Professor Peter Naudé, Manchester Business School, UK

This paper studies the relational attractiveness of the customer (RAC) and explores ways in which the customer can achieve attractiveness in the eyes of the supplier. We show how fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) is capable of dealing with the methodological challenges posed by complex business phenomena such as RAC. This method is especially useful in addressing causal complexity, that is the interaction between different drivers (conditions) leading to attractiveness. It also helps to answer the question as to whether alternative solutions (different configurations of conditions) can lead to attractiveness, and considers the asymmetrical nature of the attractiveness phenomenon. Despite the originally qualitative nature of fsQCA, it has primarily been applied to the analysis of large quantitative data sets in business research. This study offers a step-by-step approach to carry out fsQCA on qualitative data, based on the analysis of 28 in-depth interviews with senior managers on the supplier side. The study offers a Membership Evaluation Template (MET) that is useful to assign fuzzy set values to conditions identified in qualitative data. This research also incorporates aspects of RAC previously not analyzed in configurations such as relationship characteristics (Relational Fit), the network context (Comparison Level of Alternatives) as well as the time dimension (Maturity of Relationship).

Presenter: Peter Naudé studied at the University of Cape Town, graduating with a B. Bus. Sc. (Hons. in Marketing) in 1975. He then spent a few years working as a programmer (in the days of Fortran and 80-column cards!) before doing his M.Sc. (Operations Research) at Sussex in the UK, and then B.Sc. (Hons.) in Information Systems through UNISA. After a few years of management consulting, he joined the staff at the University of Cape Town as a Lecturer and then Senior Lecturer in Marketing between 1983 and 1988. He then left and joined Manchester Business School as a Doctoral student, and subsequently Lecturer and Senior Lecturer. He left MBS in 1999 to go to the University of Bath as Professor of Marketing. He returned to MBS in 2005, and between 2006 and 2012 he served as Deputy Director of MBS. In 2013/14 he served on the UK’s REF Panel as one of the two Marketing Assessors.