secure the needed resources for the opportunity exploitation. Therefore, even if firms faced the institutional pressure, they invested earlier instead of later, simply due to the fact that they wanted to ensure and secure the competitive resources.

The paper of Salvato (2003) explores the process of strategic evolution by using data about two Italian companies. Strategy evolves due to the intentional

recombination of a firm's Core Micro-strategy such as routines, micro-activities, and resources and novel resources. Furthermore, direct and salient leadership in micro-level processes play an important part in this evolution. Managers can influence the adaptive strategic evolution by leveraging the resources and routines. Particularly, they can interfere by determining Core Micro-strategies, allocating external factors, and influencing the process of new combination. This depends highly on the experience gained through former strategic initiatives. When firms recombine existing resources and capabilities with novel ones it allows making innovations and creating capabilities. However, a company should keep its processes rather stable during change processes than making radical variations in order to promote innovations.

Another interesting perspective on strategy is investigated by Watson (2003), who emphasises the role of the strategists during the process of strategy making. Strategists and their personal strategy regarding their life and identity have an exchange relationship with their organization's strategy. Hence, the interpersonal and social processes and an organizations relationship with its resource-dependence constituencies in terms of resources are relevant parts of the organizational strategy making. Strategies of firms are influenced by the strategist's personal orientations, identity, and priorities. However, they enact strategies on the firm's behalf involving parties and constituencies, which have to be considered according to them, so that the firm's future survival can be guaranteed.

Strategies are developed by strategists, however, the strategies can emerge or be developed on different levels or areas within an organization by different managers. Thus, analysing four multinational corporations this paper intends to examine how managers develop strategies. It was found that the creation and development of strategy takes place at the micro-level of a firm and those processes induce macro strategic changes and define the content. Different strategy activities were found to be in the centre and the periphery of a firm due to the diverse location and social embeddedness. The strategy making in the periphery was featured by an explorational and external orientation with sense-making (inductive) in order to implement new expertise. On the other hand, the boards at the centre seemed to follow deductive reasoning to exploit the current knowledge. Even if both focuses are very different, they are both essential for a firm's strategy in different times thus managers should not only focus on the exploitation of current assets (Regnér, 2003).

Jarzabkowski (2003) investigates strategic practices when those patterns continue or change. Generally, strategy depends on four mutually influencing factors: collective structure, primary actors, practical activities, and strategic practices. By analysing universities in the UK this research investigates strategic practices in terms of resource allocation, monitoring and control, and direction setting. Therefore, continuity can be particularly achieved when a firm tries to align its actors and shapes a collective structure, which in implemented by the dynamic practices in order to create system coherence. On the other side, strategic practices can change when they are affected by external stimuli. It can be said that practices maintain contradictions, but if those have to be changed one

day due to shifts, the practices have to adapt. Therefore, contradictions initiate change in practices, which have to be reinterpreted.

As China's economy is shifting, the organizational capabilities and transaction costs are incrementally significant influencers on managerial and strategic choices. This study about the Chinese pharmaceutical industry identified varying transition trajectories for different types of complementary assets such as R&D and distribution of one company, which intends to secure those assets through different strategies. The three perspectives - organizational capabilities, transaction costs, and institutional and social structure - led for the two mentioned assets to complementary explanations for behaviour. However, they can be distinguished regarding the decision process and predictions. Based on the R&D example the three perspectives explain in different ways why manufactures continue to buy technologies instead of developing them. Institutional perspectives highlight that a firm did not develop relationships to other institutions, the organizational capability perspective illustrates that firms have not the skills in order to develop and the transaction costs perspective explains that a firm does not have the capability to internalize the R&D, as the institutes are only developing and not commercializing (White & Liu, 2001).

In new markets technology is often not fully leveraged compared to existing ones and thus their whole value is often not fully extracted. Danneels (2007) studied through a longitudinal case study a chemical manufacturer, whose technologies were not fully utilized. Firms often want to fulfil the needs of their current customers and therefore are not able to gain new customers. Consequently, the companies experience a customer competence trap and marketing competence gap. Those log-ins were strengthened as firms were not able to allocate and transform the needed resources in order to adopt the technology for new markets. Hereby, firms should convert the resources of time and capital into specific resources such as knowledge and distribution channels during a constant and sufficient process. Otherwise they only exploit the current markets and this dilemma inhibits them of leveraging the technology beyond the initial intention regarding market entry.

The last article of the category "Strategy" examines how a once successful strategy might become inappropriate. In the example of *Intel* and its CEO the study illustrates how a highly successful strategy implemented by a focused induced strategy process can lead to a co-evolutionary lock-in in a particular market segment. A once successful strategy can bind a firm strongly to its existing and current markets. However, when facing external changes and inertia a company's performance can be affected, as its long-term adaption decreases. In the case of *Intel* and the CEO Grove the exceptional success of one strategy made him so confident that his commitment increased the influence in the middle managers' strategy field. Consequently, they were not able to create essential and needed adoptions. Therefore, it is recommended to provide the middle managers autonomy, so that they can promote strategies outside of the CEO's view (Burgelman, 2002).

The articles regarding an organization's strategy reported about closely content-related and a bit more far apart themes. However, the overall emerging picture is by all means very informative, as many diverse perspectives are covered during the examined period of time. Topics ranging from strategy planning under uncertainty, the implementation, to aspects regarding the strategist itself were treated and provided deep insights.

