Strategic Management Journal
Strat. Mgmt. J., **26**: 473–488 (2005)
Published online 11 March 2005 in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com). DOI: 10.1002/smj.454

THE INFLUENCE OF MANAGEMENT JOURNALS IN THE 1980s AND 1990s

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It is difficult to get a clear picture of the relative influence of management journals because previous studies have focused on a single sub-area in the field over a relatively restricted number of years, and/or have used inconsistent criteria to judge journal influence. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine journal influence using citations from 28 journals over the past two decades. The findings show that the top seven journals accounted for 61 percent of all of the citations in the journals included, and that the three journals that showed the greatest increase in influence over the past 20 years were AMJ, AMR, and SMJ. Copyright © 2005 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

INTRODUCTION

The influence and prestige of academic journals are of interest to researchers, universities, and journal publishers for a variety reasons. Researchers are concerned with journal influence because publication in top-tier journals serves as evidence of scholarship and potential impact on the field (Franke, Edlund, and Oster, 1990; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1992; Niemi, 1988), and has a direct effect on pay, promotion, and tenure decisions (Gomez-Mejia and Balkin, 1992; Johnson and Podsakoff, 1994; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1992). For example, Gomez-Mejia and Balkin (1992) found that each publication in a top-tier journal had a cumulative value of approximately $84,000 over a researcher's career. Knowledge about the influence of a journal is also valuable to researchers because it 'provides a timely mechanism for scholars to select the research outlet which will have the greatest likelihood of being scrutinized by one's peers and, therefore, impact future research' (Tahai and Meyer, 1999: 293).

Universities and management departments are also interested in information about journal influence and prestige because publication rates in top-tier journals provide a measuring stick for assessing a department's impact on the field at large (Coe and Weinstock, 1984; Stahl, Leap, and Wei, 1988; Trieschmann *et al*., 2000). Indeed, it is becoming increasingly common for business school ratings (e.g., *Business Week* and the *Financial Times*) to include an 'intellectual capital' component, which is based on publications in top-tier journals. In addition, information about publication rates in top-quality journals is one of the most important factors used by universities when making decisions about how to allocate scarce resources. For example, universities place a great deal of weight on publications in prestigious journals when making promotion and tenure decisions, allocating

Keywords: journal ranking; citation analysis; management journal influence; journal prestige
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Received 2 March 2003
Final revision received 20 September 2004

teaching loads, and providing summer support to faculty. Finally, information about journal influence is also important to the journals and the professional associations that often sponsor them, because journal impact influences the number of subscribers, advertising rates, and the likelihood that a journal will be included in library collections, and contributes to the prestige of the journal's sponsoring organizations.

Thus, it is not surprising that researchers, universities, and professional associations have maintained an abiding interest in assessments of journal influence and prestige. Indeed, an examination of the literature suggests that several attempts have been made to develop rankings or ratings of journal influence or prestige in the field of management (Coe and Weinstock, 1984; Extejt and Smith, 1990; Franke *et al*., 1990; Johnson and Podsakoff, 1994; MacMillan, 1989, 1991, 1993; MacMillan and Stern, 1987; Phene and Guisinger, 1998; Sharplin and Mabry, 1985; Tahai and Meyer, 1999). Unfortunately, there are a number of limitations of this body of research.

First, many studies of journal influence have failed to include a representative sample of journals in the field of management. Usually, this was because they only focused on specific sub-fields in the discipline. For example, in their analyses of journal prestige, Franke *et al*. (1990), MacMillan (1991), and MacMillan and Stern (1987) focused only on the strategic management journals. Similarly, MacMillan (1989, 1993) restricted his analysis to journals that are suitable for entrepreneurship research, and Phene and Guisinger (1998) concentrated on the stature of the *Journal of International Business Studies*.

Another limitation of previous studies of journal influence is that they have assessed influence at only a few specific moments in time and generally ignored dynamic changes in journal influence over time. This is true of the studies by Coe and Weinstock (1984), Extejt and Smith (1990), MacMillan (1989, 1991, 1993), and MacMillan and Stern (1987), all of which assessed journal influence during only a single year. The main exceptions to this were Phene and Guisinger (1998), who examined the influence of a single journal over an 11-year period; and Johnson and Podsakoff (1994), who examined the trends in the influence of a set of journals across three specific years (1981, 1986, and 1991).

One final limitation with previous research in this area relates to the criterion used to assess journal influence. Several studies (Coe and Weinstock 1969, 1984; MacMillan 1989, 1991; MacMillan and Stern, 1987; Extejt and Smith, 1990; Gomez-Mejia and Balkin, 1992) have used subjective ratings by department chairpersons or academic experts to evaluate journal impact. Although using ratings from content experts might be considered a virtue, because experts can take a variety of different criteria into account when judging journal influence, this practice can also undermine the validity and reliability of the ratings if some of the factors taken into account by the experts are not related to a journal's actual influence. For example, some raters may give higher ratings to journals (a) in which they have frequently published, (b) on whose editorial boards they serve, (c) with which they are most familiar, or (d) that publish research in areas they especially like. Alternatively, it is possible that subjective ratings of journal influence may vary across experts due to the differential weight given to rigor vs. relevance, field vs. lab methodologies, micro vs. macro approaches, etc. To the extent that these types of biases are unrelated to journal influence, they compromise the *validity* of subjective ratings. Moreover, regardless of whether they are related to journal influence or not, these types of biases will diminish inter-rater reliability (because raters may use different criteria) and test–retest reliability (because the weights for the criteria may shift over time), and increase measurement error.

For these reasons, other researchers (Johnson and Podsakoff, 1994; Salancik, 1986; Sharplin and Mabry, 1985; Tahai and Meyer, 1999) have argued that quantitative measures like citation counts are more reliable and valid measures of journal influence or prestige. For example, Salancik (1986: 202) has noted that, 'Since authors are also likely to be more informed than others about the value of their sources, citation analyses promise more valid and useful observations about journal influence than do expert opinion surveys ... in which a few more or less informed persons speak for an entire field.' Similarly, Sharplin and Mabry (1985: 141) noted that 'measures of citation frequency provide objective means of evaluating the impact of scholarly research on other research. Certainly, the intended purpose of publications in *academic* journals is to impart knowledge to others, furthering the advancement of the discipline. The number

of references to particular works, therefore, provides a way of evaluating not only the researchers themselves, but the journals in which they publish.'

