A Methodological Contribution for Generation of Planning & Management Methods[1]

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In the knowledge of management, it is not simple to find a discussion of how to systematize an academic research to establish planning and management methods (frameworks). How to plan an exploratory, qualitative and interdisciplinary research, for generation of planning and management methods is the focus of this work. The *Grounded Theory,* Case Study and Desk Research are methods that could be used by most studies that produce sequences of planning and managerial steps. As literature review, different planning and management methods recently approved in journals and the common points for the elaboration of them are shown. The methodological contribution of this article, besides the discussion of how to structure a scientific research for generation of planning and management methods, is the process for publication (and recognition) of this research line.

Key words: managerial methods, planning, sequence of steps, frameworks.

1 - Research Problem and Motivation

When a researcher chooses an issue to study for a dissertation, thesis, article or other purposes, several things come to mind. It is a tough time, decision time. The major motivations, decisions related to the academic and personal development, research style and way of doing things, what to study and how to study, the research issue, the empirical applicability, among others. This is a challenge that takes time and thoughts of students and researchers and these decisions are crucial for the academic life and even are related to his performance in focusing and finishing his research on adequate time.

Most papers presented at conferences in management area contain an exploratory study as an initial step of a further complete descriptive or causal research, if needed. Some interdisciplinary studies, which seek to increase the understanding spectrum of a phenomenon, may reach such a high level of complexity which hinders its diffusion to society. Each theory adds a different perspective of analysis to the point of involving so many variables in a model that makes it not practical, or only a theoretical exercise ‘ceteris paribus’ of questionable applicability.

Sometimes there is a feeling, when seeing proceedings of conferences and even some academic journals, and this is not a new phenomenon, that researchers are losing touch with the real world. They are closing themselves inside academia and running models without a sense of why are you doing that study? Who will be benefitted? Papers are built just to exercise and to show knowledge of a sophisticated quantitative method, and all the discussion goes over the method and how it was applied. Quality of data is forgiven, and all the other conditions either. And this situation where the results came only works when all variables are controlled, in an artificial world.

Very little discussion is done in what these results show as messages to companies and to society, mostly, the sponsors of Universities and its researchers. Operationalization of the generated

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knowledge and its return to the organizations become more complicated too, often not attending the social demands. An "exclusive club" is created where all these papers are sent to some journals, revised by its counterparts of the same club, and then published. Publish or perish… This is not the only important point. What is the relevance? Who outside this small club will read? What will be the use of this research?

This paper is a kind of an academic life report telling that it is also possible to do research of relevance, to publish and to use the results of this research in companies. To be cited, to have the propositions used by academics and public/private sector.

Or even the opposite. Based on a problem coming from the real world, produce theory and contribute with a method that will help the same problem to be solved on another environment. The major objective here is to show how to build an exploratory and qualitative research in the area of management, especially when wants to create a planning and management method (sequence of steps), as well as to show studies which presented these methods and were published at literature. Based on studies done by authors in the last 10 years, we present methods in planning and management, marketing, distribution channels, contracts and relationships, joint ventures, agribusiness systems, value chains, corporate sustainability, collective actions which were approved and recognized in national and international conferences and journals.

It is assumed that a management method is a series of managerial processes to achieve an organizational goal (Srivastava et. al. 1999). An organization that seeks to answer the demand of its customers, for example, needs to systematize working methods for it. Expertise to creation and implementation of working methods is a valuable competence (Grant, 2002).

Therefore, the research problem was defined as follows: How to design an exploratory and qualitative research for generation of managerial methods? Which methodological procedures should be used? Which research methods fit best?

To answer this research problem this paper is divided in five sessions. Session 2 describes the objectives and procedures done. Session 3 explores three ways to generate methods for theory: grounded theory, case studies and desk research. Session 4 brings the major methods generated by the authors in 10 years of research using this style, the major contributions, and where was published. Session 5 brings the methodological contribution for researchers that were convinced and want to use this proposition as their research style.

2 - Objectives and Procedures

The main objective of this paper is to contribute to the exploratory, qualitative and interdisciplinary research in the generation of planning and management methods. This could be subdivided in two specific objectives:

- To develop a proposal for academic research structure, seeking the design of planning and managerial methods;
- To develop a proposal for publication and dissemination of this research line.

The article made here can be classified as a theoretical essay. The methodological procedures were limited to literature review about three research methods, regarded by the authors as useful to conduct this kind of exploratory research. They are known as Grounded Theory, Case Study method and Desk Research. The reader should see the difference of the research methods, which have been made here as part of methodological procedures and are shown in session 3, with the formulated planning and management methods that are shown in session 4. For didactic purposes, the different methods of management produced by the authors were also reviewed. Finally, it presents a methodological contribution for students and researchers that think this type of research and style fits more with their own style.

