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# A Review of the Academic Impact of Three Methodological Innovations: Netnography, Child-Led Research and Creative Research Methods

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## Introduction

The ESRC National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) develops and disseminates methodological innovation within the UK social science community. There is an increasing interest in innovation in social research methods, partly fuelled by funding opportunities as well as trends within research reporting (Taylor & Coffey, 2009; Travers, 2009). The purposes behind innovation are likely to be varied and research in this area raises a number of questions, such as, what is innovation, why do researchers innovate, what impact do innovations have and what is the process whereby innovations achieve 'breakthrough' status and widespread take-up? There is limited published exploration of these issues (Wiles *et al.*, 2011; Xenitidou & Gilbert, 2009).

This project forms part of a programme of research on methodological innovation being undertaken by the NCRM Hub. Previous research undertaken between 2009-10 explored claims made for innovation in qualitative research through a narrative review of papers published between 2000-2009 (Pain 2009; Wiles *et al.*, 2011; see <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/811/> and <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/919/>). That research provided only partial answers to issues of innovation and was limited in that it was based on a review of journal papers. However, it indicated that what is claimed as 'innovative' often relates to adaptations to existing methods or to the transfer and adaptation of methods from other disciplines. This raises issues about: the process of methodological developments; their originality; the 'ownership' and control developers have, and want to have, over their innovations; methods of diffusion; and the take-up of innovations across disciplines.

The current project seeks to address these issues by focusing on three case studies in areas of qualitative research which have been identified as innovative. Its aims are:

- To explore, from the perspective of key individuals associated with their development, why the method was developed (the origins, rationale, development and dissemination of these innovations);
- To explore the views of key developers and champions of the methods about ownership, take-up and adaptations to the method;
- To identify the academic response (or 'impact') of these innovations and their take-up across disciplines.

This paper focuses on one aspect of this study of innovation 'cases', that of an exploration of the academic impact of these innovations conducted by identifying and reviewing citations for the innovation and/or the authors. This is explored as one aspect in assessing the response of the social science community to these innovations. We recognise that this is only one measure of 'impact', a point we return to in the discussion. This paper documents the findings of a review of literature that was conducted between 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011 and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2011.

## Case studies

The case studies selected meet the following criteria:

- i) they have been in existence in some form for around 10 years, to allow time for 'take-up' by the wider social science community;
- ii) they have been identified as 'innovations' through study 1 (Pain 2009; Wiles *et al.*, 2011), other research on innovation (e.g., Xenitidou and Gilbert, 2009) or NCRM Research Needs Assessments (Bardsley & Wiles, 2006; Wiles *et al.*, 2009);
- iii) they are qualitative methods.

Additionally, the three specific cases have been selected as exemplars of innovations which address one of the following methodological challenges:

- i) to enable the study of a new area of social life;
- ii) to provide insight into aspects of social life that are challenging to access by traditional methods;
- iii) to manage ethical, access or response issues raised by traditional methods or approaches.

The cases are:

### 1. Online ethnography: Robert Kozinets and 'Netnography'

The case study of netnography sits within a broader methodological context of online/virtual ethnography. Online ethnography comprises approaches for conducting ethnographic studies of online communities. It is being used here as an exemplar of methods that enable researchers to focus on a new area of social life, in this case, online communities. For many people, online ethnography comprises studies of the internet and how people engage with it. However, others have used it to study particular internet communities. In common with traditional ethnography, there is no one accepted way that online ethnography should be conducted. In general, online ethnography involves observation of naturally occurring 'postings' and 'threads' within an online forum and interviews with an online community; it may however involve data collection offline as well as online (Hine, 2005).

There has been a burgeoning interest in online research methods and the use of online surveys is relatively commonplace. Less common, but widely used, are online interviews and the analysis of material from websites, chatrooms, blogs and other electronic resources. For our purposes, we are focusing on online ethnography (rather than the use of online methods), and defining this as studies of online communities conducted wholly or mainly online.

Christine Hine has been a key proponent of this method, publishing a book in 2000 entitled 'Virtual Ethnography'. There are a wide range of publications on the topic from the late 1990s onwards and virtual or online ethnography has been included in various research methods textbooks (Sage Encyclopaedia of Social Science Research Methods, 2008). Nevertheless, it remains innovative and is cited in Hesse-Biber & Leavy's (2008) book on 'Emergent Methods'. In Wiles *et al.*'s (2011) review of claims to innovation, online and e-research methods was the fourth largest group of innovations among the papers identified. Various innovations identified by Xenitidou & Gilbert (2009) relate to online research and 'netnography', developed by Robert Kozinets from Canada as a form of online ethnography is one of these.

Kozinets developed his 'netnographic' approach to online research within the relatively new disciplinary field of Marketing and Consumer Research, devising it initially as an online

marketing research technique for studying the 'unique characteristics of online communities' (Kozinets, 2002). Netnography adapts traditional ethnographic research techniques to the study of cultures and communities that emerge through computer-mediated communication, and is presented by Kozinets as a new qualitative research methodology, which provides an economical, effective and unobtrusive means of studying 'naturally occurring' online communication and behaviour, and generating naturalistic data about online communities. Since its development, netnography has begun to be disseminated more widely across the social sciences as, Kozinets argues, many social scientists are realising that they need to incorporate internet and computer-mediated communications into their research in order to understand many of the important facets of contemporary social and cultural life (Kozinets, 2010).

Kozinets intends netnography to address many of procedural, ethical and methodological issues that are specific to online research, and he incorporates a step-by-step approach, which he claims is more rigorous and clearly defined than other forms of online ethnographic research. The 'pragmatic and applied approach' that netnography embodies, Kozinets argues, is what distinguishes the method from other forms of online ethnography, and justifies the use of a distinctive term to differentiate netnography from less-systematic approaches. Netnography involves strategic online fieldwork procedures, which are adapted from participant-observation-based ethnographic methods and guide researchers through the processes of identifying a suitable online field site, negotiating access to communities operating within that site, gathering and managing 'netnographic' data, analysing and interpreting data, and the ethical issues associated with researching online settings.

## 2. Child-led research: Mary Kellett and 'Children as Researchers'

Child-led research is an approach pioneered by Mary Kellett at the Children's Research Centre at the Open University. The method involves providing training and support to children and young people to enable them to design and carry out a research project. Proponents of this method view enabling children to undertake research on and about them as important from a moral and ethical standpoint, that is, because children are social actors and citizens and should be empowered to have a say in the decisions that are made about them and their lives. However, such an approach is also viewed as important from the standpoint of data quality. Kellett argues that children are party to the cultural experience of childhood which gives them a unique 'insider' perspective that is critical to our understanding of children's worlds. Adult-led or managed research is viewed as less able to access or gain an understanding of children's worlds. This is a particular form of participatory research in relation to children and childhood: research by children, rather than 'on', 'for' or 'with' children. Kellett published a book in 2005 based on her training programme and she has featured strongly in a wide literature on the topic of children's involvement in research.

Child-led research is located within a broader range of participatory approaches which include user-involvement, emancipatory and partnership research (Frankham, 2009). Such approaches are commonly used in relation to research with groups of people viewed as vulnerable or socially disadvantaged, such as children, people with physical or learning disabilities and people in receipt of health and social care services. The child-led research approach pioneered by Kellett is being used in this study as an exemplar of a method or approach developed to manage the ethical, moral and access problems that traditional methods pose.

The participatory paradigm has become increasingly popular. In our review of innovation claims (Wiles *et al.*, 2011), around a third of the 57 papers identified cited moral or ethical reasons for the innovation and many of these related to issues of empowerment. Similarly, Xenitidou and Gilbert (2009) identify a number of innovations centred around participatory and action research. The importance of developing methods that enable researchers to engage with the priorities and needs of research participants and research users throughout the research process was also noted in the NCRM 2009 Research Needs Assessment (Wiles *et al.*, 2009). However, none of these relates specifically to research involving children.