Thus, previous studies provide only 'snapshots' of journal influence in the field of management, because they: (a) often focus on a single sub-area of the field over a relatively restricted number of years; (b) have been inconsistent in the criteria used to judge journal influence; and (c) have used subjective ratings that may lack validity and/or have low reliability. These limitations make it difficult to get a clear picture of the relative influence of management journals, thus impairing judgments of the influence of researchers on the field and the key decisions that are based on those evaluations (e.g., pay, teaching load, promotion, tenure). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine journal influence in the field of management over the past 20 years using an objective measure of impact. The sample of 28 journals was drawn from a wide variety of sub-disciplines in order to improve representativeness and facilitate comparisons of journal influence across research areas. Journal citations were used as the objective measure of journal influence to improve the reliability and validity of the assessments (cf. Franke *et al*., 1990; Johnson and Podsakoff, 1994; Salancik, 1986; Sharplin and Mabry, 1985; Tahai and Meyer, 1999); and journal citation rates were obtained for each year from 1981 to 1999 to allow changes over time to be studied.

METHODS

Journal selection process

Twenty-eight journals were included in our analysis (see Table 1). The initial set of journals was selected on the basis of the number of times they had been included in previous studies of journal influence (cf. Coe and Weinstock, 1984; Extejt and Smith, 1990; Gomez-Mejia and Balkin, 1992; Johnson and Podsakoff, 1994; Salancik, 1986; Sharplin and Mabry, 1985; Tahai and Meyer, 1999). Following this, journals were added to the list in order to improve the representativeness of the sample. In making the judgments about which journals to add, we relied on previous research identifying the premier journals in the sub-disciplines whenever possible. For example, the *Journal of Business Venturing* was added for the entrepreneurship sub-discipline because MacMillan's (1989, 1993) and Shane's (1997) studies identified it as the top specialty journal in this sub-discipline; and the *Journal of International Business Studies* was chosen because Johnson and Podsakoff's (1994), and Tahai and Meyer's (1999) studies indicate it is the highest ranked international business journal. Similarly, *Leadership Quarterly* was included because it is the most prominent specialty journal in this sub-discipline. Taken together, all of the main areas of research in the field of management are represented by one or more journals, including strategic management, human resources/personnel, leadership, general management, industrial and labor relations, entrepreneurship, organizational behavior, organizational theory, organizational decision making, international business, and management science.

Data

Data for this study were obtained from the Institute for Scientific Information's (ISI) relational database. ISI is the only major source of citation information in the world. Their relational database has data regarding publications, citations, and the average citations per article for approximately 8500 scientific journals. Of the journals in their database, approximately 5500 of the journals are from the 'hard' sciences, while the remaining 3000 journals are from the social sciences and humanities. Although ISI provides information on citations dating back to 1954, their computerized relational database dates back only to 1981. We used the relational database because it permits the data to be sorted by journal, rather than only by a specific article, thus making it possible to obtain the total citations and average citations per article for each journal.

The number of citations for each of the journals included in our study was obtained for each year from 1981 to 1999. The only exceptions were the *Journal of Business Venturing* and *Leadership Quarterly*, which did not begin publication until 1986 and 1990, respectively. The computerized database was available for all journals, except for the *Academy of Management Review* (1981 and 1982), *Decision Sciences* (1981–83), *Group and Organization Studies/Group and Organization Management* (1981–84), *Human Resource Management* (1981–84), *Journal of Business Venturing* (1986), *Journal of Management* (1981–82),

Table 1. Summary of total number of citations and average number of citations per article

Journal	Cumulative (1981–99)					
	Total citations			Citations/article		
	# Cites	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank	Average	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank
Academy of Management Journal (*AMJ*)	25,412	1.43	3	24.7	1.43	3
Academy of Management Review (*AMR*)	23,477	1.34	4	29.46	1.68	2
Administrative Science Quarterly (*ASQ*)	18,581	1.10	5	39.87	2.11	1
California Management Review (*CMR*)	3,751	−0.60	20	5.95	−0.57	21
Decision Sciences (*DS*)	6,297	−0.05	15	6.87	−0.37	16
Group and Organization Management (*G&OM*)	2,100	−1.21	26	4.47	−0.97	24
Harvard Business Review (*HBR*)	8,985	0.33	10	6.27	−0.50	20
Human Relations (*HR*)	8,143	0.22	11	6.75	−0.3	18
Human Resource Management (*HRM*)	2,066	−1.23	26	4.30	−1.03	25
Industrial and Labor Relations Review (*I&LRR*)	8,040	0.21	12	11.52	0.36	11
Industrial Relations (*IR*)	3,384	−0.71	21	6.33	−0.48	19
Journal of Applied Psychology (*JAP*)	37,459	1.84	1	22.09	1.27	4
Journal of Business Research (*JBR*)	2,838	−0.89	23	3.00	−1.53	27
Journal of Business Venturing (*JBV*)	2,137	−1.19	25	5.73	−0.62	23
Journal of Human Resources (*JHR*)	6,445	−0.03	14	9.35	0.07	13
Journal of International Business Studies (*JIBS*)	4,140	−0.49	19	6.83	−0.38	17
Journal of Management (*JOM*)	6,865	0.04	13	10.88	0.28	10
Journal of Management Studies (*JMS*)	4,523	−0.40	18	7.59	−0.23	15
Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology (*JOOP*)	5,455	−0.20	17	10.51	0.23	12
Journal of Organizational Behavior (*JOB*)	6,056	−0.09	16	8.79	−0.02	14
Journal of Vocational Behavior (*JVB*)	10,943	0.54	8	12.30	0.45	9
Leadership Quarterly (*LQ*)	734	−2.33	28	3.73	−1.23	26
Management Science (*MS*)	30,444	1.62	2	13.35	0.57	8
Monthly Labor Review (*MLR*)	2,781	−0.92	24	1.82	−2.23	28
Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes (*OBHDP*)	16,038	0.94	7	14.99	1.18	7
Personnel Psychology (*PerPsych*)	9,725	0.41	9	16.57	0.73	6
Sloan Management Review (*SMR*)	3,313	−0.73	21	5.95	−0.58	22
Strategic Management Journal (*SMJ*)	17,862	1.05	6	19.14	1.07	5
Totals	277,994			NA		
Means	9,928.36			11.40		
S.D.	9,453.34			8.79		
Top 7 journals	169,273			23.83		
Top 14 journals	228,419			17.39		
Bottom 7 journals (excluding LQ and JBV)	20,233			4.54		