3 - Literature Review: Three Ways on How to Produce Methods (Frameworks)

3.1 - The Grounded Theory Perspective

The *Grounded Theory* is a qualitative research method. It appeared in the U.S. in the 60's, designed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss and released by these two authors in the book "The Discovery of Grounded Theory" in 1967, dedicated to studies in sociology. This work was later completed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Glaser (1992). This is an inductive method that aims to develop theories as the fieldwork progresses. It is a qualitative method to develop theory based on data collected and analyzed (Goulding, 2002).

The researcher should start the research with only a partial model of "local" concepts, i.e. concepts which indicate some key aspects of the structure and the processes of the situation to be studied. Therefore, the researcher should not go into the field with a finished theoretical model (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This will be a joint construction, going to field work, and coming back to desks.

To Godoi et al. (2007, p. 242), this method seeks explanations, with minimum intervention by the researcher on the action of individuals in a defined context. So the end product of the *Grounded Theory* is the proposition of a substantive theory, i.e. a theory which explains a specific situation, a theory whose scope is restricted. As the empirical data collected in the field are very important in this composition, this method is also known as theory based on data.

The assumptions of this theory are that a) the relation among researcher, reality and theory are continuous and intrinsic, with the researcher interacting with reality and formulates theory over the time and process; b) Theory evolves with the research; c) theory must explain the behavior, be useful for the advance of knowledge, possible to be applied and guide and support a research style for areas of knowledge. Information can come from several sources (interviews, observations, written materials, reports, speeches, case studies and relations).

For Glaser and Strauss (1967), the emergence of theory after the data is achieved through processes such as selective data collection, the data categorization, and theoretical saturation. The selective data collection (*theoretical sampling*) is the process of collecting data to generate theory. The emergent theory points to the next steps to be researched. Thus, the researcher is guided by the research questions initially defined and the gaps that rise in the theory that it is generating.

To Ashill and Frederikson (2003), the emergence of theoretical categories is only permitted by the empirical evidence. This contradicts the hypothetical-deductive approach, in which the theory is superimposed and thus tested by empirical data. Indeed, the focus of theory building is linked to discover more than "refinement" as in causal analysis.

Therefore, one can mention the construction of theory as a process or cycle by which representations (categories) are generated, tested and refined, until consistency and explanatory strength in their explicative content are found, thereby obtaining a theory that reflects the reality on what is observed (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Therefore, there is a concurrence between data collection and analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

The criterion to judge when to stop searching different groups related to a category is the theoretical saturation. Saturation means that no additional data can contribute to understanding the category, and consequently to substantive theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

The main differences between Glaser and Strauss are in the fact that while the first one believes that the prior theoretical knowledge is an indispensable tool to give meaning to empirical data, the second proposes an approach that disregards any theory or prior knowledge of fieldwork. In other words, they are two perspectives of the same philosophy.

Regardless this discussion, this method is positioned in the center of the continuum between objectivity and subjectivity that characterizes a scientific research, adopting a positivist paradigm incorporated to a phenomenological method. The research characteristics of this method are: objectivity, impartiality, tendency to produce qualitative data, interest for the generation of theories, meaningful and subjective data, low reliability[4], high validity[5], spreading of the sample to population, and valorization of theoretical structure (Collis and Hussey, 2005).

Ashill and Frederikson (2003) try to integrate the *Grounded Theory* with case study method, conducting in-depth interviews with marketing managers to obtain data, allowing in a cyclical process of literature review and conduction of multiple cases, the proposition for a marketing planning method. Payne and Frow (2005) used a similar approach to a method proposal in customer relationship management, as Ulaga and Eggert (2006) who proposed a method for suppliers who could get the status of special suppliers.

In essence, grounded theory is a qualitative research method that uses systematized procedures to induct and to develop theory about a phenomenon. The objectives are to develop concepts, theories about words and actions of individuals where knowledge could improve. Data are collected by several methods, like survey, experiences, case studies, being either primary or secondary sources. The analysis of these data is open and flexible, with a constant comparison, simultaneously. It incorporates the understanding and tentative of the researcher to develop explanatory theoretical thoughts representing observed processes and structures (Bianchi and Ikeda, 2008).

Bianchi and Ikeda (2008) also affirm that the use of qualitative methods in management is still in a process of consolidation. Inside this perspective, the grounded theory is a good option. Lots of theoretical analyses come being developed but empirical applications are still incipient. The researchers should do a literature review about the method and decide to go into this rich but hard process of investigation.

3.2 - The Case Method as a Facilitator in the Generation of Management Methods

Case study is one way of doing empirical social research, an investigation of a current phenomenon within its real-life context, where the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly defined and in situation where multiple evidence sources are used (Yin, 1989).

