



FEDERAL UNIVERSITY  
OF CEARÁ

# CONTEXTUS

## REVISTA CONTEMPORÂNEA DE ECONOMIA E GESTÃO

Contextus – Contemporary Journal of Economics and Management

ISSN 1678-2089  
ISSNe 2178-9258

[www.periodicos.ufc.br/contextus](http://www.periodicos.ufc.br/contextus)

### “Once upon a time [...]”: Stimulating management research through vignettes

“Era uma vez [...]”: Estimulando pesquisas em administração por meio de vinhetas

“Érase una vez [...]”: Estimulando la investigación gerencial a través de viñetas

<https://doi.org/10.19094/contextus.2023.83246>

#### Joacil Carlos Viana Bezerra

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7320-0148>

Administrative Technician at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB)  
PhD candidate in the Graduate Program in Administration at the Federal University of Paraíba (PPGA/UFPB)  
[joacilcarlosviana@gmail.com](mailto:joacilcarlosviana@gmail.com)

#### Ana Lúcia de Araújo Lima Coelho

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0877-6351>

Associate Professor at the Department of Administration at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB)  
PhD in Administration and Tourism from the University of Vale do Itajaí (UNIVALI)  
[alalcoelho@gmail.com](mailto:alalcoelho@gmail.com)

#### ABSTRACT

This methodological essay aims to present and reflect on some aspects to be considered when constructing and using vignettes as a data collection instrument. Characteristics, advantages and possible limitations of vignettes, practical circumstances of use, and frequently used formats are presented. These jointly-addressed aspects contribute to using vignettes in research in Administration, regardless of the perspective of the studies. As the vignette is a data collection instrument fairly used in Administration, this article can guide future researchers serving as a source for those more interested in understanding the characteristics of carrying out a study using vignettes.

**Keywords:** vignettes; research; methodology; instrument; data collect.

#### RESUMO

O propósito deste ensaio metodológico é apresentar e refletir sobre alguns aspectos a serem considerados por ocasião da construção e utilização das vinhetas como instrumento de coleta de dados. Características, vantagens e possíveis limitações das vinhetas, circunstâncias práticas de uso, formatos frequentemente utilizados são apresentados. Estes aspectos abordados conjuntamente contribuem para o uso das vinhetas nas pesquisas em Administração, independente da perspectiva dos estudos. Como a vinheta é um instrumento de coleta de dados pouco utilizado em Administração, este artigo pode ser um norte para futuros pesquisadores servindo de fonte para aqueles mais interessados em compreender as características para realizar um estudo utilizando vinhetas.

**Palavras-chave:** vinhetas; pesquisa; metodologia; instrumento; coleta de dados.

#### RESUMEN

El propósito de este ensayo metodológico es presentar y reflexionar sobre algunos aspectos a ser considerados al momento de construir y utilizar viñetas como instrumento de recolección de datos. Se presentan características, ventajas y posibles limitaciones de las viñetas, circunstancias prácticas de uso, formatos de uso frecuente. Estos aspectos abordados en conjunto contribuyen al uso de viñetas en la investigación en Administración, independientemente de la perspectiva de los estudios. Siendo la viñeta un instrumento de recolección de datos poco utilizado en la Administración, este artículo puede ser una guía para futuros investigadores sirviendo de fuente para aquellos más interesados en conocer las características para realizar un estudio mediante viñetas.

**Palabras clave:** viñetas; investigación; metodología; instrumento; recolección de datos.

#### Article Information

Uploaded on 06/01/2023  
Final version on 02/02/2023  
Accepted on 03/02/2023  
Published online on 06/06/2023

Interinstitutional Scientific Committee  
Editor-in-chief: Diego de Queiroz Machado  
Associated Editor: Henrique César Muzzio de Paiva Barroso  
Evaluation by the double blind review system (SEER / OJS - version 3)



#### How to cite this article:

Bezerra, J. C. V., & Coelho, A. L. A. L. (2023). “Once upon a time [...]”: Stimulating management research through vignettes. *Contextus – Contemporary Journal of Economics and Management*, 21, e83246.  
<https://doi.org/10.19094/contextus.2023.83246>

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The type of data that the researcher intends to collect becomes decisive in elaborating and using a research instrument. In research, it is possible to investigate more details about the perceptions and behaviors of participants regarding a certain phenomenon or to analyze a more sensitive situation without exposing the participant. In another research, we can investigate how the participants would act in a given context or even evaluate the conduct of the participants in a given situation experienced. Such questions, for example, can guide the construction of a data collection instrument. In this data collection and analysis perspective, we present and reflect on the vignettes in this methodological essay.

The literature points out that a vignette can be understood as stimuli (Hughes & Huby, 2002) that portray elements of reality and the participants are invited and often inspired to respond. The stimuli can be through a narration, an argument or the constructed description of a person, object or context seen or experienced from a specific point of view (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Törrönen, 2018). More objectively, the vignettes simulate real events that portray hypothetical situations (Wilks, 2004). These situations can be presented in texts, images, audio from messaging applications, stories on Instagram, posts on Facebook, short videos on TikTok, or longer videos on YouTube, to name a few illustrative examples.