[a] The total citation and average citation data are somewhat positively skewed; therefore these data were log transformed to remove the skew prior to the calculation of the *z*-scores. Since this transformation is monotonic, it only affects the *z*-scores and not the ranks.

and *Leadership Quarterly* (1990–93). In these instances, we conducted a manual search of the journals to identify the articles published, and then used ISI's *Web of Science* database in April of 2000 to determine the number of citations for each of the articles. We waited until April to collect these data, because it takes ISI a few months after the end of each calendar year to complete their data entry process. The average citations per article for each journal were calculated by dividing the total citations by the number of articles published.

RESULTS

Analysis of journal influence based on number of total citations

Table 1 reports the total number of citations received and the average number of citations per article for the cumulative time period (1981–99). In order to examine trends in citation rates, Table 2 reports these same data for each of the individual time periods: 1981–84, 1985–89, 1990–94, and 1995–99. For the purposes of our discussion, we

Table 2. Summary of total number of citations and average number of citations per paper

Journal	1981–84						1985–89					
	Total citations			Citations/article			Total citations			Citations/article		
	# Cites	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank	Average	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank	# Cites	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank	Average	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank
Academy of Management Journal (*AMJ*)	7,749	1.39	3	32.29	1.22	2	8,830	1.45	4	35.32	1.43	3
Academy of Management Review (*AMR*)	7,587	1.37	4	30.11	1.13	4	9,240	1.50	3	42.19	1.69	2
Administrative Science Quarterly (*ASQ*)	7,478	1.35	5	64.47	2.09	1	5,188	0.81	7	43.60	1.74	1
California Management Review (*CMR*)	772	−0.91	22	5.08	−1.09	22	1,591	−0.61	19	8.84	−0.62	20
Decision Sciences (*DS*)	1,478	−0.26	16	7.50	−0.60	19	2,451	−0.09	14	10.43	−0.38	18
Group and Organization Management (*G&OM*)	465	−1.41	25	4.43	−1.26	23	929	−1.26	27	7.04	−0.96	24
Harvard Business Review (*HBR*)	2,425	0.23	11	6.47	−0.79	21	3,376	0.29	10	8.38	−0.70	23
Human Relations (*HR*)	2,426	0.23	12	9.22	−0.34	16	2,841	0.09	11	9.66	−0.49	19
Human Resource Management (*HRM*)	346	−1.71	26	4.02	−1.38	25	1,021	−1.14	23	8.80	−0.63	21
Industrial and Labor Relations Review (*I&LRR*)	2,494	0.26	10	19.18	0.57	9	2,570	−0.03	13	14.60	0.12	11
Industrial Relations (*IR*)	1,248	−0.43	17	10.49	−0.18	15	1,151	−1.00	21	8.72	−0.64	22
Journal of Applied Psychology (*JAP*)	11,618	1.79	1	31.92	1.21	3	14,765	2.06	1	30.13	1.19	5
Journal of Business Research (*JBR*)	539	−1.27	23	4.05	−1.37	24	1,009	−1.16	25	4.69	−1.56	26
Journal of Business Venturing (*JBV*)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,073	−1.08	22	11.54	−0.23	15
Journal of Human Resources (*JHR*)	2,042	0.06	13	13.99	0.18	12	2,048	−0.31	15	11.84	−0.19	14
Journal of International Business Studies (*JIBS*)	872	−0.79	20	6.76	−0.73	20	1,361	−0.80	20	10.63	−0.35	17
Journal of Management (*JOM*)	557	−1.24	24	9.13	−0.36	17	2,714	−0.03	12	14.14	0.07	12
Journal of Management Studies (*JMS*)	891	−0.77	19	10.48	−0.18	14	1,794	−0.47	18	11.14	−0.28	16
Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology (*JOOP*)	1,610	−0.18	14	13.76	0.16	13	2,017	−0.32	16	15.05	0.16	10

(*continued overleaf*)

Table 2. (*Continued*)

Journal	1981–84						1985–89					
	Total citations			Citations/article			Total citations			Citations/article		
	# Cites	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank	Average	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank	# Cites	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank	Average	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank
Journal of Organizational Behavior (*JOB*)	1,579	−0.20	15	17.74	0.47	10	1,852	−0.43	17	13.52	0.01	13
Journal of Vocational Behavior (*JVB*)	3,375	0.56	7	14.87	0.25	11	4,141	0.54	8	17.85	0.42	9
Leadership Quarterly (*LQ*)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Management Science (*MS*)	10,252	1.67	2	22.63	0.78	7	11,957	1.80	2	19.67	0.55	8
Monthly Labor Review (*MLR*)	916	−0.74	18	2.47	−1.99	26	1,027	−1.13	24	2.61	−2.42	27
Organ. Behavior and Human Decision Processes (*OBHDP*)	4,925	0.94	6	28.8	1.08	5	5,667	0.92	6	25.3	0.93	6
Personnel Psychology (*PerPsych*)	2,949	0.43	9	19.79	0.61	8	3,633	0.38	9	24.55	0.89	7
Sloan Management Review (*SMR*)	848	−0.82	21	8.48	−0.45	18	961	−1.21	26	6.54	−1.07	25
Strategic Management Journal (*SMJ*)	3,005	0.44	8	27.07	1.00	6	7,008	1.17	5	33.06	1.33	4
Totals	80,446			NA			102,215			NA		
Mean	3,094.08			16.35			3,785.74			16.66		
S. D.	3,185.63			13.58			3,626.67			11.34		
Top 7 journals	52,984			33.90			62,655			33.45		
Top 14 journals	69,935			24.79			83,521			24.34		
Bottom 7 journals excluding *JBV* and *LQ* in 1981–84, and *LQ* in 1985–89	4,399			4.75			7,171			6.68		