Before a deeper description of the research method, please note that there is a difference from case studies for education purpose with those for research purposes, which is discussed in this work. In the first case, it seeks to establish only a didactic framework for discussion and debate among students, not necessarily concerned to reflect with accuracy and coverage, the actual phenomena (Yin, 1989; Campomar, 1991).

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[4] The concept of reliability refers to the capacity of a research to be replicated in different contexts (Collis and Hussey, 2005, p.63).

[5] The concept of validity refers to how the discoveries of the theory represent precisely the reality, what is happening in the field (Collis and Hussey, 2005, p.64).

The core of a case study is that it tries to clarify a decision or set of decisions: the reasons for which they were taken, how they were implemented and with which result (Schramm, 1971 apud Yin, 1989). Moreover, the case study allows the systematic description of experiences among organizations, systems or business networks. Thus, it generates value because it enables the monitoring of actual flows (social, of goods, finance, risk, trading, and information) and identifies how the problems are recognized and solved.

Authors such as Yin (1989), Eisenhardt (1989) and Gummesson (1991) have been advocating for a long time for the building of theories based on the case study method. Thus, Bonoma (1985) believes that case study is particularly applicable when analytical generalizations, not statistics, are wished, which can contribute to a theoretical framework that needs consolidation and/or improvement. So, the cyclical review between theory, data and theory is very useful. Without this approach, the case study becomes just a well told story.

Woodside (2003) also claims to be necessary the triangulation among theory/data/theory in applying the case study. He not only advocates the use of multiple methods of data collection in the cases, but also a switching amongst them. Operational suggestions are given as the direct observation of the researcher within the case environment, the application of interviews which seek explanations and interpretations of "operational data" and finally the collection and analysis of written documents related to the case.

The use of multiple cases allows observation of evidence in different contexts, by the replication of the phenomenon, without necessarily considering the logic sampling, as commonly used in "surveys". Moreover, the decision about the number of cases (or replication) will depend on the degree of certainty wished on the research results (that is, similarly, a decision similar to the significance of a statistical test) (Yin, 1989). Eisenhardt (1989) suggests the study of four to ten cases as a good number for the theory building. Less than four cases, the theory may be difficult to be generated, while more than ten cases, the data volume is so big that hinders its systematization.

It is intended here to defend the flexible planning of research, especially in the case of exploratory ones, using multiple sources of evidence (case studies, literature review, in-depth interviews, focus group, survey) and a cyclical or triangular process without predetermined order, to: i) literature review, ii) initial design of a new theoretical method or model (contribution), iii) collection and analysis of empirical data, iv) comparison with literature, v) final proposition of a theoretical method or model, i.e. with management implications.

To make good use of the case study method, the definition of a good tool for data collection is essential. The management methods reviewed here are characterized by using in-depth interviews and semi-structured interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and participant observation. To follow the proposal of *Grounded Theory*, which is to make the collection of objective and subjective information viable, it is necessary to thoroughly interview the players. Moreover, in order the researcher to shape the theory as the interview progresses, it is also stimulated the semi-structured conduct. Thus, the method of case study can be summarized by Table 1.

Table 1 – Use of Case study method to generate managerial methods

Characteristics	Description
Research purpose	Exploratory
Research approach	Qualitative
Research questions	Case study strategy is more suitable to answer questions such as "how" and "why".
Units of Analysis and sub units	- Types of units: individuals, groups or organizations, business, process, one aspect or a dimension of organizational or social behavior - Holistic cases: the focus is centered in the general context of the phenomenon - Embedded Cases: the focus is shifted to sub-units, included in a broader context.
Research goal	Develop and validate a management method
Geographical unit	Choice for convenience and relevance
Studied economical area	Choice for convenience and relevance
Studied organizations	Choice for convenience and relevance
Identified strategic groups	According with the pattern of competition in the industry
Number of studied cases	Until theoretical saturation. However, it is recommended 4 to 10 cases.
Gathering of secondary data	Institutional material (websites, catalogs, reports), articles in newspapers and magazines, websites etc.
Gathering of primary data	Questionnaires, in-depth interviews, focus groups and participant observation
Supporting tool	Semi-structured research guide
Researcher's profile	- The attributes of fairness and sensitivity to understand the reality from the meaning given by individuals (respondents) to their experiences. - The interactive to guide the research and carry out a theoretical sampling. Between an interview and another, he should influence the choice of direction of the research for theoretical saturation.
Recommendations to the interviewer	- Should avoid direct questions about the detailed design of operations and other related information. - Do not publish any data, information or opinion considered confidential and strategic for organizations. - Respondents are asked to review the final report of the case, even omitting the name of the organization if desired. - It is important the researcher has accumulated knowledge about the study object. - A comfortable position should be found so that the interviewees do not inhibit before the researcher.
Respondents' profile (interviewees)	- Hold power to influence the unit of analysis - Have access to information and data about the unit of analysis - Have accumulated knowledge (experience) on the unit of analysis - Good interest to work on the research - Keep an open communication "channel" for future contacts.
Period to hold the case study	Specified period, discrete analysis

Source: Developed by authors based on Yin (1989), Lazzarini (1997), Rossi (2009), Godoi et al. (2007), Bryman (2005), Hair Jr. et al. (2005), Eisenhardt (1989), Glaser (1992) and Strauss and Corbin (1990).

