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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pages

EDITORIAL PREFACE

This is *First* Issue of Volume *Twelve* of the International Journal of Business Research and Management (IJBRM). The International Journal of Business Research and Management (IJBRM) invite papers with theoretical research/conceptual work or applied research/applications on topics related to research, practice, and teaching in all subject areas of Business, Management, Business research, Marketing, MIS-CIS, HRM, Business studies, Operations Management, Business Accounting, Economics, E-Business/E-Commerce, and related subjects. IJRBM is intended to be an outlet for theoretical and empirical research contributions for scholars and practitioners in the business field. Some important topics are business accounting, business model and strategy, e-commerce, collaborative commerce and net-enhancement, management systems and sustainable business and supply chain and demand chain management etc.

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Innovating Public Service Delivery Through Crowdsourcing: What Role for The Third Sector and Civil Society?

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to study the involvement of the "crowd" in designing innovative public policies, and the possibility for the Third Sector to play a role in this process. To do so, we want to answer the following research question: what is the extent to which crowdsourcing is adopted in financing and delivering public services within New Public Governance arenas? In order to answer it, we employ the following approach. First of all, we will set public innovation into the context of New Public Governance; secondly, we will analyse definitions for crowdsourcing, and thirdly, we will provide an overview and crisis of crowdsourcing examples to demonstrate their significance as novel forms of public service finance and delivery. This approach evidences the potential and the outcomes of applying crowdsourcing in the public sector, and indicates the role of the actors involved: the adoption of a leadership role by the Third Sector could facilitate crowdsourcing processes. The outcome of the application of crowdsourcing in the public sector is a greater involvement of the civil society in its relationship with the State.

Keywords: Public Innovation, New Public Governance, Public Value, Crowdsourcing, Open Governance.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the face of an accelerated pace of global uncertainty, increased performance requirements, rising citizen demands, and the need to engage with a broader cocktail of stakeholders, many public agencies are using innovation to underpin novel ways of financing and enhancing public service delivery [1]. There are no longer "one size fits all" universal solutions to complex social problems, nor can any public or private agency satisfy all citizen demands for tailoring services to personal needs. Citizens are no longer passive consumers but empowered individuals who expect state agencies to provide more personalised services and choice, either those more akin to private provision, or increasingly through a wider range of civic providers [2]. An "iPod generation" that expects personalised service delivery and rapid responses to problems needs to be set against a backdrop of "finite resources and infinite demands" meaning that innovation in public service finance and delivery will become even more crucial in future [3].

Nowadays a plurality of inter-relationships between state, market and civic institutions have become the focal point for co-production and co-responsibility of public service delivery and production of public value [4; 5; 6]. These new relational forms of governance are not only a

challenge to the role of government in advanced democracies in the 21st Century, but they raise questions on what type of institutions, organizational and capacities are needed in future to integrate the state's own resources, capacities and knowledge with those of the market and civic institutions. Clearly this calls for less hierarchical, top down, bureaucratic forms of financing and delivery, and more horizontal, bottom up, facilitative or innovative mechanisms, such as crowdsourcing.

Governments across the globe are experimenting with new forms of citizen engagement and with the use of digital or other forms of technology to facilitate it The use of ICT by governments and public administrations is not novel as several countries have adopted e-government and open government strategies, in order to increase transparency towards their citizens, reduce waste and improve their accountability. These phenomena are, however, one-sided: the government takes action (for example by putting up relevant data on a website for citizens to consult them) and citizens are simply the recipients of such policies. Crowdsourcing, on the other hand, allows communities of engaged individuals to perform certain tasks, which may be in solving a problem, suggesting ideas, etc., but importantly it creates a two-way relationship between the crowd and the crowdsourcer [7; 8]. It is in line with the quadruple helix model, recognising civil society as one of the crucial actors in the innovation process [9], even with the aim to foster the shift from technical to social innovations [10, 11; 12]. Public administrations have been adopting crowdsourcing to tackle specific issues, by asking citizens for feedback, ideas and suggestions: this allows public administrations to go beyond the concepts of e-government and open government, by closing the gap between themselves and citizens and collaborating to create public value. In fact, citizens are no longer the passive recipient of public policies: with crowdsourcing, they can actively contribute and influence public policies [13; 14; 15].

Several attempts have been registered in this direction: the European Commission (through the programme Horizon 2020) [16] and some governments, such as Australia, Latin America, and India have fostered public involvement in science [17; 18; 19]. In this sense, Horizon 2020 aims to establish participatory multi-actor dialogues and exchanges all over the Union to foster mutual understanding, co-realize research and innovation outcomes within society and provide new inputs to policy agenda.

Also developing countries have started to look at crowdsourcing as an effective tool to facilitate sustainable urban development planning process [20]. It has been adopted in several ways, always with the aim to address complex and global challenges such as climate change, poverty, armed conflicts and every type of conflicts [1].