Table 2. (*Continued*)

Journal	1990–94						1995–99					
	Total citations			Citations/article			Total citations			Citations/article		
	# Cites	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank	Average	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank	# Cites	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank	Average	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank
Academy of Management Journal (*AMJ*)	6,882	1.47	3	25.68	1.33	3	1,951	1.83	1	7.20	1.80	3
Academy of Management Review (*AMR*)	5,201	1.13	5	38.53	1.89	2	1,449	1.45	2	7.59	1.88	2
Administrative Science Quarterly (*ASQ*)	4,972	1.08	6	44.00	2.07	1	943	0.90	8	7.99	1.96	1
California Management Review (*CMR*)	1,020	−0.79	21	6.89	−0.46	20	368	−0.32	17	2.45	0.09	12
Decision Sciences (*DS*)	2,125	0.08	15	6.40	−0.57	21	243	−0.85	24	1.59	−0.60	22
Group & Organization Management (*G&OM*)	579	−1.46	26	4.49	−1.05	26	127	−1.69	27	1.22	−1.02	25
Harvard Business Review (*HBR*)	2,453	0.25	11	7.32	−0.38	18	731	0.57	7	2.28	−0.03	13
Human Relations (*HR*)	2,404	0.22	12	7.13	−0.42	19	472	0.00	14	1.51	−0.68	23
Human Resource Management (*HRM*)	581	−1.46	27	4.65	−1.00	25	118	−1.78	28	0.77	−1.75	27
Industrial & Labor Relations Review (*I&LRR*)	2,411	0.22	13	11.16	0.19	12	565	0.24	11	3.21	0.52	8
Industrial Relations (*IR*)	732	−1.19	24	5.01	−0.90	24	253	−0.80	22	1.83	−0.37	19
Journal of Applied Psychology (*JAP*)	9,664	1.87	1	19.97	0.99	5	1,412	1.42	3	3.94	0.84	6
Journal of Business Research (*JBR*)	970	−0.85	22	3.77	−1.29	27	320	−0.50	18	0.94	−1.43	26
Journal of Business Venturing (*JBV*)	896	−0.95	23	6.01	−0.65	22	168	−1.33	26	1.28	−0.94	24
Journal of Human Resources (*JHR*)	1,792	−0.13	16	9.96	0.04	13	563	0.23	12	2.96	0.39	9
Journal of International Business Studies (*JIBS*)	1,489	−0.35	19	8.97	−0.10	15	418	−0.15	16	2.28	−0.03	14
Journal of Management (*JOM*)	3,122	0.53	8	15.93	0.68	7	472	0.00	13	2.59	0.18	11
Journal of Management Studies (*JMS*)	1,527	−0.32	18	8.73	−0.14	16	311	−0.53	20	1.78	−0.42	21
Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology (*JOOP*)	1,581	−0.28	17	12.07	0.30	11	247	−0.83	23	1.80	−0.40	20

(*continued overleaf*)

Table 2. (*Continued*)

Journal	1990–94						1995–99					
	Total citations			Citations/article			Total citations			Citations/article		
	# Cites	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank	Average	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank	# Cites	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank	Average	*Z*-Score[a]	Rank
Journal of Organizational Behavior (*JOB*)	2,196	0.11	14	9.67	0.00	14	429	−0.12	15	1.82	−0.38	18
Journal of Vocational Behavior (*JVB*)	2,782	0.39	9	13.57	0.46	9	645	0.41	9	2.85	0.33	10
Leadership Quarterly (*LQ*)	480	−1.69	28	5.65	−0.74	23	254	−0.79	21	2.27	−0.03	15
Management Science (*MS*)	6,993	1.49	2	12.16	0.31	10	1,367	1.37	5	2.11	−0.15	16
Monthly Labor Review (*MLR*)	642	−1.34	25	1.44	−2.61	28	196	−1.13	25	0.62	−2.09	28
Organ. Behavior & Human Decision Processes (*OBHDP*)	4,217	0.89	7	13.96	0.50	8	1,229	1.24	6	3.29	0.56	7
Personnel Psychology (*Per. Psych.*)	2,558	0.29	10	17.76	0.83	6	585	0.28	10	4.01	0.87	5
Sloan Management Review (*SMR*)	1,189	−0.61	20	7.39	−0.37	17	315	−0.52	19	2.11	−0.15	17
Strategic Management Journal (*SMJ*)	6,447	1.39	4	21.49	1.09	4	1,402	1.41	4	4.52	1.06	4
Totals	77,905			NA			17,553			NA		
Means	2,782.32			12.49			626.99			2.81		
S.D.	2,367.25			9.97			495.99			1.94		
Top 7 journals	44,376			26.19			9,753			6.00		
Top 14 journals	62,302			18.99			14,622			4.00		
Bottom 7 journals (includes *JBV* and *LQ*)	4,880			4.43			1,352			1.13		

[a] The total citation and average citation data are somewhat positively skewed; therefore these data were log transformed to remove the skew prior to the calculation of the *z*-scores. Since this transformation is monotonic, it only affects the *z*-scores and not the ranks.

will focus our attention first on the total number of citations the journals in our sample received.