3.3 – Desk Research as a Method

A third possibility of building planning and management methods is by desk research. It can be done by using the capacity of the researcher, based on previous experiences, and with strong literature review, the researcher can find proposed methods for a particular problem or objective, discuss them, see the common and missing points of each, and by comparison, creating a more sophisticated or complete method, based on theory and on the researchers contribution.

4 - Review of Planning and Management Methods Proposed in 10 Years of Research

Some concepts are inherent in the philosophy of method generation for planning and management. They are: the idea of productive system (value chain) or the company network (network) and orientation towards the market (demand driven). The concept of productive system (value chain) emphasizes the vertical relations, while the network comprises the vertical and horizontal relationships between independent organizations. The methods reviewed here take in count that organizations should take this perspective of understanding systems and business networks they are embedded.

At the same time, it is worth to explore the prospect of orientation towards the market (*demand driven* or market driven), by satisfying a particular group of consumers offering what they want, better than competitors. Within this context, a method of planning and management is a set of sequential activities or managerial processes that achieve organizational objectives. Several articles in recognized management and marketing journals propose methods based on the logic of sequencing of actions (processes). Srivastava et al. (1999) established four criteria for defining a process as central in an organization. These procedures should focus on basic and common tasks that are critical to the achievement of the organization’s objectives, should contribute to the creation of value to the customer, the process should be more macro than micro, and finally, as each process is connected with other processes, they must show a clear interaction and relationship.

Therefore, a management method is a breakdown of the process of establishing relationships with agents of a network and value to final users. This involves rethinking a process as designed in practice (common knowledge about how to do), get relevant literature on the studied process, and look at the theory more widely and even interdisciplinary. It is important to gather opinions from those who are somehow involved with the process, their perceptions and suggestions for improvement. The creation of a method does not necessarily involve a total "reengineering" of neglecting the process as it is or its recreation as a "revolution from a blank sheet of paper," as the classic work of Hammer and Champy (1993).

The methods presented in Table 2 are a real application of the inherent reasoning in the development and creation of planning and management methods. The methods are limited to propose a sequence of management steps, with strong theoretical and empirical applicability, creating something useful for the academic and business community. They have their maturation in long term, that is, its eventual publication does not imply that any improvements in processes cannot continue being made (Table 3), as proposed in grounded theory.

Table 2 - Summary of the sequence of steps used in the reviewed managerial methods

Major Methods Created in 10 years	**Steps Proposed in These Methods**
Strategic planning and management of distribution channels	1 - Description of the productive chain (supply chain and distribution channels) 2 - Description of the industry and business focused on distribution channels. 3 - Environmental analysis (PEST), impacts on the power channels and sources. 4 - Analysis of the asset specificities and level of integration (control) in the channels. 5 - Review of existing contracts and the reference (benchmark) in distribution practice. 6 - The objectives of the focus company 7 - The consumers' goals, needs and buying process (marketing research) 8 - Analysis of gaps and quick adjustments 9 - Selection of channels and negotiation 10 – Contract settlement and relationships 11 – Channels administration.
Contract development and review	1 - Design of the corporate network, knowledge of the contract and group discussion 2 - Define the responsibilities in the contract with respect to the marketing flows 3 - Analysis of the presence of asset specificities, their property and risk analysis 4 - Analysis of possible sources of power (control) and how the contractual forms can balance the relationship 5 - Preparation and / or improvement of the contract and institutional considerations (sources of future conflicts)
Mapping and quantification of agribusiness systems	1 - Description (drawing) of the agribusiness system under study 2 - Approval of the description by executives from the private sector and other experts 3 - Literature review. 4 - Search for sale data and publications on associations and institutions. 5 - Interviews with executives 6 - Search for sales data for each company in the studied sector. 7 - Quantification of the productive system with the compilation of data 8 - Workshop on result's validation 9 – Focal group work to develop collective actions.
Creation of vertical organizations	1 – Propose the idea of vertical organization 2 - Establish the organization, definition of the founders, adequate legislation, preparation of internal politics etc. 3 - Define the funding mechanisms of the organization 4 - Settle the board and define the operational structure 5 – Try to increase the number of associates (prospecting for new members) and increase the participants' involvement. 6 - Measure the performance of the actions and the achievement of work goals.
Planning and management of joint ventures	1 - History of the relationship between organizations 2 - Identification of business opportunities to companies 3 - Core competencies of each company (what it does better) 4 -Each participant's objectives and strategic alignment 5 - Analysis of the relationship and coordination of alternative organizational forms 6 - Evaluation of critical success factors in the alliance and relationship management.
Strategic planning and management of marketing focused on networks	1 - History and understandings 2 - Environmental analysis 3 - Analysis of the internal situation and competitors 4 - Strategic goals 5 - Strategies for achieving the goals 6 - Decisions of products, brands and packaging 7 - Decisions of communications 8 - Decisions on pricing 9 - Decisions of distribution and logistics 10 - Decisions of sales force and sale administration 11 - Budgeting of plans 12 - Implementation, control, monitoring and correction.

