**Women in Research Methods**

Interview with Dr. Teresa Scandura

Professor and Warren C. Johnson Endowed Chair

Herbert Business School

University of Miami:

(interviewed by Jayci Robison, Ph.D. student at Oklahoma State University on 6/8/21)

*1. What initiated your interest in quantitative research methods and thorough methodology?*

“My PhD program emphasized research methods and statistics. In fact, our program required us to have research methods as one of their support areas. So, I started working with my advisor, George Graen, my first year of the PhD program on field experimental data he had collected. So, my first project was a repeated measures design. It was before and after the implementation of a leadership training program, and so that sparked my interest. It wasn’t optional in my program… research methods was part of the program and it was emphasized…. It was part of the socialization.”

*2. Sometimes it’s difficult to explain to others what goes on in academia. How important is methodology when translating our findings to those outside of the field?*

“I think research methods are the backbone of everything we do in science. Without rigorous methods, we can’t draw clear conclusions from our work. Research methods have been undergoing increasing scrutiny in recent years. There’s been a lot of discussion about articles being retracted for methodological reasons. And so, steps are being taken by journals to address this. One thing some journals are doing is assigning a research methods reviewer specifically to examine the methods. Other journals are asking reviewers to certify their level of expertise with the methods in the papers that they’re reviewing. So, I think it’s critical to academia as a whole. Without rigorous methods…. we can’t draw any meaningful conclusions.”

*3. I noticed you’ve given several talks regarding how to publish in research journals, ORM specifically, and what specifically authors and editors are looking for throughout submissions. What are the main takeaways you hope listeners will take note of?*

“I really realized this when I started writing textbooks… the ability to read research and then translate it for students and practicing managers is very important. There’s a classic article by Barry Stall, “Repairs on the Road to Relevance and Rigor: Some Unexplored Issues in Publishing Organizational Research.” It’s in a book, edited by Cummings and Frost Publishing in the organizational sciences. This book really talks about the tension between rigorous research methods and the relevance for practice or applied research. This was picked up on by Tushman and O’Reilly and is now another classic Academy of Management Journal Article. They talk about three quadrants. When we think about rigor and relevance and the tensions between them, relevance is the consideration of use; how can we apply our work to the workplace. Which is really why we’re here if you think about it. And then rigor is the quest for fundamental understanding. So, on the one hand, we can have highly rigorous research, but it’s not very relevant. And we don’t want to be doing that at all. The worst quadrant is basic disciplinary research. We have very strong methods, but they’re not very relevant. For example, sometimes laboratory experiments are criticized for this because they don’t have generalizability to the real world or field settings, but they’re very strong on rigor. And then we have Edison’s Quadrant, which is basically consulting research. It’s not very rigorous, but it’s really focused on solving problems for organizations. And when where we want to be in business and professional schools is Pasteur’s Quadrant. When we’re both highly rigorous and relevant at the same time, and that’s not easy to do. I think that (framework) is a way of thinking about the importance of translating our work for the audiences that we teach to.”

*4. There’s also a clear dedication toward mentoring and leadership literature. How would you encourage early scholars who are interested in methodological issues? What specific opportunities, and with whom, might you encourage them to seek out?*

“You know, one of the things that authors are looking for, regardless of whether it’s a research methods journal or any journal, authors are looking for developmental feedback. They’re looking for feedback that will make the research better regardless of the publication outcome. And we know from the justice research, that people are willing to accept the outcome if they’re satisfied with the process. And so, I think the process is really important. Reviewers should be constructive. Reviewers should also be kind in this process, and then people are most likely to accept the outcome. Maybe their article won’t be published in that journal, but they’ve learned some things where they can improve the paper or improve the line of research in general. I think editors are looking for innovation in research methods. It’s not enough just to have applications. It needs to be a value-added contribution beyond what other people have done. Some of the best ORM articles have guidelines or checklists with best practices. The best articles show readers how to apply a new methodology. And those are the articles that get cited a lot.”

