

Back to the Future: A Review and Editorial Agenda of the International Journal of Business Research and Management

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Abstract

In September 2020, in the tenth year of its life, a strong editorial turnaround happened within the *International Journal of Business Research and Management (IJBRM)*. In this vein, editorial and review board members, together with the Journal's current and future authors, should be made aware of the history of the Journal as well as its future agenda. Thus, this contribution aims to: *i)* identify the major research themes faced by the Journal's articles in the past, and *ii)* define a research agenda for the Journal's future development. All the 98 articles published in *IJBRM* up to August 2020 have been initially analyzed according to: *i)* number of papers published per year, *ii)* authors' nationality, and *iii)* number of papers per research design. Thus, all papers have been thematically analyzed to identify the main research areas they represent. Results show that authors' institutions are mainly based in Asian countries and the main areas addressed were "Marketing" and "Technology and Innovation Management". Important implications for editors and future authors arise from the analysis. In particular, to exploit potentially fruitful collaborations in Europe and the Americas, editors and highly involved reviewers are asked to build their own sub-communities around the Journal, including the encouragement of Special Issues on all research areas within the management realm. In addition, authors are asked to explore unfulfilled research areas and to increase the scientific soundness of proposed works.

Keywords: Management, Research, Systematic Literature Review, Publication, Thematic Analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

In September 2020, in the tenth year of its life, a strong editorial turnaround happened within the *International Journal of Business Research and Management (IJBRM)*.

The turnaround resulted in the appointment of a new Editor in Chief and a series of drastic but necessary decisions have been made in order to revitalize the Journal's life. In particular, the Editorial Board underwent an initial cut of Editorial Board Members, from 43 to 13, in order to eliminate all those Editors who had not made any kind of contribution to the Journal over the years (in terms of publications, reviewing activities, promotion of the Journal, etc.) and to create openings for new members. The same has happened with the Reviewer Board, which had grown

considerably by adding experts in management research areas that had not previously been covered (e.g., accounting and financial management).

Accordingly, a *continuous ongoing* selection process of editors and reviewers is in place in search of scholars who would like to proactively engage with the Journal, giving it new important lifeblood. As of November 2020, this process has resulted in the appointment of 32 new Editorial Board Members, 12 new Review Board Members and a new Associate Editor in Chief – from 5 different continents and 18 countries. This has helped to build the fundamentals for really becoming an International Journal.

Stemming from the above, this is an appropriate moment to chronicle the history of the *Journal* and to clearly define its future agenda. This exhaustive overview could allow editorial and review board members, together with the Journal's current and future authors, to better understand how to best play their role within the Journal and the contributions to be made in order to ameliorate its performance, especially in the long term. In other words, this paper does not want to simply record the topical contents of *IJBRM*, but it wants to shed light on how the Journal can better fulfill its mission by proposing an editorial and research agenda.

Accordingly, the aim of this paper is twofold. On the one hand, it identifies the main research areas addressed by the papers published by the Journal to date and, on the other hand, it defines an editorial and research agenda for the Journal's future development. In order to do so, the authors undertake a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of all the articles published by *IJBRM* during its life from 2010 to August 2020). The resulting 98 articles have been initially analyzed in order to provide information on: *i)* number of papers published per year, *ii)* authors' affiliation nationality, *iii)* number of papers published per research area, and *iv)* number of papers per research design. In particular, in order to identify the main research areas of the published papers, a mixed thematic analysis has been adopted.

Results of this investigation provide important implications for the Editors of the *Journal* as well as for scholars who would like to publish their article in *IJBRM*. In particular, to scientifically develop *IJBRM*, Editors have been asked to build their own sub-communities around the Journal, with the aim of exploiting potentially fruitful collaborations in Europe and the Americas, considering that Asian countries have been already highly involved. Moreover, with just four main areas, i.e., "Marketing", "Technology and Innovation Management", "Operations and Supply Chain Management", and "Strategizing Activities and Practices", having been addressed by published *IJBMR* articles until now, authors have been asked to explore the numerous other fields of research within the management realm. This will allow the Journal to become a 'true' generalist scientific outlet.

After this introduction, the paper is structured as follows. The second section is devoted to the methodology and provides information on the data collection and data analysis at the basis of the SLR. The third section reports the study results, which are mainly divided into two subsections: the first one provides descriptive statistics of the analyzed sample, whilst the second presents the results from the thematic analysis. The fourth section concludes this investigation by providing numerous implications for current and prospective *IJBRM* editors, reviewers, and authors.

2. METHODOLOGY

Similarly to Schwarz (2015) – who conducted a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of the *Journal of Management History* to inform its audience and editors – this paper performs a SLR of all the papers published in *IJBRM* (from the first issue published in October 2010 to the issue published in August 2020) to introduce editors and authors (current and future) to the history of the Journal and its future editorial and research agenda. The SLR has been identified as the suitable research design to consolidate and synthesize the identified academic research into a comprehensive framework (Crossan and Apadyin, 2010; Cristofaro, 2019). Moreover, according to Tranfield et al. (2003), this method differs from the traditional narrative reviews by: *i)* assisting

in linking future research to the questions and concerns that have been posed by past research, and *ii*) being more explicit in the selection process, by employing rigorous and reproducible evaluation methods.

