

**LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK:
THE *BRITISH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT* 2000-2015**

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ABSTRACT

This paper reflects on 16 years of the *British Journal of Management (BJM)* and discusses what the future holds. The paper analyses publication statistics and submission figures, as well as Special Interest Group (SIG) affiliation of submissions over the more recent period of 2007 to 2015. We find that human resource management (HRM) has a clear dominance among the SIGs. Other fields that are well represented include strategy, work psychology, corporate governance and performance management. We also highlight that submissions to *BJM* are predominantly made by UK-based authors, possibly reflecting the concentration of UK-based academics among the pool of associate editors and the editorial board members.

Keywords: Bibliographic analysis; publication characteristics; future outlook; editorial

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INTRODUCTION

The *British Journal of Management (BJM)* was established by David Otley in 1990. It is the official journal of the British Academy of Management (BAM). It publishes articles that are multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary, as well as empirical research from traditional disciplines and managerial functions. *BJM* is a general management journal that seeks to advance applied and theoretical business knowledge. Therefore, the expectation is that all submissions should be firm or organisation centred in their approach, and make a clear contribution to extending what we know and what we understand; small scale studies and modest advances to knowledge are discouraged (see also Wood and Budhwar, 2015).

Given that *BJM* has now been published for more than 25 years, the time has come to take stock. This article attempts to achieve this aim by reflecting on the recent past, more precisely, the last 16 years for which reasonable publication data is available. It also looks forward by proposing areas of interest for new submissions.

ANALYSIS OF PUBLICATIONS IN AND SUBMISSIONS TO *BJM*

As a generalist journal, *BJM* should reflect the diversity of business and management research. Hence, while it does publish papers from traditional disciplines, it encourages multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research. Importantly, *BJM* does still expect papers from traditional disciplines to spell out the meaning of their results for the wider business and management literature as well as practice.

In the following section, we break down papers published in (submitted to) *BJM* since 2000 (2007) according to the primary and secondary “special interest groups” (SIGs) a paper is submitted to, the region the submitting author comes from and the keywords supplied by authors. These analyses provide a reasonable overview of the kind of papers submitted to and published in the journal.

SIG affiliation

The members of the British Academy of Management (BAM) are organized into 21 SIGs. *BJM* mirrors that organizational structure and encourages each author who submits a paper to choose their primary and secondary SIG.

Table 1 reports submissions between 2007 and 2015 (SIG information for earlier submissions is not available and the reader should note that the SIG names used are those at the time of the submission). The figures show a clear dominance of the Human Resource Management SIG. *BJM* papers predominantly contribute to the fields of human resource management, strategy, work psychology, corporate governance and performance management.

Table 1 about here

When considering submissions over time, that pattern has been stable over the years with the notable exception of marketing-related topics, which have seen a decline of over 50% over that period.

Considering which combinations of SIGs are most prevalent, Table 2 shows that human resource management and organizational psychology in combination are chosen 90 times, far more than any other combination. Apart from this combination, we find a wide variety of combinations, indicating the cross-disciplinary nature of much of the research published in *BJM*.

Table 2 about here

We also find that papers submitted to the marketing & retailing area most often show research methodology and performance management as the secondary SIG. This is surprising as combinations like marketing & retailing and inter-organisational collaboration, marketing & retailing and innovation, or marketing & retailing and identity as can be found in main-stream marketing and retail journals hardly feature at all. Apparently, the current marketing & retailing area does not attract main-stream marketing scholars to submit their best work.

Corporate governance as a primary SIG is typically combined with performance management, sustainable & responsible business, public management & governance, and leadership & leadership development. It is also important to highlight that, as a secondary SIG, corporate governance is frequently combined with corporate social responsibility, and gender in management as the primary SIG. Corporate finance itself is not an SIG, but it would likely be found in SIGs such as performance management, corporate governance, corporate social responsibility, and possibly research methodology.

Region

While the aim of *BJM* is to become a premier outlet for management research world-wide, we must acknowledge that, as of now, it is predominantly a Europe-focussed journal (Table 3 for details¹). An analysis of all submissions from 2000 until 2015 (n=4,710) shows that about three quarters of all papers come from Europe, around 11% from North America and about another 11% from Australasia and Asia. Looking at individual countries, we further note that the vast majority of submissions (43%) come from the UK, followed by the USA with about 8%. When considering only published papers between 2000 and 2015 (n=678), the picture is very similar, with nearly 50% of all published papers originating from the UK.

