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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

### MEETING THE EDITORS AT THE 9<sup>TH</sup> IBEROAMERICAN ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE<sup>1</sup>



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The following Editorial Comment presents a summary of the main ideas and suggestions presented at the “Meeting with the Editors” at the 9<sup>th</sup> Iberoamerican Academy of Management (IAM) Conference, in Santiago (Chile). The meeting was conducted by three editors: Jonathan Doh from the Journal of World Business, Martin Larraza from Management Research and Herman Aguinis, President of the Iberoamerican Academy of Management and former editor of Organizational Research Methods.

The conference took place from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> December 2015, and was hosted by Universidad Del Desarrollo. This editorial does not change the focus of the previous recent editorial comments of the **Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management (IJSM)**. Its purpose of helping researchers and students in their quest to conduct quality research and publish it remains unchanged. These specific editorial comments are grouped in the menu section of the IJSM website under the title *How to publish (or perish)?* (available at <http://www.revistaiberoamericana.org/ojs/index.php/ibero/pages/view/publish%20or%20perish>).

“Meeting with the Editors” is quite a frequent panel at management congresses and seminars. It is traditional at AoM Annual Meetings and is also frequently held at Brazilian academic events like ENANPAD (the Brazilian national meeting of the National Association of Graduate Programs in Business Administration), or at seminars held by universities and research groups such as the SINGEP (International Symposium of Project Management, Innovation and Sustainability).

The frequency of these meetings emphasizes the importance of academic production and the challenges facing editors to ensure sufficient good quality submissions and publish high quality articles reviewed by qualified peer reviewers.

The mission of Doctoral Programs is to prepare researchers and strive to integrate research and teaching positions at universities (Stephan, 1996; Ferreira, 2013; Conley & Önder, 2014). However, in general, and this

editors’ meeting at the IAM Conference is no exception, the editors emphasize the usual low quality of the reviews and articles that are submitted by Latin American scholars, including Brazilian ones.

The publications of scholars are perhaps the most important aspects for consideration when it comes to gaining employment or a career promotion in the academic field (Ferreira, 2013; Maccari, Almeida, Riccio & Alejandro, 2014).

In Brazil, Business Administration researchers are pressured by the institutional rules imposed by CAPES (Coordination for Improvement of Higher Education Personnel) that demands not only quantity, but increasingly presses for quality in published articles. This not only influences the researcher’s CV, but also has an important influence on the official classification of the Doctoral Program in relation to other Brazilian Doctoral Programs (Maccari, Almeida, Nishimura & Rodrigues, 2009; Nascimento, 2010).

As Editors of the IJSM, Manuel Portugal Ferreira and I decided to encourage and help young researchers and graduate students, not only with better reviews, but also with a group of editorial comments that would serve as a tutorial for the preparation and review of their articles. As mentioned above, this editorial comment seeks to emphasize and provide comments on important things to consider in article submissions. This editorial comment is organized considering the common subjects presented and debated during the editors’ meeting at the IAM Conference, in an attempt to group and condense the contributions.

### Publishing in Business and Management

To start this part of the Editorial Comment, I would like to reproduce a paragraph of the introduction of the article that I presented at the IAM Conference, which summarizes our challenge for publishing (Falaster, Ferreira & Serra, 2015):

“Scholarly publications play a crucial role in the career of the professors of doctoral programs (Stephan 1996; Ferreira, 2013; Maccari, Almeida, Riccio & Alejandro, 2014). In Brazil, the institutional rules imposed by CAPES (Coordination for improvement of higher education personnel) require professors to publish a certain number of papers (that following a pre-defined listing are converted into points), for the program to be well classified (Maccari, Almeida, Nishimura & Rodrigues, 2009; Nascimento, 2010). Hence, doctoral programs tend to value the more prolific researchers, making publications an important component of a researcher’s career (Bedeian, 2003).”

Despite the personal and original motivations to become a researcher, institutional pressure is important. Reviews from the best journals, even those at the Brazilian Qualis levels of B2-A2, are becoming more rigorous, and journals are facing increasing competition for good articles. Therefore, advice and tips from experienced editors and authors are welcome.

