


Looking Forward, Looking Back: *British Journal of Management* 2000–2015

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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 2007–2015. It is found that human resource management has a clear dominance among the SIGs. Other fields that are well represented include strategy, work psychology, corporate governance and performance management. The paper also highlights 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.

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 multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, as well as empirical research from traditional disciplines and managerial functions. The *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 organization 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 paper 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 multidisciplinary 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) to which a paper is submitted, the region the submitting author comes from and the keywords supplied by authors. These analyses provide a reasonable overview of the type of papers submitted to and published in the journal.

SIG affiliation

The members of the BAM are organized into 21 SIGs. The *BJM* mirrors that organizational

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

structure and encourages each author who submits a paper to choose their primary and secondary SIGs.

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 (HRM) SIG. The papers in *BJM* contribute predominantly to the fields of HRM, strategy, work psychology, corporate governance and performance management.

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

With regard to which combinations of SIGs are most prevalent, Table 2 shows that HRM 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*.

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

Corporate governance as a primary SIG is typically combined with performance management, sustainable and responsible business, public management and governance, and leadership and 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 a SIG, but it would probably be found in SIGs such as performance management, corporate governance, corporate social responsibility and possibly research methodology.

Table 2. Primary and secondary SIG combinations of BJM submissions (2007–2015)

	Secondary SIG																						
Primary SIG	Corporate governance	Corporate social responsibility	E-business and e-government	Entrepreneurship	Gender in management	Healthcare organization and management	Human resource management	Identity	Innovation	Inter-organizational collaboration	IB/IM	Knowledge and learning	Leadership and leadership development	Marketing and retail	Organizational psychology	Organizational transformation, change and development	Performance management	Public management and governance	Research methodology	Strategic foresight	Strategy	Strategy as practice	Sustainable and responsible business
	2	7	0	0	4	0	6	1	1	6	5	4	8	0	3	4	10	9	2	2	6	4	10
	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	5	1	3	2	1	5	0	4	1	1
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	4	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
	2	0	0	1	3	0	3	1	1	8	3	6	2	0	2	2	3	1	5	1	13	6	0
	7	0	2	0	0	0	20	4	0	0	1	0	7	2	4	3	1	1	3	0	0	0	1
	0	1	0	1	0	2	2	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
	2	0	5	10	3	4	4	4	0	4	13	9	11	3	53	20	15	5	6	2	2	6	4
	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	2	4	2	1	0	1	3	0	1	0	10	0	0
	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	1	0
	4	0	3	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	8	11	1	4	6	7	4	4	1	1	11	5	0
	3	3	5	0	0	4	1	2	1	2	2	3	1	6	1	4	6	2	6	0	20	2	1
	2	0	6	1	1	1	6	2	4	11	2	1	7	0	3	18	6	2	3	2	5	2	1
	1	0	1	1	1	1	15	2	1	0	0	2	2	0	13	10	3	2	2	3	0	0	1
	0	3	2	0	0	0	7	5	0	4	4	5	1	3	6	6	8	1	12	2	3	2	4
	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
	1	0	1	2	3	37	4	1	2	2	2	3	12	1	1	11	5	0	4	1	4	0	2
	6	1	2	0	1	6	5	1	1	1	2	12	4	3	5	0	5	5	6	2	0	8	0
	4	0	1	1	0	5	2	0	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	4	0	3	10	3	7	6	0
	1	2	1	0	8	4	0	1	3	0	0	3	4	1	0	5	7	1	5	2	3	1	2
	1	0	0	0	0	1	4	2	1	1	2	9	2	3	5	6	2	1	0	0	5	1	2
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
	8	0	2	1	1	5	1	3	7	14	8	1	3	2	2	12	9	2	6	1	1	27	5
	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	5	0	2	1	10	8	2	3	9	16	0	3
	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	2	0	3	0	1	0	3	3	0

Table 3. Regional distribution of *BJM* submissions and published papers (2000–2015)

Submissions					
Country	Frequency	%	Region	Frequency	%
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 and Middle East	53	1.1
Canada	144	3.1	Central and 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			
Other countries	108	2.4			

Published papers					
Country	Frequency	%	Region	Frequency	%
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 and Middle East	6	0.9
Germany	24	3.5	Central and 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			
Other countries	105	15.5			

Region

While the aim of *BJM* is to become a premier outlet for management research worldwide, we must acknowledge that, as of now, it is predominantly a Europe-focused journal (see Table 3 for details¹).

¹The ‘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 come from. Therefore, we might underestimate the number of non-UK authors of *BJM* papers.

An analysis of all submissions from 2000 to 2015 ($n = 4710$) 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 greatest percentage 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.

Here, we make suggestions in terms of the areas of marketing and 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 and retailing

The marketing and retailing area is a fairly wide field of study, spanning consumer behaviour, strategy, marketing operations and supply chain topics. The *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 – that 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 and 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 and 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 generalizing findings and creating 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 multidisciplinary 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 and leadership development.

The *BJM* solicits papers on corporate governance that give justice to the multidisciplinary 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 (e.g. see Goergen, O’Sullivan and Wood, 2014). Still, there are other interesting avenues in corporate governance research that have received little or no attention and would benefit from a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach. One such topic includes boardroom dynamics, which would benefit from the joint input of finance, psychology and organizational 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 in which *BJM* would be interested:

- the behavioural aspects of boards of directors
- board diversity beyond board gender diversity, including ethnic and cultural diversity
- whether there is a link between corporate culture and corporate governance
- governance of not-for-profit organizations, cooperatives and mutual organizations.

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 that *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, many 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, many papers in corporate finance engage in either quantitative analysis or – a much more limited number – in qualitative or ‘clinical’ analysis. However, only a few papers engage in both types of areas. Again, *BJM* should encourage researchers to 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 organization. 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 organizations – such as the alleviation of poverty and

the empowerment of women – are typically ignored. The *BJM* therefore encourages researchers to study areas with an established literature, but by adopting novel perspectives.

The *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 that more specialized 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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