Strategic planning and management for agribusiness systems (GESis)	1 - History of initiatives 2 - Mapping and quantification of the agribusiness system: the application of Neves et al (2004) method 3 - Creation of a vertical organization in the system: the application of Campos and Neves (2007) method 4 – Settlement of planning and strategic management for agribusiness system: adaptation of Neves (2007a) method. 5 – Projects' consolidation and management 6 - Design of contracts: application of Neves (2003) method
Integrated and sustainable business projects (PINS)	1 - Technical viability 2 - Governance and coordination of a sub-system 3 - Economic and financial viability 4 - Business sustainability
Administration of sales function in organizations	1 - Defining the seller role 2 - Analysis of the sale environment 3 - Determination of quotas / goals 4 - Analysis of management and remuneration form 5 - Recruitment and selection 6 - Training and motivation 7 -Information flow 8 - Conflict management 9 - Sales control
Efficiency in distribution channels	1 - Participation of the agents in marketing flows 2 – Determination of costs and margins 3 - Comparative analysis of results 4 - Implications for management and planning of distribution channels
Review of the Industry Association's Funding	1 - Benchmarking in national and international organizations 2 - Survey of members' opinions 3 - Proposal for a new funding mechanism for members 4 - Administration and control
Settling of new distribution channels	1 - Environmental Analysis: search for opportunities 2 - Benchmarking and analysis of competition in the new channel 3 - Decisions of the structure of the new channel 4 - Description of the flows in the channels and allocating responsibilities 5 - Implementation and monitoring of performance

Sources: Developed by the authors based on Neves et al. (2001); Neves (2003); Consoli et al. (2004); Neves et al. (2004); Rossi et al. (2005); Neves et al. (2006); Neves (2007a); Neves (2007b); Neves and Castro (2007); Castro and Neves (2007); Campos and Neves (2007); Trombin and Neves (2007); Consoli et al. (2007); Consoli and Neves (2008); Neves et al. (2009).

Table 3 shows methodological procedures used to create and generate these methods, and when and where they were published until 2009.

Table 3 – Summary of methodological procedures used in the reviewed managerial methods.

Adopted methods/ procedures	**Publication site**	**Literature review (Desk research)**	**Field research**	**Management implications**
Strategic planning and management of distribution channels	Emerald Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing, 2001.	- Planning of distribution channels - Supply chain management - Transaction cost economics	- Theoretical design of the method - In depth interviews with 10 participants of private sector	Series of templates for management of distribution channels in organizations
Contract development and review	Journal of Chain and Network Science, 2003.	- Distribution channels - Company Networks - Transaction cost economics	- Training of focus groups for contract review - Feedback for participating companies - Proposition of the method	Tool for the study of contracts which allows working with lawyers.
Mapping and quantification of agro industrial systems	Organizacoes Rurais & Agroindustriais 2005	- Agribusiness systems - Company Networks	- Design of the theoretical method - Application in 3 case studies, with participant observation	Instrument of public policy and also for planning collective actions in productive systems.
Creation of vertical organizations	International Pensa Conference - IPC, 2007	- Agribusiness systems and company networks - Collective actions - Vertical organizations in agribusiness systems	- Study of 9 national and international case studies, - Proposition of the method	Tool for creation of vertical organizations to agribusiness systems.
Planning and management of joint ventures	Journal Problems and Perspectives in Management, 2006.	- Strategic alliances - Distribution channels - Transaction cost economics - Marketing research - Strategic planning.	- Theoretical design of the method - Application in 3 case studies with participant observation	Tool for planning joint ventures
Strategic planning and management of marketing focused on network	Emerald Marketing Intelligence and Planning Journal, 2007.	- Marketing planning - Strategic planning - Strategic marketing	- Theoretical design of the method - Application in many cases	Series of templates for strategic management of the marketing and corporate organization.
Strategic planning and management for agribusiness systems (GESis)	Revista de Administração da USP RAUSP, 2007.	- Agribusiness systems and company networks - Collective actions - Strategic Planning and Management - Transaction cost economics - Contracts	- Theoretical design of the method - Application in 3 case studies with participant observation	Instrument of public policy and planning of collective actions in productive systems.
Integrated and sustainable business projects (PINS)	Revista Agroalimentaria, 2008	- Development of projects - Marketing - Transaction cost economics	- Study of 10 case studies of success in the integration of family farmers - Theoretical-empirical design of the method - Application to case studies with participant observation - Proposition of the final method	Instrument of public policy and planning of organizations' supply chain.