As mentioned by Herman Aguinis, the pressure is also on the editors:

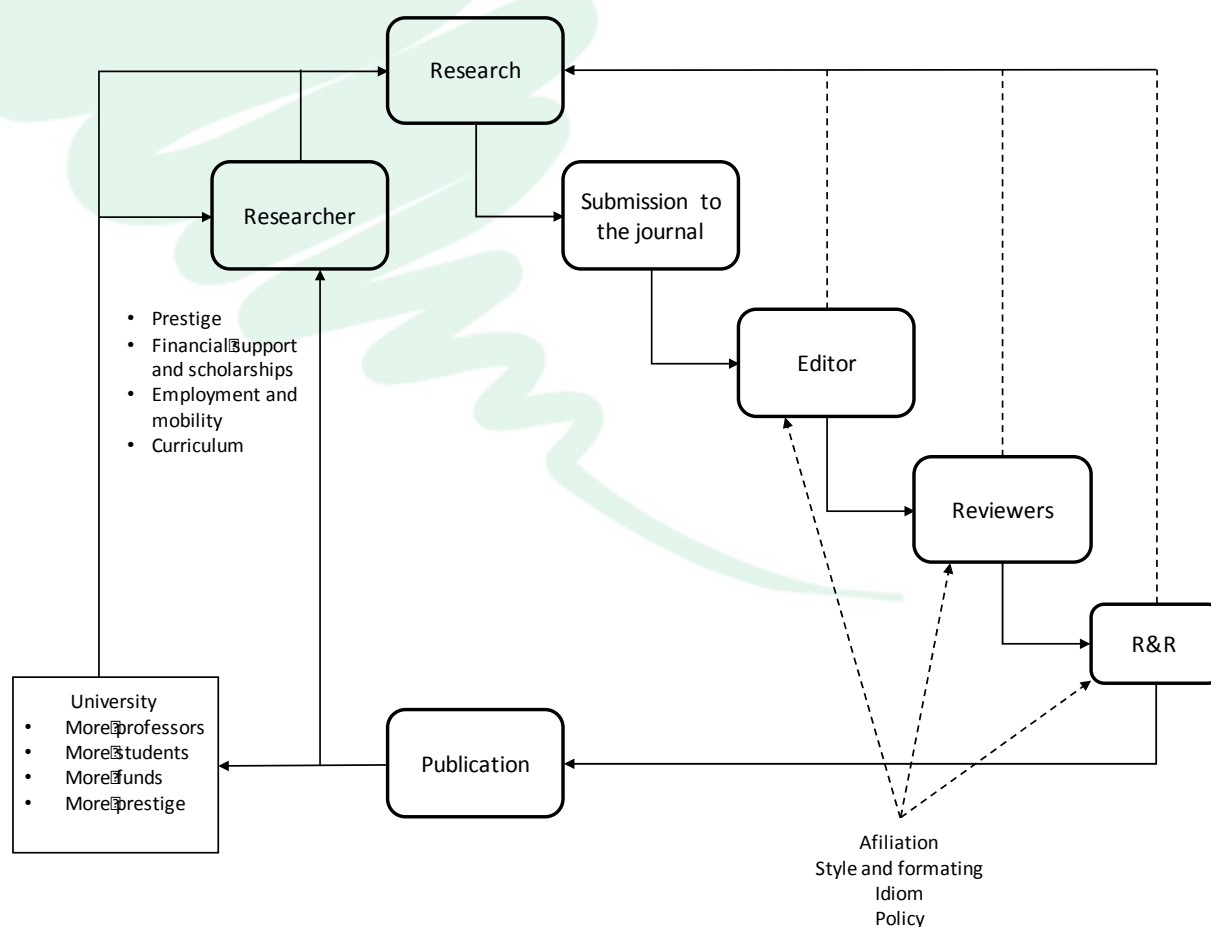
“Publish or perish applies more to journals than authors. If you reject everything as an editor, your journal will fail. Every time an editor takes over, he is scared to death of accepting a bad paper.”

“The reviewers’ job is to reject papers. The editors’ job is to accept papers.”

The editors will leave this dilemma and the need to have a balance of articles that are good enough considering the impact of the journal and to guarantee that the journal continues to survive and be cited. For example, in my view, *Administrative Science Quarterly* is one of the hardest journals in which to be published, and it is losing its impact, perhaps because it publishes only few articles per year.

The editorial process has specific steps and can be considered a system (Figure 1) with specific components, i.e., authors, reviewers, readers and community. It has a process. It has goals (knowledge generation and learning). It is also a “system of material and social rewards for the researchers and the University” (Ferreira, 2013).

Figure 1 – Publishing as a system



Source: Ferreira (2013).