### 3. Creative methods: David Gauntlett and 'Creative Research Methods'

David Gauntlett's innovation lies within the broad field of 'creative methods' which encompass a range of methods including visual, performative and sensory methods. For the purposes of this case study we are restricting the study to methods that involve a study participant creating something (a photograph, a drawing, a scrapbook, a model) which is then used within the research process in some way, usually for data elicitation purposes. For our purposes we are defining creative methods as methods involving the creation of a visual or three-dimensional artefact rather than research which involves the creation of performance, plays or poems. This case is being used as an exemplar of a method that it is claimed provides insight into aspects of social life that are not accessible by traditional methods.

The method in question is located within a broader range of approaches generally referred to as visual methods which comprise an array of different types of approaches and data (Prosser & Loxley, 2008). Creative methods also encompass sensory methods in which various stimuli might be used to access people's sensory existence (Pink, 2009). There has been a rapid growth in the use of visual methods within a range of disciplines and settings in the last decade or so. The need for further research to explore the potential of visual methods, including sensory and creative methods, was identified in NCRM's 2006 and 2009 Research Needs Assessments. In a review of claims to innovation in qualitative research between 2000-2009, 'creative methods' (including arts-based and performative approaches) was the largest group of innovations among the papers identified (Wiles *et al.*, 2011). Xenitidou & Gilbert's (2009) review of methodological innovations outside the UK did not identify these types of creative methods although performative approaches were identified.

David Gauntlett, Professor of Media and Communications at the Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI), University of Westminster, UK, is a leading proponent of the method focused on here. He produces a website about media and identities, [www.Theory.org.uk](http://www.Theory.org.uk), and has pioneered the use of creative and visual research methods, for which he has created the hub at [www.ArtLab.org.uk](http://www.ArtLab.org.uk).

Drawing upon an array of disciplines Gauntlett explores the ways in which researchers can embrace people's everyday creativity in order to understand social experience. Seeking an alternative to traditional interviews and focus groups, he outlines studies in which people have been asked to make visual objects - such as video, collage, drawing and models using Lego and plasticine - and then interpret them. This creative, reflective method provides insights into how individuals present themselves, understand their own life story, and connect with the social world. The studies involve asking people to make their own media or artistic artefacts; the choices made (and not made) are subsequently analysed and discussed, and the research 'data' consist not simply of the creative product, but also

observation, discussion and analysis of the *process* of production and the choices made, in particular, the participants' interpretation of what they have produced.

## **Method**

The review of research literature in relation to the three cases that was undertaken for this study was informed by debates about the systematic review of literature, which have emerged in recent years (Dixon-Woods *et al.*, 2006; Popay *et al.*, 2007). The review consisted of a systematic search of UK Social Science databases for research and conference papers written in English, which were published between 1999 and 2010, and cited one of the three cases being investigated. A dataset of citations was generated through a systematic process of database searches, which were repeated for each database, but were in some cases adapted slightly in an attempt to accommodate discrepancies in the range of search options that each database provided.

### Search Criteria

As this review was investigating citations for methodological innovations, which are associated with particular academic researchers, results from the searches had to meet the following criteria:

- (a) The publication had to specifically mention/reference one of the methodological innovations being investigated;
- (b) The publication had to link the methodological innovation to one of the innovators that are being studied, as opposed to other researchers who may be following similar approaches;
- (c) The publications must not include any of the innovators being studied as co-authors, or be associated with them in any way.

The following databases were used during the review:

### **Web of Science [Social Sciences]**

Incorporating the following sub-databases:

- Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-EXPANDED)
- Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)
- Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI)
- Conference Proceedings Citation Index- Science (CPCI-S)
- Conference Proceedings Citation Index- Social Science & Humanities (CPCI-SSH)

### **CSA Illumina [Social Sciences]**

Incorporating the following sub-databases:

- ERIC
- IBSS: International Bibliography of the Social Sciences
- CSA Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts
- National Criminal Justice Reference Service Abstracts
- Social Services Abstracts
- Sociological Abstracts

### **OvidSP**

Incorporating the following sub-databases:

- Books@Ovid
- Journals@Ovid Full Text
- PsycARTICLES Full Text
- Econlit

- EMBASE
- PsycEXTRA
- PsycINFO
- Social Policy and Practice

### Informaworld

Educational Research Abstracts Online

Incorporating the following sub-databases:

- Educational Technology Abstracts
- Multicultural Education Abstracts
- Sociology of Education Abstracts
- Special Educational Needs Abstracts

**Google Scholar** [search conducted between 29.03.11 and 11.04.11]

It had been intended to include PhD theses in the data set that this literature search generated. However, the databases we accessed for this purpose, Index to Theses and Ethos, provided only limited search options (title and abstract only with no facility for full text or reference searches) and did not enable us to identify relevant citations.

The databases were searched using the following terms and search criteria

Table 1: Search Terms Used

| Innovation Name                | Related terms  | Name of innovators               | Key publications  |
|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---|
| Netnography                    | Netnographic   | Kozinets, R<br>Kozinets, Robert  | Kozinets (1997/8)<br>Kozinets (2002)<br>Kozinets (2010) |
| Children as active researchers | 'child researchers'<br>'children as researchers'<br>'child-led research' | Kellett, M.<br>Kellett, Mary     | Kellett (2004)<br>Kellett (2005)<br>Kellett (2010)      |
| Creative research methods      | 'Lego'   | Gauntlett, D<br>Gauntlett, David | Gauntlett &<br>Holzwarth (2006)<br>Gauntlett (2007)     |

### Search Process

Database searches were conducted using the 'advanced search option', but not all of the databases used the same categorisation system, or provided the same range of search options. As this review was investigating the academic impact of these innovations, databases that provided a *full-text* search, or search *references* option, were the most useful (e.g. CSA Illumina and informaworld) for identifying publications that had applied, adapted, discussed, referred to, or reviewed the innovations, or cited/referenced the innovators we are investigating. Databases that employed a more limited range of search categories: (e.g., Web of Science and OvidSP) did not provide the same opportunity for in-depth searching, as the name of the innovation, or a related search term, had to be included in the *title* or as a *keyword* or *topic* in the database record in order for it to appear among search results. This was not an issue for the netnography case, as many of studies that applied netnography also included the term, or the derivative term (e.g. netnographic) in the title, or used one of these terms as a keyword or topic. For the other two cases, however, which did not have such unique and specific names, databases that did not provide *full-text* search, or *search references* options were less useful. Searches for the

composite and less-specific names of Kellett's and Gauntlett's approaches tended to generate high-numbers of irrelevant results, which were not related to either innovation. A small number of publications did include the name of these approaches in their titles, or in some cases related terms were used as a *key word* or *topic* in the data base. However, it proved very time consuming to identify relevant citations among the large numbers of irrelevant results that were generated by searches for the names of Kellett's and Gauntlett's innovations .

To complicate things further, databases that ostensibly provided *full-text* or *reference* searching, did not provide that facility for *all* of the entries on their system, so it was not possible to access and identify all relevant citations in the database using this search method. Similarly, on a number of occasions citations which did not appear among the results generated by *full-text* searches for the *name* of the innovation, or *references* to the innovator, were accessed and identified using less-credible search engines like Google Scholar. Once the title of these citations had been identified, it was found that many were actually included in the database that had previously been searched, but could only be accessed if they were searched for by *title*. It was also discovered that not all entries in the data bases were categorised appropriately, and, therefore, did not appear among results of searches, which should have identified them. In an attempt to overcome these challenges, search strategies were adapted to accommodate the idiosyncrasies of each database, and search terms were varied and entered into more than one search-option category.