The vignettes need to be configured in a realistic and contextualized way to stimulate the attention of the research participants. When they imitate or simulate real situations, they can capture, among other things, beliefs, emotions, attitudes, knowledge, perceptions, reflections and behaviors (Skilling & Stylianides, 2019), provoking responses from an imaginary person or the respondent himself through closed or open questions in quantitative, qualitative or multimethod research.

We recognize the insertion of the theme in Administration by Brazilian authors (Hoelz & Bataglia, 2015; Kirschbaum & Hoelz, 2014) when they use vignettes and present some considerations about their use. However, we intend to deepen this debate by pointing out ways to construct and use vignettes in Management research, which leads to the question: what aspects should researchers in Administration consider when constructing and using vignettes as a data collection instrument?

With this article, we want to initiate the methodological debate on the construction and use of vignettes in research in Administration, opening up opportunities for progress in filling methodological gaps. Therefore, this essay aims to contribute to researchers suggestively by presenting and reflecting on some aspects to consider when constructing and using vignettes. The discussion presented throughout the article may contribute to disseminating the use of the vignette as a data collection instrument in future research.

Despite its recurrent use in health, some authors (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2014; Gray et al., 2019; Jenkins et al., 2010) point to the low incidence of articles with a methodological focus on aspects of vignette construction. The literature also shows that using vignettes in Management research is incipient and needs to be debated and analyzed (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Wason et al., 2002).

The more effective use of vignettes in Management research can bring contributions to the theoretical and practical field to either support or advance emerging theories with new theoretical insights or to present evidence, social, behavioral or organizational practices. However, based on the discussions presented here, we believe that the greatest contribution is in the methodological path of the research since the vignettes can be used innovatively in several areas of Administration. Thus, the vignettes considered consolidated data collection instruments in the health care area would be able to promote new opportunities in a significant way for the researchers and their research in Administration.

When used in research with sensitive themes in which the participant does not feel comfortable explaining a personal situation, which can hide the reality of certain questions, research with vignettes can promote theorization of the study field, whether in Business Administration or another area of knowledge, by capturing how people interpret or classify reports from certain organizational contexts, when they present how the participants understand the discursive and social practices in the construction of reality or even when they address the participants' physiological, biological, psychological or social reactions, to mention some of the possibilities of use.

In this context, we understand that the debate established here contributes to the Administration field by addressing characteristics, advantages and possible limitations of vignettes, possible ways of use, frequently used formats and the construction and use of the vignette as a data collection instrument. These jointly-addressed aspects contribute to the greater appreciation and use of vignettes in research in Administration, regardless of the epistemological or ontological perspective of the studies.

## 2 VIGNETTES AND THEIR FORMATS

The emergence of the vignette is not well defined in the literature. However, Aznar (1990) points out that the Greek and Roman manuscripts contained only texts and in the fourth century, the church began to use engravings – figures, drawings and symbolic paintings – in the gospels to illustrate the texts for people with reading difficulties. The term vignette came from the French *vignette* and started to have a decorative function with the emergence of the press. It was later adapted for film, radio, television and the internet. In the media, electronic vignettes – fixed, animated or sound – use elements belonging to the collective imagination to persuade the receiver (Petrini, 2004). However, we will not treat vignettes as a persuasive element

for the receiver but rather their use as a data collection instrument in academic research.

As a data collection instrument, vignettes began to be used in the social sciences, with studies in Anthropology (Herskovitz, 1950) and Psychology (Walster, 1966) advancing in the 1980s to other areas such as Social Psychology (Murphy et al., 1986), Nursing (Johnson, & Beidleman, 1984) and Medicine (Roberts et al., 1984; Finch, 1987). Its insertion in health research was to overcome dissatisfaction with questionnaires, interviews and observations to study beliefs, norms, values and abstract concepts (Gould, 1996). Health research that uses vignettes deals with sensitive topics that an interview may not be able to capture (Wilks, 2004). These are studies addressing, for example, sexual health and HIV (Hughes, 1998), mental health, stigmatization and violence against specific vulnerable populations, such as children and drug users (Barter & Renold) or investigating how health practitioners make decisions that affect their patients (Törrönen, 2018).

Vignettes are usually presented in texts that can vary between short excerpts, unfinished sentences or extensive narratives. The choice of vignette format will be motivated by the research objectives, approach and questions, the nature of the responses and the participants involved (Hughes & Huby, 2002). In addition to text vignettes, we should consider images, news, folders, music, podcast, videos, advertising campaigns, film excerpts, live acts and comics as vignette options for research (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Barter & Renold, 2000; Gray et al., 2019; Hughes & Huby, 2002).

**Table 1**  
Example of a hypothetical vignette

| Vignette 03   | Answers   |
|---|---|
| You identified an environmental impact (waste disposal, use of toxic products, high energy consumption, impacts on natural environments from water use or deforestation) promoted by your company. However, the company is not very concerned about the environmental impacts it causes. How are you likely to respond? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) I do not consider that my workplace impacts negatively the environment.</li> <li>2) I am aware of the impacts but do not take any action.</li> <li>3) I am aware of impacts and let others take responsibility for reducing impacts.</li> <li>4) I develop strategies to reduce the environmental impact and contribute with others to implement actions to reduce impacts.</li> <li>5) I do something else not listed here. Please specify.</li> </ol> |

**Source:** Adapted from Sandri, Holdsworth & Thomas (2016, p. 11).

When we use a vignette form or a combination thereof (Berg Johansen & De Cock, 2018; Thomas et al., 2021; Törrönen, 2018), we must identify the level of the participant and the nature of the response we expect. Thus, the format and content of the vignette must be compatible with the research participants. Still focusing on the research participant, we need to analyze the degree of complexity and superficiality of the vignette, the clarity of the message, the language used and the way of applying the vignette, whether in person or online.

