

## Designing the Design Tools" Field as a Meta-Research Fractal: Setting the Research Agenda

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### Abstract

*The two main concepts discussed here are those of meta-research and meta-design. There is abundant evidence that managers base their decisions either upon pure intuition or by using some “assisting artefacts” they call various names (tools, instruments, concepts, models, frameworks, methods, etc.). The scientific validity of such epistemic artefacts is obscured and doubtful, and their use is mostly governed by fads and fashion.*

*Our literature review reveals that organizational design instruments, while representing important part of those epistemic artefacts, are very fragmentally studied. The majority of papers on the topic (and on management tools in general) relates to the analysis of single type of tools (or just one specific tool), either deducing their general characteristics from theoretical foundations, or inducing studies of tools use into some applied framework. In turn, the field of purposeful design of such tools is even more scarce, with just a handful of published research. It seems logical that any design needs its own specific assisting artefacts – but, surprisingly, no research on such “design tools for designing tools”, i.e. meta-design, was ever undertaken.*

*The situation is even more intriguing because the design itself is commonly defined as a kind of research, that led to formation of the “Design Research” field. Here we arrive to the idea of meta-research (the research about research) – through design – for the meta-design, forming a sort of epistemic fractal.*

*The obvious follow-up for our literature review is setting the research agenda. Hence, we propose the initial hypotheses and research questions for it.*

**Keywords:** organizational design, design tools, meta-research, meta-design