As indicated in Table 1, of the 277,994 citations received by the 28 journals in this study from 1981 to 1999, 169,273 of these citations were attributable to the top seven journals and 228,419 of the citations were attributable to the top 14 journals. Thus, the top quartile (25%) of the journals accounted for approximately 61 percent of the citations received from 1981 to 1999, and the top two quartiles accounted for about 82 percent of the citations during this period. Of the journals in the top quartile, *JAP* (37,459) and *MS* (30,569) received the greatest number of cumulative citations from 1981 to 1999, followed by *AMJ* (25,412), *AMR* (23,477), *ASQ* (18,581), *SMJ* (17,862), and *OBHDP* (16,038). As indicated at the bottom of the table, these journals were cited 8.4 times more (169,273 vs. 20,233) than the bottom quartile of journals (*HRM, G&OM, MLR, JBR, SMR, IR*, and *CMR*). These differences are even more dramatic when one compares individual journals across the top and bottom quartiles. For example, the most cited journal (*JAP*) is cited 18 times more (37,459 vs. 2066) than the least-cited journal (*HRM*) that was in existence for the whole time period covered by our study. These findings are consistent with those in other disciplines (cf. Ellison, 2002), and suggest that the top journals in the field of management have a substantially bigger impact on research than those journals at the bottom.

Focusing now on the pattern of results for the four individual time periods reported in Table 2, it is obvious that, with the exception of the time period from 1981 to 1984, the same seven journals (*JAP, MS, AMJ, AMR, ASQ, SMJ*, and *OBHDP*) have remained in the top quartile in terms of their total cites, although their relative ordering changed somewhat. Unlike the journals in the top quartile, those that comprised the bottom quartile were somewhat less stable. Two journals (*G&OM* and *HRM*) were consistently in the bottom quartile of journals in terms of total number of citations received for each of the four time periods examined in this study. A third journal (*JBV*) was first published in 1986, and has remained in the bottom quartile since that time. Finally, two other journals (*IR* and *MLR*) dropped into the bottom quartile of journals during the 1985–89 time period, and have remained there ever since.

In order to get a clearer picture of the trends in total citations across the four time periods, we also calculated z-scores for each journal. This was necessary because articles published in earlier time periods have a greater opportunity to be cited than ones published in more recent time periods. Thus, the average total citations for each time period is positively related to the length of time since a paper was published, and converting them to z-scores controls for this effect. It was also important to control for the fact that the data were slightly positively skewed. Skew was controlled by log transforming the data prior to calculating the z-scores. These z-scores are provided for each journal for each time period in Tables 1 and 2.

The z-scores shown in Table 2 indicate that two journals (*AMJ* and *SMJ*) showed substantial increases in their relative standing over the past two decades. This improvement in relative impact is impressive, since the 28 journals included in our analysis have been identified as among the best journals in the field of management. *AMJ* improved from being a very good journal in 1981 (z-score = 1.39, rank = 3) to being the best in terms of total citations in 1999 (z-score = 1.83, rank = 1); and *SMJ* improved from being an average journal in 1981 (z-score = 0.44, rank = 8) to being one of the premier journals in the field in 1999 (z-score = 1.41, rank = 4), even though *SMJ* was only first published in 1980. It appears that the rise of these two journals came, in part, at the expense of *JAP, ASQ*, and *MS* —all of which experienced relative declines in their total citations but still remained in the top quartile of the 28 journals included in our analysis.

Analysis of journal influence based on average citations per article

The right half of Table 1 also provides information regarding the average citations per article for each journal. As shown in this table, articles published in the seven top journals (*ASQ, AMR, AMJ, JAP, SMJ, PerPsych*, and *OBHDP*) averaged almost six times more citations per paper (23.83 vs. 4.54) from 1981 to 1999 than the seven bottom journals (*MLR, JBR, HRM, G&OM, SMR, CMR*, and *HBR*). (Note that *LQ* and *JBV* were excluded from this analysis, because they were not published during the whole time period examined.) These data also indicate that over the time period from 1981 to 1999 articles published in the journal with the

highest average citations per article (*ASQ*) were likely to receive almost 20 times more citations per article (39.87 vs. 1.82) than articles published in the journal with the lowest average citations per article (*MLR*); and articles published in the journal with the second-highest average citations per article (*AMR*) were likely to receive more than 10 times as many citations (29.46 vs. 3.00) as articles published in the journal with the second-lowest average citations per article (*JBR*). Thus, generally speaking, the data demonstrate that publications in those journals with the highest average citations per article have a considerably greater impact on the field of management than articles published in other journals.

Table 2 provides information on the average citations per article for each of the four time periods included in this study. It also reports *z*-scores that permit comparisons across these time periods to be made. Based on the *z*-score trends, it appears that the top quartile of journals was fairly stable from 1981 to 1999. Six of the top seven journals (*ASQ, AMR, AMJ, JAP, OBHDP*, and *SMJ*) generally remained in the top quartile throughout the 20-year time period examined. Only *MS* dropped out of the top quartile, and it was replaced by *PerPsych*. However, it appears that the top quartile of journals became somewhat more stratified from 1981 to 1999. For example, during the time period from 1981 to 1984, *ASQ* was head and shoulders above the other journals in the top quartile (z-score = 1.81, rank = 1). However, by the 1995–99 time period, the seven journals in the top quartile had separated themselves into two tiers, with *AMJ* and *AMR* joining *ASQ* in the top tier with z-scores of 1.80, 1.88, and 1.96 respectively, followed by *SMJ, PerPsych, JAP*, and *OBHDP*, with z-scores of approximately 1.00.

Relationships between different indices of journal influence

In addition to finding out how each of the 28 journals included in this study compared in terms of the number of total citations and average number of citations per journal article, we were also interested in determining how these measures compared with other indices that have been used in the past to rate journal influence. Therefore, we computed the correlations between these indices, and other objective and subjective indices that have previously been reported in the management literature. These correlations were calculated after first transforming the data to remove the slight positive skew. The results are reported in Table 3.

There are several patterns worth noting in Table 3. The first is that the total number of citations that journals receive, and the average number of citations per article in the journals, is fairly stable over time. For example, based on the data in the first eight rows/columns, the average correlation between the total number of citations across the 1981–84, 1985–89, 1990–94, 1995–99 time periods is $r = 0.91$; and the average correlation between the average citations per article over these same time periods is $r = 0.92$. In addition, the data reported in this table suggest that the total number of citations is correlated with the average number of citations per article (average $r = 0.80$, across the four time periods). This suggests that the two measures of journal influence that we used in this study share about 64 percent of their variance.