Despite its questionable status in academia, Google Scholar proved to be the most useful generic resource for identifying citations as it automatically generates the number of citations for a specific text, and a link that generates a list of the publications that cite that text. In cases where citations were identified by Google Scholar, but not through similar searches of academic databases, searches were repeated for titles that Google Scholar had generated. In most cases, searches for titles would identify a record for a publication, which had not appeared among the results of searches that had used other search categories. Some citations, however, were only identified by Google Scholar, and did not appear to be recorded in other databases (see appendix 4 for Google Scholar only references).

The results generated by Google Scholar searches for the terms 'netnography' and 'netnographic' have not been included in the findings of this review, as the numbers generated were very high, and time limitations meant that it was not possible to sort through them and identify relevant citations. Google scholar searches for *netnography* and *Netnographic* generated in the region of 1,300 results. Whilst some of these results might be indicative of further applications of netnography or relevant citations of Kozinet's work, *only* Google Scholar citations that were identified by searches for the titles of key Kozinet's publications were taken into account.

### Identifying Relevant Citations

A number of texts were identified from this review in which similar, or in some cases identical, methodological approaches to those we are investigating were applied, discussed or referred to, but not linked to the innovators that we are focusing on in our cases. For example, searches for 'children as active researchers' and 'child-led research' under *topic* in web of science generated 228 results, but none of these were found to refer to or cite Kellett's work, although methodologically they followed a very similar approach. Instead, they cited other researchers that had ostensibly developed similar approaches to Kellett. This suggests that although Kellett has developed a specific approach to child-led research, and is fairly well known in her field for her work in this area, she is not the *only* person associated with this kind of approach, or universally acknowledged as its innovator.

In an attempt to differentiate search results specifically relating to Kellett's work from other studies that adopted similar approaches, searches for the *name* of the innovation, and related terms, were combined with searches for Kellett.

The term 'creative research methods', which Gauntlett uses to describe his approach, similarly proved too broad for *keyword* and *topic* searches, and generated a high number of results that were irrelevant to this study. Publications that cited Gauntlett's work which were identified by this review rarely included this term in their title. Databases that provided 'full-text' or 'references' search options again proved much more useful for identifying citations of Gauntlett's approach, as it was possible to combine searches for Gauntlett in *references* or *anywhere*, with searches for *creative methods*. Google Scholar proved useful again for identifying citations of key texts by Gauntlett and, once the titles of publications had been identified, they were searched for by *title* in academic databases, to check the reliability of results.

The challenges that were encountered when searching for and identifying citations of Kellett's and Gauntlett's approaches were not encountered in the case of netnography. Searches for netnography in almost all cases *only* generated results that drew on or discussed Kozinets' work. Kozinets' use of a unique term to classify and define his innovation serves to differentiate it from other approaches, which may be methodologically similar, but employ different nomenclature. The fact that the approaches of Kellett and Gauntlett are not so clearly designated makes identifying academic responses to these innovations much more difficult. This may mean that we have under-reported citations in relation to these two innovations.

Two examples of secondary citations were identified for netnography, in which Kozinets' method was applied, but he was not directly cited. These publications instead cited Langer (2005), who discusses netnography and references Kozinets. Langer (2005) is included among the results of the review, but not the two examples of secondary citations because they do not directly associate the method with the innovators we are investigating. If we had included secondary citations for netnography it would have introduced an inconsistency between the three cases based on a finding that only become apparent because of the distinctiveness of netnography as a term. It could be the case that some of the publications that were identified whilst searching for child-led research or creative research methods, but were rejected because they did not directly cite Kellett or Gauntlett, were actually citing publications that had drawn directly on their work. This, however, was not possible to ascertain because it went beyond the scope of this particular study.

### Data Extraction

Full references for each citation were entered into an Access database, and each entry was coded under the following categories:

- Type of publication (journal (study); journal (discussion); journal (book review); conference paper; book; book chapter);
- Year of publication;
- Author(s)' academic disciplines, based on stated affiliation in the publication;
- Geographical area in which the first author is located, based on location of stated affiliated organisation;
- Type of citation (see below).

Publications were categorised in terms of the type of citation, under the following categories:

- *Applied* – the method or approach had been applied in a secondary study, which drew directly on the work of one of the developers in our cases;
- *Adapted* – the method or approach had been adapted/combined with other method(s) in a study, which was informed by the work of one of the developers in our cases;
- *Discussed* – the method or approach was discussed in a publication and linked to one of the developers in our cases;
- *Championed* – the method or approach was discussed and advocated in a publication as a reliable/effective/valid approach;
- *Referred* – the method or approach and the developer were briefly referred to as part of a wider discussion;
- *Referenced* – Key publications on the method or approach by developers in our cases were cited/referenced, but not discussed;
- *Reviewed* – Key publication (i.e. book) outlining the method or approach, written by one of the developers in our cases, was reviewed.

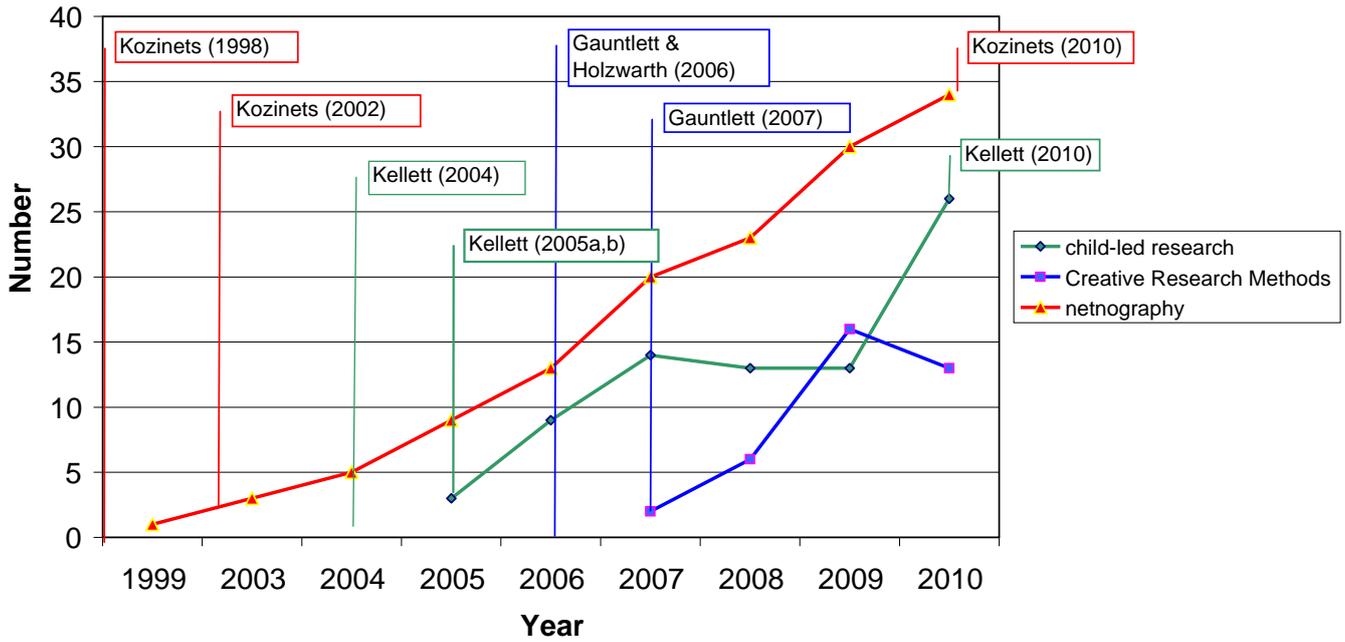
## Findings

In total 251 published journal articles/conference presentations were identified that cited the cases under investigation. References identified by type in relation to each case can be found in appendices 1-4. A small number of studies were identified, which were published in 2011 and not included in this data set; there were ten 2011 citations for netnography, nine for child-led research, and one for creative methods. Table 2 sets out the number of citations for each case during the time period that the review covered (1999-2010). Figure 1 displays the distribution across the time period cross-referred to dates of key publications.