To carry out online research and with a combination of vignette formats (written and video), we can, for example, send an email to the participants asking them to read the description of the scenarios, watch the videos and present their answers (Sauer, 2011). We can also present social media posts (texts, images, audio or videos) and ask

Vignettes can be based on real cases or hypothetical situations. However, some authors (Macêdo & Bispo, 2022; Sampson & Johannessen, 2020) argue that vignettes based on real cases can increase the reliability of research data since participants are faced with previously experienced situations. However, the use of either hypothetical or real vignettes can promote a stimulus and help researchers who seek to make participants expose and reflect on their thoughts (Sampson & Johannessen, 2020). Next, we present a vignette based on real and hypothetical cases.

Macêdo and Bispo (2022) developed vignettes based on situations experienced by members of the Superior Council of a federal university. The authors followed some meetings (field observation) to understand how the Council works, took notes and then constructed vignettes that the Council members should answer.

Vignette 04: A student who received a postgraduate-level scholarship asked to receive the scholarship payment along with her salary as a public servant. Brazilian law allows for the cumulative granting of a scholarship and a job. However, other students in the selection do not have jobs and have not received scholarships. The graduate program voted to cancel the scholarship. How can we consider this question? What are the elements needed to make a decision? What should that decision be and why? (Macêdo & Bispo, 2022, p. 06).

However, we can use a hypothetical vignette in our research, like Sandri et al. (2016), who built vignettes to analyze what graduate students think about sustainability.

participants to respond to the post's content and comments, if any (Dunn & Harness, 2019).

These are examples that allow the researcher to understand that in studies that use vignettes, communication does not result only from the interaction between him and the participant but that the vignette format used will bring voices, points of view and narratives incorporated into the dialogue (Jenkins et al., 2010). When opting for a vignette format, or a combination of them, the researcher should analyze how they will be made available and reflect on the advantages and limitations of each format.

### 3 ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE USE OF VIGNETTES IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Whether used alone or in conjunction with other data collection instruments, vignettes can become valuable

research tools because they have a range of advantages. They allow the development of concrete research questions, helping avoid bland, generalized and difficult-to-interpret answers (Finch, 1987). Another advantage is that they provide greater realism to the researched context and allow participants to model real-life decision-making (Macêdo & Bispo, 2022), exploring the meanings and interpretations of certain contexts or phenomena.

Vignettes can simplify complex scenarios and create or expand the distance between the participant, the researcher and the scenario presented. We emphasize that the scenario in the vignette provides identical stimuli for all participants, removing interference from the researcher or interviewer in data collection (Barter & Renold, 2000; Gray et al., 2019; Wason et al., 2002). We also emphasize the collection time, the resources employed and the amount of data collected. Vignettes favor these aspects since they allow the collection of a large amount of data in a short time, allowing research to be conducted quickly and at a low cost (Murphy et al., 2021).

Another advantage is using vignettes in studies involving ethical problems that cannot be carried out through observation or when the participant feels uncomfortable being interviewed (Barter & Renold, 2000; Finch, 1987). Another highlight is that the vignette is a data collection instrument characterized by its flexibility, allowing the content and form to be adapted to the context in the search for greater reliability and credibility (Macêdo & Bispo, 2022). Thus, together with the researchers, the vignettes can develop reflective skills in building data collection instruments adapted to social and organizational contexts.

However, care must be taken with some limitations of vignettes as a data collection instrument. Vignettes that are too long or complex can make participants not focus on the narrative, just as static vignettes may not arouse the participant's interest, while vignettes that are too short can make understanding difficult (Barter & Renold, 2000; Gray et al., 2019). Therefore, the researcher should seek to minimize these effects when creating the vignettes.

Some critics of vignettes (Paddam et al., 2010; Spalding & Phillips, 2007) point out that participants may provide socially and ethically desirable responses. However, we do not see problems with this type of response depending on which perspective the participant will respond to. Another limitation concerns the participant's inability to transmit emotions through sound or vision, such as tone of voice, facial expressions and body language. However, if the researcher deems it important to analyze these aspects, he can use vignettes in a focus group or interview.

Following the limitations, Bradbury-Jones et al. (2014) argue that the participant is “removed” from his concrete context due to presenting situations he did not experience. It follows that the research may have as its objective the participant's understanding of a certain fact or action of a character and that he does not need to have experienced it to respond. If the concrete context is relevant to the research, we suggest that vignettes be constructed based on real cases.

Despite the challenges exposed, we believe that research that seeks to encourage participants to provide reports of their experiences, skills and abilities will be conducted satisfactorily and bring promising results when using vignettes as a data collection instrument since participants will not be provided with only a rigid and linear sequence of choices, none of which correspond to their beliefs (Finch, 1987). On the contrary, the vignettes can awaken the participants' reflective, interpretive and constructive side about certain contexts.