In addition, the correlations reported in Table 3 indicate that total citations and average citations per article are significantly correlated with the majority of the other objective measures of journal influence (contained in rows/columns 11–27). This is especially true when comparable measures are examined. For example, one would expect generally higher correlations between our total citation measures and the unadjusted influence indices, because both measures are based on total citations. Similarly, one would expect generally higher correlations between our average citations per article measure and the adjusted influence indices, and Sharplin and Mabry's 'A' influence index, because all of these measures are based on the average number of citations per article. Generally speaking, this was true. For example, the 1981–84 citation total measure is generally more strongly correlated with the unadjusted influence indices (r's = 0.72, 0.79, and 0.80) than it is with the adjusted indices (r's = 0.55, 0.61, and 0.64), or with Sharplin and Mabry's 'A' influence index ($r = 0.42$). Conversely, the 1981–84 average citations per article measure is generally more strongly correlated with the adjusted influence indices (r's = 0.62, 0.67, and 0.73), and Sharplin and Mabry's 'A' influence index ($r = 0.70$), than it is with the unadjusted influence indices (r's = 0.56, 0.62, and 0.67).

Table 3. Correlations between objective indices and subjective ratings of journal influence[a]

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Objective indices																
1. 1981–84 citation totals																
2. 1981–84 average citations	0.85**															
3. 1985–89 citation totals	0.92**	0.81**														
4. 1985–89 average citations	0.78**	0.93**	0.83**													
5. 1990–94 citation totals	0.88**	0.85**	0.96**	0.84**												
6. 1990–94 average citations	0.72**	0.91**	0.78**	0.96**	0.83**											
7. 1995–99 citation totals	0.88**	0.81**	0.92**	0.78**	0.92**	0.79**										
8. 1995–99 average citations	0.74**	0.87**	0.75**	0.89**	0.75**	0.93**	0.82**									
9. Cumulative citations (1981–99)	0.95**	0.86**	0.99**	0.83**	0.97**	0.77**	0.90**	0.71**								
10. Cumulative average (1981–99)	0.81**	0.96**	0.84**	0.98**	0.87**	0.98**	0.81**	0.91**	0.85**							
11. Salancik (1986)	0.64*	0.60*	0.59*	0.56*	0.65*	0.54*	0.56*	0.56*	0.63*	0.61*						
12. Unadjusted influence 1981	0.72**	0.56**	0.61**	0.49*	0.56**	0.43*	0.58**	0.51*	0.64**	0.53**	0.98**					
13. Unadjusted influence 1986	0.79**	0.62**	0.70**	0.59**	0.64**	0.53**	0.68**	0.60**	0.73**	0.62**	0.94**	0.97**				
14. Unadjusted influence 1991	0.80**	0.67**	0.76**	0.67**	0.73**	0.64**	0.78**	0.72**	0.79**	0.70**	0.86**	0.88**	0.96**			
15. Adjusted influence 1981	0.55**	0.62**	0.38	0.51*	0.39	0.50*	0.40	0.57**	0.45*	0.57**	0.79**	0.81**	0.77**	0.70**		
16. Adjusted influence 1986	0.61**	0.67**	0.45*	0.59**	0.45*	0.59**	0.48*	0.66**	0.52**	0.65**	0.76**	0.79**	0.80**	0.77**	0.97**	
17. Adjusted influence 1991	0.64**	0.73**	0.54**	0.68**	0.56**	0.70**	0.60**	0.77**	0.60**	0.74**	0.72**	0.72**	0.78**	0.83**	0.89**	0.95**
18. Sharplin and Mabry (1985) A	0.42	0.70*	0.28	0.67*	0.41	0.69**	0.39	0.72**	0.37	0.71**	0.87**	0.86**	0.85**	0.81**	0.91**	0.92**
19. Sharplin and Mabry (1985) E	0.42	0.67*	0.32	0.66*	0.43	0.69**	0.39	0.74**	0.39	0.71**	0.83**	0.80**	0.77**	0.76**	0.83**	0.83**
20. Tahai and Meyer (1999)	0.78**	0.75**	0.85**	0.82**	0.85**	0.81**	0.86**	0.83**	0.86**	0.84**	0.80**	0.72**	0.78**	0.85**	0.58**	0.64**
21. Park and Gordon (1996)—acceptance 1981	−0.15	0.00	0.00	0.12	−0.08	−0.06	−0.26	−0.30	−0.08	−0.02	−0.33	−0.33	−0.25	−0.21	−0.26	−0.22
22. Park and Gordon (1996)—acceptance 1994	0.00	0.16	0.05	0.12	0.07	0.00	−0.15	−0.15	0.03	0.07	−0.43	−0.52	−0.54	−0.53	−0.22	−0.25
23. Cabell's (2000)—acceptance rates	0.18	0.31	−0.04	0.14	0.17	0.09	−0.02	−0.05	0.24	0.23	−0.02	−0.05	−0.12	−0.19	0.08	0.03
24. Ave. SSCI impact factor 1981–84	0.73**	0.71**	0.59**	0.61**	0.57**	0.54*	0.51*	0.57**	0.63**	0.65**	0.66*	0.63**	0.63**	0.62**	0.61**	0.61**

(*continued overleaf*)

[a] Any skew present in the data was removed using a log transformation prior to calculating the correlations.
*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$