The author should consider the process and the specific characteristics of the journal and should understand the role and challenges of the editors. I invite readers to access the Editorial Comment on the Editorial Process available at the following link of the **IJSM website**:

<<http://www.revistaiberoamericana.org/ojs/index.php/ibero/article/view/2042/pdf>>. I would also recommend reading the book edited by Baruch, Konrad, Aguinis and Starbuck, entitled *Opening the Black Box of Editorship* (Palgrave Mac Millan, 2008), which has specific chapters, penned by important scholars, with challenges and tips regarding the role of editors in a journal.

Authors always have the chance to review their rejected paper and resubmit it to another journal. Receiving a good review either during a desk reject, and better from two reviewers, is an opportunity to know how to improve the article for another submission. The desk-rejection rate at the *Journal of World Business*, for example, is around 50%, with a total acceptance rate of 8-10%. Most papers are rejected because they do not fit the scope of the journal. At a recent meeting with editors at the SMS Conference in Rome, one of the editors said that publishing in the AMR is almost as hard as winning a lottery. The final rejection rate in the top journals is very high (Ferreira, 2014: 2):

Lorraine Eden (2009), as editor of the *Journal of International Business Studies*, the most renowned journal in international business, reported that from 2002 to 2008 the number of submissions had doubled to around 43 per month on average, and the acceptance rate had fallen to approximately 15%. The data of the American Psychological Association (APA) for 2012 show that some journals have very high rejection rates.

These journals include the *Journal of Applied Psychology* (93%), *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (88%), *Psychological Review* (85%) and the *Journal of Consumer Psychology* (90%) (source: <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/statistics.aspx>), and it is not uncommon when it comes to the social sciences to find similar rejection rates. Therefore, rejection in these journals is the norm rather than the exception. In Management, Daniel Hamermesh, with data from 2008, reported on the fact that acceptance rates were extremely low for some journals (acceptance rate shown in brackets): *American Economic Review* (7%), *Econometrica* (9%), *Journal of Political Economy* (5%), *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (4%), *Economica* (11%), *Economics Letters* (17%), *European Economic Review* (9%), *RAND Journal of Economics* (11%), *American Sociological Review* (8%), and others.

Although it is hard to publish in a good journal, it is an important path for Brazilian researchers, not only because of the reasons shown in Figure 1, but

also for the improvement and relevance of our academic work. This is a particular challenge for Brazilian researchers, as less than 10% of the papers published by the JWB, for example, come from Latin America, Africa or the Middle East.

### Challenges and Opportunities for Brazilian Researchers

The journals mentioned above are in different circumstances. The JWB is a top journal with an important JCR impact factor (3.729– JCR 5-year impact factor 2015), receiving a considerable number of submissions every year, whereas *Management Research* is an emerging journal from an important association for Brazilian researchers, The Iberoamerican Academy of Management. This journal is well organized and rigorous, but with few submissions in comparison with the JWB. Unfortunately, as it is not included in the Scopus database or JCR, and is classified as B2 in the Brazilian Qualis, despite its quality. Both editors, Doh from JWB, and Larraza from *Management Research*, agree that they would like to receive more papers from Latin America, but considerable improvement is required in terms of quality.

We have few Brazilian researchers publishing in the top international journals. This also seems to be a problem for the rest of Latin America. The editors and Herman Aguinis offered some general recommendations concerning common flaws found in papers, which we will return to later. However, apart from these recommendations, Brazilian researchers are also less proficient in statistical methods (Fiates, Serra & Martins, 2014). Qualitative studies are not rigorous, and the contributions of articles are not clearly stated (Ferreira & Falaster, forthcoming).

In my view, there are also opportunities for Brazilian researchers. Jonathan Doh argued the need of more phenomenon-based research. Phenomenon-based research is connected to real and important real world problems. Phenomenon-based research seeks to “capture, describe and document, as well as conceptualise, a phenomenon so that appropriate theorising and the development of research designs can proceed” (von Krogh, Rossi-Lamastra & Haefliger, 2013: 278). I believe that this is an important opportunity for emerging markets. It is also an opportunity to examine phenomena that are not usually found in institutionally developed countries. Regarding these opportunities, an important article that should be read by Brazilian researchers, and coincidentally published in *Management Research*, is Sergio Lazzarini’s “Leveraging the competitive advantage of Iberoamerican scholars” (Lazzarini, 2012).

Both editors mentioned the importance of authors from outside North America. Doh mentioned



that with the growth in the membership of the AoM, over 50% of the members are from outside North America. He remarked on the low number of articles from Latin America, Africa and the Middle East (only 10%, as mentioned above).