Table 3 about here

¹ The “country of origin” of a paper is determined by the country the submitting author comes from. We have no information about the country any of the co-authors are coming from. Therefore, we might under-estimate the number of non-UK authors of *BJM* papers.

While one would typically expect that a journal with the word “British” in its name would attract a fair share of submissions from UK-based researchers, the preponderance of submissions from the UK is nevertheless difficult to reconcile with the journal’s aspiration of publishing papers with an “internationally significant nature” and “from around the globe.” What can be done to broaden the journal’s world-wide appeal?

First, the BAM SIGs omit important research fields such as accounting, finance and regional studies. While this does not seem to prevent UK-based researchers in accounting and finance from submitting their papers to the journal it may nevertheless discourage foreign-based researchers from doing so. Indeed, the latter may not have the tacit knowledge that the journal welcomes papers from non-BAM SIGs. Hence, there is a need to educate potential authors that such papers are welcome. Of course, the need remains that papers from traditional disciplines clearly spell out the implications for business and management of their results.

Second, except for one of the associate editors all of the editors and associate editors have UK affiliations. While there is more geographic diversity among the editorial board members, nevertheless exactly half of the 98 members have UK affiliations. However, recently *BJM* has made a conscious effort to appoint additional associate editors and editorial board members with affiliations outside the UK or considerable links with overseas institutions. Still, clearly more needs to be done in the next years.

Finally, while the journal is highly regarded in the UK its recognition and reputation outside the UK is somewhat more limited. To a great extent, its strong reputation in the UK stems from its 4* rating in the Journal Quality Guide of the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS). Again, this would call for the journal to interact more with a wider range of audiences. Hopefully, this article will go some way in achieving this.

Keywords

We analyse the author-provided keywords of all published articles between 2000 and 2015 (n=678). In sum, they list a total of 4,623 keywords². The list is clearly dominated by the terms “performance,” “management,” “organisation,” “knowledge” and “strategy,” each – in various combinations – accounting for the vast majority of keywords. A graphical representation of all keywords in a word cloud illustrates this³.

Figure 1 about here

² We do not have information about the keywords of all 4,710 submitted papers.

³ The cloud was created using www.wordle.net, a web application that gives greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in source texts.

It is worth noting that keywords one would expect from marketing and retail papers do not feature. For instance, the term “marketing,” typically used in conjunction with other terms such as “marketing strategy,” as well as “customer” only feature about 20 times each. More recent developments such as topics around customer participation, customer engagement and value co-creation barely appear.

Similarly, recent hot topics in corporate finance – and clearly of interest to a wider audience – such as angel finance, venture capital, crowd financing, or crypto currencies are – based on keywords – not discussed in *BJM*. A similar dearth of keywords can be noticed in the corporate governance area.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

Clearly, *BJM* is well placed among management journals in terms of topics covered. However, we believe that some current topics and issues are either under-represented or lack a clear cross- or multi-disciplinary nature – in line with *BJM*'s remit. As a result, we would encourage colleagues to consider submitting additional work in such areas. Here, we make suggestions in terms of the areas of Marketing & Retailing, Corporate Governance and Corporate Finance, but would welcome input as to priorities in other fields. Below we outline some specific areas of interest from each of these three wider topic areas.

Marketing & Retailing

The Marketing & Retailing area is a fairly wide field of study, spanning across consumer behaviour, strategy, marketing operations and supply chain topics. *BJM* would be interested in topics with a clear managerial focus. A good indication for that is the nature of the dependent variable – or variable of interest in qualitative studies – which is under investigation. If for instance firm performance or customer lifetime value is an important variable, *BJM* would certainly be interested. Traditional consumer behaviour topics that aim at understanding human behaviour without clear implications for managerial decision making might not be suitable.

This non-exhaustive list of potential topics might inspire submissions to the Marketing & Retailing track of *BJM*:

- Managing (retail) innovation
- Use of (disruptive) technologies in marketing and retailing
- Managing customer experience
- Customer value and loyalty management
- Joint value creation
- Performance impact of marketing strategy
- Managing (big) data
- Managing the interface between firms and customers

Furthermore, as the field of marketing & retailing is maturing, we would encourage summary articles of important streams within the field, empirical meta-analyses in particular. We would also look favourably at rigorous replication studies of important phenomena with a view to generalize findings and create more reliable building blocks of knowledge in the field.

Corporate Governance

Corporate governance is not only a fast-growing area of academic research, but it is also multi- and interdisciplinary by its very nature. It encompasses a number of disciplines, including strategy, accounting, finance, HRM, entrepreneurship, and law. Within corporate governance, there are also a number of emerging areas such as board gender diversity and leadership. This is reflected in how many times corporate governance is combined, as a primary SIG or secondary SIG, with gender in management, and leadership & leadership development.

