

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING Departmental Research Seminar



Doing interesting research.
The stupidity based theory of
organizations as an example
By

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Date : 8 Feb 2019 (FRI)
Time : 10:30 am – 12:00 nn
Venue : M802

Abstract

Contemporary research in management, and many other fields, are frequently seen as rather boring and irrelevant. Much is written and published but a lot of it is, according to many critics, fairly predictable and unchallenging. Find and fill a gap in the literature is a common recipe. Interesting research, according to Murray Davis and others who have studied what people find interesting, don't follow this recipe. Instead they identify and challenge the common, implicit, taken-for-granted assumptions of their audience. The formula for doing interesting research, that also tend to be influential (as most people take seriously what they find interesting), is thus as follows: a) identify and articulate implicit assumption in an area, b) challenge these and suggest well-informed counter-assumptions.

The presenter illustrates this with his and André Spicer's theory of functional stupidity in organizations.

Participants in the seminar may want to read:

Alvesson, M. & Sandberg, J. 2011. Generating research questions through problematization. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(2): 247-271.

Alvesson, M. & Spicer, A. 2012. A stupidity based theory of the organization. *Journal of Management Studies*, 49(7): 1194-1220.

Prof. Mats Alvesson works at Lund University, Sweden and University of Queensland, Australia. He has published extensively in journals but prefer to publish (interesting) books, including *Reflexive Leadership. Organizing in an Imperfect World*. London: Sage (with M Blom & S Sveningsson) 2017, *Managerial Lives. Leadership and Identity*. Cambridge University Press 2016, (with S Sveningsson), *The Stupidity Paradox. The Power and Pitfalls of Functional Stupidity at Work*. London: Profile 2016 (w A Spicer) and *Return to Meaning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017 (w Y Gabriel & R Paulsen).

All interested are welcome.



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