Table 3. (*Continued*)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
25. Ave. SSCI impact factor 1985–89	0.77**	0.76**	0.68**	0.71**	0.64**	0.65**	0.66**	0.73**	0.70**	0.74**	0.67**	0.66**	0.69**	0.73**	0.58**	0.61**
26. Ave. SSCI impact factor 1990–94	0.71**	0.75**	0.71**	0.77**	0.69**	0.80**	0.73**	0.84**	0.74**	0.82**	0.56**	0.58**	0.68**	0.77**	0.55**	0.64**
27. Ave. SSCI impact factor 1995–99	0.60**	0.64**	0.62**	0.67**	0.60**	0.72**	0.68**	0.77**	0.63**	0.72**	0.52	0.56**	0.64**	0.76**	0.55**	0.63**
Subjective ratings (log)																
28. Coe and Weinstock (1984)	0.71	0.56	0.62	0.52	0.73	0.52	0.69	0.44	0.69	0.55	0.77	0.77*	0.87*	0.77*	0.53	0.62
29. MacMillan and Stern (1987)—strategy	0.81**	0.78**	0.71**	0.63*	0.76**	0.66*	0.87**	0.74**	0.78**	0.70**	0.74	0.60	0.68*	0.75**	0.47	0.54
30. MacMillan (1991)—strategy	0.68*	0.65*	0.60*	0.58*	0.59*	0.58*	0.80**	0.68*	0.65*	0.60**	0.77*	0.59*	0.68*	0.79**	0.44	0.53
31. MacMillan (1989)—entrepreneurship	0.95**	0.80**	0.59	0.68*	0.52	0.52	0.57	0.56	0.59	0.63*	0.68	0.71*	0.80**	0.84**	0.58	0.66*
32. MacMillan (1991)—entrepreneurship	0.87**	0.66*	0.51	0.52	0.46	0.37	0.52	0.43	0.52	0.47	0.55	0.56	0.66*	0.74*	0.40	0.47
33. MacMillan (1993)—entrepreneurship	0.87**	0.82**	0.60*	0.77**	0.57	0.63*	0.60	0.67*	0.60*	0.71**	0.72	0.68*	0.77**	0.88**	0.60	0.69*
34. Extejt and Smith (1990) [reverse scored]	0.84**	0.84**	0.75**	0.78**	0.72**	0.70**	0.74**	0.77**	0.79**	0.79**	0.83**	0.83**	0.81**	0.81**	0.78**	0.78**
35. Gomez-Mejia and Balkin (1992)	0.57*	0.73**	0.58**	0.75**	0.59**	0.69**	0.59**	0.77**	0.62**	0.78**	0.77**	0.68**	0.70**	0.74**	0.68**	0.71**

Table 3. (*Continued*)

17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	
																			1.
																			2.
																			3.
																			4.
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																			13.
																			14.
																			15.
																			16.
																			17.
0.90**																			18.
0.83**	0.97**																		19.
0.73**	0.79**	0.76**																	20.
−0.20	−0.35	−0.19	−0.17																21.
−0.28	−0.69	−0.14	−0.13	0.61															22.
−0.05	−0.09	0.12	−0.09	0.50	0.93**														23.
0.61**	0.66*	0.54	0.54*	0.10	−0.25	0.13													24.
0.67**	0.66*	0.63	0.67**	−0.30	−0.46	0.05	0.91**												25.
0.74**	0.64*	0.59	0.75**	−0.31	−0.54	−0.16	0.78**	0.90**											26.
0.75**	0.61*	0.59*	0.68**	−0.30	−0.57	−0.16	0.65**	0.82**	0.93**										27.
0.58	0.59	0.42	0.71	0.23	−0.16	−0.08	0.72	0.52	0.66	0.46									28.
0.64*	0.53	0.39	0.75**	−0.47	−0.29	−0.06	0.86**	0.84**	0.72**	0.60*	0.96**								29.
0.65*	0.65	0.50	0.62*	−0.45	−0.59	−0.38	0.80**	0.87**	0.80**	0.83**	0.94**	0.96**							30.
0.72*	0.57	0.52	0.51	0.07	−0.06	0.25	0.83*	0.82**	0.54	0.47	0.76	0.88**	0.85**						31.
0.57	0.38	0.30	0.39	−0.20	−0.23	0.11	0.65	0.75**	0.48	0.43	0.76	0.90**	0.90**	0.92**					32.
0.79**	0.68	0.65	0.62*	−0.12	−0.16	0.21	0.72*	0.84**	0.63*	0.52	0.69	0.83**	0.87**	0.93**	0.89**				33.
0.80**	0.90**	0.90**	0.83**	0.08	0.05	0.30	0.71**	0.78**	0.72**	0.67**	0.45	0.77*	0.73*	0.88**	0.79*	0.94**			34.
0.76**	0.90**	0.92**	0.84**	−0.07	0.04	0.01	0.58*	0.59**	0.58*	0.57*	0.36	0.47	0.54	0.55	0.42	0.71*	−0.88**		35.

The only objective measures that were not found to be related to the total citations and average citations per article indices used in the present study are the acceptance rate measures. Indeed, virtually no relationship was obtained between these measures of journal influence and Park and Gordon's (1996) reported acceptance rates for journals, or the acceptance rates obtained from Cabell's (2000) *Directory of Publishing Opportunities in Management*. Perhaps this is not surprising, since the acceptance rate indices were not correlated with any of the other objective or subjective measures of journal influence either. Although it is not clear why acceptance rates are not related to any of the other indices of journal influence, it is possible that this is the result of the fact that many of the acceptance rates reported in Cabell's directories were very similar, resulting in a restriction in range. Another possibility is that the acceptance rate estimates themselves are inaccurate. For example, data available from ISI show that during the 5-year period from 1990 to 1994, *HBR* published 335 articles, and Cabell reports that its acceptance rate in 1994 was between 1 percent and 5 percent. This suggests that *HBR* received somewhere between 6700 and 33,500 manuscripts over these years! Although this is possible, it does not seem very likely. Still another reason why acceptance rates and citations are uncorrelated may be that acceptance rates are more related to a journal's popularity than to its influence. For example, some journals may be 'popular' with some researchers because they are read by a large number of practitioners and therefore receive a lot of submissions, even though the quality of the research published in the journal is not very high and is unlikely to be cited in academic research.

Finally, the correlations reported in Table 3 indicate that total citations and average citations per article are significantly correlated with most of the subjective measures of journal influence, except for ones used by Coe and Weinstock (1984) and MacMillan (1989, 1991). Although it is not clear why these subjective indices are not as highly related to total citations and average citations, it may have to do with the fact Coe and Weinstock's (1984) study included only seven of the 28 focal journals included in the present research, and MacMillan's (1989, 1991) only included 11, thus reducing the power of the significance tests for these correlation coefficients.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Top-tiered journals

Generally speaking, the results of our analysis indicate that the top quartile of journals was quite stable from 1981 to 1999. Six of the top seven journals (*ASQ, AMJ, AMR, JAP, OBHDP*, and *SMJ*) in terms of average citations generally remained in the top quartile throughout this entire time period. Interestingly, most of these journals are sponsored by a professional group. *AMR* and *AMJ* are sponsored by the Academy of Management, *JAP* by the American Psychological Association, and *SMJ* by the Strategic Management Society. Thus, one reason for the stability among the journals in the top quartile may be that they are sponsored by a large broad-based professional group of scholars who provide a ready readership, and have yearly conferences during which scholars can preview upcoming research. However, given that the size of the Strategic Management Society is so much smaller than either AOM or APA, its success over the past two decades cannot be solely attributed to this professional group.