4.2.6 Divestment

The last articles, which deal with the internal-macro level of a company, are about topics related to divestment activities. Two papers were allocated to this classification, as they refer to downsizing and divestment, and those complete the review with regard to internal-macro level related issues.

Organizational downsizing is generally often needed and essential in order to remain competitive. Hereby, actions can be taken to reduce costs or promote flexibility. Pinsonneault and Kraemer (2002) examined the role of IT regarding organizational downsizing in two American city governments. When American cities were downsized, the IT supported this process after making the necessary investments, however, it did not induce it. It was also observable that when the environmental pressures, which would influence the organization's performance negatively, were increasing towards the cities' managers, they were rather reshaping their downsizing strategies, which led to larger layoffs. Overall, the use of IT allowed the managers to downsize more rationally and efficiently by adapting the change strategy. However, the cities were still able to offer the same level of services by also minimizing the costs simply due to the employment of the IT.

Excess capacities in small competitive industries need to be reduced through decisions about closures or simply capacity reduction. Firms experience a particular high market pressure, but also face barriers in order to shut down plants. In the British brick industry, companies first shut down small plants, which manufactured bricks of low quality. When the market demand broke down, firms started to acquire competitors' plants in order to overcome exit barriers and also closure programs. However, lately acquired plants were rather shut down then the others, as the managers wanted to be loyal to employees, who have worked in their firms for a longer time. Moreover, they intended to keep plants, which they developed. It can be seen, that a higher concentration through acquisition is obviously necessary before a small industry undergoes a period of restructuring (Wood, 2009).

4.3 External-Macro Quadrant

The last section of this chapter reports the main findings of the external-macro analysis and the four categories of "Alliances & Networks", "Internationalization & FDI", "Stakeholders", and "Mergers & Acquisitions".

4.3.1 Alliances & Networks

Alliance networks can be seen as an organizational form, which involves various partners. Those networks emerge, grow, and shape based on the motivation of its founders. The research conducted by Koza and Lewin (1999) investigates a service network in the public accounting industry and noticed, that the original purpose of the network was to "produce incremental income in exchange for cross-border referrals" and to solve some issues for the partner firms. However, within the network the partners had asymmetric opportunities beyond the original purpose, so that some were motivated to enter each others' markets. Together with the desire for individual autonomy, this behaviour led to tensions among the partners and finally promoted instability, which can only be solved if the network effects outcome the tensions. The intention of the network to explore new strategies was contradictory to the strategies of the individual firms, who intended to exploit current opportunities.

Doz (1996) deals with the same aspects by analyzing strategic alliances. According to him the success and outcome of strategic alliances depend highly on the ability of the partners to learn regarding different factors such as skills, goals, tasks, processes, and the environment. Evolutionary strategic alliances follow the characteristic of an interactive learning process in which the alliance partners take readjustments after they re-evaluated the dimensions. This leads to successful cooperations, whereas inertia and the non-inclusion of re-evaluation and readjustment lead to the failure of those alliances.

It is clear that alliances and networks have the potential to influence the performance, as those are sources for knowledge. However, according to Ozcan and Eisenhardt (2009) the potential of a firm to profit from its alliances depends on the whole alliance portfolio. Looking at the wireless gaming industry, this paper explores how such portfolios can be developed. Hereby, managers and their cognitive view provide the basis, as they scan the industry for new ties and due to their understanding they are able to locate multiple new promising contacts simultaneously. Those multiple ties provide synergies and access to resources. In order to develop high-performing portfolios one should create a unique structure, which influences the industry. Moreover, a firm should strive to make ties with firms that are unconnected, as opportunities might be discovered, which no one else will explore.

Despite the fact that alliances have a huge potential, there are also challenges, which have to be considered. However, Boddy, Macbeth, and Wagner (2000) state that alliances are difficult to implement and to manage, as various factors for example the culture affects the success, but those difficulties can be solved through a process. Seven dimensions - business processes, technology, resources, people, culture, power, and structure - illustrate how an alliance between firms emerges and in which context the collaboration operates. The partners and their interactions are influenced by the context. In the beginning of an alliance people were interacting informally, while later formal settings were developed, which clearly highlights an evolutionary process regarding the change

of the alliances. Overall, the study developed an interaction model that explains how cooperations among firms evolve through interactions and adaptability.

Different network architectures such as dual networks and networks with strong ties or dyadic interfirm ties can have significant influence on the innovative capability of the leading firm of a knowledge-intensive alliance network. After observing Italian furnishings manufacturers the author stated, that a network's structure should be managed thoroughly when a firm wants to exploit the maximum potential in order to achieve a competitive advantage. With regard to the study it seems important to realize that a lead firm should have the distinctive relational capability to contain plenty of heterogeneous weak ties and additionally, a core of strong ties. This dual network architecture enables a firm to optimize its innovative capability, which might lead to an improved competitive position (Capaldo, 2007).

The following study of Jones and Smith (1997) investigated the firm *Otter Controls* in the UK and concentrated especially on how the company acquires new technologies. Central to the research is the concept of strategic technology management and the consideration of alliances. Strategic technology management should be linked to a firm's strategy even in small companies. External relationships for example to higher education institutes can be promising sources for small enterprises in respect of technology. To do so, the managers should create a flexible and open culture that allows the transfer of the know-how and the technology in order to exploit new opportunities. Additionally, a firm has to create capabilities, which allow the exploitation of acquired knowledge. However, it should be kept in mind that it is critical for small firms to evaluate the skills of universities and this presents a risk of technology alliances.