In particular, all the 98 papers have been downloaded from the Journal's website and then an Excel spreadsheet has been created with the following variables pertaining to each paper: *i*) year of publication, *ii*) authors' name, *iii*) authors' affiliation nationality, and *iv*) keywords.

Alongside the collection and analysis of these variables, a mixed thematic analysis of all the 98 published papers has also been performed aimed at identifying the research areas in which they fall. To implement this analysis, the mixed thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) has been followed. In particular, the mixed thematic analysis is based on both deductive analysis (by which communication messages are thematized according to an initial codebook) and inductive analysis (by which new themes are free to emerge).

Concerning the deductive analysis, the initial codebook used for codifying the papers' themes has been derived from the *research divisions* pointed out by the *Academy of Management*, which is the most important association for management studies with over 17,000 associated scholars (Academy of Management, 2020). These research divisions – also called areas – reflect the broad range of scholars' interests across 26 different management disciplines. However, following the inductive approach, new themes – not represented in the initial codebook – were free to emerge. Accordingly, the Marketing (MKTG) research area – described as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (American Marketing Association, 2017) – has been added as the consequential effect of the inductive thematic analysis of the papers. The resulting final codebook is presented in Table 1.

Division	Acronym	Definition
Careers	CAR	It supports research, teaching, and practice focused on people's lifelong succession of work experiences, the structure of opportunity to work, and the relationship between careers and other aspects of life.
Conflict Management	CM	It focuses on the: nature and management of conflicts at the individual, group, organizational, interorganizational and societal level; power processes including influence, coalitions, coercion, deterrence, and persuasion; bargaining and negotiation, negotiator characteristics and behaviors; collaboration and competition; third party interventions (such as facilitation, arbitration, mediation); distributive and procedural justice and dispute resolution procedures.
Critical Management Studies	CMS	It is characterized by skepticism concerning the morality and social and ecological sustainability of prevailing forms of organization. The Division promotes management research and education, which is dedicated to interrogating relations of power and control and giving voice to marginal and oppressed voices.
Entrepreneurship	ENT	It promotes the scholarship and advances in the field of entrepreneurship; that is, in the purposeful activity of initiating, developing, and maintaining an enterprise.
Gender and Diversity in Organizations	GDO	It focuses on the content relating to gender and diversity within and outside organizational boundaries including cultural, societal, and worldwide levels, and to the influence of group relations on the structuring of societies and the production of knowledge.
Health Care Management	HCM	It is dedicated to enhancing the population's health and wellbeing through developing and testing management theory. Division members seek to understand the role of professionals and organizations in providing effective health care that is low cost, high quality, and enhances population health and wellbeing at the local, national, and global levels.
Human Resources	HR	It is dedicated to understanding, identifying, and improving the effectiveness of HR practices to facilitate organizational competitiveness nationally or internationally, encourages individual growth and development, and enhances individual performance, work-related attitudes, and well-being.
International Management	IM	It focuses on content pertaining to the theory, research, and practice of management in various global settings, such as the cross-border management of operations, including multi-country, multi-unit, strategy formulation and implementation, evolving organizational forms and management practices in cross-border business and the cross-border differential impact of culture.
Management Consulting	MC	It aims to advance the knowledge and understanding of management consulting and to aid in the development of management consultants through research, practice and teaching.
Management Education and Development	MED	It supports theory development and research in management education (academic) and leadership/management development (non-credit instruction).
Management History	MH	It encourages the pragmatic investigations into the historical evolution of managerial thought and action, such as the chronological tracing of the development of contemporary managerial concepts.
Marketing	MKTG	According to the American Marketing Association (2017), Marketing can be described as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large."
Management, Spirituality and Religion	MSR	It explores how spirituality and religion can influence organizational dynamics and affect management outcomes. In that regard, MSR is devoted to defining the relevance and impact of spirituality and religion in management, organizations and society.
Managerial and Organizational Cognition	MOC	It is devoted to understanding individual, relational, and collective cognition in organizational contexts.
Operations and Supply Chain Management	OSCM	It is focused on the management of the transformation processes that create products or services. These processes are found in all organizations including profit and non-profit organizations.
Organization and Management Theory	OMT	It involves building and testing theory about organizations, their members and their management, organization-environment relations, and organizing processes. Theoretical advances in organization theory have included strategic choice, resource dependence theory, organizational ecology, and