#### 4 VIGNETTE CONSTRUCTION

The actions to be developed in constructing these processes using vignettes are similar to other data collection approaches but with some peculiarities. These particularities include, for example, that the narrative presented in the vignettes be as detailed as possible and make the participants face a decision that is similar, or close, to their reality.

Based on the vignette presentation, the researcher can ask the participants to read, listen, watch, see illustrations or drawings and then answer the questions. Responses can be from the participant's point of view, from their peers, from the scenario presented in the vignette, from what the participant knows from the context of the vignette, or a combination of points of view (Hughes & Huby, 2002; Riley et al., 2021).

The construction of vignettes can be based on data from previous research, literature reviews, experience reports, partnerships with other professionals in the field, focus groups or based on the reality of the participants (Azman & Mahadhir, 2017; Barter & Renold, 2000; Bradbury-Jones et al., 2014). Vignettes should seek to reflect local contexts, creating a story that participants may experience or have experienced at some point. Barter and Renold (2000) point out that the participant's capacity for involvement, their experiences with the scenario described and how the story is presented are relevant factors in constructing vignettes.

The way the story is presented reminds us of the consistency and complexity of the vignettes. Consistency refers to how much the situation presented is real or unreal. We understand that the less hypothetical the vignettes are, the more likely they are to provoke responses based on the real behaviors of the participants, whereas unrealistic narratives or scenarios can lead participants to negative reactions (Finch, 1987). Mudrack and Mason (2021) constructed overly hypothetical vignettes without relevance for the participants and recognized these factors as a study limitation.

The complexity of the vignettes, in turn, can be understood as the format and language to be used. To assess the consistency and complexity of the vignettes produced, we suggest that experts analyze them by assessing the representation of situations and the subject addressed (Gould, 1996). This procedure makes the

vignettes more realistic and with more appropriate language, making the participants feel more interested in participating in the research.

Bradbury-Jones et al. (2012) point out that knowing the nature of the participants is important, as it allows greater interaction between them and the researchers. The nature of the participant is linked, among other things, to the gender and language used, age, professional profile and level of education of the respondent. Therefore, vignettes can be a means for the researcher to capture data empirically and in a participatory, engaged and active way.

After the construction of the vignettes and assessment by specialists, we suggest carrying out a pilot study (Leal et al., 2019; Sandri et al., 2016) in a small sample of 10 to 15 participants, with similar characteristics to the one that will be used in the research. This prior application will show the researcher whether the responses presented through the vignettes are achieving the research objectives and whether the format of the vignette used is adequate with the study approach (Gray et al., 2019). We present three stages for constructing and applying vignettes based on the considerations presented and seeking to contribute to future research.

**Table 2**  
Construction and application of vignettes

| Phase                    | Actions   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Preparation              | Define the context and focus of the research.   |
|                          | Become familiar with the context in which the participants are inserted.  |
|                          | Define the factors that will be analyzed in the research.   |
|                          | Review the literature to identify other studies that have analyzed similar factors.   |
| Elaboration              | Check the availability of existing vignettes that can be used in the research.  |
|                          | Interview experts on the theme to be developed in the research.   |
|                          | Interview people who have had similar experiences or faced similar situations to those that will be analyzed in the research. |
|                          | Elaborate on the parameters of the scenario of the vignette.  |
|                          | Define the most appropriate format for the vignettes based on the participants and the research objectives.                   |
|                          | Develop the vignettes, their different versions, and the survey questions.  |
| Application and analysis | Submit the vignettes to the appreciation of specialists.  |
|                          | Correct and adjust, if necessary, the wording of the vignettes.   |
|                          | Carry out a pre-test with a group of people in conditions similar to the research's.  |
|                          | Correct the vignettes if necessary.   |
|                          | Define how vignettes will be applied (virtual or face-to-face).   |
|                          | Indicate the form of delivery and how to respond to the vignette.   |
|                          | Apply vignettes providing adequate time for responses.  |
|                          | Structure the answers.  |

**Source:** Designed by the authors.

We understand that the phases and actions, exemplary and not mandatory, described in Table 2, can serve as a guide to encourage researchers to adopt vignettes as a data collection instrument, although we know that there are no predominant processes for the construction of vignettes.

## 5 APPLICATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES OF USE OF VIGNETTES

Vignettes can be used either in quantitative, qualitative or multimethod approaches. In quantitative research, they can be used as producers of measurability, dealing with causal impulses or participants' projections to assess reactions and their cultural values. In contrast, qualitative research can be used to construct the phenomenon studied, allowing the researcher to explore the participants' feelings, experiences and interpretations (Törrönen, 2018).

Multimethod research can also use vignettes (Jennings et al., 2015) to clarify issues addressed in closed questions (Leal et al., 2019). We understand that no research tool can capture organizational or social complexity. However, by using a multimethod approach,

researchers can take advantage of the strengths of each data collection instrument (Barter & Renold, 2000).

Another highlighted aspect is that the initial studies using vignettes were mostly quantitative. These studies typically employ vignetting as a stand-alone method or follow a large-scale survey. Participants are presented with standardized vignettes and invited to respond using predetermined categories (Barter & Renold, 2000).