A high efficiency of a network is essential in many industries as the networks have the guarantee the smoothly implementation of all operative processes. Furthermore, when firms learn how to operate supply networks most efficiently they create the opportunity to optimize the costs and to reach the maximum of effectiveness. Dynamic business models are flexible and consequently, enable a firm to learn permanently and ensure the inter-firm knowledge transfer. Hereby, key actors are connected and thus the appropriate knowledge transfer for each individual is warranted. Together the elements of network structure, knowledge forms, and interfirm routines create offshore supply networks. In this network different types of knowledge such as know-how, know-why, know-what, and know-who are transferred, which allow managers to learn in networks. The paper concludes that executives should conduct the hard knowledge transfer (structure of network) transparently for all participants and bolster the soft knowledge transfer (social creation of knowledge) in order to increase the acceptance of a new network structure. Only this procedure leads to the creation of new knowledge (Mason & Leek, 2008).

By analyzing the co-operative buyer-supplier relationships in the case of *Toyota* Langfield-Smith and Greenwood (1998) intend to explore what has to be taken into account when creating such relationships. Co-operative buyer-supplier partnerships can imply competitive advantages on the basis of trust, information

sharing, direct assistance, long-term contracts, shared product development, and performance evolution. A co-operative relationship can only be created if the buyer is willing to give up a bit of his strong bargaining power position. By examining *Toyota Australia* and its suppliers, one can recognize that the relationship shifted from a rather opposing one towards a more co-operative. This transition was particularly possible, as the buyer and the suppliers shared similarities in their industry and technology, have made positive prior experience of change, were communicating effectively, shared information, and promoted experiential learning.

Conducting a survey in the Japanese automotive industry the paper by Takeishi (2002) investigates the integration of suppliers in the product development. When design processes of components are outsourced to suppliers in terms of developing automotive products in Japan, the level of knowledge of the carmaker about the component determines the level of quality. Therefore, a separation between task and knowledge should be pursued. However, regular projects demand a higher architectural knowledge, which allows the compilation of all components to one product, of the carmaker regarding coordination, whereas new projects ask for more component-specific knowledge in order to refine certain engineering problems. Furthermore, supplier and carmaker should share their total knowledge when cooperating in innovative issues. The management of knowledge is important, as it influences the learning process, should not disperse erratic, and finally can lead to a competitive advantage.

The last article deals also with supplier networks in the automotive industry by analyzing particularly *keiretsu* networks. Focusing on *keiretsu* supply networks in Japan, which provided the car producers in the past flexibility and leanness, but also control over their suppliers, the study indentifies recent changes from a network governance towards a hierarchical administration. Some firms suddenly internalized different transactions in order to raise control, whereas with other suppliers they created capabilities about components right from the beginning of an alliance. These diverse approaches and the less importance of the *keiretsu* approach due to the standardization of components and the globalization will ask for restructuring actions regarding the networks and alliances of the Japanese automakers (Ahmadjian & Lincoln, 2001).

The articles that were subject of this section described the evolution of collaborations and on what firms and their managers have to focus in order to implement an efficient network. It gave clear answers about what alliances are good for and what designs are most success promising. It is noticeable, that the researchers conducted their studies often in high-tech industries, as those sectors offer the clearest opportunity how firms can gain advantages through networks.

4.3.2 Internationalization & FDI

Relating to the external-macro level of companies this section presents the studies, which were concentrating on the internationalization activities of firms. Hereby, the topics regarding joint ventures (JVs), first mover advantages, and foreign subsidiaries were central.

In the globalized world international fungible resources create competitive advantages and are hence the drivers for the development of corporate global strategies. According to the study about Danish firms, conglomerates become global specialists in niche markets and face competition with smaller enterprises. Consequently, they internationalize and de-diversify and this development is known under term of globalfocusing. Based on that, the industry- and country specific resources and capabilities are shifting driven by the corporate growth and beyond that by internal and external forces. To become an industry leader a firm should create new capabilities, leverage the resources around the world, and enhance their supply chain operations. Thus, globalfocused firms are able to sell their core products worldwide (Meyer, 2006).

Social and cognitive processes play an essential role in international joint ventures (IJVs), as cultural differences, partner dominance, and autonomy might affect the performance. Not only environmental and structural contexts influence the performance of an IJV, but also the social identity formation, which takes place in the beginning of an IJV. In the study the national social identities were determining sensemaking even though other identities were present. Therefore, the social identity enactments by members, when once defined, determine the relationship of contextual variables with group and organizational outcomes (Salk & Shenkar, 2001).

The majority of studies represent the opinion that early entrants to an industry outperform the late entrants. According to this research of Bryman (1997) about the American animation industry, the previous studies have some methodological problems and for that reason his study points out that late and early entrants can have the same likelihoods of success. Chances for the late entrants are among others the limited protection of patents, mobility of knowledgeable staff, and complacency of the first movers. Late entrants can even leapfrog the incumbents by differentiation, free-riding, changes in preferences of customers, and inertia.

In the same context is the following study, which investigates the first mover advantage. First mover advantages can emerge due to various reasons such as technological advantages. The researchers examine in detail *Shell-BP* in Nigeria, *Lockheed Martin* in Russia, and *Volkswagen* in China to explore the political influence on first mover advantages. Those political resources for international organizations have to be acquired, sustained, and finally exploited. Government interventions are able to shape entry barriers, and furthermore the success can depend on relations to political officials. Thus, political resources play a major role in the liberal and global marketplaces and their influence is affected by

market and non-market capabilities and resources of a firm. Managers have to be aware, that non-market strategies can be absorbed by competitors entering the market (Frynas, Mellahi, & Pigman, 2006).