Table 2: Citations per Case

| <b>Case</b>                           | <b>No. citations</b> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Netnography (Kozinets)                | 138                  |
| Child-led research (Kellett)          | 76                   |
| Creative research methods (Gauntlett) | 37                   |

Figure 1: Citations of all 3 cases by year



We now outline the findings for each case in relation to the *type* of citation, the *discipline* of lead authors of the citation and their *geographical location*.

## Netnography

As Figure 2 demonstrates, 42% of the citations for netnography were direct applications of Kozinets' method. In a small number of studies (9%), netnography was adapted in some way, but most applied the steps that Kozinets outlines and claimed to be following his method. In 3% of the publications, netnography was not only applied, but actively championed by the authors of the study as an appropriate method for studying a particular phenomenon, or using in a particular field. Beltz (2010), for example, advocates netnography as an effective method for identifying lead-users in particular consumer areas, through their participation in online communities. O'Reilly *et al.* (2007, similarly celebrate the advantages of netnography over other methods, for evaluating pedagogical tools and techniques in large university classes. Sandlin (2007) highlights the benefits of netnography as a consumer education tool. Hamilton and Hewer (2010) also celebrate the 'insightful work' of Kozinets and advocate the use of netnography, but also build upon his work by suggesting that researchers need to develop a netnographic imagination.

Figure 2: Citations of Netnography by type

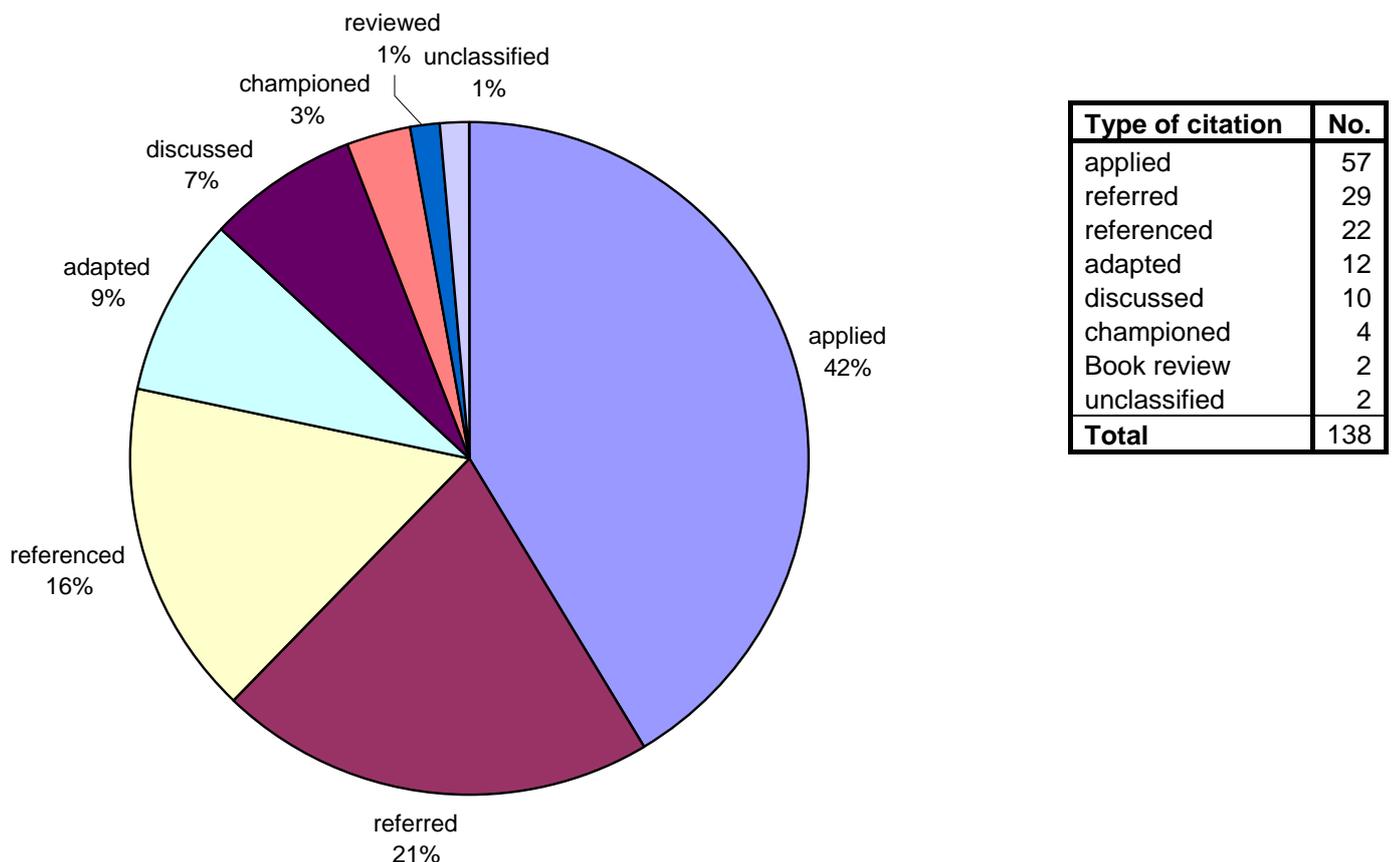


Figure 3 (with further detail provided below in Table 3) shows that citations of netnography have mostly occurred within the disciplinary fields of marketing (47%), management (17%) and business (12%). If these are treated as related disciplines, citations in this area account for 76% of netnography's overall citations. There have been relatively few citations in sociology (4 publications), and only one of these applied the method (Stubbs, 1999). The other three refer to netnography within the context of broader discussions of online research methods. Five citations were identified in economics, and three of these applied

netnography directly as a method. The remaining citations of netnography are distributed across a range of disciplines (see Table 3), but mostly concentrated in areas linked to ICT, which account for 6% of total citations (2% information systems; 1.5% communication; 1.5% computer science; 0.7% e-learning).