However, we agree with Gray et al. (2019) that vignettes play an important role in the qualitative approach, as well as in multimethod research, as they are valuable tools in exploring perceptions, reflections, attitudes, social constructions, and discursive structures of the participants either about certain contexts or phenomena analyzed. By using an open question in the vignette, we can access the narratives of individuals mediating between reflection, interpretation and action. These aspects are suppressed in a 'totally agree' or 'totally disagree' response. Therefore, when using vignettes in qualitative research, the researcher forces the participant's involvement in an interpretive or constructive process.

Vignettes can be used as a data collection tool in Business Administration in studies of the influence of social media in organizations (Dunn & Harness, 2019), entrepreneurship (Törrönen, 2018), change management

(Ashta et al., 2018), partnerships through strategic alliances (Hoelz & Bataglia, 2019), employability of graduates (Mullen et al., 2019), development of new products (Jennings et al., 2015; McKelvie et al., 2011), co-creation of collective services (Carù & Cova, 2015), ethical leadership (Hassan et al., 2021), and consumer decisions or behavior (Wason et al., 2002), to name a few areas.

In the field of sustainability, we highlight the studies by Leal et al. (2019) and Thomas et al. (2021). The first used vignettes to analyze the sustainability practices employed in the purchasing processes of Higher Education Institutions, as well as the facilitating aspects and the challenges faced in these processes, while the second study combined vignettes with interviews and a Likert scale to analyze which dimensions of sustainability are considered important by corporate purchasing managers when selecting suppliers.

Another area that presents a study using vignettes is social responsibility. Liu and Xu (2021) addressed the effects of social responsibility initiatives on consumers' purchase intentions. The participants received links to a vignette (electronic catalogue) that advertised various products supplied by the companies and presented different information from the suppliers regarding aspects of social responsibility. Subsequently, participants should answer whether they would buy products from these companies and justify the reasons. We emphasize that social responsibility can be studied through vignettes from the perception of the different stakeholders of the organizations, as well as the actions implemented and developed in organizational contexts.

Thus, the vignettes may also be useful in research, such as emphasizing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Research can address education for sustainability in Business Administration curricula, focusing on how these disciplines are taught and the students' conceptions. Another option for using vignettes is to study SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), focusing on sustainable public procurement. Researchers can build vignettes from situations experienced by agents in the procurement sector of public bodies and invite participants to reflect and respond to the scenarios described.

We emphasize that the topics covered can be studied through vignettes applied individually or within a focus group (Sandri et al., 2016), seeking to encourage the shyest participants to express their opinions. There are several possibilities of use, and we try to bring some insights for future research. We emphasize that vignettes can happen in realistic, idealistic or intersubjective ontological perspectives and with objectivist, subjectivist or constructivist epistemologies, depending on the theoretical and methodological conceptions of the researcher and the research objectives (Jenkins et al., 2010).

Regardless of perspective, vignettes can be used to research sensitive topics. However, researchers cannot fail to observe the ethical principles of research in human and social sciences (Brasil, 2016). In addition to the principles

established by Resolution, the researcher must explain the objective of the research to the participants, guarantee data confidentiality, ensure the participants' anonymity, including the use of image and voice, explain the voluntary nature and withdrawal of participation in the research at any time, request the signature of the Free and Informed Consent Form and, if applicable, submit the research project to the Ethics Committee to which the researcher is linked (Barter, 2000; Skilling, 2019), among other things.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

This article intended to present, discuss and propose using vignettes as a data collection instrument by researchers in Administration. We offer a perspective that adheres to the research approach in Administration using vignettes, debating from their origins, definitions and conceptual elements, formats, advantages and limitations, relevant aspects in their construction and practical circumstances of use in the different areas of Administration.

There are several possibilities for using vignettes. We try to bring some insights to future studies that seek dense descriptions of narratives to make the research more 'live' for the participants, whether in ethnographic, ethnomethodological or phenomenological research. In addition to the possibilities of use that were discussed throughout the text, we suggest the use of vignettes, as a data collection instrument, in organizational research addressing topics such as quality of life and its reflections, knowledge and organizational behavior, change management, volunteering in Civil Society Organizations, behavioral reactions with projective techniques, social participation, education for sustainability or sensitive issues such as diversity, inclusion or gender relations in organizations.

We understand that research using vignettes is appropriate and contributes to understanding how people deal with complex issues, build their judgments or make decisions. So that these aspects can reflect the participants' way of acting, we suggest that the vignettes should be planned and constructed in a clear, realistic way and contain the necessary information for the participants to provide the answers that meet the research objectives.

Thus, stimuli for the production and use of vignettes can be found everywhere in modern society, whether in audio or images shared via WhatsApp, stories on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok or YouTube, to name a few. Thus, when using vignettes with these characteristics, the researcher will have greater ease in the planning, production and data collection since the participants are stimulated and provoked daily by these scenarios. These scenarios contribute so that the vignettes can help in the theoretical and methodological path of the research in Administration or other areas of knowledge, presenting themselves as an innovative instrument in the collection of

data, adding value to sensitive themes, for allowing the use of social media as a support in the construction or use and for the aspect of letting the participant express himself freely in his answers, analyses and interpretations.