*5: How would you encourage scholars who find methodology to be intimidating and/or overwhelming?* ***(piggybacks off of the previous question)***

“Start with the Academy of Management Research Methods Division. RMD should be everyone’s second division. Everybody does research methods, whether it’s quantitative or qualitative… it should be everyone’s second division. Attend the pre-conference workshops. The PDWs are a really good way to gain research method’s knowledge and are also a really good way to network and meet people who are experts in the field. Southern Management Association offers research methods workshops, and it is a smaller organization. It’s more intimate. You get more time, oftentimes at SMA. Experts teach CARMA seminars, and questions can be posted on RM net. I think it’s really important, good networking advice, that people in research methods need to know who you are. You need to know what you’re interested in. What you’re doing. So, you need to seek out new research methods, mentors who are experts in the field. I found this division to be very welcoming and helpful. I’ve even invited (members) as co-authors on papers. They end up helping so much, we make them coauthor on a paper. So, I think the research methods people, they’re there to help. They give of their time, and they’re there to mentor, and they really get this stuff. I think more than almost any other division I can think of.

By attending PDWs, CARMA events, SMA, etc., you gain the knowledge. The next step is you need to apply it. You need to apply it to your own data. So, you need to find a mentor or mentors, whether they’re at your organization or outside of your organization. Someone you meet at Academy, your group mentor… someone who can guide you in applying techniques to your own data. There’s no substitute for being an open mentee for research methods. It’s an apprenticeship model. It’s how I learned it. It’s how everybody learned it. It’s how everyone learns research methods. You run the data, you take it to your mentor, you discuss it, you ask what did I do right? What did I do wrong? You go back, and you fix it, and you run it again and again. So, it’s that developmental process of just… I advise you to call it, getting your hands dirty. Which is basically just jumping in there with your own data. We can gain only so much, even from the best workshops, the best lectures, the best classes that we take. No, we really have to get in there and do it and be willing to make mistakes. Everybody makes mistakes, and it’s a lifelong process. When I went to school, structural equation modeling, wasn’t being taught. It was in its early infancy. How did I learn it? I saw Larry Williams, you know at a PDW presenting on SEM models. This is how I learned HLM from Mark Gavin. So, the list could go on and on, but a lot of these techniques weren’t in existence when I went to school. And by the way, this is going to happen to everyone. It’s going to happen to you. It’s going to happen to everyone. I don’t know what the next thing’s going to be. The thing that isn’t being covered in your doctoral program, or as a junior faculty member you don’t already know. But I will tell you this. Whatever it is, the Research Methods Division and CARMA will be offering workshops on it. It will be available, and you will just have to keep learning. You’ll have to keep learning these new techniques, not only for your own research, but also so that we can be competent reviewers.”

*6. Throughout your career you’ve received substantial accolades recognizing your work and your influence, particularly in regard to research methods, an area in which female representation was, and continues to be, lacking. In 2022, Lisa Lambert and Tina Köhler will take over as co-editors of ORM, representing the first time the journal has been led by female scholars. Can you briefly speak on the importance of increased representation throughout the area of research methods? How might we continue to encourage this representation?*

“I’ve been involved with the research summit, I had to think about this, but I’ve been involved with the Research Methods Division since the early 1990s. And there weren’t a lot of women – and underrepresented minorities, also, I will say – at this time. But over the years, there’s been an increase in women involved in the division, women leading the division. I think with Lisa and Tina heading ORM, it’s a signal for the future. I think it will give women who are junior in the field… I think we are role models, I hope, for other people to see that you can do this. I think breaking that glass ceiling with ORM, I think is a really important signal for women to be more comfortable with research methods and in the division. So, again, it’s important to get involved in RMD as a student, as a junior faculty member… it’s just really important to get involved and volunteer for things. They always need help. Be a student representative, run for the governor’s board of directors of RMD, be a representative. I think this is a great time. It’s a great time to get involved in our research methods. I think the division, you know, is evolving. The composition, that I see, of division membership is changing. And I think it’s solid. It’s really positive.”