

## Introduction to issue 3, 2018: a review of major shortcomings in failed submissions

Dear reader and colleague. You have in your hands the third issue of volume 16 of *Management Research*, the official journal of the Iberoamerican Academy of Management. This issue contains three original research articles that improve our understanding of employee behavior and various organizational phenomena, and hold important hints for managerial practice. The first one, entitled “Expanding job crafting theory beyond the worker and the job”, written by Erich Dierdorff and Herman Aguinis, proposes a multilevel occupational framework to understand job crafting and its consequences. Through two empirical studies, Erich and Herman found that nearly one-third of the variability in job crafting is attributable to occupational context, and that occupational contexts moderate individual-level processes, whereby occupational-level crafting moderated the mediated effects between job-level autonomy, job-level crafting and individual-level outcomes.

The second article, by Dirk De Clercq and Imanol Belausteguigoitia Rius, is entitled “Knowledge sharing and unethical pro-organizational behavior in a Mexican organization: moderating effects of dispositional resistance to change and perceived organizational politics”. Analyzing a data base of employees in a Mexican manufacturing organization, Dirk and Imanol find that knowledge sharing increases the risk that employees engage in unethical pro-organizational behavior. This effect is most salient when employees tend to resist organizational change or believe the organizational climate is highly political. Finally, Rubén Martínez Alonso, María J. Martínez Romero and Alfonso A. Rojo-Ramírez are the authors of the third research article published under the title “Technological innovation and socioemotional wealth in family firm research: literature review and proposal of a conceptual framework”. This is a conceptual piece that systematically analyzes the findings of previous journal articles focusing on the interrelationships between technological innovation and socioemotional wealth in the context of family firms TI and SEW. Based on this review, Ruben, María and Alfonso develop a new conceptual framework that explains how these two variables interrelate, outlining new lines for future research.

The issue is completed with an interview to Rita Campos e Cunha, Associate Professor at Nova School of Business and Economics in Lisbon and past Editor-in-Chief of *Management Research*, conducted by Santiago Ibarreche as part of our section “A life in research”.

The three research articles published in this issue are part of the 19 per cent of submission that were finally published in the journal. This is a relatively high rate of success. However, this figure contrasts with the fact that approximately 47 per cent of new submissions (33 per cent of total submissions) were desk rejected because of their lack of fit with the journal’s aims and scope or because their stage of development made them inappropriate for the journal and seriously hamper their possibilities to succeed the review process. This early rejection may seem discouraging, as none of us want to receive a negative assessment of our work. But, I truly believe that early feedback would benefit the authors as they can start improving the weak features of their articles and develop a better piece, with higher probabilities to overcome a review process in other journals, sooner.

But, which are the reasons behind these desk rejections? What should a paper have to be published in *Management Research*? There are excellent materials on what a good research article in management should contain. For example, the Academy of *Management Journal* published between 2011 and 2012 a series of short editorials with hints on suggestions on



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how to craft a good research article. I certainly encourage you to read those. Nonetheless, in what follows I would like to briefly outline some of the major shortcomings of the papers that are discarded for publication in *Management Research*:

- Lack of fit with the journal's aims and scope. As stated in our web site, *Management Research* publishes articles covering all major disciplines in management with an interest in Iberoamerican issues. We publish both conceptual and empirical articles that display thoughtful, accurate research and be rigorous in all regards. While we are broad in scope, we sometimes receive submissions that fit better in journals specialized in other areas like finance, marketing, education or even macroeconomics.
- Lack of a sufficiently interesting research question. By an interesting research question I mean research questions that contribute to international academic debate in management. On this matter, the first thing that it has to be said is that the fact that it has not been studied before does not necessarily mean that the research question is interesting. Researchers should make an effort to justify the interest of their research question on the relevance of the question for management theory and practice. Second, I have to note that it is quite common to receive articles that claim to contribute to our knowledge base by testing a relationship that has been already tested or proved using a sample from a country in which that relationship has not been tested before. Unless there is something (e.g. institutional conditions) in that country or region that help us better understand or contextualize previously known relationships among variables, confirming relationships that others previously have shown adds little to what we already knew. We are a regional journal and because of that have a particular interest on analyses that show a link, because of the data and/or because of the phenomenon under scrutiny, with Iberoamerica. But we also want to develop better theoretical models to advance management science, and therefore a test of a relationship in an Iberoamerican country (or in any other country or region) that confirms what it has already been observed it is not enough. Showing that a certain relationship does not hold in our country/region is potentially more interesting, as it gives the authors the opportunity to think and explain why this is the case and therefore to develop more fine-tuned models.
- Failure to properly frame the research. This is closely related with the previous shortcoming. There are cases in which the research question is interesting but it is not well presented and properly framed/positioned in the current academic debate. So, authors should pay attention to how they present their research, clearly identifying the gap in the literature and, therefore, their contribution to it. Providing a good framing of the research question is the main purpose of the introduction section of the article. What authors want to study, why, what has been concluded by previous research and what is left to be studied, need to be neatly presented in the introduction.
- Lack of theory. It is not my intention to debate what may or may not be new theory. My aim is just to note that at a minimum we request that the hypotheses to be tested need to be derived from a well-defined theoretical framework. Such framework must be grounded in well-known theories and in previous literature. The hypotheses and propositions that are obtained must provide an answer to the research question that drives the article. That theoretical framework could (ideally should) incorporate new or contingency factors that help us depict (and consequently better understand) the mechanisms that link the variables of interest, and ultimately develop better, more precise, models.
- Inappropriate research design. Most of the papers that are submitted to the journal contain an empirical test of their hypotheses. The design of the empirical study must allow the researcher to properly test those hypotheses and therefore provide a

good answer to the research question. In the majority of cases, problems with the research design have to do with their samples and the measures of the central variables of the theoretical model. In social science usually we have to rely on samples because information about the whole population is unavailable. Therefore, a central question is the extent to which those samples are random and representative of the population. Thus, authors must provide evidence of that representativeness, otherwise their conclusions cannot be generalized to the population and their research lacks interest and relevance. Relatedly authors must show that their sample size is good enough to guarantee statistical tests are meaningful. As per variable measurement, authors sometimes fail to provide evidence on the accuracy of their measures, particularly the central ones of their model. In this regard, it is important to show that the measures they use are correctly representing the underlying constructs. With regard of the variables, I have also observed in some cases that authors miss to include relevant control variables in their empirical analyses. For example, authors that seek to explain firm performance cannot only include in their analyses the two or three explanatory variables they are interested in, but also need to consider that differences in performance may be due to industry level factors and therefore that including industry controls may be necessary. In this sense, authors may try to discard other explanations, besides the theorized one, to the observed empirical relationships.

- Previous comments have to do with shortcomings observed in quantitative studies, which account for the majority of the submissions received. However, we also receive, and publish, articles that use qualitative techniques. In fact, we want to encourage more qualitative studies, as they provide an opportunity to measure and understand key organizational and individual processes. The qualitative studies that are submitted to *Management Research* are in many occasions a case study based on a single organization. This is, in most of the cases, insufficient. Qualitative research has its own procedures and requirements that researchers should know and apply. There are excellent manuals on how to properly conduct a qualitative study.
- Absence of discussion. In a significant number of cases the discussion section of the papers that are rejected is a mere summary of the results. This is clearly insufficient. A good discussion section should “discuss” the implications of those results for theory development, starting with our own theoretical framework and also managerial practice. A good discussion section also contains a description of the limitations and future lines of research that could be followed at the light of the developments shown in the article.

I hope the identification of these usual shortcomings may help future authors in their attempt to prepare better manuscripts with higher chances to be published in *Management Research*.

I believe you will enjoy this new issue of *Management Research* and would like to take this opportunity to encourage to submit your research papers to our journal as. You won't regret it!

**Martin Larraza-Kintana**

*Department of Business Management, Universidad Pública de Navarra,  
Institute for Advanced Research in Business and Economics, Pamplona, Spain*