### Editors' Recommendations

Some desk-rejections are due to mistakes that are easily resolved. Some tips and notes on how to resist and be resilient to rejection are available in the following Editorial Comment from the IJSM (Ferreira, 2014):

<http://www.revistaiberoamericana.org/ojs/index.php/ibero/pages/view/publish%20or%20perish>.

Many editorials include not only general tips for publication, but also specific tips about the specific requirements or nature of a journal. See, for instance, the editorial suggested by Jonathan Doh from the JWB (see in the references: Ahlstrom, 2015).

The editors agreed on flaws that were common to most articles: failure to identify the contribution and failure to provide sufficient information on the method and data. The current editors provided some recommendations and tips.

Before submitting to the journal, the author should check the scope and aims of the journal, as well as read recent articles published in the journal, especially those related to the author's research theme.

The Introduction is identified as a critical element. Editors and reviewers may become biased if they have concerns over this section. As Doh commented, "package, sell, articulate, and present your idea with a clear and compelling introduction. A paper doesn't sell itself." This editor also cited Grant and Pollock (2011: 873): "... first impression matter. Although it is typically the shortest section of an article, the introduction ... determines whether or not the readers will continue reading". The introduction usually contains six to eight paragraphs, and two to four pages. The editor recommends presenting the research question on the introduction, positioning the paper in relation to past research, stating the importance and relevance of the article and its purpose and general hypothesis. The methods should be mentioned briefly and the theory, empirical and managerial/practical contributions of the article should be summarized. We suggest our readers follow the recommendations of the RIAE editorial comment about Introductions (Serra & Ferreira, 2015), available at this link: [http://www.revistaiberoamericana.org/ojs/index.php/ibero/article/view/2227/pdf\\_1](http://www.revistaiberoamericana.org/ojs/index.php/ibero/article/view/2227/pdf_1).

The research question may be presented from different aspects, but should stem from a gap that must be presented powerfully, according to Doh. It can arise from new phenomena. The goal should be to expand the knowledge of the field and address a topic that needs to be better understood. It should be focused, and

the past research situates the contribution and provides an accurate positioning of the contribution.

The editor also presented some tips for situating and motivating the paper:

- Following the introduction, at the beginning of the body of the text, there should be a short summary that situates the study in the past literature, demonstrating the need for the study.
- Authors must be knowledgeable on the literature that leads up to their paper or contains reports on the topic.
- All topics should be situated in supporting literature and relevant phenomena.

Doh addressed the major flaws in papers, specifically in Brazilian papers submitted to the top Brazilian journals (Ferreira & Falaster, forthcoming), with recommendations regarding the JWB:

- At the very lead, authors should provide the theoretical, empirical and practical contributions of their work.
- To convey the value of the paper, JWB requires a strong contribution section, without which papers will often be rejected.
- Authors should review past JWB papers for examples of thorough contribution sections.
- The JWB (and all IB/management journals) welcome papers that are well situated and motivated, explaining what has been found and, more importantly, why it matters.

Herman Aguinis made some criticism regarding methodological issues with articles. Two of his remarks especially attracted my attention. The first was about the need to present the method clearly:

"Not disclosing fully what happens in the kitchen. You go to a French restaurant. You get this dish. It looks fantastic, but the chef went through 20 different combinations until he arrived at this point. You try to do it at home, but you can't, because you don't know how to do the process. So we need more transparency and disclosure, right?"

The other remark was that most of the things that leads to rejection could be avoided before the data collection. This is a particular weakness that I see in our research because we do not plan it sufficiently (for example, looking and checking past research examples) and do not take care with data collection, which leads to a great deal of trouble later. Reinforcing the importance of data to support an argument, Aguinis also criticized the citation that "the story is more important than the data", and noted that "the data will tell the story....Are you writing a novel or are you writing a scholarly article? Are we writing novels or are we doing science?"

Aguinis suggested reading some texts. I will now take the opportunity to select some articles from the former editor of *Organizational Research Methods*

to recommend to our readers (all available at [www.hermanaguinis.com](http://www.hermanaguinis.com)):

Aguinis, H., & Edwards, J. (2014). Methodological wishes for the next decade and how to make wishes come true. *Journal of Management Studies*, 51(1): 143-174.

Aguinis, H., & Vandenberg, R. (2014). An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure: Improving research quality before data collection. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organization Behavior*, 1: 569-595.