Therefore, vignettes become alternatives to be used in conjunction with other data collection methods (interviews, focus groups, questionnaires) to reinforce the information collected by other instruments. The field's theoretical and methodological advancement involves innovative data collection instruments. The vignettes can present more detailed information than those collected from more traditional methods, facilitating the theorization process in the field of Administration. Thus, the vignette can be used in research in Administration when the questionnaires alone do not obtain the necessary information or when observing or interviewing is not the most appropriate, practical or ethical way.

It is not about presenting consensuses or petrifying supposed truths. Throughout the article, we sought to present possibilities for using the vignette as a data collection instrument capable of leading the participant to reflect on the scenarios described and present their conceptions about certain organizational phenomena more realistically since they can report deeper levels of understanding of the situation narrated in the vignette. Thus, the vignettes demonstrate potential in generating or constructing data and can be used independently in research or combined with other methods, techniques or instruments.

Vignettes are important not only for theoretical advancement, as we explore how individuals vary in interpreting these situations, but also for teaching business. From another perspective, when we use vignettes in the classroom, we will lead our students to sharpen their decision-making in complex and unstructured situations, and we will be able to develop or awaken reflexivity in action. Undergraduate or graduate professors can use vignettes to provoke debates and encourage students' reflection and problem-solving (Mullen et al., 2019) along with the teaching-learning process.

As the vignette is a data collection instrument fairly used in Administration, this article can guide future researchers serving as a source for those more interested in understanding the characteristics of carrying out a study using vignettes. We hope that the aspects listed here can provide a starting point in developing research using vignettes as a more heterogeneous instrument, whether in research in Administration or other areas of knowledge.

## REFERENCES

- Aguinis, H., & Bradley, K. J. (2014). Best practice recommendations for designing and implementing experimental vignette methodology studies. *Organizational Research Methods*, 17(4), 351-371. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428114547952>
- Ashta, A., Stokes, P., & Hughes, P. (2018). Change management in Indo-Japanese cross-cultural collaborative contexts: Parallels between traditional Indian philosophy and contemporary Japanese management. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 31(1), 154-172. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-05-2017-0201>
- Azman, H., & Mahadhir, M. (2017). Application of the vignette technique in a qualitative paradigm. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 17(4), 27-44. <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2017-1704-03>
- Aznar, S. C. (1990). *Vinheta: Do pergaminho ao vídeo*. Universidade de São Paulo.
- Barter, C., & Renold, E. (2000). I wanna tell you a story: Exploring the application of vignettes in qualitative research with children and young people. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 3(4), 307-323. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570050178594>
- Berg Johansen, C., & De Cock, C. (2018). Ideologies of time: How elite corporate actors engage the future. *Organization*, 25(2), 186-204. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508417725592>
- Bradbury-Jones, C., Taylor, J., & Herber, O. R. (2014). Vignette development and administration: A framework for protecting research participants. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 17(4), 427-440. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2012.750833>
- Brasil (2016). Resolução n. 510, de 07 de abril de 2016. *Ética na Pesquisa na área de Ciências Humanas e Sociais*. Brasília: CNS.
- Carù, A., & Cova, B. (2015). Co-creating the collective service experience. *Journal of Service Management*, 26(2), 276-294. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOSM-07-2014-0170>
- Dunn, K., & Harness, D. (2019). Whose voice is heard? The influence of user-generated versus company-generated content on consumer scepticism towards CSR. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 35(9-10), 1605-1621. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2019.1605401>
- Finch, J. (1987). The vignette technique in survey research. *Sociology*, 21(1), 105-114.
- Gould, D. (1996). Using vignettes to collect data for nursing research studies: how valid are the findings? *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 5, 207-212.
- Gray, D., Royall, B., & Malson, H. (2019). Falando hipoteticamente - Uso de Vinhetas como método qualitativo independente. In V. Braun, V. Clarke, & D. Gray (Eds.), *Coleta de dados qualitativos: um guia prático para técnicas textuais, midiáticas e virtuais* (p. 385). Editora Vozes.
- Hassan, S., Pandey, S., & Pandey, S. K. (2021). Should managers provide general or specific ethical guidelines to employees: Insights from a mixed methods study. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 172(3), 563-580. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04442-3>
- Herskovits, M. J. (1950). The hypothetical situation: A technique of field research. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 6(1), 32-40.
- Hoelz, J. C., & Bataglia, W. (2015). O uso de vinhetas em estudos qualitativos. *Investigação Qualitativa em Ciências Sociais*, 3(1), 64-69.
- Hoelz, J. C., & Bataglia, W. (2019). Eventos prejudiciais à reputação corporativa: Um estudo exploratório utilizando a técnica de vinhetas. *Âmbitos - Revista Internacional de Comunicação*, 44, 33-53. <https://doi.org/10.12795/ambitos.2019.i44.03>
- Hughes, R. (1998). Considering the vignette technique and its application to a study of drug injecting and HIV risk and safer behaviour. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 20(3), 381-400. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.00107>
- Hughes, R., & Huby, M. (2002). The application of vignettes in social and nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 37(4), 382-386.