Beyond first mover advantages latecomer strategies of market entry can also be a reasonable alternative for firms, which affect the performance of a firm. Latecomer strategies can be also successful and additionally, a firm might be able to become the market leader. In the semiconductor industry in Japan and Korea two strategies can be identified, which either compensate latecomer dis-advantages ("focusing, thin margin or loss bearing, and volume building") or exploit the advantages of latecomers ("odd timing, time compression, human-embodied technology transfer, benchmarking, technological leapfrogging, and resource leveraging"). As the cases illustrate it seems to be that late entrants have to take more risk than the earlier ones, yet they have also the chance to succeed in a market (Cho, Kim, & Rhee, 1998).

4.3.3 Mergers & Acquisitions

Another category of articles is related to mergers and acquisitions. Hereby, the two reported articles deal mainly with integration programmes, which increase the chances for a better overall performance.

It is often essential to implement the right strategy after a merger or acquisition has been conducted. Schweizer (2005) investigates the integration process of biotechnology firms into pharmaceutical organizations. The acquisitions were driven by the goal to gain access to know-how, technologies, and innovative capabilities. The motives of mergers and acquisitions have to be linked to post-acquisition integration strategies, which fit to both parties. This approach should focus on a rapid, but also slow integration that fulfils the short-term motives such as enhancing the market positions, but also long-term goals like the support of the growth strategy. In the case studies, managers should attempt to integrate non-R&D-related departments, but keep the R&D-related division autonomously to preserve the knowledge and capabilities of the acquired firm.

Post-acquisition restructuring measurements can be seen as an evolutionary process, which means a radical change for an organization regarding its strategy and culture. Hereby, a firm learns through experimenting, develops new routines through new capabilities, which emerge from local and foreign knowledge, and selects the most suitable ones depending on the context. An acquirer should follow this evolutionary process, keep up a target firm's autonomy, and support it with resources in order to increase the long-term potential of the acquired assets. Therefore, acquirers, who transfer resources and allow the local firm to create own capabilities, were more successful in creating major assets in long-term. Based on the acquisitions of state-owned firms in East Germany and Hungary it is recommended that managers do not favour their own firm and thus protect the local resources through adaption (Meyer & Lieb-Dóczy, 2003).

4.3.4 Stakeholders

The following main category of "Stakeholders" completes the thematical review about the 75 case studies. The papers focus on stakeholder groups, who are related to turnaround attempts, but also to environmental and social issues.

The first study examines the stakeholder influence during turnaround attempts of organizations in crisis situations. By investigating a corporation in the Finnish pulp and paper industry Pajunen (2006) illustrates how firms can identify the most relevant stakeholders in order to allow the optimal management. The stakeholder influence depends on their power and network position and thus the most influential stakeholders have to be identified. However, it is essential that a firm realizes that the impact of the different groups can change during turnaround stages. According to the study the survival of a threatened company depends on the following six factors between stakeholders and the management: continuing support of governing stakeholders, frequent and open communication, personal relationship, unlocked brokerage position, consensus on long-term goals, and the stakeholders' association of management with good firm performance. Overall, it is advisable for managers to communicate and collaborate with all stakeholder groups not only during crisis, as the relative influence of each individual group might change over time.

Another group of stakeholders with whom a firm has to deal with are governmental officials. The following study focuses on the American steel industry and investigated political strategies such as governmental lobbying in the context of trade protection. Companies, which had high market shares, were throughout politically active on different levels due to the exit costs and fix assets. Firms that had the potential to profit the most of those activities were among the most active ones. Furthermore, the study illustrated, that the firms' political actions depended on the national economy's strength. Lobbying activities increased when import pressures were particularly high. This indicates that that the firms lobbied politicians in order o promote the industry when external economic pressure increased. The paper concludes that firms will continue to consider political involvement as options due to the globalization in order to protect own interests in the domestic market (Schuler, 1996).

Schaefer (2007) illustrates in her paper what factors motivate firms in the UK water and sewerage industry to implement measurements regarding their environmental performance. This can be internal initiated or due to external stakeholder groups. In order to guarantee environmental sustainability firms adopt the environmental management systems (EMS), which have the potential to enhance the environmental and corporate performance. This adoption could be driven by either internal or external forces. However, environmental and economic performance issues are also essential. In the beginning the firms did not start the EMSs to improve their performance by internal forces, but rather due to the external pressures like the increasing public scrutiny and hostility. Later the managers recognized the commercial benefit of EMSs and thus the cases show that the institutional pressures were the drivers for the adoption rather than the performance issues.

The article of Boiral (2007) deals with the same topic. The ISO 14001 standard is a reference model in the EMS, which particularly industrial firms adopt. It fosters the internal management by developing preventive approaches in daily activities and also the external recognition, as it communicates a green image to the stakeholders. Examining Canadian firms it was showed that the firms implemented the standards only for image-promoting effects and hence the environmental and performance effects and improvements were restricted, which leads to a gap in managerial rhetoric and practice. This promoted the emergence of a parallel structure within the examined companies that conforms to the required standards. This structure was used as a showcase, as the organizational and environmental requirements are obviously not compatible in most cases. Overall, the study notes that the number of firms, which receive the certificate increases, but the improvements on practices continues to be unsure.

