Editorial

What Makes an Article be More Cited?

O Que Faz um Artigo ser Mais Citado?

Open Access

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As discussed in a previous editorial (Mendes-Da-Silva, 2020), the rejection of articles is something that we can learn from, and have to live with, since this is part of a researcher's professional routine. This, however, proceeds from a supposed common objective of business researchers: the publication of our studies and the desire that they be considered relevant to society. In this respect, one of the main ways in which we judge the level of interest in our works is the number of citations that they receive (Garfield, 1955; Lee, Law, & Ladkin, 2014) and their mentions in the media (Pulido, Redondo-Sama, Sordé-Marti, & Flecha, 2018). But what then makes an article more cited (Hall & Page, 2015)?

In most cases, scientists depend on the previous literature in their fields to develop new ideas. However, it is not possible, nor sensible, to cite all existing publications, because the volume of work in the literature is increasing extremely rapidly. Therefore, researchers generally follow or cite a small proportion of the publications that interest them (Bethard & Jurafsky, 2010; Yan, Tang, Liu, Shan, & Li, 2011).

Uzzi, Mukherjee, Stringer, and Jones (2013) analyzed 17.9 million articles covering every scientific field. They argue that science follows an almost universal pattern, i.e., the science of greatest impact is mainly based on exceptionally conventional combinations of previous works, but at the same time presents an intrusion of uncommon combinations. Articles that have these characteristics are twice as likely to be cited often, according to Uzzi et al. (2013).

As emphasized by Lee et al. (2014), there is space for research that examines what constitutes a large number of citations, whether they are in scientific journals or alternative channels outside the academic world; the *RAC* has an interest in publishing robust studies in this field. Identifying and examining quantifiable characteristics in publications (Gargouri et al., 2010) and investigating their associations with their number of citations appears to be something that is relevant to authors and editors in the business area. In a specific editorial, Garcia, Gattaz, and Gattaz (2019) dealt with the relevance that titles, abstracts, and keywords can have in the attractiveness of an article *ceteris paribus.*

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That is, despite the quality of a given study, the same informational content can end up reaching a smaller audience essentially due to issues related to the communication of the study's results (Jacques & Sebire, 2010). Thus, there are issues relative to the article itself and issues relative to the journal in which it is published. In respect to this, for example, Gargouri et al. (2010) argue that empirical results are in favor of a positive causal relationship between open access and the number of citations, but this belief is not shared by Kurtz and Henneken (2007). A preliminary exam of the literature dedicated to estimating the number of citations, conditioned on the attributes of the article, makes it possible to list, in a non-exhaustive manner, variables such as:

· Is it published in the english language;

· The diversity of the target audience for the subject addressed by the paper;

· The age of the article — older articles are cited more often;

· The h index of the authors — the higher the h index, the more the paper will tend to be cited;

· Whether it is available through open access;

· If it uses data that is open, does it include the code utilized;

· The title should suggest the study's main result;

· Do the authors work at institutions based in different countries;

· Fame – a preeminent author participated in the paper;

· Author's connections – authors who are socially more connected tend to be cited more often;

· Does the author have social preeminence in the scientific field;

· Author's productivity;

· The use of provocative words in the title and the abstract, e.G., New, revealing, robust;

· The article's title should be friendly to search engines containing its keywords;

· The abstract should include the keywords and the main result;

· The use of keywords throughout the article;

· Work on the article after its publication, sharing it in social media;

· The article meets the requisites required by seo (search engine optimization);

· The quality of the editorial process adopted by the journal in which it was published.

Inadequate behavior in the authorship and/or promotion of citations is a reality that needs to be properly addressed in order to inhibit epidemics of honorary authorship and artificial citations (Jacso, 2006; Kovacs, 2013). In terms of seeking citations in a way that neglects ethical rules, which is not impossible to observe on the part of authors, editors, and scientific journals, the *RAC* believes that the unrestricted observance of ethical rules that respect society is not something that is up for discussion.

