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Article

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Gentle tailwinds allow BRQ to take inspiration from Bob Dylan



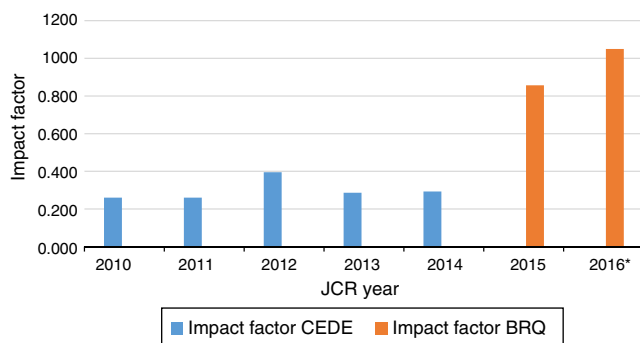
I must confess that in my former editorial (Vázquez, 2016), when I addressed submissions and research impact in the transition from CEDE to BRQ, I was expecting firm progress in our editorial roadmap (Fuentelsaz, 2014; Vázquez, 2015a,b) but a limited short-term impact in our market share for high-quality papers and citations. I guess I was wrong. After a record 207 submissions in 2015, we received 279 manuscripts in 2016. Our good prospects for article downloads also turned into a first Impact Factor of 0.875 in 2015, with the estimation for 2016 being even higher.

In my view, the support of the Spanish Academy of Management (ACEDE), BRQ's parent association, which provides a stable readership of more than 700 colleagues, has a lot to do with the immediate increase in citations (Fig. 1). To begin with, the Divisions of the Academy (dealing with Strategy, Human Resource Management, International Management, Marketing, Finance, Operations, etc.), provide a broad impact and great visibility for the journal's articles when compared to the focused audience of a specialized journal. Simultaneously, ACEDE may also serve for some papers as a sort of specific research community allowing targeted sharing of results. This is especially the case for articles that address the idiosyncrasies of the Spanish

institutional framework with regard to problems that have apparently been well covered in the literature. Such articles are often used to support or even inspire further work (Huguet and Gandía, 2016; Villanueva-Villar et al., 2016; Gras-Gil et al., 2016).

Regarding the increase in submissions in 2016, inclusion of BRQ in the third quartile of JCR must have had some influence. But Thomson Reuters only came up with the Impact Factor in mid-June, whereas submissions had already shot up in the first semester with a 30% increase compared to 2015. In general terms, ACEDE and the higher international visibility of our journal are important factors on which BRQ's progress in submissions hinges. My own conversations with other editors confirm that the rise in submissions reflects particularly the gradual incorporation of thousands of colleagues in developing countries into the publication process. Additionally, the two calls for Special Issues with deadlines in 2016 contributed significantly, allowing us to receive many papers that would otherwise not have been submitted to BRQ (Fig. 2).

Finally, our editorial policy (Vázquez, 2015a,b), which involves highly interventionist Associate Editors to increase the efficiency and quality of the peer review process, has



* Estimation for 2016.

Figure 1 Evolution of 2-year Impact Factor.

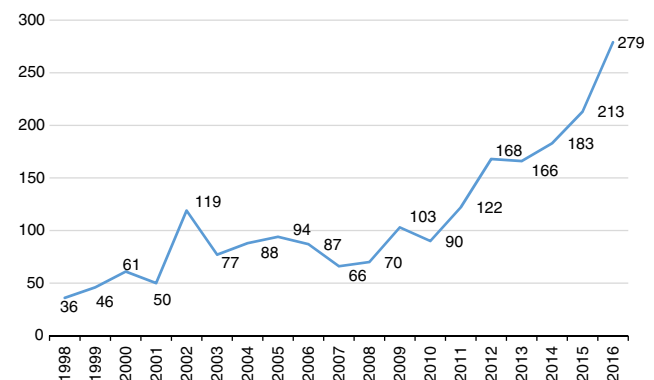


Figure 2 Evolution of submissions.

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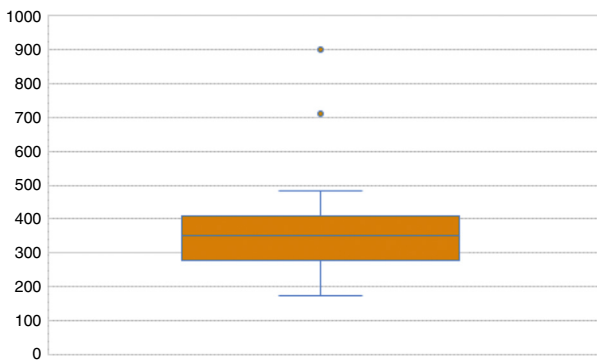


Figure 3 Boxplot for turnaround time in 2016 (days from submission to acceptance).