		institutional theory.
Organization Development and Change	ODC	It focuses on the empirical research, theory development, and practical application that concerns all forms of organization change. The ODC content domain focuses on the processes and outcomes of organization change and development at the individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels using multiple methods and perspectives.
Organizational Behavior	OB	It is devoted to understanding individuals and groups within an organizational context. The field focuses on attributes, processes, behaviors, and outcomes within and between individual, interpersonal, group, and organizational levels of analysis.
Organizational Communications and Information System	OCIS	It promotes an interdisciplinary approach to further the understanding of the behavioral, social, and economic processes at the intersection of communication, technology, and organizing. OCIS emphasizes communication topics that reflect changes in the contemporary nature of work enabled through the use of mainstream and emerging technologies and systems.
Organizational Neuroscience	NEU	It is dedicated to using neuroscience knowledge and approaches at different levels in organizations, as well as promoting linkages to management practice.
Organizations and the Natural Environment	ONE	It focuses on the research, theories, and practices regarding relationships between organizations and the natural environment, such as the ecological sustainability, environmental philosophies and strategies, ecological performance and environmental entrepreneurship.
Public and Nonprofit	PNP	It focuses on civil society, which includes public and nonprofit organizations, such as government agencies, the military, social services, cultural and educational institutions, membership and professional associations, and advocacy, religious, and charitable organizations.
Research Methods	RM	It is committed to advancing and disseminating techniques for the collection, evaluation, and interpretation of information pertinent to Management scholarship.
Social Issues in Management	SIM	It examines the social issues, institutions, interactions, and impacts of management. SIM shares an interest in understanding the behavior of organizations and the people and groups working in and around them. The group questions the ethical systems, roles, functioning, and legitimacy of business institutions.
Strategic Management	STR	It supports the development and dissemination of knowledge that is relevant to general managers and those who study, shape, or influence the strategy of organizations, and promotes effective teaching of these issues. Division scholars seek to understand and predict when and why some firms perform better than others over time. The Division covers several topics associated with strategic decision-making processes, their antecedents/context, and their consequences.
Strategizing Activities and Practices	SAP	It advances the knowledge and understanding of strategy as something people do and not just something organizations have, and therefore the work involved in doing strategy. Empirically the focus is on the day-to-day-work, activities and practices of strategists, with an interest in how this work socially accomplishes a wide range of individual and organizational outcomes, and also relates to broader societal and institutional trends.
Technology and Innovation Management	TIM	It encourages interdisciplinary scholarship and dialogue on the management of innovation and technological change from a variety of perspectives, including strategic, managerial, behavioral, and operational issues. The problem domain includes the management of innovation processes, research and development, information technologies, e-commerce, and process technologies.

TABLE 1: Final Codebook: Research Areas within the Management Field.
Source: Academy of Management (2020) and American Marketing Association (2017).

Due to their prior experience with this method, all the 98 papers published in *IJBRM* have been thematically analyzed by two of the three authors of this paper with the aim of identifying the *primary* research area of each paper in the sample. Each author analyzed papers individually and the inter-rater reliability between them was high (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.93). However, when disagreeing, together they extended the analysis in order to arrive at a shared vision of the sentence meaning and related theme. Hence, the formed thematic categories are characterized by "internal homogeneity" (i.e., inductive and deductive themes merged into new meaningfully coherent categories) and "external heterogeneity" (there are clear and identifiable distinctions among the final set of themes). It is worth notice that keywords of papers have not been analyzed *per se* within this work; indeed, they were looked at by researchers only after the categorization of papers in order to confirm or generate doubts about the performed thematic analysis.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

Articles published in *IJBRM* have been initially analyzed according to: *i)* number of papers published per year, *ii)* authors' affiliation nationality, *iii)* number of papers published per research area, and *iv)* number of papers per research design. Each of these aspects is described in detail.

According to Figure 1, which shows the number of papers published per year, *IJBRM* saw an increase in publications during its first 3 years of life, from 2010 to 2012, rising from 7 to 25 published papers (+257%). However, starting from 2013, the number of publications slightly declined until 2018 (with only 4 published papers). From 2018 to 2019, the number of publications seemed to increase again. Finally, it seems there is a second decrease of papers through 2019, but it is not possible to provide a final statement for that last trend due to the fact that the last issue of 2020 will be published after this paper has been written.

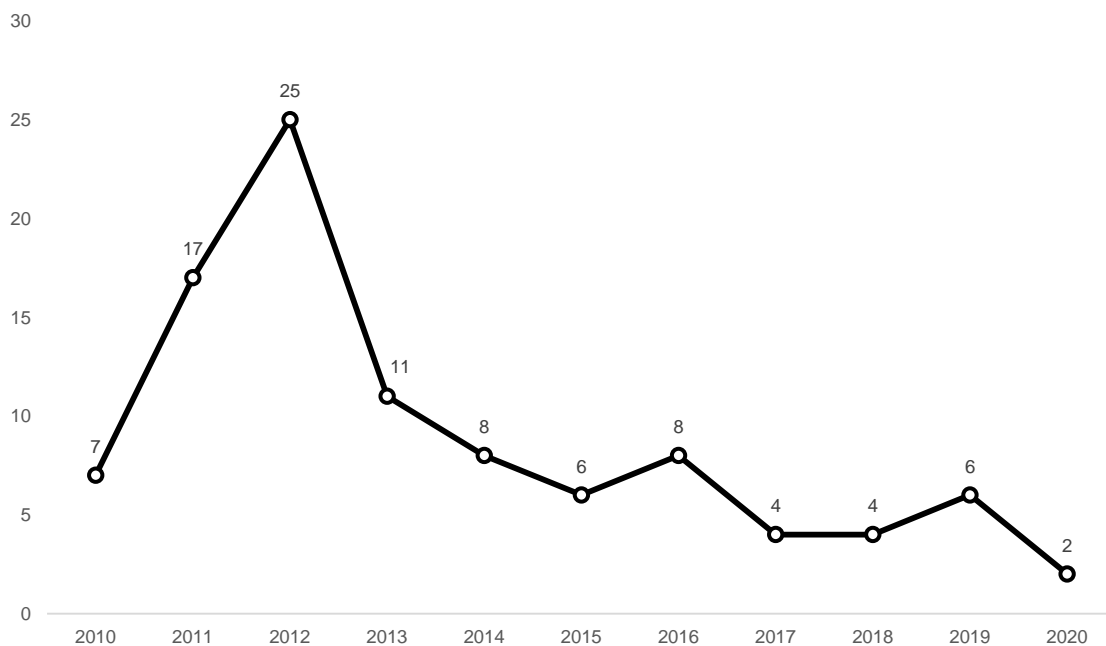


FIGURE 1: Number of papers published per year.