EVOLUTION OF THE *RAC* EDITORIAL PROCESS DURING THE PERIOD FROM 2015 TO 2019

The editorial process of a journal should assure the quality of the articles that appear in it. There is no doubt that the highest editorial standards tend to demand efficiency in this process in terms of resources, ranging from time to finances. One of the most important particular elements to professionalizing the management of the editorial process is communication with the public interested in the journal, and in the case of the *RAC* we have sought to conduct this especially through the editorials in each edition. According to McGrail, Rickard, and Jones (2006), one of the most frequently considered aspects in the characterization of the distinction of a scientific journal is its typical acceptance or rejection rate for received submissions.

Thus, in line with contemporary editorial practices oriented towards transparency (Duflo, 2019), which permit greater transparency in the editorial process practiced by the *RAC* — *Revista de Administração Contemporânea (Journal of Contemporary Administration)*, and also supply relevant information about the magazine to the interested public (Hargens, 1988), in this editorial I am presenting an overview of the evolution of editorial process indicators for the *RAC* (Mendes-Da-Silva, 2020) over the past five years.

Table 1 presents the evolution of the main numbers associated with the *RAC*'s editorial process. In Panel A we may observe that in 2015 almost 300 manuscripts were received including research articles, case studies, and technological articles. The number of manuscripts received by the *RAC* has continued to grow since then, reaching 425 manuscripts in 2019 (Δ % = 42.14). Part of the growth in this rejection rate is due to the editorial decision to reduce the number of published works, which has gradually decreased from 60 in 2015 to 40 in 2019, indicating an increase in selectivity for the works published in the journal.

Panel B of Table 1 allows us to evaluate that of the 425 submissions received in 2019 (see Panel A

in Table 1), just 120 were forwarded to peer review, which suggests that a significant portion of the submissions did not pass the desk review phase. The main reason for desk rejections is a lack of clarity in terms of the manuscript's effective contribution to its field of knowledge, as well as a lack of robust characteristics in the methodological procedures adopted. Other less frequent reasons were detailed in the *RAC* editorial of our last issue (Mendes-Da-Silva, 2020).

Table 1. Editorial process indicators for the *RAC — Journal of Contemporary Administration* during the period 2015–2019.

Panel A: Relationship between the manuscripts received and published[1]		
Year	# of documents received	# of documents published
2015	299	61
2016	361	38
2017	397	48
2018	303	45
2019	425	40
Panel B: Typical time required for the editorial process for works sent to peer review		
Year	# of days for the editorial decision (average)	# of days for the editorial decision (median)	# of submissions sent to peer review[2]
2015	88	70	142
2016	77	65	133
2017	117	77	165
2018	130	110	114
2019	107	82	120

Note. Source: Editorial Office of the *RAC — Journal of Contemporary Administration*. Panel A: The number of documents received (submissions) for each year includes all new submissions between January 1 and December 31 of that year. The documents published each year include all the editions of each volume, except the editorials. Panel B: The data considers the time required for each manuscript decision. The number of submissions sent to peer review represents the number of submissions that at least received a double-blind review. The *RAC* maintains its editorial process based on the premise of academic reciprocity (Mendes-Da-Silva, W. (2018a). Reconhecimento da contribuição do avaliador anônimo. *Revista de Administração Contemporânea*, *22*(5), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2018180281), and publicly recognizes the people who participate in the process as reviewers in a transparent manner. This occurs in two complementary ways: the annual publication of the nomination of individual reviewers, as well as the listing of the reviewers for each published article (with the permission of the respective reviewers). 1 Every year there is a group of people who act as reviewers. In 2015, there were 250 reviewers; in 2016, there were 247; in 2017, there were 236; in 2018, there were 176; and in 2019, there were 213 individuals who made up our group of volunteers who, using a double-blind review system, reviewed the submitted works. 2 This includes all types of documents received by the *RAC*, i.e., research articles, case studies, and technological articles, but does not include editorials.

In Panel B of Table 1, we can verify that the average editorial cycle lasts roughly 100 days, with approximately 50% of the submissions receiving a final decision within 90 days. It should be noted that the *RAC* maintains its evaluation process based on the principle of academic reciprocity, according to which we ask authors submitting manuscripts to evaluate works, in exchange for the detailed evaluation of the work that they receive from other colleagues (Mendes-Da-Silva, 2018a). In this sense, invariably there is a need to invite at least five people, until we have at least two peers. This editorial effort induces an inevitable increase in typical evaluation times in the editorial process. We hope that, to the extent that there is a greater disposition of community members to evaluate works, the submission cycle will be substantially shorter.

