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Editorial Introduction

Introduction to Emerging Conceptual Scholarship Section

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During the last several years, the field of organizational scholarship appears to have witnessed two, somewhat interrelated, developments of note: (a) the growth of methodological/epistemological inquiry, including intense introspection about the very process of research and knowledge production and (b) increasing focus on critical analyses of management theory, research, and practice. The article by Nancy Landrum and David Boje operates on an intellectual terrain marked by both these developments.

In "Using an Ethnostatistical Analysis to Interpret Data: The Nike Case," Landrum and Boje offer an ethnostatistical critique of a 1997 quantitative study (conducted at Dartmouth College's Amos Tuck School of Business) that concluded that Nike Inc. paid adequate wages to workers in its factories in Vietnam and Indonesia. The study was released by Nike to counter widespread criticisms of its wage and labor practices in foreign countries. Landrum and Boje critically analyze the Tuck study with a view to unearthing the ways in which statistics for the study were constructed, the assumptions and appropriateness of statistical techniques used, and the language and rhetoric employed in the study for persuading the reader. In this process, the article also demonstrates how the statistics for the study may need to be suitably reconstructed, with the result that the conclusions reported in the Tuck study are rendered highly questionable.

Situated at the intersection of organizational research methodology, critical management scholarship, and globalization, this is a thoughtful article with useful lessons for scholars as well as practitioners. While, on the one hand, the paper offers valuable insights to management researchers for overcoming the false dichotomy of qualitative vs quantitative research and guarding against the pitfalls of mindless number-crunching, simultaneously it also alerts managers to some of the complexities of managing ethically in an era of intensifying globalization.