Table 2 depicts the authors' nationality. It can be derived that most of the authors come from Asian countries (54%), followed by European (22%), American (14%) and African (10%).

Country	Number of authors	Percentage
India	12	13%
Taiwan	10	10%
Malaysia	7	7%
Italy	6	6%
Iran	5	5%
Bangladesh	4	4%
Canada	4	4%
China	4	4%
Indonesia	4	4%
United States of America	4	4%
Others	38	39%
Total	98	100%

TABLE 2: Authors' affiliation nationality.

In particular, within the Asian continent, the major represented countries are India, Taiwan, and Malaysia; whilst in Europe, most of the authors are from Italy, Greece, Ireland, Finland, and Sweden. Concerning the American continent, the main represented countries are the United States of America, Canada, and Brazil. Lastly, with regard to the African continent, authors are mainly from Nigeria, Oman, and Tunisia.

Table 3 shows the reclassification of the 98 analyzed articles according to the previously identified research areas. It is important to notice that the largest share of publications can be re-ordered into four main themes: 1) Marketing, 2) Technology and Innovation Management, 3) Operations and Supply Chain Management, and 4) Strategizing Activities and Practices.

Cluster	Acronym	Number of papers	Percentage
Marketing	MKTG	19	20%
Technology and Innovation Management	TIM	14	15%
Operations and Supply Chain Management	OSCM	11	11%
Strategizing Activities and Practices	SAP	10	10%
Strategic Management	STR	6	6%
Human Resources	HR	6	6%
Organization and Management Theory	OMT	5	5%
Entrepreneurship	ENT	5	5%
Social Issues in Management	SIM	4	4%
Managerial and Organizational Cognition	MOC	4	4%
Organization Development and Change	ODC	3	3%
Research Methods	RM	2	2%
Management History	MH	2	2%
International Management	IM	2	2%
Gender and Diversity in Organizations	GDO	2	2%
Public and Nonprofit	PNP	1	1%
Management Education and Development	MED	1	1%
<i>Non defined</i>	-	1	1%
Total		98	100%

TABLE 3: Number of papers published per cluster.

Moreover, according to data in Table 3, it is possible to state that there are different research

areas that are not addressed by papers published in *IJBRM*, such as Management, Spirituality, and Religion (MSR), and Organizational Communications and Information Systems (OCIS), amongst others.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that it has been not possible to classify one particular paper of the sample. We refer to the paper by Sohail et al. (2011) that, in addressing the role of social media and its impact on the 2011 Egyptian revolution, does not fall within any management research areas and can be considered more as a social/political science paper.

Lastly, papers have been analyzed according to the research design adopted and the results show that the sample is composed of: 37 empirical quantitative papers (38%), 25 empirical qualitative papers (26%), 25 review papers (26%), and 10 conceptual papers (10%). Table 4 highlights the different research designs adopted by the published papers, providing detailed information on a representative part of them (both chronologically and in terms of research areas).

Authors	Year	Category	Type of paper	Setting	Data collection	Data analysis	Main results
Kirchwehm, H.	2014	ENT	Empirical qualitative	Online resources	Secondary sources	Best Practice Approach	The author claimed the importance concerning the implementation of the found success factors in a strategy at company level.
Barbar, K., Bou Orom, B., and Al Jardali, H.	2019	GDO	Empirical quantitative	200 Lebanese women	Survey	Kaisers-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and regression analysis	Women in Lebanon suffer from the lack of corporate values that enable them to move ahead and become big managers or owners of their own business.
Senter, K. Y., and McClelland, A. Sr.	2015	HR	Review	-	-	-	The authors have proposed a list of ten skills that is provided for consideration of a future workforce, which will face an environment in rapid change.
Scalera, S.	2019	IM	Empirical qualitative	80 Italian companies	Survey	Thematic analysis	After the "Arab Spring", many more organizations are looking to invest in the Maghreb area.
Herrero de Egaña Espinosa de los Monteros, A., and van Dorp, C. A.	2011	MED	Empirical qualitative	UNED students	Secondary data and observations	Descriptive statistics	Authors claimed that there is no conclusive evidence that a distance education approach to entrepreneurial education is wrong or unfeasible.
Hlochova, H.	2019	MH	Review	-	-	-	The author shows the origins of CSR lie in the practical world and it is the studies of the 'proto'-CSR that enable the understanding of its inception.
Rohani, K., Rohani, L. S., and Barth, J.	2017	MKTG	Conceptual	-	-	-	Marketing managers can take advantage from e-coupons because they provide multiple opportunities for attracting new consumers.
Khairuddin, K. N., and Sapuan, D. A.	2016	MOC	Empirical quantitative	398 Malaysian CSOs	Survey	Structural equation modeling	The authors pointed out that understanding the employees' emotions is important to improve overall organizational performance.
Dorda, B., and Shtëmbari, E.	2020	OB	Review	-	-	-	Covid-19 proved to be extremely important for the organizational culture. Flexible companies proved their ability to manage insecure situations.
Köllen, T.	2012	ODC	Conceptual	-	-	-	The author proposed the corporate jester as a tool to promote a corporate climate of inclusion.
Trequatrinì, R., Russo, G., and Lombardi, R.	2012	OMT	Review	-	-	-	The authors aimed to investigate, from the business economics standpoint, the emerging phenomenon of company networks.
Sartzetaki, M., Dimitriou, D., and Karagkouni, A.	2019	OSCM	Empirical quantitative	Open source data on air traffic networks	Primary and secondary data	Objective functions	Authors have provided evidence about the importance of air connectivity in remote tourist destinations, especially in the Mediterranean region.
de Oliveira Dias, M., and Teles, A.	2018	PNP	Empirical quantitative	1618 Brazilian agriculture cooperatives	Secondary data and archival data	Thematic analysis	According to the authors, the current agriculture cooperative model proved to be a success in Brazil.
Ring, J. K.	2018	RM	Empirical	1103 U.S. transportation	Survey	Linear regression	Organizational support is shown to mediate the relationship