According to Table 2, Revise and Resubmit (R&R) decisions have become less frequent since 2015, when more than 30% of the submissions went through this process, with a little more than 15% of the 299 received submissions being accepted. Thus, in 2018, of the 303 submissions received, a little more than 20% went through the R&R process, with 14.5% being accepted. In 2019, the general numbers continued to change: we received 425 submissions, with 56 pending; of those, 40.2% received desk rejections, as opposed to 27.8% in 2015. The fluid situation of this movement is basically the following: in enriching the criteria for the desk review, we are preserving a scarce and valuable resource, and this is the anonymous reviewer who makes careful judgments and contributions to the authors. In addition, with potentially more prompt responses for individual authors, we promote greater autonomy for these authors to find alternative ways to publish their works

Table 2. Frequency of editorial decisions attributed to manuscripts submitted to the R*AC — Journal of Contemporary Administration* during the period 2015–2019.

Year of submission	Accepted N (%)	Pending N (%)	Rejected N (%)	Desk rejects N (%)	R&R N (%)	Archived N (%)	Total[1] N (%)
2015	45	-	58	83	93	20	299
	(15.1)	-	(19.4)	(27.8)	(31.1)	(6.7)	(100.0)
2016	36	-	57	155	89	24	361
	(10.0)	-	(15.8)	(42.9)	(24.7)	(6.6)	(100.0)
2017	37	-	63	166	107	24	397
	(9.3)	-	(15.9)	(41.8)	(27.0)	(6.0)	(100.0)
2018	44	-	52	132	61	14	303
	(14.5)	-	(17.2)	(43.6)	(20.1)	(4.6)	(100.0)
2019	38	56	71	171	73	16	425
	(8.9)	(13.2)	(16.7)	(40.2)	(17.2)	(3.8)	(100.0)

Note. Source: Editorial Office of the *RAC — Journal of Contemporary Administration*. Data as of March 20, 2020. The numbers in parentheses show the relative percentages out of the total submissions each year. The pending manuscripts include submissions and revisions that were under evaluation on March 20, 2020. The rejected manuscripts represent the submissions rejected after a double-blind review. Desk rejections are manuscripts rejected without peer review, while Revise and Resubmit (R&R) are manuscripts that were returned to the authors for corrections that year. 1 This appears in the second column of Table 1 in Panel A.

Bearing in mind the current scope of the *RAC*, i.e., functioning from a regional perspective with an interdisciplinary spirit, seeking to be positioned in the vanguard of technological and methodological innovation, and welcoming substantive and empirical contributions that investigate and examine significant economic, social, and political issues, the magazine receives contributions from research developed in various fields of knowledge in the area of business. The areas of special interest to the *RAC* include environmental management; production, distribution, and the consumption of resources; financial, capital, and corporate finance markets; the food chain; entrepreneurship; the labor market; and organizational and individual behavior. These research areas have been presented and published by the *RAC* in recent years as illustrated in Figure 1.
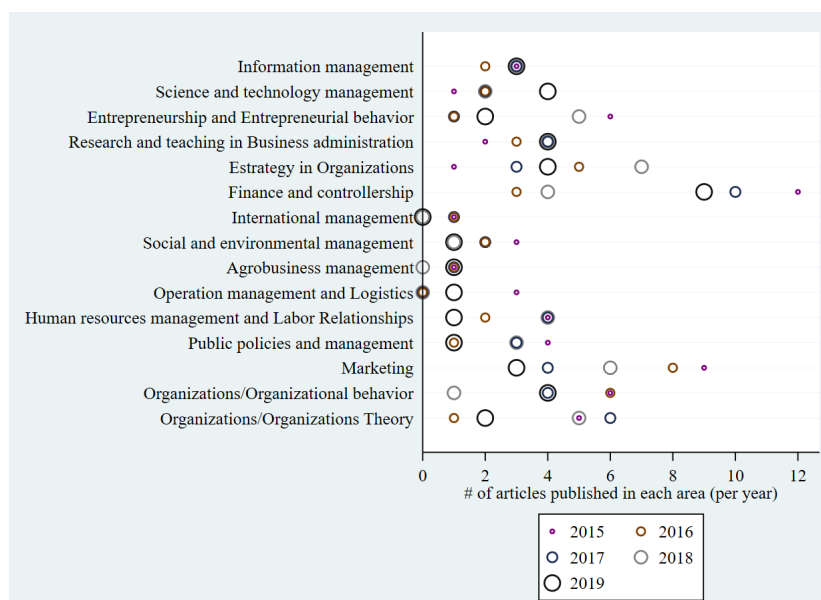
Figure 1. Frequency of new articles published by the *RAC — Journal of Contemporary Administration* by area of business knowledge (for the period 2015–2019).