Figure 3: Citations of Netnography by Discipline

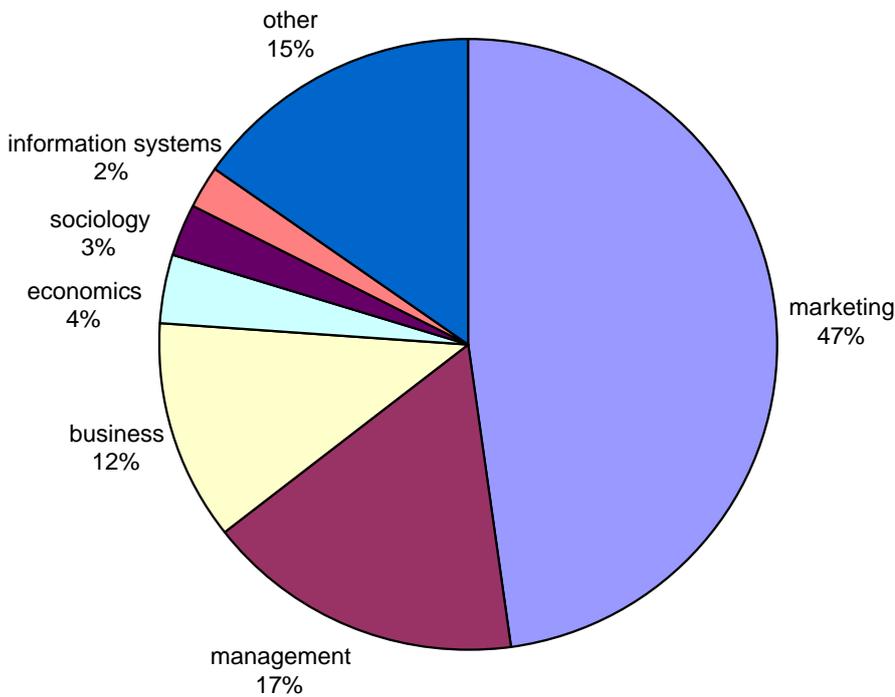
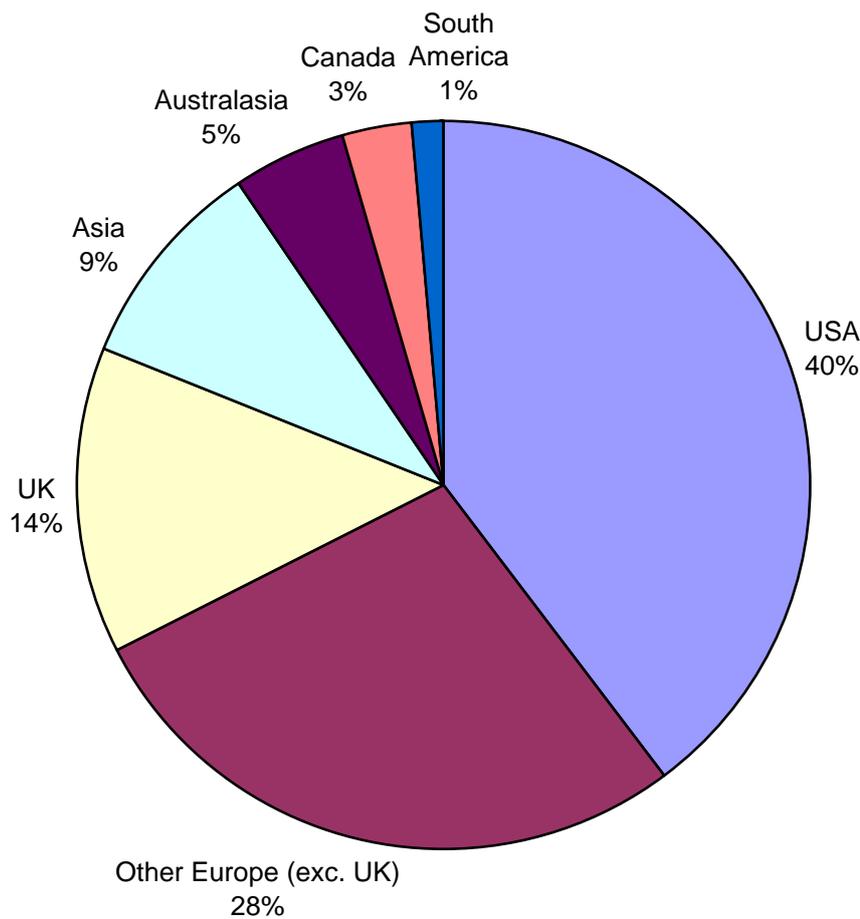


Table 3: Disciplines of authors

| Discipline          | Lead author | 2 <sup>nd</sup> author | 3 <sup>rd</sup> author |
|---------------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| marketing           | 66          | 52                     | 11                     |
| management          | 23          | 18                     | -                      |
| business            | 16          | 13                     | 1                      |
| economics           | 5           | 2                      | -                      |
| sociology           | 4           | 1                      | -                      |
| information systems | 3           | 2                      | -                      |
| <i>Other</i>        |             |                        |                        |
| communication       | 2           | 2                      | 1                      |
| tourism             | 2           | 2                      | -                      |
| sport & leisure     | 2           | 2                      | -                      |
| education           | 2           | 1                      | -                      |
| journalism          | 2           | 1                      | -                      |
| computer science    | 2           | -                      | -                      |
| media               | 1           | 1                      | -                      |
| history             | 1           | 1                      | -                      |
| e-learning          | 1           | -                      | -                      |
| criminal justice    | 1           | -                      | -                      |
| cultural policy     | 1           | -                      | -                      |
| social science      | 1           | -                      | -                      |
| methodology         | 1           | -                      | -                      |
| urban studies       | 1           | -                      | -                      |
| arts                | 1           | 1                      | -                      |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>138</b>  | <b>99</b>              | <b>13</b>              |

Figure 4 shows that engagement with netnography has mostly occurred within the USA (40%) and to a lesser extent the UK (14%). Netnography was found to have a high number of citations by country, with first authors of publications based in 25 different countries. By continent, 43% of citations are from authors in North America, 42% in Europe, 9% in Asia, 5% in Australasia and 1% in South America.

Figure 4: Citations of Netnography by Geographical Area



| Country                      | No.        |
|------------------------------|------------|
| USA                          | 55         |
| <i>Other Europe (exc UK)</i> |            |
| Austria                      | 10         |
| France                       | 8          |
| Finland                      | 4          |
| Germany                      | 3          |
| Switzerland                  | 3          |
| Denmark                      | 2          |
| Italy                        | 2          |
| Spain                        | 1          |
| Sweden                       | 2          |
| Belgium                      | 1          |
| Croatia                      | 1          |
| Norway                       | 1          |
| UK                           | 19         |
| <i>Asia</i>                  |            |
| Hong Kong                    | 4          |
| Israel                       | 2          |
| Taiwan                       | 2          |
| Turkey                       | 2          |
| China                        | 1          |
| India                        | 1          |
| Indonesia                    | 1          |
| <i>Australasia</i>           |            |
| Australia                    | 5          |
| New Zealand                  | 2          |
| <i>Canada</i>                |            |
| Canada                       | 4          |
| <i>South America</i>         |            |
| Brazil                       | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>138</b> |

### Summary

Since Kozinets' early publications on netnography there has been a steady increase in citations referring to the method. The majority of citations relate to applications of netnography but there are also a high number of citations where Kozinets and/or netnography is referenced or referred to. The majority of citations are located within the disciplines in which the method originated (broadly management and business studies). There is some evidence of take-up or interest in the approach from wider social science disciplines but this is relatively limited. As might be expected, many of the citations are from authors from North America where Kozinets is based. However, there are citations from authors in a wide range of other countries; there are a high number of citations by authors in Europe, particularly the UK. There are also some citations from Australasia and

Hong Kong. This certainly indicates some global spread of the approach, although mostly within the specific disciplines from which it originated.

## Children as Active Researchers

Figure 5 describes the citations of Kellett’s child-led research and suggests limited *application* of the approach. Only one publication was found (1%), which illustrated a direct application of her methodological approach, and that was written by Bucknall, a Children’s Research Centre tutor who works alongside Kellett. The majority of publications (56%) referenced Kellett’s work, along with other researchers working in the area of child/youth research, within the context of broader discussions of children’s research, or the particular methodological or theoretical approach that a study had adopted. A small number (14%) discussed Kellett’s work specifically, but again within the context of wider discussion of different forms of research involving children.