			quantitative	companies			between safety climate and voluntary turnover.
Allouche, M. A.	2010	SAP	Empirical quantitative	Performance of 170 industrial machineries	Primary data	Author's own algorithms	The author has presented a new metaheuristic approach to solve multi-criteria permutation flowshop problems.
Mausumi, N.	2017	SIM	Empirical qualitative	46 stakeholders and online materials	Survey and secondary data	Thematic analysis	The author described the importance of a good and solid relationship between managers and workers in order to achieve corporate goals
Di Tullio, P., Valentinetti, D., and Rea, M. A.	2018	STR	Review	-	-	-	The authors have argued that the concept of Business Model lacks a common definition and characterization.
Iddris, F.	2018	TIM	Empirical qualitative	Comfort Audio AB and other Swedish companies	Primary data	Thematic analysis	The author claims that there is the need to invest in resources of the supply chain members or perform activities in order to stimulate their ability to be committed to the focal firms' innovation capability.

TABLE 4: A portion of the papers published in *IJBRM*.

3.2 Thematic Analysis

From the SLR conducted on all the volumes published in *IJBRM*, it appeared that the main areas of research are: Marketing, Technology and Innovation Management, Operations and Supply Chain Management, and Organizational Behavior. Each area is discussed in detail below in a dedicated section.

3.2.1 Marketing

From the number of published *IJBRM* articles, the first area of research results to be Marketing. Following the American Marketing Association (2017), marketing studies have three main drivers: customers, product, and brand awareness. This is the rationale used for approaching the description of papers published within this area.

With regard to the analysis of customers' behavior, it is noteworthy to remember the contributions made by scholars such as Huang and Lin (2010). The authors have verified that in the modern market – where goods are consumed faster and the product life span is reducing – one of the main threats concerns the difficulty, for marketing and design departments, to be able to understand the quick changes in consumers' choices and, consequently, the new potential target customers. In addition, thanks to the fast global spread and growth of the Internet, the sales of goods and services have exhibited an astonishing growth in recent decades, depicting the unquestionable role that digital platforms are holding. In this vein, Ahmadi (2011) studied and described the relationship between Internet-based companies and customers (B2C), developing a new model for evaluating such relationships, also taking into consideration the consequences related to market risks that could affect customer behavior in the future. On the same field of application, Nilashi et al. (2011) have arranged a new model based on the Fuzzy Logical System that is able to describe some of the hidden links between critical customer needs – i.e., security, familiarity, and easy access to websites – and the ability of firms to meet such needs. The model proposed by Nilashi et al. (2011) converges with the assumption suggested by Khan and Emmambokus (2011) who studied the adoption of new IT services in the Mauritius' banking system, pointing out the importance of factors, such as age, income, previous familiarity with IT solutions and risk factors, as the main variables that can lead people to opt for online banking services rather than more traditional ones.

A second component of the marketing research area is represented by the analysis of the product/service-centric phenomenon. Under this lens, it is crucial to remember the contributions made by scholars such Wang and Chou (2011) who have investigated how people perceive and understand the usefulness brought from using a specific product or service. In particular, Wang and Chou (2010) paid attention to those visual features that are more likely to transmit messages in an efficient and effective way, helping customers to understand and fully appreciate the value of using the products and services. A short while later, Hsu (2012) highlighted the importance for firms to have a marketing department that is able to work in symbiosis with the department devoted to product/service innovation and design. In fact, Hsu (2012) claimed that only efficient and effective cooperation between these two departments is able to trigger and boost product/service innovation that, undoubtedly, represents one of the main key elements to ensure the survival of a company in the medium and long term. Moreover, one year later, the same author argued that co-creation is a valuable form of marketing and strategic approach, which is able to enhance the iterative renovation of well-established modus operandi and the creation of new ones with a consequent boost for the establishment of mutual firm-customer value (Hsu, 2013). Accordingly, it is possible to assume that, within an organization, highly harmonized, efficient and daily-based interactions among the Research and Development (R&D), marketing, and design areas are key factors in order to allow the company to achieve outstanding performance. Furthermore, the design and delivery of products and services have to focus on the needs of final users and these needs are likely to change according to the population and, also, which segment of population the organization is focusing on. In this vein, Shuler et al. (2016) have claimed that specific features are going to diversify the behaviors of each generation; thus, the firm's ability to grasp such intangible differences will play a fundamental role in the success or failure of a product or service.