Source: Illustration constructed by the author, based on data kindly supplied by the Editorial Office of the *RAC — Journal of Contemporary Administration*. This figure presents the number of articles published by the *RAC* (per year between 2015 and 2019).

Observing Figure 1, we can see that the areas of international management, agrobusiness management, and operations and logistics management make up a subgroup with a smaller presence in the *RAC* in recent years. In parallel, the areas of organizational studies, finance and managerial control, and organizational strategy, together with marketing appear among those that most often appeared in issues of the *RAC* in the last five years. Among the most stable areas in terms of the number of works published in the *RAC* is information management.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORKS PUBLISHED BY THE *RAC*

Just as the research topics and methods employed have changed over time, there have been innovations in the editorial process itself. In this sense, the *RAC*, during the past 24 months, has begun publishing additional information about the process involved in each published work, through the adoption of a new layout for documents published on a new website. Thus, for each article since then you can find, in addition to what was historically reported:

1. The number of invitations made to anonymous reviewers until the editorial decision in each round was made. This makes it possible to inform the community of the editorial effort made to evaluate the published works, and especially helps authors assess the motives why sometimes the time spent in the evaluation exceeds the expected span.

2. The adoption of a structured abstract to facilitate the reading of the article in terms of information typically found in the abstract of a scientific document.

3. The classification codes according to the system originated by the *Journal of Economic Literature* (*JEL*) to improve the distribution of, and provide more visibility to, the works published by the *RAC* within the business researcher community.

4. The identity of the editors and reviewers of the article as suggested and discussed by Mendes-Da-Silva (2019a, 2019b). In the case of reviewers, this is always with their consent prior to the article's publication. With this procedure, the *RAC* hopes to contribute to the public recognition of the voluntary work performed by reviewing colleagues. In addition, it permits

the identification of communities interested in certain subjects addressed in published articles.

5. The location of article data, materials, and codes if applicable (Martins, 2020). In other words, the situation of the article in respect to the adopted policy of open data, that is, whether it has open data and where this data is. When this is not the policy followed, the authors' reason for not sharing the data, materials, and codes will be provided together with the published article.

6. The existence of financing for the published study, in order to recognize the contribution of research stimulation agencies or any other source of finance employed in the execution of the study.

7. The method adopted for the article's evaluation.

8. The method adopted to monitor plagiarism.

9. The contributions made to merit authorship of the articles in order to recognize the individual effort of each author, and mainly to discourage the occurrence of ceremonial authors, as pointed out by Rossoni (2018).

10. The existence of conflicts of interest.

These recent *RAC* initiatives, added to others that will be implemented, are mainly designed to promote the impact of works published in this journal in the broadest sense of the word 'impact', which is not restricted to the number of citations made by the academic community. In recent years, we have seen the rise of metrics that intend to measure this impact. Among the proxies that have gained space and recognition, we may cite the social media (Mendes-Da-Silva, 2018b; Pulido et al., 2018).

The journal should not only make an effort to reach its public, but also other players involved in the process, e.g., authors who can develop their communication abilities on the individual level, and research institutions that can allocate resources and construct strategies and procedures directed towards the broad communication of the research developed and communicated by their contributors. How have our articles been received by society? This is a question that we should reflect and act upon, above all in moments like the current one, when the demands of society on the scientific community have substantially intensified.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have stated that there is no conflict of interest.

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