- Hughes, R., & Huby, M. (2004). The construction and interpretation of vignettes in social research. *Social Work and Social Sciences Review*, 11(1), 36-51. <https://doi.org/10.1921/17466105.11.1.36>
- Jenkins, N., Bloor, M., Fischer, J., Berney, L., & Neale, J. (2010). Putting it in context: The use of vignettes in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative Research*, 10(2), 175-198. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794109356737>
- Jennings, J. E., Edwards, T., Jennings, P. D., & Delbridge, R. (2015). Emotional arousal and entrepreneurial outcomes: Combining qualitative methods to elaborate theory. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 30(1), 113-130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2014.06.005>
- Kirschbaum, C., & Hoelz, J. C. (2014). A confiança em situações ambivalentes e incongruentes: A utilização de vinhetas como método exploratório. *RAM - Revista de Administração Mackenzie*, 15(3), 42-68. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1678-69712014/administracao.v15n3p42-68>
- Kirwan, J. R., De Saintonge, D. C., Joyce, C. R., & Currey, H. L. (1983). Clinical judgment in rheumatoid arthritis. I. Rheumatologists' opinions and the development of 'paper patients'. *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases*, 42, 644-647.
- Leal, W., Filho, Skouloudis, A., Brandli, L. L., Salvia, A. L., Avila, L. V., & Rayman-Bacchus, L. (2019). Sustainability and procurement practices in higher education institutions: Barriers and drivers. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 231, 1267-1280. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.05.202>
- Liu, Y., & Xu, C. (2021). Consumer intention to purchase and corporate social responsibility: Evidence from an experiment in an entrepreneurial context. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1987>
- Macêdo, N. M., & Bispo, M. de S. (2022). Qualitative vignettes drawing on real cases as method in organizational research. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences / Revue Canadienne Des Sciences de l'Administration*, 2022, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cjas.1692>
- McKelvie, A., Haynie, J. M., & Gustavsson, V. (2011). Unpacking the uncertainty construct: Implications for entrepreneurial action. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 26(3), 273-292. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2009.10.004>
- Mudrack, P. E., & Mason, E. S. (2021). Vignette themes and moral reasoning in business contexts: The case for the defining issues test. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 181, 979-995. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04944-8>
- Mullen, E., Alexander, J., & Coates, N. (2019). 'Think about what our industry stands for...': Exploring the impact of external factors on line manager perceptions of graduate employability. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 1, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2019.1646381>
- Murphy, J., Hughes, J., Read, S., & Ashby, S. (2021). Evidence and practice: a review of vignettes in qualitative research. *Nurse Researcher*, 29(3), 8-14. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.2021.e1787>
- Murphy, K. R., Herr, B. M., Lockhart, M. C., & Maguire, E. (1986). Evaluating the performance of paper people. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71, 654-661.
- Paddam, A., Barnes, D., & Langdon, D. (2010). Constructing vignettes to investigate anger in multiple sclerosis. *Nurse Researcher*, 17(2), 60-73. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2010.01.17.2.60.c7463>
- Petrini, P. (2004). Um estudo crítico sobre o significado das vinhetas da Rede Globo. *Acta Scientiarum - Human and Social Sciences*, 26(1), 123-133. <https://doi.org/10.4025/actascihumansoc.v26i1.1568>
- Riley, A. H., Critchlow, E., Birkenstock, L., Itzoe, M. L., Senter, K., Holmes, N. M., & Buffer, S. W. (2021). Vignettes as research tools in global health communication: A systematic review of the literature from 2000 to 2020. *Journal of Communication in Healthcare*, 14(4), 283-292. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17538068.2021.1945766>
- Roberts, M. C., Johnson, A. Q., & Beidleman, W. B. (1984). The role of socioeconomic status on children's perceptions of medical and psychological disorders. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 13, 243-249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15374418409533197>
- Sampson, H., & Johannessen, I. A. (2020). Turning on the tap: The benefits of using 'real-life' vignettes in qualitative research interviews. *Qualitative Research*, 20(1), 56-72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794118816618>
- Sandri, O., Holdsworth, S., & Thomas, I. (2016). Vignette question design for the assessment of graduate sustainability learning outcomes. *Environmental Education Research*, 24(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2016.1263280>
- Sauer, S. J. (2011). Taking the reins: The effects of new leader status and leadership style on team performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(3), 574-587. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022741>
- Skilling, K., & Stylianides, G. J. (2019). Using vignettes in educational research: A framework for vignette construction. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 43(5), 541-556. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2019.1704243>
- Spalding, N. J., & Phillips, T. (2007). Exploring the use of vignettes: from validity to trustworthiness. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(7), 954-962. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732307306187>
- Thomas, R., Darby, J. L., Dobrzykowski, D., & van Hoek, R. (2021). Decomposing Social sustainability: Signaling theory Insights into supplier selection decisions. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 57(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/jscm.12247>
- Törrönen, J. (2018). Using vignettes in qualitative interviews as clues, microcosms or provokers. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 18(3), 276-286. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-D-17-00055>
- Walster, E. (1966). Assignment of responsibility for an automobile accident. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 3, 73-79.
- Wason, K. D., Polonsky, M. J., & Hyman, M. R. (2002). Designing vignette research in marketing. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 10(3), 41-58. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1441-3582\(02\)70157-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1441-3582(02)70157-2)
- Wilks, T. (2004). The use of vignettes in qualitative research into social work values. *Qualitative Social Work*, 3(1), 78-87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325004041133>
- Yanow, D., & Tsoukas, H. (2009). What is reflection-in-action? A phenomenological account. *Journal of Management Studies*, 46(8), 1339-1364. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2009.00859.x>



**CONTEXTUS**

CONTEMPORARY JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS AND  
MANAGEMENT.