probably helped attract new papers too. I cannot give a precise figure, but we do have anecdotal evidence suggesting that many authors sending their work to BRQ know that there is a 90% chance that their paper will be desk-rejected in four to five days. If their work is sent for review, however, they also know they will have a high probability of making an efficient specific investment in the revision process. As Fig. 3 shows for the papers we published in 2016, this strategy shortens the turnaround time and, above all, prevents most authors from having to undergo painful revision processes that often end sadly. As with any other journal, there have been outliers relating to eventualities that may affect reviewers or authors, which benefit from a superior degree of patience on the part of the Associate Editors and myself. The good news is that the median paper was accepted 352 days after submission, and that – as targeted by our editorial policy – we were able to accept a few papers with only one round of revisions (Domínguez et al., 2016; Rodríguez-Fernandez, 2016). Revisions with two rounds, which was the case for the majority of the papers published, also had fast turnaround times; some of them below 10 months (e.g., Gras-Gil et al., 2016; Koseoglu, 2016).

Be that as it may, the number of manuscripts we are currently dealing with is perhaps at the upper limit of our regular capacity. So far, so good. The increased number of submissions has allowed us to be very selective with the manuscripts we have sent for review. If the number of submissions continues to rise, however, I personally would not take it as a sign of success. BRQ should aim from now on at increasing the quality of submissions even further. This aim is not perfectly correlated with the number of submissions but, rather, with the internationalization of our brand in the countries/research communities that have the highest scientific maturity in the field of management. Most of the initiatives we have carried out go in this long-term direction.

Some recent changes have been described in previous editorials but are now being materialised. For example, the new sections will finally be introduced in 2017 when we publish our first contributions in the form of review essays, methodological insights or counterintuitive ideas. The internationalization of our managing team began some months ago with the arrival of Yama Temouri, from Aston Business School (UK), as Associate Editor, and has continued with the complete renewal of the Editorial Board. We have thus taken on colleagues from all over the world who will act as

ambassadors for BRQ (in addition to their more specific duties, such as reviewing).

There are also several on-going initiatives that will help the journal to strengthen its reputation in the long term. One that I would like to highlight has to do with the increasing demand from funding bodies and scholars to work on transparency, openness and reproducibility of research. We will encourage authors to share their data with Editors and Reviewers through Elsevier's online system, and whenever that is not possible, to give reasons. So, even if sharing data will not be mandatory for the time being, this will probably entail a significant change of perspective for all of us as authors. I am convinced, however, that this trend is unstoppable; not only because funding institutions want their money to generate as many scope economies as possible, but also – and probably most importantly – because journals that wish to convey credibility will have no alternative.

The discussion on reproducibility has been actually spearheaded by journals like *Science* (Nosek et al., 2015), *Nature* (Collins and Tabak, 2014) or *Cell* (Marcus, 2014), and has found growing consideration in many other fields such as management (O'Boyle et al., 2014). The fact is that, as an Editor, when assessing the initial or final stages of a submission, I have often had to deliberate about coding errors, standard error computation, ambiguity in the definition of proxies, large data sets with dozens of controls and fixed effects that necessarily affect measurement errors, etc. I suffer these problems myself as an author, and I know of course what the shortest way to solve them is. Transparency and reproducibility will not avoid us the possibility of type II errors, but following international standards in this regard (with sequential steps and at a particular rhythm that reflects the current situation in the field of management) will make failure less likely. Furthermore, beyond BRQ's interests, I have no doubt that the world's best scholars will understand sooner rather than later that, in a market like ours with highly anonymous participants and intense rivalry, displaying one's "lab methods" is what differentiates peer-reviewed "scientific" research from pure anecdote.

Anyway, it looks therefore as if BRQ's short-term is cloudless. ACEDE is not supporting a scientific journal like BRQ, however, to live in the stability of a recently transformed journal that allows the same high quality papers written in Spanish – and other languages – to be published in English. This is important, but it is not enough. BRQ can certainly provide a forum for the exchange of ideas among management researchers with a contextual focus on Spain and Latin American countries. But the rationale behind the journal goes much further. Leaving aside hurries or emergencies derived from short-term research impact, BRQ aims at building a strong brand in the global market for management ideas; a brand that somehow reflects the purpose, institutional design and social norms of ACEDE from its very beginnings.

This last reflection reminds me of Bob Dylan. When his name first appeared on the list of candidates for the Nobel Prize in literature back in 2011, some people found it hilarious. Throughout his life, Dylan's major concern was not to sell the following single – let alone win a Nobel Prize – but to constantly reinvent himself. This he did for 54 years with great talent. It is the intrinsic motivation of dark horses like

Dylan that I find most appealing. And it is their inspiration that helps individuals to distinguish between what is here to stay and what is just new packaging for outdated concepts or ideas. Maybe there is something blowing in the wind for BRQ after all.

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