Figure 5: Citations of Child-Led Research by type

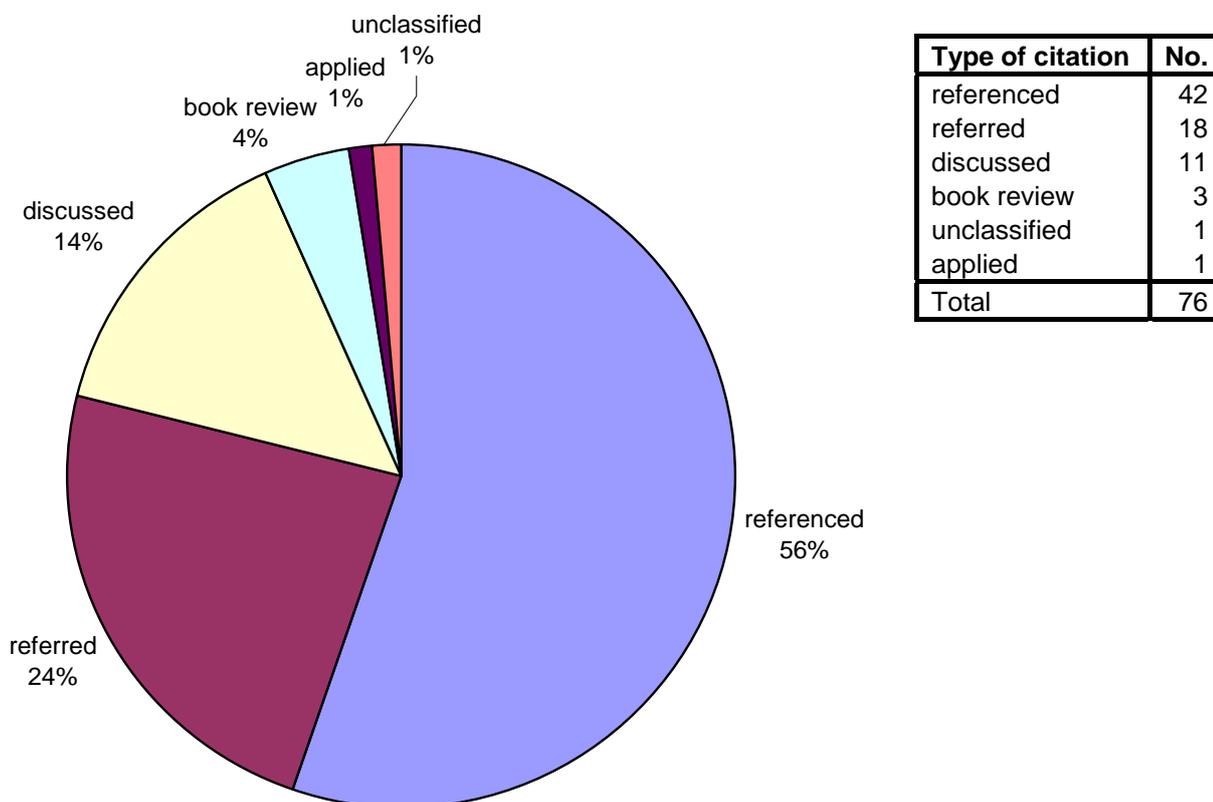
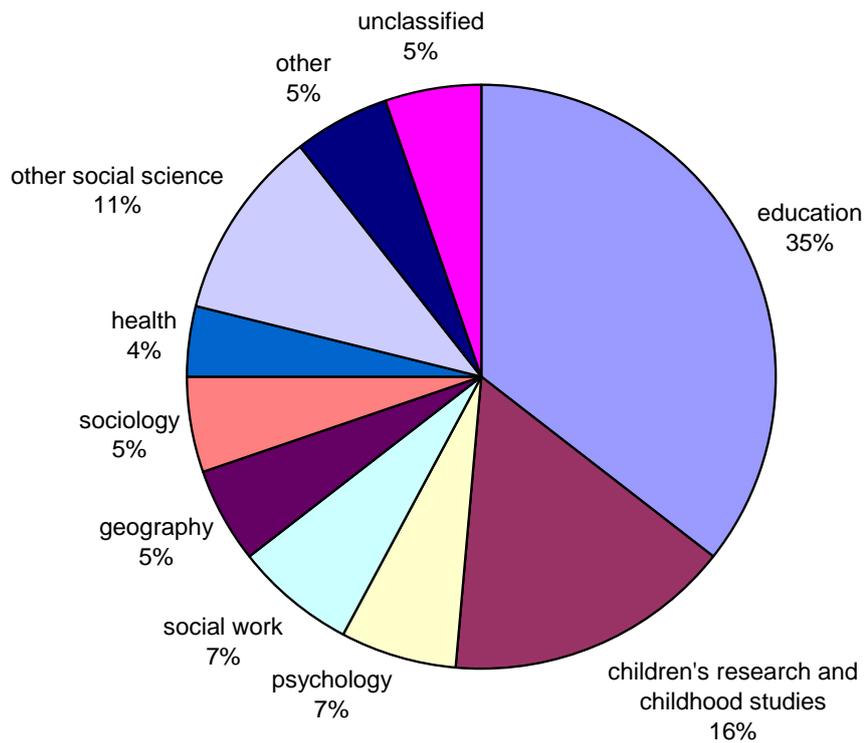


Figure 6 (with further information shown below in Table 4) shows that citations of Kellett’s approach were identified across the social sciences, although as noted above only one study directly applied her approach. Citations were highest in education (35%) and children’s research and childhood studies (16%), and then distributed between psychology (7%), social work (7%), geography (5%), sociology (5%) and health (4%). ‘Other social science’, comprising anthropology, social policy and social justice as well as generic social science, comprised 11% of citations.

**Figure 6: Citations of Child-Led Research by Discipline**

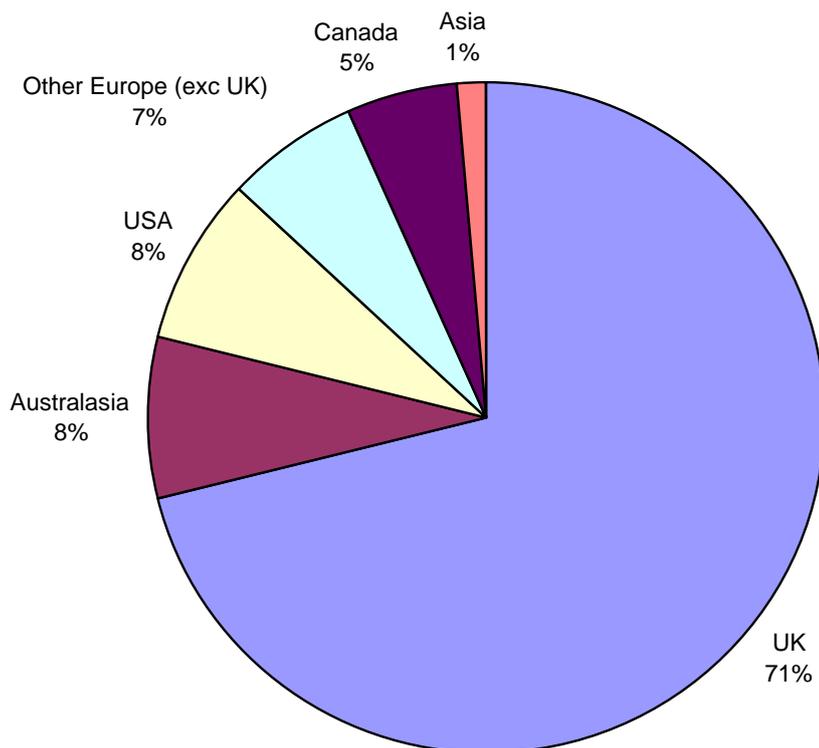


**Table 4: Disciplines of Authors**

| Discipline                   | Lead author | 2 <sup>nd</sup> author |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| education                    | 27          | 15                     |
| childhood studies            | 8           | 1                      |
| psychology                   | 5           | 3                      |
| social work                  | 5           | 1                      |
| sociology                    | 4           | 1                      |
| children's research          | 4           | 1                      |
| geography                    | 4           | -                      |
| social science               | 4           | 3                      |
| health                       | 3           | 2                      |
| <i>Other social science:</i> |             |                        |
| anthropology                 | 1           | -                      |
| social policy                | 2           | -                      |
| Social justice               | 1           | 1                      |
| <i>Other:</i>                |             |                        |
| Law                          | 1           | -                      |
| Refugee Research             | 1           | -                      |
| Cultural & language studies  | 1           | -                      |
| Management                   | 1           | -                      |
| Child & Family Studies       | -           | 1                      |
| Arts                         | -           | 1                      |
| <i>Unclassified</i>          |             |                        |
| independent charity          | 2           | 2                      |
| independent consultants      | 1           | 1                      |
| unknown                      | 1           | -                      |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>76</b>   | <b>33</b>              |

Figure 7 shows that citations of child-led research were mostly concentrated in the UK (71%), but 5 citations were also identified with first authors based in Australasia. By continent, 78% were in Europe, 13% in North America, 8% in Australasia and 1% in Asia. There were no citations from authors in South America.

