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Article

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Submissions and research impact at BRQ: Gradual changes weave their way



Two hundred and four manuscripts in 2015, and an average impact factor of 0.299 – with a very small variance – in the last 5 years. These two rough figures, as in a static photograph, tell us something about the journal's recent evolution: whereas the Impact Factor of CEDE showed signs of stagnation (2014 still counts citations during 2012 and 2013, when the journal was still published in Spanish), its transformation into BRQ has clearly boosted the diffusion of the journal for publishing purposes. Let us get deeper into this picture and delve into the dynamics of submissions and research impact.

Table 1 shows the number of submissions and some key figures about editorial decisions. The number of papers received has increased approximately at a 10 per cent annual rate since BRQ was first published in English in January 2014. Accordingly, the number of reviews completed each year has also raised: we made 197 decisions in 2015. Only 10.2% of these papers were sent to authors for a second round, however, and almost all of these manuscripts made it to the final desired stage: an acceptance decision.

Not surprisingly, together with the information included in Table 2 on BRQ's turnaround time, these figures reflect the editorial policy published at the beginning of the present year (Vázquez, 2015): we are trying to make quick first decisions that allow authors to save time and—if invited—harness the specific investment of a thoughtful peer-review process. It is worth remembering that the Editorial Board does not “forward emails” from reviewers to authors: we build on the referees' comments to decide which changes and how many rounds will take place. If we recall that approximately 20% of the submissions sent to CEDE back in 2010 and 2011 were finally published (Fuentelsaz, 2014), all these reflections send a strong message: manuscripts really need to be clear and demonstrate a robust contribution from the start. The rise of competition to publish in BRQ is definitely putting a high pressure on the rejection rate and, in fact, calculations are easy to do: five papers in each issue, four issues per year, more than 200 submissions... It is not easy to find space in BRQ nowadays, and this would not change even if our editorial resources were unlimited to perform high risk revisions.

Table 1 Decision Summary.

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of papers received	168	166	183	204
Reviews completed	159	162	181	197
Invited for a second round	15.7%	18.5%	9.9%	10.2%
Accepted	13.8%	9.9%	9.9%	9.7%

Table 2 Journal turnaround time in 2015.

Submission to Editor Assignment	2.3
<i>Average number of days between the date the manuscript was received and the first Editor was assigned</i>	
Submission to desk rejection	5
<i>Average number of days between the date the manuscript was received and a desk rejection decision is sent by the Chief Editor</i>	
Submission to Reviewer Invitation	17.2
<i>Average number of days between the date the manuscript was received and the first Reviewer was invited</i>	

Regarding research impact, Fig. 1 shows the evolution of CEDE's Impact Factor in the last 5 years. With an average of 0.299 and a very small standard deviation (0.055), the series is large enough to assess the narrow potential of the journal while being published in Spanish. By contrast, even if there is not any guarantee that CEDE's transformation into BRQ can increase the Impact Factor *per se*, it has indeed broaden the diffusion of the journal to participate in the global market for ideas.

The path of citations for 2015 and 2016 was anticipated by former Editor, Lucio Fuentelsaz (2014): “An unavoidable outcome of [transforming CEDE into BRQ] is that, in the next two years, the impact factor of the journal will be split into two. The procedure followed by Thomson Reuters when a journal changes its title is to spread its impact factor between the two names of the same journal for a two-year

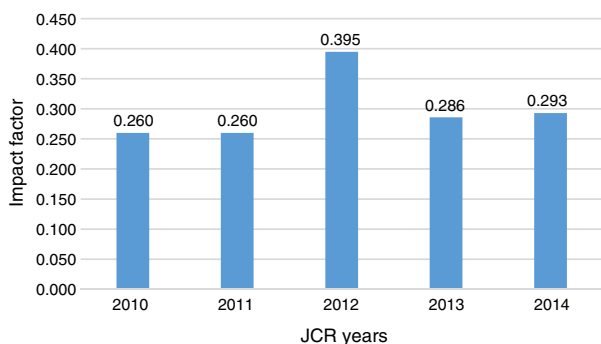


Figure 1 CEDE's Impact Factor trend.

transition period. For this reason, in 2015 and 2016, CEDE and BRQ will each have their own impact factor but the result of adding the two figures together will give us the real impact factor.”

BRQ's web page warns authors and readers about it, but there is certainly much more to the diffusion of ideas than the impact factor. In particular, I would like to highlight the number of downloads that BRQ articles are reaching: almost 50% of the papers published by BRQ in 2014 and 2015 show more than 500 downloads. Two of them stand out above the rest by December 31, 2015: [Guerras-Martín et al. \(2014\)](#) with 2708 downloads, and [Barba-Aragón et al. \(2014\)](#) with 1020.

Although [Schloegl and Gorraiz \(2011\)](#) find that downloads and citations have different patterns of obsolescence, they also support previous results showing a significant and positive correlation between citations and downloads when absolute figures are considered ([Brody et al., 2006](#)). Counting downloads can therefore be an early-days' proxy of probable citation impact, especially if we take into account that BRQ Business Research Quarterly is published under a Creative Commons international license. The impact factor notwithstanding, nonetheless, it is worth remembering that the notion of scientific impact is certainly a multi-dimensional construct that cannot be adequately measured by a single indicator ([Bollen et al. 2009](#)). As an estimate of *usage impact* of a paper, therefore, downloads have probably become an authoritative indicator of research impact in an Open Access environment ([Kurtz, 2004](#)).

To conclude, two years after BRQ began its journey to the highest level of global intellectual debate in the area of

management, submissions and research impact have evolved positively as expected. It is not trivial to emphasize in today's academic environment that no shortcuts were taken. The greatest strength of the journal, its parent association, ACEDE, has allowed successive Editorial Boards to deploy a long term vision in which the ordinary concerns of scholars have always been compatible with the pursuit of insight and knowledge. These are not outdated ideals inside a liturgical discourse. They are actually the main reason why the journal has exposed its highly reputed position as a Spanish journal to address fearlessly the internalization challenge. As Faulkner would put it, "you cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore".

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