The category "Stakeholders" completed not only the external-macro perspective, but is also the last category of the whole review. This chapter covered a wide range of different categories and provided an informative overview about what has been investigated during the period of 1995 to 2009. Each study was introduced regarding its main finding and contribution individually. In the following section an analytical analysis will be carried out by which representative studies of this sample will be investigated regarding how the researchers addressed Rosenzweig's delusions. In this context four to the case study method related delusions are chosen, which illustrate for example how the studies warranted qualitative aspects of the data material.

5 ANALYTICAL EXAMINIATION REGARDING ROSENZWEIG'S DELUSIONS

In this chapter representative articles from the sample of 75 case studies will exemplarily illustrate whether the case studies are affected by some of Rosenzweig's delusions. Hereby, the focus of this analytical examination lies on four delusions, as those are particular significant for the case study method. The intent of this analysis is to investigate what kind of data sources were used by the researchers and consequently whether the case studies were affected by pseudoscientific practices. The four selected delusions are especially related to the case study method and address issues and challenges, which might lead to wrong inferences, when not corrected and governed properly by a researcher (Rosenzweig, 2007). Thus, by examining representative articles the four delusions will be addressed to which case studies are particularly vulnerable.

5.1 Delusion 1 & 5: The Halo Effect & the Delusion of Rigorous Research

Delusion one, which embodies the core delusion of Rosenzweig's delusions, deals with the Halo Effect. Researchers should in this context use tangible and objective data in order to avoid making simply inferences about attributions, which are not measurable, based on obvious aspects. Consequently, Rosenzweig recommends not to integrate data, which are affected by retrospective interpretations, as they are often driven by a firm's performance. Therefore, the quality of the used data is essential for a study, which is also addressed by the delusion of rigorous research. Rosenzweig (2007: 100-101) highlights that the quality of the used data material has to be high and should not be influenced by any Halo Effects. Moreover, a researcher can refer to a disproportionate large sample regarding the quality, but if the quality cannot be ensured then the study cannot be regarded as a rigorous research. Due to the close interconnection of these two delusions in terms of qualitative aspects they will be analysed in the following jointly.

The sample of 75 case studies provided considerable insights regarding the used sources and how the researchers compensated a source's weakness in

terms of the Halo Effect. As case studies aim to gain deep insights into an organization or a phenomenon, they strive to collect particularly primary data. According to the sample interviews seem to offer a widespread opportunity to gather first-hand data from for example managers.

Furthermore, many case studies build up on various primary and secondary data sources and thus do not rely only on one source. Following this approach the researcher reduces the influence of a single source, which might be affected by the Halo Effect, as the information gathered from it might be relativized through the others and as a result the quality of the data is increased.

An example for this is the study of Rowlinson (1995), who illustrates how the culture of an organization changed over time. In order to evaluate the cultural changes the study relies mainly on contemporaneous documentary data such as board minutes and retrospective interviews. Rosenzweig (2007: 68-72) exemplifies that in order to examine culture, researchers should avoid referring to self-reporting data, which tend to contain Halo Effects, as the interviewed manager reports his perception with a high connection towards performance. Therefore, it is recommended to observe the actions, policies, or behaviours, which are not influenced by perceptions of performance. The study uses interviews and board minutes, which tend to contain Halo Effects. However, the explanations and illustrations of the cultural change are also linked to the observation of actions and behaviours, which consequently enhance the quality.

Pitcher and Smith (2001) follow the same approach when examining how a TMT's composition affects performance. Hereby, they build up on a triangulated multimethod approach by which large-sample and case study data are combined. The study uses archival, observational, and interview data, which are mainly objective, in order to gather data such as average tenure or heterogeneity. Once more, the use of interviews might hold the risk of being influenced by Halo Effects, however, through the multiple use of various data sources the effect seems to be reduced.

In the same line is the study of Robbie and Wright (1995), which identifies effects initiated by changes in the management and ownership structure of a firm, connects also qualitative and quantitative methods. They investigate five cases in great detail, which arose from a larger survey. Here again the data of the cases is gained mainly through interviews.

The article of Siggelkow (2001) studies how tight fit among a firm's activities affects its ability to response to changes. This case study about the fashion company Liz Claiborne refers to various different sources, but compared to other studies relies also on journal articles. Rosenzweig regards those secondary data as highly affected by Halo Effects, as he claims that the authors of such papers tend to look at the firm's overall performance when making attributions about less observable and measurable phenomena. Therefore, by integrating other archival reports Siggelkow compensates and reduces the potential Halo Effects originating from the interviews and journal articles.

In total the sample of 75 case studies showed that the majority of the researchers follows a triangulated multimethod approach by which many different types of sources are used. This approach increases the reliability and validity of a

study and its results, as it also reduces the potential containment of Halo Effects. It is obvious that particularly the case study method seems to be vulnerable to Halo Effects simply due to the fact that significant insights can be gained through interviews with involved parties. Thus, it can be said that case studies tend to be influenced by the Halo Effect to a certain level, but through the use of triangulated sources the influence is often optimized so that a study is able to provide important insights on a rigorous basis.

5.2 Delusion 2: The Delusion of Correlation and Causality

The second delusion of correlation and causality implies generally that correlation is causation. Researchers should integrate independent variables when measuring the correlation between variables, which are not directly related to the dependent variable. Also by using longitudinal case study designs a study should focus on the causality rather than on the correlation.