A third component of the marketing field of study is represented by the analysis of the brand-centric phenomenon. It is noteworthy to remark the contribution in *IJBRM* made by Horng and Lin (2014a) who studied how the Taiwan based YULON Group has vigorously developed its self-owned brand LUXGEN. In particular, those researchers have investigated how LUXGEN – even though it was subject to insufficient popularity during its initial exposure in the marketplace – was able to convince its customers that its automotive products were characterized by a perfect match between quality and price through *ad hoc* marketing strategies and differential threshold stimulation. Yet, Horng and Lin (2014b) have also carried out a study to investigate how to achieve advertising effectiveness; they analyzed a sample of 200 marketing campaigns by using descriptive statistics and a two-way ANOVA test. The results have shown that an effective advertisement represented a crucial factor in the amelioration of “Brand Attitude” and “Advertising Attitude”, disregarding how the brand was perceived during the customers' purchase intention with a consequent annulment of the comparisons between different brands' perception.

3.2.2 *Technology and Innovation Management*

The second main area of interest for many *IJBRM* authors is Technology and Innovation Management that, according to the Academy of Management (2020), encourages “interdisciplinary scholarship and dialogue on the management of innovation and technological change from a variety of perspectives, including strategic, managerial, behavioral, and operational issues. The problem domain includes the management of innovation processes, research and development, information technologies, e-commerce, and process technologies.”

Several *IJBRM* scholars have covered this topic. For instance, through a literature review, Suárez-Barraza et al. (2010) have investigated the management cornerstones theories – i.e., Taylor's principles, Fayol's operations, Systems theory frameworks, Peter and Waterman's eight excellence attributes, the EFQM European Excellence model, the ISO 9000 norms, Toyota's 4P model, and Kaplan and Norton's Management System – with the aim of helping stakeholders to determine the qualitative, quantitative, and strategic frameworks around which organizations should operate. In addition to the literature review, Suárez-Barraza et al. (2010) have highlighted the importance of having an efficient and integrated set of both hard and soft skills in order to reach the organizational equilibrium through the use of Integral Management Systems (IMSs). In fact, according to the results of their investigation, for internal processes, many organizations tend to focus only on technical and financial views, ignoring the soft dimension of the management system, which concerns the human aspect. Consequently, Suárez-Barraza et al. (2010) have demonstrated that when organizations also try to implement the soft dimension in their business models (i.e., an IMS), they will be more likely to achieve a better overall performance.

A couple of years later, Sarosa (2012) argued the fact that implementing and adapting innovation (IT in particular) within an organization should be thought of as an interactive process between the stakeholder, organizational architecture, and external environment. One of the emerging theories concerning this interactive process is the Actor Network Theory (ANT), proposed by Bruni and Teli (2007), according to which the adoption of IT solutions is classified as a process comprising five steps – i.e., problematization, interessement, enrolment, mobilization, and dissidence – aimed at generating a normative response for the decision maker. In this vein, Sarosa (2012) argued that ANT is much more useful in illustrating the adoption of IT compared to other theories due to its ability to diagnose not only the elements, but also the processes and the circumstances in which it is more likely to achieve success in the adoption of IT solutions.

Alongside the implementation of IT into the managerial processes, the need to manage and run the massive flows of information required new general methodological approaches. Related to this aspect, Buckley (2012) examined and demonstrated – through the use of several empirical evidences – how Information Aggregation (IA) can be used as an IT tool capable of supporting the decision-making processes and achieving effective and practical results thanks to the fully integrated adoption of such new IT into the organizations' business models.

Also, other *IJBRM* scholars have studied the effect of the use of IT solutions in pre-existing business architectures. For instance, Al Shamy et al. (2012) have carried out an in-depth analysis regarding the situation of Egyptian business organizations showing that there is an existing gap between the local and the more developed western environments in terms of IT solutions adoption. In the same year, Vousinas (2012) published a research that aimed to understand the possible positive correlation between IT investments and economic performance, at both micro and macroeconomic levels. Results show that the hypothesized positive correlation exists but, as demonstrated also by Durst and Stähle (2013), there are several circumstances – which, certainly, may differ around the globe – that need to be taken into consideration when organizations are going to implement IT methodologies into their business models. In particular, Durst and Stähle (2013) highlighted that these circumstances can be grouped into nine general categories: *i)* relational aspects, *ii)* people involved in the process, *iii)* governance, *iv)* facilitators, *v)* provision of resources, *vi)* strategy, *vii)* process management, *viii)* leadership, and *ix)* culture.