BJM solicits papers on corporate governance that make justice to the multi- and interdisciplinary nature of this research area. Such papers could for example combine methodologies, such as regression analysis and interviews. Typically, existing papers use either methodology, but not both. The advantage of papers using both methodologies would include more granularity in the results and also possibly one methodology confirming the findings of the other one, and vice-versa. Yet another advantage of using both methodologies would stem from the interviews possibly setting the scene by formulating a set of research questions or hypotheses, which the quantitative analysis would then attempt to answer or validate (see e.g. Goergen *et al.*, 2014). Still, there are other interesting avenues in corporate governance research which have received little or no attention and would benefit from a multi-and interdisciplinary approach. One such topic includes boardroom dynamics which would benefit from the joint input of finance, psychology and organisational scholars. To date this topic has been analysed in isolation by all three disciplines, with scholars frequently adopting a silo mentality.

While not claiming to be exhaustive, the following list suggests a number of areas in corporate governance research that *BJM* would be interested in:

- The behavioural aspects of boards of directors
- Board diversity beyond board gender diversity, including ethnic and religious diversity
- Is there a link between corporate culture and corporate governance?
- Governance of not-for-profit organisations, cooperatives and mutual organisations

Corporate Finance

There is a rapid move away from financial intermediation – partly as a result of the 2008 financial crisis – via new emerging financial practices such as crowd financing, crypto-currencies and blockchains. These developments will have major consequences in terms of how new ventures as well as more established businesses will finance themselves. Again, this is an area *BJM* should tap into as it generates clear managerial implications and it is also an area benefitting from a mix of methodological approaches as well as different theoretical lenses and perspectives.

Further, a lot of finance journals tend to be conservative and prefer the use of quantitative secondary data. They tend to shy away from papers using survey evidence. Also similar to the corporate governance area, a lot of papers in corporate finance engage in either quantitative analysis or – a much more limited number – in qualitative or ‘clinical’ analysis. However, only few papers engage in both types of areas. Again, *BJM* should encourage researchers use both

methodologies within their papers, thereby benefitting from the specific advantages that both methodologies offer.

Finally, a number of areas in finance have been studied by adopting the standard perspective of value creation for the owners of the business or organisation. The example of microfinance springs to mind. Frequently, research on microfinance institutions adopts performance measures, such as return on equity, which are no different from those that one would adopt for a profit-making, stock corporation. In contrast, performance measures reflecting the remit of most microfinance organisations – such as the alleviation of poverty and the empowerment of women – are typically ignored. *BJM* therefore encourages researchers to study areas with an established literature but by adopting novel perspectives.

BJM would like to encourage submissions in finance that fit with the above broad lines. Possible topics would be:

- Clinical studies (case studies) in finance
- Revisiting the main puzzles in finance by adopting novel perspectives
- Studies combining qualitative and quantitative research methods

CONCLUSION

To conclude and in order for *BJM* to improve its standing as a relevant general management journal, we would like to encourage submissions from authors of high-quality papers that break the “norm” by being truly cross-disciplinary and/or by adopting novel perspectives which more specialised journals may discourage. We wish to encourage authors from across all the areas of management to submit their best work to *BJM*, work that is novel and path-breaking.

REFERENCES

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Table 1
SIG Affiliations of BJM Submissions (2007-2015)

SIG	Primary SIG of Submission 2007-2015	Secondary SIG of Submission 2007-2015
Human Resource Management	221	161
Strategy	123	119
Corporate governance	115	56
Organizational Psychology	115	127
Knowledge and Learning	105	95
Marketing and Retail	103	58
Inter-Organizational Collaboration: Partnerships, Alliances and Networks	99	54
Organizational Transformation, Change and Development	94	142
International Business and International Management	84	76
Entrepreneurship	75	47
Strategy as Practice	73	76
Gender in Management	68	22
Performance Management	68	126
Leadership and Leadership Development	67	81
Research Methodology	66	95
Public Management and Governance	62	58
Corporate social responsibility	52	0
Healthcare Organization and Management	23	22
Innovation	22	22
Identity	19	40
e-Business and e-Government	18	10
Strategic Foresight	15	36
Sustainable and Responsible Business	14	39
Operations, Logistics and Supply Chain	7	0

Table 2
Primary and Secondary SIG Combinations of BJM Submissions (2007-2015)