Regarding the sample of the case studies it is observable that the studies can be divided into two groups. Whereas one group follows a rather descriptive approach and only intends to discover a clear causality between different events, the other category differs in that way, as it integrates numerical variables. Hereby, the correlation between independent and dependent factors is the central basis in terms of the inferences about a phenomenon. Thus, the causality explanation is build up on the correlation analysis. This observation about the approaches of the investigated case studies corresponds thus only partly to Rosenzweig's opinion (2007: 72-75, 77), which regards correlation between variables as unimportant compared to a clear causality.

Due to the descriptive approach, which does not integrate numerical data, correlation between variables was not an issue regarding the study of Rowlinson (1995). The different explanations about the change relate to a certain degree to each other, as all affect and strengthen each other. Moreover, the paper intended to explain how and why the culture changed and what profound developments supported this direction. Therefore, the causality of events was centred to the study. Different events over the time were recorded and associated with the change of the organizational culture, which could be seen as a longitudinal design.
Another descriptive causal study of Siggelkow (2001) provided many comprehensive explanations particularly regarding the changes in production and distribution of Liz Claiborne in order to illustrate the examined phenomenon. The longitudinal research shows the same signs as Rowlinson's study, however, the offered financial data have only a supportive role. The numbers do not lead the argumentation of causality, but are substantiating.
The study of Pajunen (2006) examined the stakeholder influence in an existence-threatening crisis of Kymi Corporation. The case study follows also a longitudinal design in order to describe the changes in stakeholder influence over time. Referring to archival data the descriptive study is particularly able to illustrate the structural relations and the causal mechanisms.

Whereas the three mentioned studies did not integrate correlation aspects, the second group of studies build their causality argumentation up on a correlation analysis. The research of Pitcher and Smith (2001) used variables in order to measure performance effects. As required by Rosenzweig (2007) the two researchers measured the performance developments only indirectly by using numbers regarding the assets and the ratio of market-to-book value.

Schuler (1996) investigated the lobbying activities in the American steel industry by analysing 17 carbon steel firms. Hereby, the study carried out a multiple regression model by which several market, strategic, and organizational variables were used in order to measure the activities. Schuler uses a correlation matrix, which contains eight different variables, in order to make inferences about the sample and the political firm activities and hence the study's results depend on the correlation analysis.

Even if Rosenzweig (2007) favours causal longitudinal case study designs it can be said that the studies, which conducted a correlation analysis integrated several independent variables. Of course correlation testing studies are also necessary in order to measure rather numerical phenomena, however, as Rosenzweig (2007) addresses it is important not to equate correlation with causality and thus the appropriate procedure is required. The sample illustrated that descriptive studies investigated more often a single organization whereby multiple aspects were examined and descried. Contrary, the category of correlation testing case studies considered often more cases and the results emerged consequently when a phenomenon was shared across many cases.

5.3 Delusion 4: The Delusion of Connecting the Winning Dots

Rosenzweig (2007: 92-93, 97) identified this delusion when discovering that researchers often investigate only successful companies. However, Rosenzweig views it as essential to include also less successful cases in order to identify the real factors of a phenomenon. Thus, this recommendation applies to case studies and means that researchers should not select the cases based on a dependent variable. This affects particularly case studies, which do not have only a single design.

The reported sample of 75 case studies offers insights in terms of how the researchers explained the selection of the cases. Some of the descriptive single case studies such as the research of Rowlinson (1995) about Cadbury did not state why a particular organization was investigated and selected. However, it seems to be that in the case of this study about Cadbury the interest lies primary in the company and its development and not in studying a certain phenomenon. Thus, Rowlinson's intention was maybe primarily to study Cadbury, whereas other researchers select the organization after determining what phenomenon will be investigated.

This latter group consists of the majority of single case studies regarding the sample. Hereby, the researchers exemplified mostly in the beginning of a paper why a certain bounded system was selected. The most common and obvious

explanation was that a particular organization was particular suitable for a research as the phenomenon to be examined had been taken place in this firm. Thus, the organization provided the necessary basis in order to reach the research objective. This explanation regarding the selection was stated by Pajunen (2006), Burgelman (2002), but also by Siggelkow (2002), who examined the Vanguard Group. Moreover, all three researchers mentioned the importance that data material was accessible and available over a longer period of time. This additional selection criterion warrants that a longitudinal study could be carried out, which allowed comparisons between different stages o a firm's life cycle. Laurila (1997) clarifies for example that Tampella was chosen, as the firm had carried out similar change projects already and hence the available data allow two compare the different events.

Case studies examining more than one case provided similar explanations. However, often the cases originated from another previous carried out research or survey. Robbie and Wright (1995) selected the five cases from a broader survey. The selection was made on the basis of a previous questionnaire and the cases were chosen due to their ability to represent the whole population in the best possible way. The study of Meyer and Lieb-Dóczy (2003) selected the 18 in-depth case studies in a similar way, as the researchers conducted a study by taking the cases from a previous research of Lieb-Dóczy. However, again cases were selected that represent the whole population in an appropriate possibility.
Other studies did not refer to previous researches and their data. Schuler (1996) for example investigated the U.S. carbon steel industry over a period of time in order to observe lobbying activities. The choice fell on this industry as the firms in this sector were more active in lobbying than other industries and thus this context enabled especially the examination of this phenomenon. After the industry was chosen the firms were selected regarding the optimal representativity and thus 17 characteristic organizations were examined.