**Figure 7: Citations of Child-Led Research by Geographical Area**



| Geographical area      | No.       |
|------------------------|-----------|
| UK                     | 54        |
| <i>Australasia</i>     |           |
| Australia              | 5         |
| New Zealand            | 1         |
| USA                    | 6         |
| <i>Europe (exc UK)</i> |           |
| Cyprus                 | 1         |
| Greece                 | 1         |
| The Netherlands        | 1         |
| Norway                 | 1         |
| Sweden                 | 2         |
| Canada                 | 4         |
| <i>Asia</i>            |           |
| Turkey                 | 1         |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>76</b> |

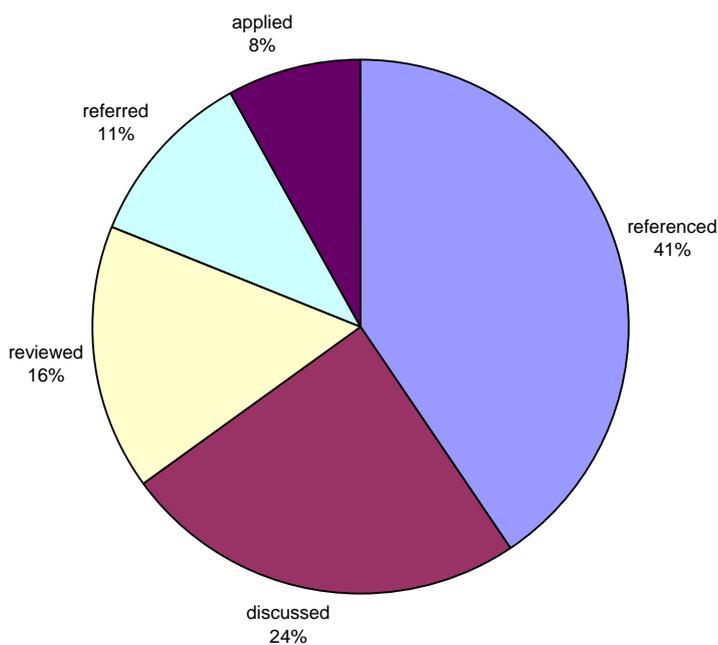
### Summary

The majority of citations of Kellett's child-led research approach were references to the approach or her publications in which Kellett was referenced along with other academics/researchers within methodological narratives that served to *position* a particular study, or broadly consider the range of different methodological approaches within a particular field. There was only limited application of the specific approach developed by Kellett. This may partly reflect the fact that Kellett's approach to child-led research is one of several similar methodological approaches to research with (or by) children. It may also reflect the difficulties in publishing work in the academic field that is led by or conducted solely by children. Nevertheless, the high number of references to Kellett's approach indicates it is one that is well known in the social science community, if not widely used or always attributed to her. Citations come from a range of disciplines, mostly education, children's research and childhood studies. Citations are next highest in the related disciplines of sociology, social work and other social science, which combined account for 23% of the total citations. This indicates some knowledge of the approach and academic impact across the social sciences. The majority of citations are from UK-based authors, where the approach originated, but there are some citations in Australia, the US and Canada indicating the approach has gained some international recognition.

## Creative Research Methods

Figure 8 shows that citations of Gauntlett's *creative research methods* approach were relatively few. Three publications were identified in which his approach was 'applied', with Jarvis and Trodd (2008) applying his 'creative exploration approach' and work with metaphors to harness 'imagination' as a tool for exploring identity within the context of multi-professional teams, and Dixon (2009) applying his Lego method as a tool for exploring the work-based experience of trainees. Hylton (2007) applied the 'Lego Serious Play' method as part of a study that explored the benefits of play as a tool for developing creative leadership and organisational skills, and drew on both Gauntlett's work and materials on the 'Serious Play' process produced by Lego. Most citations referenced (41%) or discussed (24%) Gauntlett's work within wider discussions of visual methods or creative methodological approaches, or referred (11%) to Gauntlett's work whilst developing or framing their particular methodological approach (e.g. Newhaus, 2010).

Figure 8: Citations of Creative Research Methods by type



| Form of uptake | No.       |
|----------------|-----------|
| referenced     | 15        |
| discussed      | 9         |
| reviewed       | 6         |
| referred       | 4         |
| applied        | 3         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>37</b> |

Figure 9 (with the further information shown below in table 5) shows that the majority of citations of Gauntlett's work have emerged within his own discipline, that of media and communication studies (32%). Other citations are fairly well-distributed across the social sciences, with the next highest in education (16%), followed by health (11%), geography (8%), and social sciences (11%).

Figure 9: Citations of Creative Research Methods by Discipline

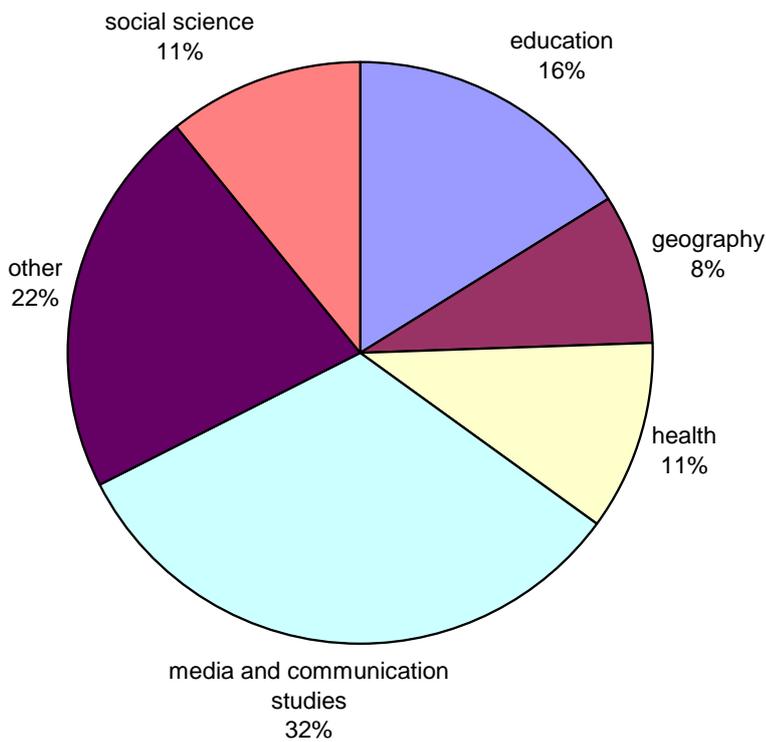
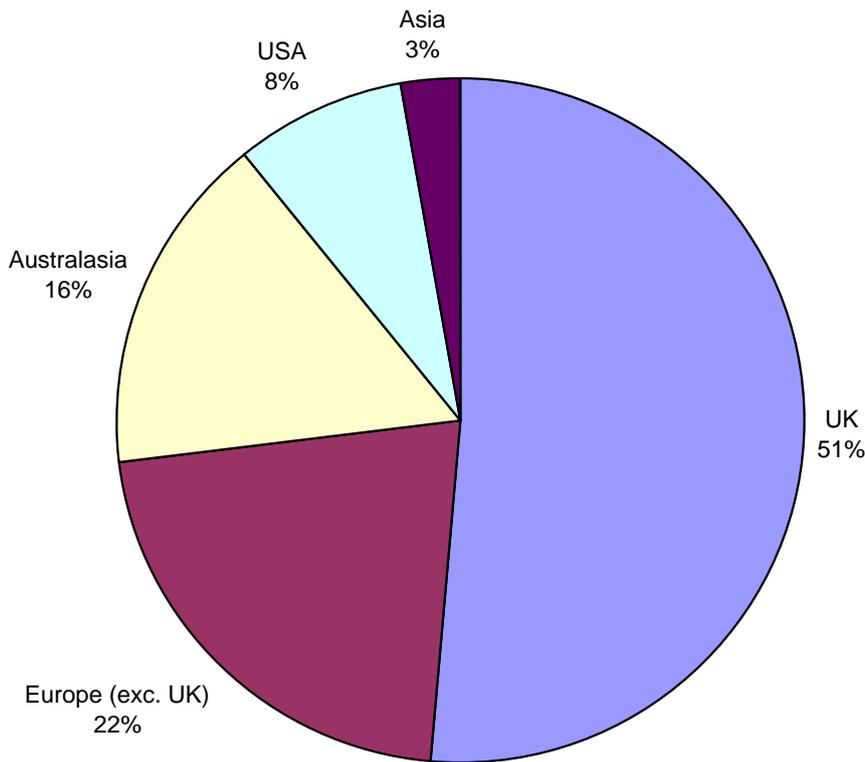