Administration of sales function in organizations	Innovative Marketing Journal, 2007	- Sales Administration - Transaction cost economics - Distribution channels - Resources and competences	- Study of 3 case studies, with participant observation - Proposition of the method	Series of templates for sales management in organizations.
Efficiency in distribution channels	Revista de Administração Mackenzie, 2004	- Distribution Channels	- Study of a single case, with participant observation - Proposition of the method	Tool for administration of distribution channels in organizations.
Review of the private interest organization's funding	International Agribusiness Management Association IAMA, 2009	- Collective Actions - Vertical and horizontal organizations in agribusiness systems	- Study of a single case, with participant observation - Proposition of the method	Tool to review the funding mechanism of private interest organizations.
Settling of new distribution channels	Emerald Direct Marketing International Journal, 2008	- Distribution channels - Direct marketing (Door-to-door)	- Study of a single case, with participant observation - Proposition of the method	Tool for planning entry into new distribution channels.

Source: Developed by the authors based on Neves et al. (2001); Neves (2003); Consoli et al. (2004); Neves et al. (2004); Rossi et al. (2005); Neves et al. (2006); Neves (2007a); Neves (2007b); Neves and Castro (2007); Castro and Neves (2007); Campos and Neves (2007); Trombin and Neves (2007); Consoli et al. (2007); Consoli and Neves (2008); Neves et al. (2009).

The collection of these methods will be published in a book by Routledge Publishers in 2010.

5 - Methodological Contribution to Generation of Planning and Management Methods

5.1 How to structure the academic research to generate a management method

The researcher's main objective is certainly to increase the quantity and quality of publications, whether through books, papers in conferences, articles in academic journals and business newspapers (applied). At this point, the way how your research is structured can impact profoundly on the final opinion obtained: approval, approval with modifications and disapproval; even more if the proposal is the creation of a planning and management method. As a methodological contribution to those researchers who like this "method building" style and intend to go well with their exploratory research, Figure 1, along with Table 4, shows a decision flow on how to proceed in academic research in order to increase the chance of success in the proposition of the management method.

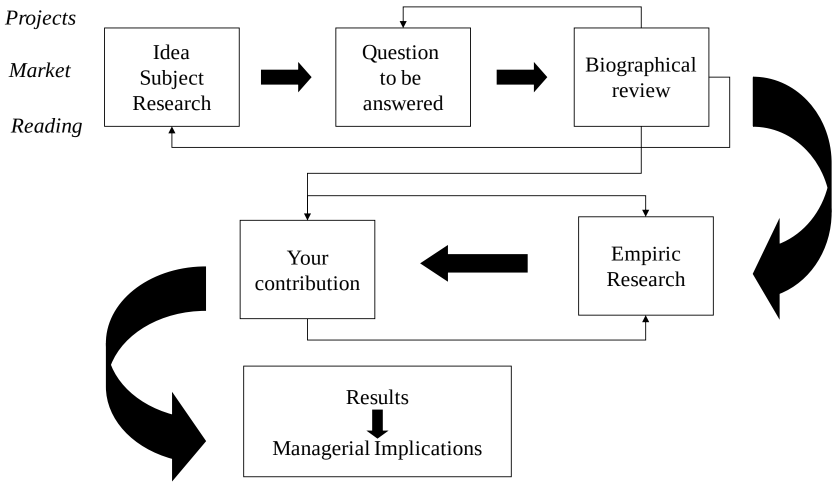

Figure 1 – Diagram to structure a scientific research (exploratory)
Source: Developed by the authors.

Table 4 – Process to design a scientific research (exploratory)

