



EDITORIAL

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief: Standing on the shoulders

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SPECIAL ISSUE

This issue of *JIBS* begins with an exciting Special Issue (SI) on “Conflict, Security and Political Risk: International Business in Challenging Times”, edited by Area Editor Witold Henisz and Guest Editors Edward Mansfield and Mary Ann Von Glinow. Fifty-four submissions to the SI were handled by the three SI Editors and by six Area Editors (Daniel Bello, Sea-Jin Chang, Lee Radebaugh, Lemma Senbet, Anand Swaminathan and Alain Verbeke). Four papers were accepted for publication and appear here, together with an Introduction by the SI Editors. I want to thank the editors, reviewers and authors for their excellent contributions to this issue of *JIBS*, one that well reflects the *JIBS* mandate of publishing insightful and influential research on IB.

STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS¹

Since the articles in the SI are discussed by the SI Editors, I will not mention them further here. The SI is followed by a separate section of regularly accepted manuscripts. There is one research note, “The structure of *JIBS*’ social network and the relevance of intra-country variation: A typology for future research”, by Chabowski, Hult, Kiyak and Mena, and four articles. The first article, by Hejazi and Santor, “Foreign asset risk exposure, DOI, and performance: An analysis of Canadian banks”, examines the causal relationship between degree of internationalization and bank performance, accounting for endogeneity and risk exposure. Zhou and Poppo, in “Exchange hazards, trust, and contracts in China: The contingent role of legal enforceability”, examine the impact of legal enforceability on buyer–supplier relationships. Zhou, Barnes and Lu, in “Entrepreneurial proclivity, capability upgrading and performance advantage of newness among international new ventures”, explore how new international joint ventures can acquire learning advantages and reduce their liabilities of newness and foreignness. Lastly, in “The effects of absorptive and joint learning on the instability of international joint ventures in emerging economies”, Fang and Zou examine the impact of interpartner learning on joint venture instability in emerging economies.

The four articles that follow the SI are the last manuscripts submitted to the previous editorial team led by Editor-in-Chief Arie Lewin that completed the review process with and were accepted for publication by the current *JIBS* editorial team.

Every new editorial team starts by “standing on the shoulders” of the previous editorial team simply due to the length of the

publication process, which can often take two to three years. Once submitted to a journal, a manuscript typically goes through two or three rounds of double-blind review, with the authors taking three to four months in between each stage to revise their papers. Once accepted for publication, the paper must be typeset, corrected, and finalized before it can be placed in an issue.² A new editorial team therefore must depend on a backlog of accepted manuscripts, typically for at least a year, until their own flow of accepted manuscripts comes on stream.

The “standing on the shoulders” phenomenon has been quite visible since my editors began processing new submissions in July 2007 and became responsible for *JIBS* starting with issue 39.1 (January 2008).³ In each issue, my *Letter from the Editor-in-Chief* has documented how many manuscripts were accepted by former *JIBS* Editor-in-Chief Arie Lewin and how many by me. While the proportion has clearly shifted over the past three years, with more and more published manuscripts having been accepted by the current editorial team, it was not until *JIBS* 40.8, the next-to-last issue in 2009, that we published the final manuscript accepted by Arie Lewin. Although not recognized at the time, issue 40.8 therefore ended our *backlog of accepted manuscripts*. This issue of *JIBS* (41.5) is a second marker, the last of the *transition manuscripts*, that is, papers originally submitted to the former team but moved over to and accepted by the current team. Starting with *JIBS* 41.6, all the published manuscripts will be in the “wholly handled by the current editorial team” category.

Why does “standing on the shoulders” matter? Other than providing the incoming team with a much-needed window before they must begin publishing their own submissions, perhaps most critically it matters for the journal citation reports published by Thomson Reuter’s Web of Science. Each June, Thomson Reuters publishes the *Social Science Citation Index* (SSCI), which provides detailed metrics that are often used to assess journal quality.⁴ *JIBS* is included in two groups of SSCI journals: Management and Business.⁵ *JIBS* could (and should) also be included in the Finance journals category, but it currently is not.⁶