Table 5: Disciplines of Authors

| Discipline                      | Lead author | 2 <sup>nd</sup> author |
|---------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Communication and media studies | 12          | -                      |
| education                       | 6           | 1                      |
| health                          | 4           | 3                      |
| geography                       | 3           | 1                      |
| social science                  | 4           | 1                      |
| <i>Other</i>                    |             |                        |
| computer science                | 2           | -                      |
| staff development               | 2           | -                      |
| industrial production           | 1           | 1                      |
| creative studies                | 1           | -                      |
| disability studies              | 1           | -                      |
| management                      | 1           | -                      |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>37</b>   | <b>7</b>               |

Figure 10 shows that the majority of citations of David Gauntlett’s work have occurred within the UK (51%), but citations were also identified for first authors based in Australasia (16%), Denmark (11%) and the USA (8%). By continent, 73% of citations are from European authors, 16% from Australasia, 8% from North America and 3% from Asia. There were no citations from authors in South America.

**Figure 10:**  
**Citations of Creative Research Methods by Geographical Area**



| Country          | No.       |
|------------------|-----------|
| UK               | 19        |
| Europe (exc. UK) |           |
| Denmark          | 4         |
| Italy            | 1         |
| Netherlands      | 1         |
| Norway           | 1         |
| Switzerland      | 1         |
| Australasia      |           |
| Australia        | 6         |
| USA              | 3         |
| Asia             |           |
| Singapore        | 1         |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>37</b> |

**Summary**

Most citations for Gauntlett’s approach *referred* to the method or approach or *referenced* him. Applications of the approach within research studies were fairly limited. This probably reflects the relative newness of the approach and its location within a broad range of similar ‘creative’ approaches. In most citations, Gauntlett was referenced, along with other academics/researchers, within methodological narratives that served to *position* a particular study, or broadly consider the range of different methodological approaches within a particular field. Around one third of the citations of David Gauntlett’s creative research methods approach emerged in media and communication studies, the area in which he is based. Other citations are distributed across the social sciences, particularly education, indicating the approach is known about across a broad range of social sciences. While just over half of citations are from UK-based researchers, there are also citations from authors based in other European countries, particularly Denmark, as well as from Australia. This indicates some international recognition of the approach.

## Discussion

This paper has explored the response of the academic community to three methods or approaches that we have identified as innovative exemplars within three broad sites of innovation, online methods, creative methods and participatory research (Wiles *et al.*, 2011). The term 'impact' is imbued with much meaning in the current climate where researchers are expected to demonstrate the impact (or contribution) that their research makes to society and the economy (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/tools-and-resources/impact-toolkit/what-how-and-why/what-is-impact.aspx>). It is not our intention to evaluate 'impact' in this broad way; rather we use the term 'academic impact' here to reflect our interest in exploring the response of the academic community to these three instrumental case studies of methodological innovations to enhance understanding of the process of innovation more broadly. We recognise citations are only one way of doing this and we also recognise that academics are only one group of people who may make use of such innovations. Indeed there is considerable evidence that each of the innovations focused on in this paper are of interest to the practitioner communities, particularly teachers and social workers, as well as managers in public and private sector organisations and businesses. Our specific interest is how these methods or approaches are viewed by social science researchers and what their response is to them. We want to be clear here that our aim in exploring the response of the academic community to these innovations is not to evaluate the success (or otherwise) of these three innovations or to compare them with each other. Our aim is to explore, as part of a wider study, what the response of the academic community is to them and citations are one measure of this, albeit an imperfect one.

Our focus on the response of the academic community to these innovations is based on the definition of innovation as being a practice that is taken up and used by the wider community, thereby bringing about some change in practice (Rogers, 2003; Taylor & Coffey, 2008). While this definition is subject to some debate, the view that developments are not innovations unless they are taken up and used by the social science community is one we are working with in this study. In this paper we have attempted to explore, through a systematic search of citations, the extent to which these three approaches have been i) acknowledged by the social science community and ii) taken up by them.

This review indicates that each of these methods has been acknowledged by the broader social science community and, to some degree, taken up. The process by which an innovation is disseminated and taken up is often slow and how an innovation is received is subject to a range of inter-personal and socio-political factors (Wiles *et al.*, 2011). This study has demonstrated some of the factors that may impact on the process of take-up and these help to explain the response of the social science community to these specific innovations. There are five factors that appear to influence the ways that innovations are received. First is the issue of *time*. Innovations take time to filter through to the mainstream (Xenitidou & Gilbert, 2009) and it may take many years for innovations to become accepted practice; the process outlined by Fielding and Lee (1996) whereby the use of CAQDAS has become established practice in the analysis of qualitative data is an interesting illustration of this. Second is the issue of *timeliness*. For developments to become innovations they need to be of their time, to fit with current trends in research and to have affordance, to be able to address current research questions in new or better ways. Third, developments need to be able to be *accessible and feasible*, researchers need to be able to understand how they can be used and be able to put them into practice. Fourth, and related to all of these issues, developments need to have reached a level of *maturity* which is achieved through the process of critical review by the social science community

and the inevitable adaptation of the method by the original innovator and others. Fifth, there are a number of strategic decisions that innovators may make in disseminating an innovation which can impact on its take-up. These include the *distinctiveness* of the innovation in terms of its name and its relationship with other approaches in the same field as well as *strategies for disseminating* (or 'marketing') the approach. The ability to disseminate developments to researchers outside the core discipline and country of the innovator appears a difficult but important step in the process of take-up.

An exploration of citations provides some interesting insights into the response of the social science community to specific innovations but it is inevitably limited. It highlights some of the issues to explore by other methods, such as the strategies used by innovators to get their work known and the qualities, limitations and scope for development of these innovations perceived by reviewers, users, commentators and champions of them. Our ongoing work in this area, involving interviews with innovators, users, champions and methodologists, will provide greater insight to these issues.

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## Appendix 1: Citations of Netnography

### Applied

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## Appendix Two: Citations of Child-led Research

### Applied

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