**ISSN 1678-2089**

**ISSNe 2178-9258**

1. Economics, Administration and Accounting - Journal  
2. Federal University of Ceará. Faculty of Economics,  
Administration, Actuaries and Accounting

**FACULTY OF ECONOMICS, ADMINISTRATION, ACTUARIES  
AND ACCOUNTING**

University Av. – 2486, Benfica  
60020-180, Fortaleza-CE

**BOARD:** Paulo Rogério Faustino Matos  
Danielle Augusto Peres

**Website:** [www.periodicos.ufc.br/contextus](http://www.periodicos.ufc.br/contextus)

**E-mail:** [revistacontextus@ufc.br](mailto:revistacontextus@ufc.br)

**CONTEXTUS**  
REVISTA CONTEMPORÂNEA  
DE ECONOMIA E GESTÃO

UNIVERSIDADE  
FEDERAL  
DO CEARÁ

FACULDADE  
DE ECONOMIA,  
ADMINISTRAÇÃO,  
ATUÁRIA  
E CONTABILIDADE

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Diego de Queiroz Machado (UFC)

**ASSISTANT EDITORS**

Alane Siqueira Rocha (UFC)

Márcia Zabdiele Moreira (UFC)

**ASSOCIATE EDITORS**

Adriana Rodrigues Silva (IPSantarém, Portugal)

Alessandra de Sá Mello da Costa (PUC-Rio)

Allysson Alex Araújo (UFC)

Andrew Beheregarai Finger (UFAL)

Armando dos Santos de Sousa Teodósio (PUC-MG)

Brunno Fernandes da Silva Gaião (UEPB)

Carlos Enrique Carrasco Gutierrez (UCB)

Cláudio Bezerra Leopoldino (UFC)

Dalton Chaves Vilela Júnior (UFAM)

Elionor Farah Jreige Weffort (FECAP)

Ellen Campos Sousa (Gardner-Webb, USA)

Gabriel Moreira Campos (UFES)

Guilherme Jonas Costa da Silva (UFU)

Henrique César Muzzio de Paiva Barroso (UFPE)

Jorge de Souza Bispo (UFBA)

Keysa Manuela Cunha de Mascena (UNIFOR)

Manuel Anibal Silva Portugal Vasconcelos Ferreira (UNINOVE)

Marcos Cohen (PUC-Rio)

Marcos Ferreira Santos (La Sabana, Colombia)

Mariluce Paes-de-Souza (UNIR)

Minelle Enéas da Silva (La Rochelle, France)

Pedro Jácome de Moura Jr. (UFPB)

Rafael Fernandes de Mesquita (IFPI)

Rosimeire Pimentel (UFES)

Sonia Maria da Silva Gomes (UFBA)

Susana Jorge (UC, Portugal)

Thiago Henrique Moreira Goes (UFPR)

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

Ana Sílvia Rocha Ipiranga (UECE)

Conceição de Maria Pinheiro Barros (UFC)

Danielle Augusto Peres (UFC)

Diego de Queiroz Machado (UFC)

Editinete André da Rocha Garcia (UFC)

Emerson Luís Lemos Marinho (UFC)

Eveline Barbosa Silva Carvalho (UFC)

Fátima Regina Ney Matos (ISMT, Portugal)

Mario Henrique Ogasavara (ESPM)

Paulo Rogério Faustino Matos (UFC)

Rodrigo Bandeira-de-Mello (FGV-EAESP)

Vasco Almeida (ISMT, Portugal)

**SCIENTIFIC EDITORIAL BOARD**

Alexandre Reis Graeml (UTFPR)

Augusto Cezar de Aquino Cabral (UFC)

Denise Del Pra Netto Machado (FURB)

Ednilson Bernardes (Georgia Southern University, USA)

Ely Laureano Paiva (FGV-EAESP)

Eugenio Ávila Pedrozo (UFRGS)

Francisco José da Costa (UFPB)

Isak Kruglianskas (FEA-USP)

José Antônio Puppim de Oliveira (UCL)

José Carlos Barbieri (FGV-EAESP)

José Carlos Lázaro da Silva Filho (UFC)

José Célio de Andrade (UFBA)

Luciana Marques Vieira (UNISINOS)

Luciano Barin-Cruz (HEC Montréal, Canada)

Luis Carlos Di Serio (FGV-EAESP)

Marcelle Colares Oliveira (UFC)

Maria Ceci Araujo Misoczky (UFRGS)

Mônica Cavalcanti Sá Abreu (UFC)

Mozar José de Brito (UFL)

Renata Giovinzio Spers (FEA-USP)

Sandra Maria dos Santos (UFC)

Walter Bataglia (MACKENZIE)



Contextus is classified in the Qualis - Capes system as a B1 journal, in the area of Public and Business Administration, Accounting and Tourism (2013-2016).



Contextus agrees and signs the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA).



Contextus is associated with the Brazilian Association of Scientific Editors.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial 4.0 International license.