Primary SIG	Secondary SIG																				
	Corporate Governance	e-Business and e-Government	Entrepreneurship	Gender Management	Healthcare Organization	Human Resource Management	Identity	Innovation	Inter-Organizational Collaboration	IB/IM	Knowledge and Learning	Leadership and Development	Marketing and Retail	Organizational Psychology	Organizational Change and Development	Performance Management	Public Management and Governance	Research Methodology	Strategic Foresight	Strategy as Practice	Sustainable and Responsible Business
Corporate Governance	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	1	6	5	4	0	3	4	10	9	2	2	6	4
Corporate Social Responsibility	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	5	1	3	2	1	5	0	4	1
e-Business and e-Government	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	4	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Entrepreneurship	2	0	1	3	0	3	1	1	8	3	6	2	0	2	2	3	1	5	1	13	6
Gender in Management	7	0	2	0	0	20	4	0	1	0	7	2	4	3	1	1	3	0	0	0	1
Healthcare Organization and Management	0	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	7	0	0	0	0
Human Resource Management	2	0	5	10	3	4	4	0	4	13	9	11	3	53	20	15	5	6	2	2	6
Identity	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Innovation	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	4	2	1	0	1	3	0	1	0	10	0
Inter-Organizational Collaboration	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	1
Inter-Organizational Relations	4	0	3	0	0	3	0	2	0	8	11	1	4	6	7	4	4	1	1	11	5
International Business and International Management	3	3	5	0	0	4	1	2	1	2	3	1	6	1	4	6	2	6	0	20	2
Knowledge and Learning	2	0	6	1	1	6	2	4	11	2	1	7	0	3	18	6	2	3	2	5	2
Leadership and Leadership Development	1	0	1	1	1	15	2	1	0	0	2	2	0	13	10	3	2	2	3	0	1
Marketing and Retail Operations, Logistics and Supply Chain	0	3	2	0	0	7	5	0	4	4	5	1	3	6	6	8	1	12	2	3	4
Organizational Psychology	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
Organizational Transformation, Change and Development	1	0	1	2	3	37	4	1	2	2	3	12	1	1	11	5	0	4	1	4	2
Performance Management	6	1	2	0	1	6	5	1	1	2	12	4	3	5	0	5	5	6	2	0	8
Public Management and Governance	4	0	1	1	0	5	2	0	1	2	3	1	1	1	4	0	3	10	3	7	6
Research Methodology	1	2	1	0	8	4	0	1	3	0	3	4	1	0	5	7	1	5	2	3	1
Strategic Foresight	1	0	0	0	1	4	2	1	1	2	9	2	3	5	6	2	1	0	0	5	1
Strategy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Strategy as Practice	8	0	2	1	1	5	1	3	7	14	8	1	3	2	12	9	2	6	1	1	27
Sustainable and Responsible Business	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	5	0	2	1	10	8	2	3	9	16	0
	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	0	3	0	1	0	3	3

Table 3

Regional Distribution of BJM Submissions and Published Papers (2000-2015)

SUBMISSIONS					
Country			Region		
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
UK	2031	43.1			
USA	384	8.2	Europe	3530	74.9
Australia	320	6.8	North America	528	11.2
Spain	320	6.8	Australasia	351	7.5
Netherlands	237	5	Asia	199	4.2
Germany	201	4.3	Africa & Middle East	53	1.1
Canada	144	3.1	Central & South America	29	0.6
Sweden	100	2.1	(missing information)	20	0.4
France	89	1.9			
Taiwan	80	1.7			
Italy	76	1.6			
Belgium	70	1.5			
Norway	70	1.5			
Austria	62	1.3			
Greece	49	1			
Switzerland	48	1			
Peoples R China	47	1			
Denmark	40	0.8			
Turkey	39	0.8			
Finland	37	0.8			
Ireland	35	0.7			
New Zealand	31	0.7			
South Korea	28	0.6			
Singapore	24	0.5			
Cyprus	20	0.4			
Japan	20	0.4			
Others countries	108	2.4			
PUBLISHED PAPERS					
Country			Region		
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
UK	332	49.0	Europe	510	75.2
USA	59	8.7	North America	76	11.2
Australia	44	6.5	Australasia	50	7.4
Spain	34	5.0	Asia	23	3.4
Netherlands	30	4.4	Africa & Middle East	6	0.9
Germany	24	3.5	Central & South America	3	0.4
Canada	17	2.5	(missing information)	10	1.5
Sweden	13	1.9			
France	11	1.6			
Austria	9	1.3			
Others countries	105	15.5			