Overall, the great majority of the case studies explained why certain organizations were part of a research. It was observable that studies with a broader focus involving more than one case illustrated the selection procedure in more detail compared to single case studies. They explained the search strategy in terms of databases (Pitcher & Smith, 2001) or exemplified the various steps that pawed the way to the final sample (Grant, 2003).

6 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The motivation to examine the sample of the 120 studies has been among other things to identify the emphases and to report the main contributions of the 75 real case studies during the period from 1995 to 2009. Moreover, due to the fact that case studies can also tend to contain pseudoscientific explanations, representative articles were reviewed regarding the relevant four delusions.

In order to carry out the analyses the paper provided in the beginning a comprehensive introduction about the case study method from a theoretical perspective. In this context the current opinion, challenges, and available designs were reflected in great detail, which created a knowledgeable foundation, as several renowned researchers' concepts and opinions were integrated.

At first the paper offered information about the evolution of the case study method and addressed different definitions by for example Yin (2014) and Stake (1995). In the course of this, the section illustrated what case studies are good for. In general the method is valuable, as it creates the opportunity to gain novel insights, to test an existing theory, or to create novel theoretical concepts. This is particularly possible as by examining a bounded system over a period of time a researcher is able to collect detailed data from multiple sources and is thus capable of illustrating the theoretical frameworks based on a practical case or example (Creswell, 2007: 73; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 73-75; Gibbert *et al.*, 2008).

Afterwards the main concerns and misunderstandings about the method were exemplified. By referring among others especially to Flyvbjerg (2006) the issues with respect to a study's rigorousness, bias towards confirmation, generalizability, and the tendency to observe successful cases were reported. Hereafter the various purposes, approaches, and designs of case studies were presented. Based on those classifications studies can differ in the degree of interest in an individual case, because they either intend to explain, to explore, or to generalize (Stake, 1995). Other developments, which increased the popularity of the method, relate to the approaches that explain how to carry out a study in order to achieve an aimed purpose (Bitektine, 2008; Eisenhardt, 1989; Gerring, 2007). Finally, others refer to various designs such as single or multiple (Yin, 2014), retrospective or prospective (Bitektine, 2008), and longitudinal or diachronic perspectives (Yin, 2014). Therefore, researchers have several options to design an appropriate case study for their investigation. However, it is essen-

tial to integrate tactics and tests in order to increase a study's rigor and robustness. Gibbert *et al.* (2008) deals in this context with the different tests of the construct, internal, and external validity and reliability. Those concepts are closely related to the generalizability whereby inferences are linked from a sample to the whole population, which has been investigated in detail by Stake (1995). Hereby, it could be recognized that most studies focus on the external validity, which is wedded to generalization. This tendency runs the risk that a study loses sight of the case itself and of the potentially valuable in-depth insights.

Overall, the theoretical chapter demonstrated various developments in terms of the case study method, which have promoted this scientific approach. Thus, researchers can build up their study on the basis of diverse legitimized existing concepts.

After providing the theoretical background of the method the systematic review was carried out. The objective was to create a detailed knowledge-base regarding 75 of the 120 studies from five selected management journals, which were published between 1995 and 2009. The approach of a systematic review was chosen, as it allows the comprehensive and transparent presentation of the identified case studies. When conducting a systematic review it is essential to describe extensively the search strategy and the process of the data collection in order allow the replicability of a study. By applying descriptive and thematic analyses the review of this thesis was able to report general information about the studies, but also the individual main contributions. The sample size of the descriptive and thematic analyses differed due to the fact that 45 case studies could not be seen as actual real case studies. As the focus of this paper lies on real case studies the thematic analysis reported only the contributions of the 75 identified articles.

The descriptive analysis discovered a disproportionate distribution of the 120 articles across the five journals whereby the majority was published between 2001 and 2003. Whereas the *JMS* published in total 53 articles within the period of time, the *ASQ* published only four studies. However, as the journals were selected in the beginning of the study without knowing the actual number of potential studies, the proportion of articles from each journal was not influenceable.

Almost one third of the articles were dealing with data from at least two industries. It is worth mentioning, that even if the articles were not actively selected, all journals were covering equally a broad range of different industries and sectors, whereby the sectors of financial services and automotives were of particular interest. This focus might be due to the fact that those sectors are able to illustrate many different theoretical perspectives of strategic management on concepts such as networks, internationalization, leadership, and technological change clearly.

With regard to the examined countries an evidently domination of Western industrialized countries within the sample could be noticed. Moreover, the English-speaking countries respectively economies and industries were investigated preponderantly, which might be due to the fact that English is the leading language in the field, but also in the journals. However, this focus on advanced,

English-speaking countries of the examined sample neglects other valuable insights in terms of other countries. Economies in Asia, Africa, East Europe, or South America could lead to novel insights and challenge existing theories, which are aligned to Western countries. On the other hand, the majority of leading researchers and universities are located in English-speaking countries where the journals also originate and therefore the orientation of the studies should not come as a surprise.