Of course, another possibility is that these journals remain at the top because their editorial review process is more rigorous and demanding than other journals. These journals typically have the best scholars on their editorial boards who require the work that is published in the journal to meet the highest standards of scientific rigor. Once this 'virtuous cycle' is established, it undoubtedly helps to sustain the journal in its prominent position over a long period of time.

Significant trends in journal influence over the past 20 years

Our citation analysis suggests that there are several trends among the top and bottom journals. Among the top journals, perhaps the most significant trend is the increase in prominence of *AMJ, AMR*, and *SMJ*. This trend in z-scores was strongest for *AMJ*, which increased in both total citations and average citations per article. *SMJ* substantially increased in total citations, while holding average cites per article steady; and *AMR* increased in average cites per article without much change in the level of total cites. Among the bottom quartile of journals, the z-scores for *LQ* and *SMR* trended sharply upward in both total cites and average cites per

article over the last 15 years; and the *z*-scores for *JBV* and *HRM* trended downward in both over this time period. Among the remaining middle-level journals, with one exception, there were few dramatic changes in *z*-scores. *JOM* increased more than any other journal from 1981 through 1994 in terms of its total cites and average cites per article, before losing a little ground in the final 5-year time period.

The stratification of the top journals is perhaps the most interesting of these trends. At the beginning of the 1980s, *ASQ* was by far the most prominent journal in terms of average citations per article, with *AMJ, SMJ, AMR, JAP*, and *OBHDP* clearly below it. However, by 1999, *AMJ* and *AMR* had joined *ASQ* at the top, and this group was followed by another group comprised of *SMJ, JAP, PerPsych*, and *OBHDP*. Although it is difficult to identify the specific reasons for this trend, there are several possibilities that come to mind. One obvious reason for the rise in prominence of the *AMJ, AMR*, and *SMJ* is that the quality of the articles in them could have improved over the past 20 years. This could be due to the fact that the field of management has moved toward a greater consensus regarding the paradigms that it uses in theory development and methodology (Pfeffer, 1993). This is particularly true in the area of strategy research since the publication of Porter's seminal work (Porter, 1980, 1985) on creating and sustaining competitive advantage. As a result, journal editors and reviewers come to rely more on universalistic criteria for evaluating research such as the quality of theoretical ideas, the strength of the methodology used, etc., and less on particularistic criteria such as institutional affiliation, personal ties, and an author's past record of accomplishment (Pfeffer, Leong, and Strehl, 1977). Perhaps because the focus of these journals is centered more on the field of management than the other journals, they have benefited more from this paradigmatic improvement.

Another reason for the increase in prominence of *SMJ* may be the wave of interest in strategy research that began in the mid to late 1980s and has continued relatively unabated until the present day. This trend may have been initially stimulated by the publication of Michael Porter's (1980, 1985) work and the enrollment growth in business schools which were required by AACSB to have a capstone course in business strategy for accreditation; but in recent years it undoubtedly has been sustained by an increasing recognition that corporate strategy has an important impact on organizational effectiveness (Bowman and Helfat, 2001). As a result, business schools have hired more faculty members in this area, thus increasing research on strategic issues.

Although *AMJ* and *AMR* may have benefited from this trend as well, it is likely that they also benefited from the fact that they are sponsored by the Academy of Management, and they have grown along with the academy as it has grown in both stature and membership over the past two decades. Indeed, Jarley, Chandler, and Faulk (1998) report that a higher percentage of the papers published in these two journals comes from academy members than is true of any other journals in our set. Related to this, the increase in prominence of these journals may have also benefited from the growth in the number of business school faculty over the past 20 years, because these journals focus more attention on the managerially relevant or business-oriented issues of interest to this growing audience than some of the more narrowly focused journals like *JAP* and *OBHDP*.

Implications of journal influence for the field

The fact that the top two quartiles of management journals accounted for over 80 percent of all of the citations from 1981 to 1999 suggests that publications in journals in the bottom two quartiles have only a negligible impact on the field. In addition, the average number of citations per article in one of the journals in the top quartile is almost six times more than the average number of citations in one of the journals in the bottom quartile. Taken together, these two findings show how much greater the impact of research published in top-tier management journals is than research published in lower-tier journals. This is especially impressive since our review did not include the entire range of journals in the field, but instead was skewed toward the 'better' journals. Thus, we believe that our findings regarding differences in the impact of top vs. bottom-tiered journals are understated, and we believe that differences in the average impact would increase if all management journals had been included in our study.

The fact that the top 14 journals received over 80 percent of the citations also suggests that universities should give substantially greater weight

to publications in top-tier journals than to publications in bottom-tier journals when determining the research impact of an individual and/or department. Faculty evaluation systems can fail either because they (a) ignore journal influence entirely and weight all journals equally, or (b) have an inappropriate list of 'top-tier' journals. These flaws are likely to lead to what Kerr (1975) has called the 'folly of rewarding A, while hoping for B.' For example, if faculty evaluation systems reward publications in lower-tiered journals as much as in higher-tiered journals, it will encourage faculty to shift their research efforts to less rigorous journals, where it is easier to publish. In addition, it will also distort resource allocation decisions (e.g., salary, release time, promotion and tenure decisions, summer research support), because people publishing lower-quality research receive as many resources as people publishing higher-quality research. This is likely to be perceived as unfair and lead to dissatisfaction among precisely those people who the university would least like to lose (i.e., those who are leaders in their discipline who publish in truly top-tier journals).

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