Steps	*Description*	*Intriguing questions (the students should ask themselves)*
1- Idea or Research Issue	- It can rise after an initial biographical review, the identification of a gap in the theory (recommended for students in PhD). - Or the intentions to better understand an empirical phenomenon, using for that a limited theoretical body (recommended for Masters students). - Or it can come from a research project.	What is my motivation to research? What is the viability (time, resources, knowledge, and applicability) of this research?
2- Question to be answered (research issue)	- Try to relate the variables (categories) of understanding for the studied phenomenon. - Can be formulated using theoretical concepts, or even be based on empirical observation to then be described theoretically. - The general objective of the research is to answer the raised research problem. The objective defines the scope of the problem and the problem qualifies the objective of the research. - In the purpose of generating methods, the objective is always to systematize the empirical and theoretical knowledge and propose a sequence of management steps. - The specific objectives are to develop the steps of that management method.	What do I want to achieve with my research? Is it necessary (useful) for both academic as the business sector?
3- Literature review (theoretical and empirical)	- This part will give the "content" to the management method to be proposed. From the reviewed theoretical aspects we can have the inputs to be operationalized to form a management tool (method). - From the theoretical review, can a preliminary management method be developed, which will be changed from the information collected in field research (grounded theory). - It is the literature that will approve or disapprove the theory to be proposed. - The theoretical framework allows a comparison of existing methods and theories, gaps and opportunities for improvement. - It must be very well done and find/cover everything on the field.	What other methods and sequences of steps were found? Was an interdisciplinary approach considered? What are the comparisons points (agreement and disagreement)? What is missing to be taken into account (gaps)? What could be the real contribution of my proposition?
4- Management contribution	- Depending on the innovation of the proposal and the student's academic level (e.g., doctoral student), the contribution may come before the literature review. - Even the management method can be derived directly from empirical research. - From the empirical observation, the student can systematize the experience in a sequence of steps. - The interaction between the first proposed method, according to data from field research, and the theoretical review results in the final management method.	Can this proposition be validated? What is its reliability level? Could it be generalized (analytical)?
5- Empirical research	- The research method will determine the depth of empirical research. - The chosen one according to the study objectives. How the proposal is to generate managerial methods, the qualitative approach fits better. And within the qualitative approach, as mentioned, the case study is one of the more mature and operational methods of research. - The in-depth interviews, the questionnaires, focus groups and participant observation are the most applied data collection tools. - This must include the original question to say that the chosen method will also depend on the viability of empirical research. The readiness of organizations to researches is also vital to the final result.	What are the research methods and instruments for collecting data to be used? What is the viability of their use? From case studies to theoretical models, using views of the business sector (focus group, in-depth interviews, and questionnaires).

6- Results and management implications	- To finish with theoretical conclusions, managerial implications, and limitations and suggestions for future research. - On theoretical conclusions, it is discussed how the general and specific objectives of the work were attended, how the research questions were answered, and contributions to their field of study (theoretical framework). - In managerial implications, the potential applicability of the management method, quality to stimulate the brainstorming in organizations, and tips for their empirical application are shown. - On limitations, it is discussed the predominantly qualitative approach, its theoretical simplicity to facilitate empirical operationalization, the generalization of the method based on one or a few empirical applications.	How to apply it in other contexts and other objects of study? What are its managerial implications and limitations?

Source: Developed by the authors based on Marconi and Lakatos (2007), Richardson (2007), Gummeson (2005), Sutton and Saw (1995) and Sarachek (1967).

5.2 How to publish the planning and management methods

It is not only how your research is structured that will determine your success and approval in the scientific community, but it also depends on the chosen form for its disclosure, or the used mechanisms for research publication can also dramatically influence the final result. The work evolution must go on the feedback received by the reviewers and the general public from several publication places. Thus, it is suggested the production of the working paper in at least two languages (mother language and English, for example) and its initial submission on a national conference and another international one, both in reputation. After its approval and presentation in events, one must address the process for its publication in national and international journals.

After this process, unlike the observed practice, where most of relevant contributions keep published only on Journals, that have not a large audience, to be honest, the academy can make a contribution to learning and knowledge to a wider and non-academic audience with smaller articles and interviews in a simple and intuitive structure, published in newspapers, magazines, websites, and new media of great audience in general. Also a book for a more extensive audience should be published with the method and how businessmen can apply this new method in an easy way on their organizations (figure 2). This is not an easy task, and will really show, under a business point of view, if the researcher came with something new, creative and attractive, linking academia and private sector.

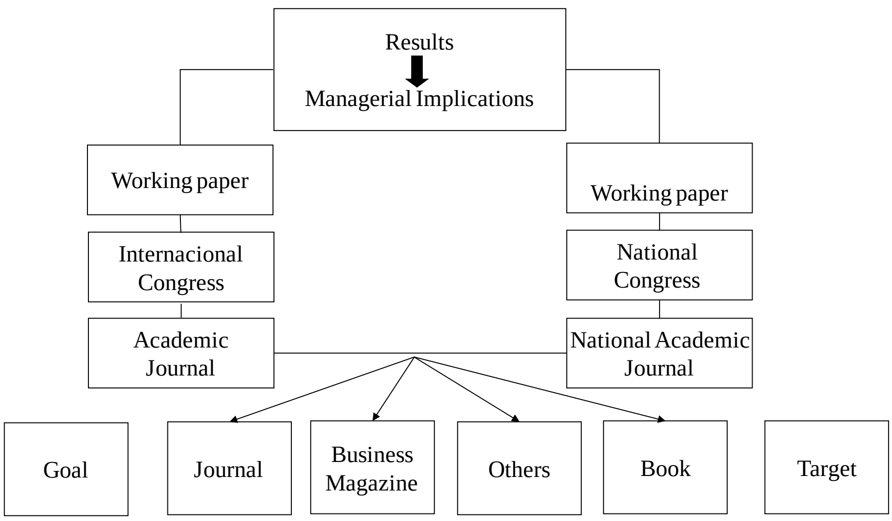

Figure 2 – Diagram to publish a scientific research (exploratory)
Source: Developed by the authors