Bernerth, J., & Aguinis, H. (2016). A critical review and best-practice recommendations for control variable usage. *Personnel Psychology*, 69(1):229-283.

Bosco, F., Aguinis, H., Singh, K., Field, J., & Pierce, C. (2015). Correlational effect size benchmarks. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(2): 431-449.

Another debate that arose was in reference to qualitative research articles. In Brazilian journals, qualitative research is pervasive. As editor and students' supervisor, I also see many problems in Brazilian qualitative research. These were highlighted by the editors when they mentioned that they do not have reviewers familiar with qualitative methods. They also said that the works are not rigorous as they should be. Personally, I would suggest that Brazilian researchers and students read carefully the editorial comment of Reay (2013). The author objectively makes very good suggestions on how to perform good qualitative research.

### Final Remarks

The remarks from the "Meeting with Editors" at the 9<sup>th</sup> Iberoamerican Academy of Management (IAM) Conference, in Santiago (Chile) may have repeated a great deal of advice that we have heard at other meetings and read in editorial comments and articles. This is a case where I consider that "more is more". We need to reinforce and repeat. I enjoyed being there and having the opportunity to listen and take part in the debate. That is one of the goals of a congress and seminar. I encourage students and colleagues to attend to international congresses, especially The Iberoamerican Academy of Management and The Academy of Management Meeting, as well as some regional meetings and the Enanpad.

Regarding the improvements of our students and researchers, I would like to suggest using our editorial comments to help and guide your articles. Prior to this issue of the Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management, we published the following editorial comments available in the "how to publish (or perish)" section of our website:

- *Structure of the article* Ferreira, M. (2013). A Pesquisa e a Estruturação do Artigo Acadêmico em Administração. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia*, 12(2), 01-11.
- *Editorial process*

Ferreira, M. (2013). O Processo Editorial: da Submissão à Rejeição (ou Aceite). *Revista Ibero-Americana De Estratégia*, 12(3), 01-11.

- *Answering the reviewers*

Ferreira, M. (2014). Responder aos Revisores. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia*, 13(1), 01-06.

- *Resilience and resistance to rejection*

Ferreira, M. (2014). Resiliência e Resistir à Rejeição para o Sucesso na Carreira. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia*, 13(3), 01-06.

- *Reviewing an article*

Ferreira, M. (2014). Como Rever um Artigo: O Papel do Revisor e um Roteiro para Novos Revisores. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia*, 13(2), 01-09.

- *Title, abstract and keywords*

Serra, F., & Ferreira, M. (2014). O título, Resumo e Palavras-Chave dos Artigos. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia*, 13(4), 01-07.

- *Introduction*

Serra, F., & Ferreira, M. (2015). O Desafio de Preparar a Introdução de um Artigo Acadêmico. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia*, 14(2), 01-07.

- *Hypothesis*

Ferreira, M. (2013). A Construção de Hipóteses. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia*, 12(4), 01-08.

- *Literature review*

Serra, F. (2015). A Construção da Revisão de Literatura. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia*, 14(3), 01-05.

I hope this editorial comment can also help Brazilian and Latin American researchers to publish and present their research internationally. I end the comment with a quote from Herman Aguinis at the Editors' Meeting: "work hard, get trained, and you will be published in top journals".

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information and to download his articles, please see [www.hermanaguinis.com](http://www.hermanaguinis.com)

### Jonathan P. Doh

He is Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of World Business*, was Associate Editor at the *Academy of Management Learning & Education* (2008-2011), *Long Range Planning* (2008-2011) and *Business & Society* (2008-2014). His experience as a reviewer includes top journals such as *AMR*, *AMJ* and *JIBS*, and top publishers like the Oxford University Press, Prentice-Hall and McGraw-Hill Irwin. He is the Herbert G. Rammarath Endowed Chair in International Business, founding director of the Center of Global Leadership and Professor of Management and Operations at Villanova School of Business.

<sup>i</sup> The editor's panel was made up of the following journal editors:

### Herman Aguinis

He is the current President of the Iberoamerican Academy of Management. He is the Avram Tucker Distinguished Scholar and Professor of Management at the George Washington University School of Business. He serves as Associate Editor for the *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, served as editor of *Organizational Research Methods*, and is past or current member of the editorial board of 23 journals such as the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Personnel Psychology*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Academy of Management Perspectives*, and *Academy of Management Learning & Education*. For more

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He is the Editor-in-Chief of Management Research, the official journal of the Iberoamerican Academy of Management. He is a Professor at the Business

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