By assigning and categorizing each article to a group based on the dominant focus of a study, it was possible to identify the emphasis regarding the examined topics during the period of the whole sample. Therefore, it was possible to illustrate what topics have been studied in the five journals. By using a matrix with the axes of internal-external and micro-macro, the categories were pictured (Figure 5). Overall, 13 categories were created. As the articles originate from strategic management journals it is not surprising that they dealt mainly with internal firm issues on the micro and macro level. The categories regarding "Capabilities", "Organizational Form & Fit", "Strategy", "Leadership", and "Alliances and Networks" were according to the analysis the primary focus. One could have expected that the disproportionate distribution of the articles across the journals might lead to a displacement of the thematic emphasis regarding the sample, as each journal might focus on different aspects of strategic management. However, especially the five dominant categories were addressed by most of the journals relatively equally. As a result of that a shared interest towards those themes could be located.

In total the descriptive analysis illustrated the distribution of the articles over the years and across the journals. Moreover, it was reported which industries, countries, and categories were examined in the context of the sample. Whereas a clear focus on certain countries could be reported, it could not be observed in terms of the investigated topics, as those were covered equally across the journals.

In order to be able to report the main contributions and findings of the 75 actual case studies, a thematic analysis was carried out by which each category's articles were introduced briefly. Hereby, the main contribution and focus of each study was extracted, which provides an overview about what the sample contributed during the period. Due to the large sample it is difficult to draw conclusions based on this analysis. However, it can be stated that the sample covers a broad range of topics and perspectives regarding each of the 13 categories.

Additionally, statements regarding a study's generalizability were collected. In the theoretical section the different types of generalizations were introduced by referring among others to Stake (1995). In the analytical part of the paper the main views of the researchers were summarized in order to report how those regard their study in terms of the generalization. Whereas the theoretical section created the expectation that the studies would focus to a high level towards generalizability, the actual analysis could not confirm this expectation completely. Most of the papers were viewed by the authors as limited or even not generalizable, whereas only a small minority considered the findings as generalizable. However, even those studies restricted this statement to a certain degree. But overall, a large proportion did not even address this issue and if so, a

case was mostly regarded as not or only limited generalizable. Thus, the statement that case studies focus often more on the generalizability than on other issues could not be observed.

In the final chapter of this thesis representative articles from the 75 studies were examined whether they contain four to the case study method closely related delusions of Rosenzweig (2007). It was noticeable that it depends highly on the design and focus of a case study whether it is affected by the delusions. Descriptive studies were using primary data such as interviews, which include Halo Effects. Studies that build up on several data sources had rather issues in order to warrant the quality of the data. Often those papers referred to sources from institutions and thus it is not assessable whether those contain Halo Effects. In total the examined articles often did not address the delusions consciously, but avoided them due to a rigorous scientific procedure. However, some studies ran the risk to be affected by some delusions to a certain degree, but this was simply due to their focus. Overall, the delusions related to the case study approach often rely on data sources such as interviews or journal articles, which tend to include the Halo Effect. However, the quality regarding the overall data is warranted by using the triangulation approach, but moreover these sources are essential for the method in order to gain deep insights, as no other method is comparably able to do so.

This thesis analyzed 120 case studies in order to provide an overview about what has been emphasized in the five journals between 1995 and 2009. Furthermore, articles were examined regarding the delusions. It is obvious that this paper faces certain limitations, which should be mentioned, as those provide the basis for future researches.
The first limitation refers to the influence of subjectivity when analysing and categorizing the articles. In context of the categorization process of the studies by which each article was assigned to one of the 13 categories, one could discuss the individual categorization. Many articles dealt with various concepts and consequently could be part of another category. Therefore, another researcher might come to other results regarding the emphasis of the field. However, a third person was consulted in order to increase the validity and rigor of the categorization process. As a result the allocation of the cases might be still controversial, but in context of this paper the process was carried out as reliably as possible and hence the results can be presented confidently. Based on this limitation future studies could identify clear criteria in order to classify or evaluate the articles. By counting certain words or terms within for example the abstract of a study, the focus and category could be identified and thus it would not be subject to subjectivity. Hereby, the content analysis might be an appropriate method in order to increase the reliability. Moreover, this procedure could be strengthened by consulting third persons in order to discuss potential issues.
Another limitation of the study might be the focus on a relatively short period of time. 120 case studies were identified between 1995 and 2009 to identify potential shifts in topics. In order to observe shifts regarding trends it might be more reasonable to investigate in future a longer period of time. By doing so, more obvious shifts could be identified by comparing studies published at the beginning of the period with articles from the end.

Also when selecting the journals in the beginning for this study, one could have paid more attention towards the published number of articles on a journal-level. This would have avoided the discrepancy between the journals regarding the number of published articles. As a result the *ASQ* or another magazine might have influenced the results to a higher degree than it was the case.

The last restriction refers to the non-random selection of the journals. The findings based on the articles cannot be generalized to all journals in the field of strategic management. The consideration of a larger amount of journals might lead to different assumptions. However, the five examined business journals are renowned in the field and thus might at least provide tendencies regarding the emphases and trends.

Beyond the limitations of this study, future research could potentially be more influenced by the editors of the journals. The management journals could bolster and publish more studies that examine economies and companies from other countries. Hereby, the growing economies in Asia, South America, and Africa could add significant value and insights to the field. Furthermore, the editors might encourage the researchers to state more clearly methodological procedures. More information about the investigated company or statements towards the generalizability might be promising when carrying out future systematic reviews and could provide additional information.

Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) stated, that case studies are interesting and increasingly popular. Based on this assumption this thesis might provide a valuable basis in order to conduct future case studies, as many theoretical aspects and practical challenges were addressed.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A:

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