The most quoted SSCI metric is the journal citation factor (JCF), which measures the frequency with which the average article in a journal has been cited in a particular year. The SSCI reports two types of JCFs, a 2-year and a 5-year index (the latter was added in 2009). The 2-year JCF compares citations

in year t to articles published in the previous two years ($t-1$ and $t-2$); the 5-year JCF compares citations in year t to articles published in the previous five years ($t-1$ to $t-5$).⁷

The most recent SSCI, released in June 2009, reported a 2-year JCF of 2.992 for *JIBS*. The 2-year JCF for *JIBS* has risen quite steadily, as evidenced by the five most recent scores: 1.286 (2004), 1.250 (2005), 2.254 (2006), 2.283 (2007), and 2.992 (2008). The 2008 score placed *JIBS* as seventh in the Management category and eighth in the Business category. (The aggregate, 2-year JCF in 2008 for the Business category was 1.565; for the Management category, 1.642.)

The 2-year JCF is calculated as follows. Citations are counted for only those journals included in the SSCI, so the number of citations is deliberately conservative.⁸ SSCI reports that, in 2008, there were 134 cites to *JIBS* articles that were published in 2007 and 219 cites to *JIBS* articles published in 2006, for a total of 353 citations. Using SSCI metrics, *JIBS* published 66 articles in 2007 and 52 articles in 2006, for a total of 118 articles. So the 2-year JCF for 2008 is the total number of citations divided by the number of articles, which is 353 divided by 118, or 2.992. Since these articles were wholly handled and published by the former *JIBS* editorial team, the JCF released in June 2009 is truly “standing on the shoulders” of those who have gone before us.

The “standing on the shoulders” phenomenon is even more important for the 5-year JCF, which is based on total citations in one year to articles published in the previous five years, divided by the total number of articles published in those years. The 2008 5-year JCF for *JIBS* is therefore calculated as total citations for 2003–2007 divided by total articles published between 2003 and 2007, which is 1157 divided by 230, or 5.030. Clearly, all of these articles were handled and accepted for publication by the previous *JIBS* editorial team (or possibly even by the previous editor Thomas Brewer).⁹

About the time this letter will appear in print (June 2010), the newest SSCI will be published. If the *JIBS* JCF rises again, it will be because of citations in 2009 to *JIBS* articles published in 2007 and 2008, all of which were accepted for publication by former Editor-in-Chief Arie Lewin. Congratulations therefore rightfully belong to the previous editorial team, even though these congratulations are likely to be given to (and gratefully received by) the current editors.¹⁰ This will also be the case for the SSCI published in June 2011, since those statistics will be based on *JIBS* articles published in

2008 and 2009. It is only with the SSCI published in June 2012 that the current editorial team will be able to rightfully enjoy the congratulations, or shoulder the blame, for the *JIBS* citation metrics. Looking ahead, the SSCI released in June 2013 (more than three years from now), will be for citations in 2012 to articles published this year and next. Thus, even though our term concludes in December 2010, congratulations or condolences should go to my editors until at least 2013.

The journal citation reports have been a “good news” story for *JIBS* for the past few years. The upward movement in the rankings, both in terms of raw scores and rankings relative to other journals, suggests that *JIBS* is – at least in terms of the JCF – fulfilling its mission statement: *to publish insightful and impactful articles on international business that are widely read and cited by business and management scholars*. However, the credit for these scores really belongs to the *JIBS* editors who engaged in all the hard work that brought these papers successfully through to publication. As one editorial team ends its term and another begins, we remember we are truly “standing on the shoulders” of the editorial teams who go before us.

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NOTES

¹The expression “standing on the shoulders” was attributed to Bernard of Chartres (d. 1126) by John of Salisbury (1955, Book III, Chapter 4: 167). The full quote is worth reporting, given how difficult it was to find and its relevance for our own scholarship: “Our own generation enjoys the legacy bequeathed to it by that which preceded it. We frequently know more, not because we have moved ahead by our own natural ability, but because we are supported by the [mental] strength of others, and possess riches that we have inherited from our forefathers. Bernard of Chartres used to compare us to [puny] dwarfs perched on the shoulders of giants. He pointed out that we see more and farther than our predecessors, not because we have keener vision or greater height, but because we are lifted up and borne aloft on their gigantic stature”.

²The total time is reduced by Advance Online Publication on the *JIBS* website where articles can

be read electronically and cited before they have appeared in print.