3.2.3 Operations and Supply Chain Management

The third main area of interest concerns Operations and Supply Chain Management (OSCM), which is defined by the Academy of Management (2020) as that area “focused on the management of the transformation processes that create products or services. These processes are found in all organizations including profit and non-profit organizations.”

Many *IJBRM* scholars have produced scientific research on this topic. For example, Ainapur et al. (2011) have pointed out that the field of Supply Chain Management was subject to rapid growth in recent decades, given its intrinsic usefulness as an outstanding tool for organizational development. Those scholars have also identified that the success of supply chain initiatives mainly lies in the choice of the appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) using the most suitable supply chain framework, and that these KPIs – to be fruitful – have to be measured, monitored and controlled with a proper review mechanism. Accordingly, Ainapur et al. (2011) have suggested a technique to identify the KPIs’ limits by applying the Supply Chain Operations Reference (SCOR) framework. In addition, they have also used the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) to break down the goal into micro portions with the aim of producing a more efficient and effective analysis of those KPIs. Subsequently, those scholars have compared the most adopted KPIs for each segment of the industry and created a list of average “best practices”. In the same year, Gill (2011) has also highlighted the importance of finding the proper KPIs. In his study, he proved that in SCM a significant share of the costs is linked to constant actions; thus, he underlined the importance, for organizations, to have a well-structured and designed supply chain network that can considerably reduce costs and save time with a consequent increase in the overall organization performance.

In 2012, Nagaraja carried out a deeper investigation in order to determine the key factors that influence the value generated by SCM in the collaborative network of the automotive sector, in particular in India, and the magnitude of the information sharing process in a Business-to-Business (B2B) set up with the consequential implications on the decision-making processes. The major empirical findings claimed by Nagaraja (2012) demonstrated that the adoption of e-based collaborative agreements and the practice of information sharing, based on trust and long-term alliances, are likely to improve the creation of added value resulting in the ensuing SCM.

In order to have a clearer idea of how to increase Supply Chain performances, Marwah et al. (2014) have tested how various parameters, taken from a wide literature review – i.e., supplier-buyer relations, external supply chain, environmental factors, human metrics, information sharing and performance measurement approaches – affect SCM performance and, therefore, grant its competitiveness, in the context of Indian manufacturing organizations. In addition, based on an experimental study with a sample population made up of 100 respondents, they demonstrated that organizations are able to strengthen SCM performance by developing ongoing practices and strategies by paying attention to the elements that significantly influence their own SCM performance. These findings were also confirmed by Iddris (2018) who, basing his analysis on a

literature review of 60 scientific articles concerning SCM, found that the main drivers of Digital Supply Chain Management (DSCM) pertain to the novelty of applied technologies, the degree of digitalization, and its integration into the organizational architecture with the consequent level of collaboration and coordination between internal and external stakeholders.

3.2.4 Organizational Behavior

The last main area of interest regards Organizational Behavior, which has been defined by the Academy of Management (2020) as the “understanding of individuals and groups within an organizational context. The field focuses on attributes, processes, behaviors, and outcomes within and between individual, interpersonal, group, and organizational levels of analysis.”

Notably, in *IJBRM*, several scholars have investigated this topic. For example, Markova and Jones (2011) demonstrated that the benefits provided by the organization to suit employee needs generate highest benefits satisfaction. In fact, employees who are satisfied, thanks to the benefits received, are less prone to consider leaving the organization, with a consequent higher degree of commitment. Thus, Markova and Jones (2011) highlighted the importance for executives to understand the affective and cognitive side of the employees' behavior.

Other important aspects were investigated by Preko and Adjetej (2013) who examined the inter-correlations of employees' fidelity and their commitment as independent variables and their impact on how these factors are able to influence the conduct of salespersons working in commercial banks. Their findings revealed that there are significant linear correlations between those factors, which also exhibit significant positive correlations between other variables, such as human relations, leadership style, job content, personal development, and creativity.

Another emerging aspect to consider in the perception of commitment, both from inside and outside the organizations, regards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In fact, as explained by Huang and Chiu (2017), the enormous implementation of CSR policies through shared values and a sustainable corporate culture are core elements that are able to enhance organizations' competitiveness, with the consequential creation of social welfare and the increasing perception about the positive added value produced by the employees across the whole range of internal and external processes.

During the life of companies, employees and managers can suffer a lot of stress related to internal circumstances and, in this context, Goyal and Joshi (2012) have investigated the possible effects derived from the processes of merger and acquisition. These scholars pointed out that both psychological factors (i.e., uncertainty, insecurity, job changes and threat of job loss) and cultural factors (i.e., technology, reporting systems, working hours, relationships with new colleagues and managers) are the main stress elements affecting people in organizations that are facing these managerial processes. In the same year, Authayarat and Umemuro (2012) tested the effect of other environmental characteristics (i.e., job satisfaction, less conflict, autonomy, camaraderie, authentic leadership, fitness, and role clarity) that may, positively or negatively, evoke individuals' affective experiences towards both colleagues and their working environment. In addition, Authayarat and Umemuro (2012) have investigated such relations under the lens of gender differences. Accordingly, it is possible to state that the changing nature of the workplace is likely to create different employees' expectations and needs. Accordingly, Nabi and Ismail (2016) claimed that working environments are no longer populated by employees performing rigid and static tasks, but by employees that proactively develop and adjust their role and functions (i.e., their working environment) according to their needs and preferences. Nabi and Ismail (2016) defined this employee behavior as job crafting and tested its existence in a sample composed of 150 public sector employees.

