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Editorial Volume 4, Issue 4

Ciorstan J. Smark
University of Wollongong, csmark@uow.edu.au

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Editorial Volume 4, Issue 4

Abstract
This issue of AABFJ presents articles from a diverse range of approaches and subject areas. The lead article is a primer on critical realism (Bisman 2010). This article presents an examination of the research paradigm of critical realism, including a review of the attendant ontology, epistemology and methods generally used.

This journal article is available in Australasian Accounting Business and Finance Journal: http://ro.uow.edu.au/aabfj/vol4/iss4/1

Editorial

Ciorstan Smark[1]*

This issue of *AABFJ* presents articles from a diverse range of approaches and subject areas. The lead article is a primer on critical realism (Bisman 2010). This article presents an examination of the research paradigm of critical realism, including a review of the attendant ontology, epistemology and methods generally used.

Finance is represented by a competing risks model study of financially distressed Australian companies (Chancharat, Tian, Davy, McCrae & Lodh 2010). This study looks at the advantages of categorising financially distressed companies according to the level and type of their distress in order to gain increased insight into company failure.

The third article in this issue is an experiment-based management accounting paper examining how incentives moderate performance (Wynder 2010). In this paper, a computerised Standard Cost Variance Analysis (SCVA) is used to model the effect of performance based incentives (and penalties), as well as useful modes of instruction, in to help accountants to effectively direct their attention and effort to the investigation of variances.

Business education is also well represented in this issue with two education-based papers. The first of these discusses embedding communication skills within financial planning courses (Rossetto & Murphy 2010). This article recognises the importance of communication skills for students wishing to work in the area of financial planning and suggests that experiential learning and "authentic tasks" (such as role playing and speed interviewing), are useful ways to build communication skills in financial planning students.

[1] School of Accounting and Finance, University of Wollongong, Australia. * csmark@uow.edu.au

The second education article in this issue is a New Zealand-based study of standards-based assessment in accounting in secondary schools (Agnew 2010). This article reviews the effect of five years of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) in New Zealand schools on ethnic minority and low socio-economic status students studying accounting and suggests that the NCEA system may not be serving these students' needs and aspirations.

In volume 4, number 2 (Smark 2010) it was noted that *AABFJ* planned to broaden its scope as a journal to include shorter articles, responses to existing articles and book reviews. This issue presents a response (Chowdhury 2010) to a previous article (Rashid, Lodh, De Zoysa & Rudkin 2010).which was published in volume 4, number 1 (2010) of *AABFJ*.

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