³In 2008, of the 73 original manuscripts published that year, all 73 were accepted for publication by the previous editorial team. In 2009, of the 76 original manuscripts published that year, 37 were accepted by the previous team, 21 were originally submitted to the previous team but accepted by the current team, and 17 were wholly handled by the current team. Thus, in 2009, about half the published articles were accepted for publication by the previous editorial team. Of the five *JIBS* issues published so far in 2010, 17 articles were submitted to the previous team and accepted by the current team, and 29 submitted to and accepted by the current editors.

⁴While widely accessible and reported, citation factors are not without their problems as measures of journal quality. Stock (2009: 2196) concludes, after comparing the available indexes for journal quality, that: “Since every single indicator has some benefits, but some pitfalls as well, we have to accept the rule: Be careful! Handle with caution”. Nor should journal rankings be used as simplistic proxies for individual scholar’s research productivity (see Adler & Harzing, 2009). Lastly, to quote Witold Henisz’s e-mail to me on this *EIC Letter*, “A caveat on the limitations of and even pernicious effects of relying on ranking as opposed to reading is always appreciated”.

⁵The Management category in 2009 included 89 journals, covering “management science, organization studies, strategic planning and decision-making methods, leadership studies, and total quality management”. The Business category for 2009 included 77 journals covering “all aspects of business and the business world”, such as marketing, advertising, forecasting, planning, administration, organizational studies, compensation, strategy, retailing, consumer research, management, business history, and business ethics.

⁶While *JIBS* is not included in the Finance journals category (which includes 48 mostly finance and accounting journals), I argue that *JIBS* should be included in this group, given the large number of international finance and accounting articles that appear in the journal. *JIBS* is an interdisciplinary journal that covers the international dimensions of business; as such, it clearly includes within its domain statement international finance and accounting as well as international management, marketing, and other aspects of business studies. If *JIBS* were included in the Finance category, the journal would rank a surprising third overall in terms of its journal citation factor (JCF), after the *Journal of Finance* and the *Journal of Financial Economics* and before *Journal of Accounting*

and *Economics*, *Review of Financial Studies*, and *Journal of Accounting Research*.

⁷One of the complaints about the JCF, whether calculated on a two or five year basis, is that within-journal citations might upward bias the index, for example, if one article in *JIBS* cites another article in *JIBS*. The greater the "internal conversation" within the journal, presumably the more "inward-looking" the journal. The new Eigenfactor Score is an attempt to handle this problem. The score measures the number of times articles published in a journal over the past five years have been cited in the current year, including citations in both sciences and social sciences journals, but taking out within-journal citations, and also weighting references according to some estimate by Thomson Reuter of the time researchers spend reading the article. Another new metric is the Article Influence Score, which is the journal's Eigenfactor Score divided by the fraction of articles published by the journal relative to all articles published by all journals. An Influence Score above (below) 1 implies that each article in the journal has above (below)-average influence. *JIBS'* Eigenfactor Score is 0.008 and Article Influence Score is 1.514. While it is hard to interpret these numbers, perhaps the most useful takeaway is that *JIBS* is in the ballpark of other nearby journals in the rankings.

REFERENCES

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⁸In the past two years, Thomson Reuters has increased the number of IB journals included in its rankings; for example, *Journal of International Management* and *Management International Review* were added in 2008. Part of the rise in *JIBS's* JCF will therefore be due to simply adding IB journals (which tend to cite *JIBS* articles) to the SSCI. In fact, I argue these IB journals should have been included in the SSCI several years ago, and their absence has artificially depressed the JCF for *JIBS* relative to other journals in the Management and Business categories.

⁹In terms of the 5-year JCF, in 2008, *JIBS* ranked eighth in Management and sixth in Business. If *JIBS* were also included in the Finance Journals category, it would also rank third, coming after *Journal of Finance* and *Journal of Financial Economics*.

¹⁰Recognition and thanks must also go to David Bull and our publisher Palgrave Macmillan for their efforts to more widely disseminate and publicize *JIBS* articles through platforms such as the *JIBS* website maintained by Palgrave at <http://www.jibs.net>, "push" e-mails with download links sent out to the AIB community and related disciplines, freely available articles such as the *JIBS* Most Cited and *JIBS* Decade Award articles, the Advance Online Publication site, and close cooperation on projects such as the *JIBS* 40th Anniversary.

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