Lastly, Dorda and Shtëmbari (2020) pointed out that Organizational Culture (OC) is one of the main drivers in charge of the success of both private/public and profit/non-profit organizations; in fact, OC represents a unique feature that is powerful enough to shape the identity of each organization. Thus, according to those authors, organizations should continue to invest time and

energy in order to build their best working culture, especially nowadays when the COVID-19 pandemic crisis is challenging what organizations have done for years.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRENT AND PROSPECT EDITORS, REVIEWERS, AND AUTHORS

The profound editorial reorganization of *IJBRM* during September 2020 looks to be the perfect moment to make editorial and review board members, together with the Journal's current and future authors, aware of the Journal's history as well as its future editorial and research agenda.

Accordingly, this paper performed a SLR of all the articles published by *IJBRM* during its whole life (2010-August 2020) in order to identify the main research features, areas addressed by the papers published by the Journal, and to define the Journal's future developments.

Results show that, although during the first three years of life the Journal has witnessed an exponential increase in publications, the number of published articles has declined. Moreover, most of the authors came from Asia, mainly India, Taiwan, and Malaysia. Concerning the research areas addressed by the published papers, the thematic analysis carried out on the sample was based on the existence of 27 different research areas. Of these, only 17 can be found in the Journal's publications, with a far greater relevance of four areas: 1) Marketing, 2) Technology and Innovation Management, 3) Operations and Supply Chain Management, and 4) Organizational Behavior. Lastly, according to the methodology adopted, it is possible to state that most of the published papers adopted a quantitative approach; whilst only 10% of the articles tried to provide a purely conceptual contribution. According to these results, important implications for editors, reviewers, and authors can be derived.

Concerning the *implications for current and prospective editors and reviewers*, results of this investigation call for opening the Journal's editorial and reviewer boards to a greater number of European and American scholars, according to an *audience development strategy* (in terms of both the *Journal's* authors and readers) to really become an *International Journal*. Thus, the *IJBRM* Editors have to pursue a twofold objective: 1) *Exploit* existing geographical areas from which submissions are already received, and 2) *Explore* new geographical areas that may precipitate suitable contributions of interest for the *Journal*. Moreover, the editors are asked to verify that submitted articles are in line with the "Journal's aim & scope"; thus, that the submitted articles fall within (at least) one of the 27 research areas identified in this work. In this respect, the reviewers' role is also crucial in increasing the quality of articles by providing accurate suggestions aimed at ameliorating the article's scientific soundness. In other words, Editors and Reviewers are requested to verify the novelty provided by the submitted papers, to be sure they are based on rigorous methodology, and that the relevant literature – including that already published in *IJBRM* – is properly cited. Lastly, the total absence of Special Issues emerges from the analysis of the various volumes published during the *Journal's* life. Accordingly, *IJBRM* strategically orients itself in this direction; the possibility of promoting a Special Issue through the Journal, in fact, allows a greater involvement of those who will cover the role of guest editors for a particular Special Issue. In this way, many different research communities dedicated to specific specializations will be formed around the *Journal*, which will therefore allow it to: *i)* increase the scientific community's awareness of the *Journal's* presence, *ii)* increase the number of publications, and *iii)* increase the number of *Journal* citations. All of this will have a positive influence on the *Journal's* ranking, triggering a fundamental virtuous cycle for the *Journal's* survival in the medium-long term.

Finally, current Editors and Reviewers are encouraged to link with their colleagues and peers with regard to the *Journal's* activities and to propose their evaluation as new potential members of the Editorial and Reviewer Boards. The scientific direction of the Journal would be as democratic as possible and provide the opportunity for all those willing to act to demonstrate their value as Editor or Reviewer.

Concerning the implications for future authors, results of this investigation call for papers that deal with different management aspects, according to the research areas identified in this work. Thus, authors specializing in all the areas still not addressed by *IJBRM* – e.g., Conflict Management (CM), Management, Spirituality, and Religion (MSR), Organizational Communications and Information Systems (OCIS), and Organizational Neuroscience (ON) – are highly encouraged to consider the *Journal* as a potential outlet for their contributions. In this regard, authors are encouraged to clearly identify, in their article, the research area into which their paper falls and, consequently, to join the conversation on that specific research area that is already in place in the *Journal*. This allows newly submitted papers to drastically reduce the possibility of being desk-rejected or out of scope; thus, increasing their chances of publication. Moreover, future authors are called upon to be particularly rigorous from a methodological point of view. In particular, articles using quantitative methods should focus more on explanatory approaches which are able to better demonstrate the causality among phenomena than descriptive ones. Regarding qualitative papers, these should clearly identify how the qualitative contents were analyzed and the nature of the research paradigm adopted. Lastly, submissions of review papers that are able to critically discuss specific literature, by identifying methodological problems and pointing out research gaps, are highly encouraged, and also help to increase the *Journal's* visibility.

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