

Editorial

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Do We Need Research that Makes Sense in Real Life? A Burning Question

There is a wall between the real and academic world in most universities in Brazil. I have heard this statement many times over my years working at a public university when dealing with business men, business owners, small entrepreneurs, among others. Whether this is true, if perception is the truth in the beholder's eyes, we seem not to be connected to the real world. Is it possible to break walls without compromising the academia and being closer to the private and public sector, without forgetting that there is nothing more practical than a good theory? Should I, as an editor worry about practical contribution of our manuscripts? If our readers are on the academy, why should I care about this? I think both theoretical and managerial contributions are relevant, and if we, as researchers could mix them together in an article, I believe this would drive us to build bridges that will help, not only companies and the public sector to be more competitive in Brazil, but also our readers and authors around the world. Actually, building bridges is not enough, I think we should set fire to the academy. I will explain this in the next paragraphs.

Recently, participating in a meeting discussing the future of academic publication in the administration field, with editors of top journals in Brazil and from a top tier foreigner journal, it was pointed out by one of the editors that to publish is to dialog. To be competitive, the dialog must be interesting for readers, for editors and reviewers. But sometimes, it seems we are talking to ourselves when trying to disseminate the results of our research, either theoretical and/or empirical ones. The editor of the foreign journal mentioned that we need to tell a story with the following check list: to make it clear the phenomenon one is focusing; to show to readers why it is relevant; also, to indicate what is known and not known about the phenomenon; to present the burning question; how you are going to address the question (theoretically and empirically); what you did, found out, and contributed; and the most important, why other people should care about the story one is telling. Is my story interesting or boring? The start point for an interesting dialog is the research question, which for now on, will be denominated as the burning question, as long as it can burn editors, readers and reviewers' mind.

Sometimes, hurrying to publish, according to Bergh (2002) authors prematurely submit papers that can kill a burning question. For instance, reviewers "often conclude that authors have not exercised

due diligence in their work and develop a skeptical attitude toward their manuscript's content" (p. 633). For that, we can assume that only a burning question is not enough. Presenting ideas and contributions in a clear dialog is also required for a potential article to be published in a top management journal.

The burning question: my free interpretation. I did not craft this expression, but I truly believe that a burning question will metaphorically call the attention of the academy for its power to light it up new perspectives to old topics, as well to bring innovation, helping to develop a specific area in business and public administration. Considering that we are part of applied social sciences, the fire provoked by the burning question should have a practical result. Researchers, like a pyromaniac, will bring novelty, contributions and theoretical development, when presenting an interesting incendiary research question. We have to keep in mind that the competition to publish in top journals is global, and the fuel for burning is limited. How many real burning question one can present in one year? Here we face the dilemma quantity versus quality (productivism), that tends to follow us every day, in the sense that an ideal situation would be both quantity and quality in publication. How creative one can be, and will editors, reviewers and readers buy our different conversations and our incendiary arguments?

Editor and reviewers have to be qualified on the topic of a single paper, so that they can decide whether the research question is a burning one. If a referee is unfamiliar with a topic, resulting comments related to the evaluating process tend to be weak, and may lead to an unfair rejection of a paper, or blind spotting a burning question with a great potential for publication (Tsang, 2013).

We are challenged to publish interesting articles, emphasizing theoretical contribution that it brings. Most of the times, if we are able to do that, our paper will be publish, but not necessarily in a top journal. Top journals call for burning questions. Maybe if we have more applied results, with research that makes sense in real life, articles will set fire in some ways, to both the academia and organizations.

The question that I make in this editorial is: do we need research that makes sense in real life? I would answer yes. That can be our contribution to help organizations (private or public) around the world to be more competitive. Of course, not forgetting theoretical contribution. Like anything in life, balance is necessary in a dialog. Smooth or loud conversations need to be balanced. What would be interesting to always find in submitted papers to BAR, in my modest opinion, is a conversation, with a dialog that starts with a burning question.

Chen (2011) indicates that fame and recognition comes with publications in top tier journals, and that responsibility for quality of generated knowledge rests on author's shoulders. For authors to have a burning question, he/she cannot publish several papers resulting from a single research. Instead of portioned papers, a substantial article reporting complete finds is preferable. The strength of a burning question will not be lost in this situation, showing the whole picture of a given topic on a strong paper, rather than multiple regular ones.

Bergh (2004) believes that authors have a critical sensibility when submitting an article to a journal, when there is a chance for acceptance. Editors in this case are seeing as someone open to different methods and areas of management, depending on the scope of the journal. No matter what, every editor should always ask to him/herself: Can this manuscript make an important and interesting contribution, burning the academy?

Current Issue

The number of submissions for BAR has increased this year, and we are happy with that, as a result, we can offer you, our reader, articles with different and unexpected research topics that brings innovation to our field of knowledge. Here is a brief description of the five papers of this issue:

The first article "Do Strategic Behaviors Link Travel Agencies in Brazil?" by Regina Madalozzo and Paulo Cesar Fernandes, explores existence of strategic groups in the Brazilian travel agency market

to elucidate how they interact with GDS and other travel agencies to maintain and improve their market position.

The second article “The Wonderful, Magnanimous, Spectacular and Possible World of Traveling Circuses in Brazil” by Ana Rosa Camillo Aguiar, Alexandre de Pádua Carrieri and Eloisio Moulin de Souza, examines the everyday management of traveling circuses in Brazil by looking for practices and strategies that allow them to survive over time.

The third article “Interpartner Differences and Governance Mode Dilemma: The Role of Alliance Scope” by Chiung-Hui Tseng, points out that it is generally recognized that governance structure of an alliance, equity versus non-equity, is an important strategic choice. Since an alliance teams up companies that are inevitably divergent in upstream resource endowment and/or downstream market coverage, it is necessary to select an appropriate governance form to manage the interpartner differences and thus facilitate cooperation.

The fourth article, “Economic Incentives or Communication: How Different Are their Effects on Trust” by Tatiana Iwai and Paulo Furquim de Azevedo, investigates the effects of economic incentives and communication on the cognitive and behavioral responses after an alleged trust violation. Authors argue that these responses depend on the type of solution used to foster cooperation between agents.

The fifth article, “Management Practices as Capabilities Leading to Superior Performance”, by Luiz Artur Ledur Brito and Patrícia Kawai Sauan, among its main contribution, the paper brings up the *Custo Brasil* (Brazilian Cost) and its practical effect on the competitiveness of the Brazilian firms.

Finally, we present an interview with Dr. W. Richard (Dick) Scott, conducted by Juliana Marangoni Amarante. In this interesting interview, the Institutional Theory is discussed and related to its past and future contributions to Organizational Studies.

References

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