Quality of papers is of fundamental importance. Te reach it, it is important to have a very relevant topic, original, with results that are trustable, implications to theory and practice, in accordance with editorial objectives of the journals, research implications and limitations, have a international perspective and suggest future research.

Finally, the work dissemination should not be restricted to traditional means of publication. The opportunity for dissemination of knowledge through the internet should also be explored. This can be done via websites of research groups, websites for the group's related matters, and new media (blogs, twitters, chats, digital interviews, and other social networks).

6 - Final Considerations

The aim of this article was to discuss a scientific process for developing methods in planning and management. For this, the literature review was based on qualitative methods of research (Grounded Theory, Case study and desk research) and also some planning and management methods published by the authors, recognized and approved by the international scientific community. From the result analysis, one can see that the reviewed management methods have some common points that should be introduced here:

Table 5 – Common points in the reviewed managerial methods

- All methods show a sequence of steps, which follows a logical sequence. - All methods are supported in a strong literature review, with particular attention to Chains & networks, Transaction Cost Economics and Strategic Marketing. - All methods have been accepted as valid by the scientific community in journals and national and international conferences. - All methods have been accepted by experts and actors in the business sector, following the theoretical review cycle - empirical application - method proposition. - All methods value the company and its network of relationships. - All methods seek to empower the organizations so that they can incorporate the guidance philosophy for the market (demand driven) in its planning and management activities. - All methods are in constant process of improvement according to the implementation in different productive systems and organizations and the development itself of the theory. They are methods of maturity and consolidation in the long-term.

Source: Developed by the authors.

Next, the article brought methodological contributions in the process of development and publication of management methods. In order to increase the researchers' chances of success, the article showed the reader how to structure his academic research and how to publish it, so increasing the possibility of knowledge dissemination and its public recognition.

Like any scientific article, the work presented here has some limitations such as: focus on exploratory research only, which makes use of qualitative research methods, for generation of planning and management methods, which could not be appreciated in some conferences and journals in the area of management. However, the management methods, that can be generated by the dynamic discussed here, have some advantages after they are produced: their relatively simple replication and their problem-solving perspective. And if the author likes, may bring recognition if the work was well done, since it will be used, applied and readers will constantly contact and come back by email to follow advancements that were done in recent years.

As suggestions for future research, there are several topics at table 6 that are gaining importance in chains & networks planning and management. There are possibilities for developing of new managerial methods.

Table 6 – Suggestions for developing of new managerial methods: A 10 point agenda for the next 10 years.

10 Major Topics	Research issues for managerial methods
1 - Empowerment	• Chains & networks inclusion of the base of pyramid (smallholders) • Chains & networks social responsibility (working conditions) • Fair trade networks • Margins allocation and distribution • Chains & networks \`neo-colonization´ (land investments abroad)
2 - Integration of Economy	• Developing countries supply chains (trade barriers relief) • Developing countries marketing channels
3 - Income Distribution	• Emerging consumers and chains & networks positioning • Building incentives for coordination (associations and cooperatives) • Neo-consumption (volumes/grains to proteins)
4 - Climate and Environment (preservation)	• Low carbon networks • Chains & networks adaptation to climate change • Renewable energy networks • Measurement and certification of chains & networks • Chains & networks resource usage efficiency / optimization of usage of by-products • Network reversal (re-use of materials or recyclable inputs)
5 - Technology	• Chains & networks transparency and information exchange • Consumer "hi-touch" networks • Innovation driven networks • New input supplies (fertilizers, crop protection and GMOs)
6 - Merge of industries	• Nutraceutical networks • Nutricosmetic networks • Nutritouristic networks • Nutricar networks
7 - Risks	• Integrated chains & networks risk management and mitigation • New markets risks (carbon foot print)
8 - Communication	• New media chains & networks communication • Proactive chains & networks communication with stakeholders • Origin and processes (inclusion) • Traceability
9 - Era of simplicity	• Chains & networks management • Market segmentation • New product launching • Costumer focus • New barriers (food miles …)
10 - Network Value Engineering	• Supply chain redesign • Marketing channels value capture • Collective actions in chains & networks

Source: Developed by the authors.

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