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Article

Editorial: Well Documented Articles Achieve More Impact

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Suggested Citation: Albers, Sönke (2009) : Editorial: Well Documented Articles Achieve More Impact, BuR - Business Research, ISSN 1866-8658, VHB - Verband der Hochschullehrer für Betriebswirtschaft, German Academic Association of Business Research, Göttingen, Vol. 2, Iss. 1, pp. 8-9,
<https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03343526>

This Version is available at:

<http://hdl.handle.net/10419/103673>

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Editorial: Well Documented Articles Achieve More Impact

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Abstract

This issue offers for the first time supplementary material to articles. It consists of Excel files providing data the research is based on, calculation sheets, and optimization tools. Moreover, text files with pseudo code of algorithms and data of instances used for testing these algorithms as well as a video file with a demonstration of the use of a system in experiments are supplied for download. This material facilitates the understanding of the published articles and the replication of their findings to the benefit of scientific progress. And last but not least, such well documented articles will achieve much more impact.

Keywords: replication, research impact, article complements

With the appearance of this issue you will find for the first time supplementary material to articles that either appear in this new issue or were published in earlier issues.

In this first issue of 2009, Boysen and Scholl offer data of test instances for their article “A general solution framework for component-commonality problems” for other researchers to test alternative algorithms. Kiesewetter, Bensemann, and Schöne-mann calculate the return on equity capital of investments in residential property in Germany after unification in their article “Who has really paid for the reconstruction of East Germany? Expecting and realized returns on real estate investments in East and West Germany in the 1990s,” with a special focus on the comparison of East and West Germany. In order to be able to replicate their results, the authors provide detailed calculations for 50 different cities in an Excel-file. Finally, Koch, Eisend and Petermann complement their article “Path dependence in decision-making processes: Exploring the impact of complexity under increasing returns” with a brief instructional video showing how to use the ComPad-Explorer which they utilize for their experiments. This facilitates the understanding of the research design and the achieved results.

In addition to the attachments for this new issue, some authors provide further material for articles previously published. Hunsdoerfer, Kruschwitz, and Lorenz complement their article “Investment valua-

tion with tax-optimized financing decisions and a tax-optimized default alternative” from the first issue 2008 with an Excel-file that enables you to simultaneously optimize the optimal financing alternative for different investments. This can then be evaluated for different investment situations and interest rates. Polacek, Benkner, Doerner, and Hartl provide for their article from the second issue of 2008, “A cooperative and adaptive variable neighborhood search for the multi depot vehicle routing problem with time windows,” the pseudo-code for their proposed algorithm facilitating its implementation by readers. In addition, they offer Excel-files with detailed results and text-files with test instances so that other researchers can engage in replicating the procedure and perhaps improving it.

All these attachments to the respective articles deliver an added value to the readers than just the articles as plain text. Modern research involves complex methods which can only be fully understood if it is documented with a degree of detail. By providing these attachments, I am certain that our journal offers excellent opportunities for other researchers to understand the exact way of investigation, enabling them to replicate a certain method or research design. [Gleditsch, Metelits, and Strand \(2003\)](#), in their analysis of 416 papers published in the Journal of Peace Research, found that papers offering data in any form were cited twice as often as



comparable papers without such an offer. Take for example the well-known book by Hofstede (1980) on cultural differences of countries. I am sure that it would not have been cited so often had he not published the exact factor scores of all countries for 4 cultural dimensions (factors).

Replicating research is very rare in business research. Evanschitzky, Baumgarth, Hubbard, and Armstrong (2007) find that for the top five marketing journals for the period 1990–2004, only 41 of 2,409 empirical articles, or 1.7%, qualified as replications with extensions. Consider an analogy to medicine: What if less than 2% of the studies attempted to verify claims about medical treatments by replication? Hubbard and Armstrong (1994) found that only 15% of replications confirmed initial outcomes, 25% provided partial support, and 60% conflicted with their predecessors. Hence, the situation in our field is in stark contrast to physics where a certain finding is only accepted by the scientific community if it could be replicated in another laboratory.

In traditional journals, space limitations restrict authors' ability to provide sufficiently detailed descriptions of their research design and the method of analysis. Very often, the questions used in a questionnaire are not documented. The choice of parameter values of an analysis method are not published so that even if data were publicly available, the results could not be verified. Moreover, results are documented very selectively. Correlation matrices of all variables used are not always published although they allow for meta-analyses and re-analyses. Sometimes, authors do not publish descriptions of their variables so that the reported parameter values of regressions cannot be compared to other studies, as would be the case for dimensionless elasticities. The true performance of algorithms cannot be assessed unless the computer program or a pseudo-code is published because the claimed superiority could depend on good programming skills rather than on a superior solution concept. In all these cases, continuing research by other researchers is time-consuming, and the speed of scientific progress is limited if the article does not document the details sufficiently.

The online character of our open access journal BuR - Business Research enables us to publish articles that do not suffer from space limitations, allowing them to be better documented. Authors are invited to write their articles in a style that differs from the

more traditional way prevalent in print journals. They are kindly asked to provide more details on the research method and the method of analysis. However, this should not lead to overly long articles. Rather, authors are advised to organize their article such that the main insights are provided in a text of usual length while the details are offered in appendices. Thereby, the needs of different readers are satisfied. Quick readers may get a glimpse of what has been achieved, while researchers in the same area can get a detailed idea of what has been done in a certain study. These appendices are not restricted to text but can be of any digital format. Excel formats are welcome for showing calculations or providing data. Videos are suitable for documenting visual impulses such as advertising spots or experimental settings. BuR – Business Research motivates researchers to publish such comprehensive articles which will be used much more intensively by other researchers, leading to more frequent citations. Thereby, we create a climate of collaboration (like for open-source software) among researchers so that the state-of-the-art can be moved by competitive efforts. I invite authors to publish under these attractive conditions to enhance the further development of business research as a scientific discipline.

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Biographies

Sönke Albers is Professor of Innovation, New Media, and Marketing at Christian-Albrechts-University at Kiel since 1990. He received his doctoral degree in 1977 from University of Hamburg and his "Habilitation" in 1982 from University at Kiel. Prior to Kiel he served on the faculties of WHU and Lüneburg. He was a visiting scholar or professor at Stanford, INSEAD, University of Vienna, AGSM Sydney, PennState, and UT Sydney. He holds an Honorary Doctorate from Goethe University Frankfurt am Main. Currently, he serves as editor-in-chief for BuR – Business Research.