In this paper we will investigate what happens in the public sector in terms of the adoption and implementation of crowdsourcing, and what is the role of the Third Sector and civil society in this process. The aim is to answer to the following research question: what is the extent to which crowdsourcing is adopted in financing and delivering public services within New Public Governance arenas? And to do this, we will provide an overview of selected experiences of crowdsourcing in the public sector, analysing them on the basis of variables identified in the literature review. However, the literature begins by setting the overall context of New Public Governance and need for public innovation, to examine crowdsourcing as novel forms of public service finance and delivery. Data were collected from existing contributions and from public policy reports on the basis of the convenience sampling [21], then classified on the basis of specific parameters, individuated through the previous analysis and analysed with the aim to make general considerations on the role played by the Third Sector. Findings show that the majority of the crowd-based experiences were implemented inside English-speaking countries, with citizens who are exclusively engaged in a consultative way by the public sector. In terms of future perspectives, crowdsourcing processes could be fostered by attributing a leadership role to the Third Sector, ensuring a privileged communication channel between citizens and public administration and, consequently, a greater involvement of the civil society in its relationship with the State.

Limitations of the analysis regard the representativeness and the objectivity since researchers could influence results with their personal opinions, describing the phenomenon without deepening the reasons why and related impacts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework of the paper is based on two main pillars. First, we analyse the New Public Governance paradigm pointing out its main characteristics and the need of a greater engagement of civil society in order to ensure an innovative way to deliver public services. Then, we focus our attention on crowd-based practices.

2.1 The Evolution of New Public Governance and Public Innovation

The findings are set within literature on New Public Governance (NPG) and Public Innovation, the former having emerged from a long standing debate regarding the role and size of government, and whilst earlier New Public Management (NPM) theory partly addressed concerns with an emphasis on efficiency, it has been argued that it did not address larger challenges such as declining government resources, the growing size of government agencies, and the complex, developing linkages between state, non-state and civic institutions to deliver public goods and services. NPG is a set of doctrines and approaches aimed at promoting the larger common good and incorporating public values across the political system [22]. NPG is distinguishable from traditional 'Public Governance', to which many studies have been devoted. All have found broad convergence towards a public management style dominated by co-operation among government levels and between public and non- state actors [23; 24]. Governance as a particular style of government refers to "sustaining co-ordination and coherence among a wide variety of actors with different purposes and objectives such as political actors and institutions, corporate interests, civil society and transnational governments" [25]. Past scholars attempted to theorise the "decision making" spaces and enlarged "gaps" that have appeared between formalised, hierarchical "tiers" of regulatory government jurisdictions and those increasingly informal, unregulated connections, linkages and inter-relationships and "spheres" of influencing decisions between plural actors who collaborate in co-designing, co-producing, co-delivering and even, co-evaluating policies [2]. For some these "spaces" are "assemblages of power", "multiple polities", or even the exemplification of a "relational state", but what they all have in common is a way of theorising complex state, market and civic society interactions, in particular as spheres of influence, rather than tiers of regulation and control.

Pollitt [26] urged scholars to look beyond existing orthodoxies to find new multi-disciplinary, explanatory frameworks, to explain innovation, creativity and enterprise practices in public services; those integrated and embedded characteristics of daily routines and rituals of public service life. Public entrepreneurs continually seek innovative ways of adapting structures, processes, and operations, but we need clarity on how and why innovation, creativity, enterprise and risk-taking occur. This paper argues that crowdsourcing is an important way of innovative delivery of public services. Indeed, a wide variety of research and projects around the world is based on the more active, inclusive, and broader participation of different stakeholders [27; 28], in line with the development of the quadruple helix model of innovation, that recognizes society as one of the crucial actors in the innovation system [9], together with science, policy, and industry. The fourth helix has been defined as civil society, consisting of groups representing demand-side perspectives, such as innovation users and consumers, as well as non-profit organizations representing citizens and workers [29; 30]. Similarly, Vincente-Saez and Martinez-Fuentes [31] explained the concept of "open science" as "transparent and accessible knowledge that is shared and developed through collaborative networks" and it is in this sense that the European Commission program Horizon 2020 [16] and other governments, such as Australia [17], Latin America [18], and India [19] have fostered public involvement in science. Furthermore, we need to identify where there might be opportunities for transformation, who are the key actors, what are the rules of the game, how constrained are public entrepreneurs, what types of novel approaches to use resources creatively are evident, and do linkages between public entrepreneurship and other forms of entrepreneurship achieve greater added value? Other fundamental questions are about how people come together collectively to engage in entrepreneurial processes, the

differences between our traditional notion of entrepreneurship and what is happening in a variety of "public" and partnership settings, such as crowdsourcing to stimulate enterprising behaviour. Also what might be learnt from the public realm or those "grey areas"; spaces between formal, statutory and regulatory agencies and informal, fluid spaces where the public, private and civic worlds interact, and in which enterprise can flourish? How are different communities of interest assembled to occupy the spaces that government traditionally occupied? What are the opportunities and barriers for enterprise in the public realm? Furthermore, a key question is "do entrepreneurship and innovation really apply, or not, in a public sector context?" The answers to such questions depends rather a lot on how we define the public realm, or seek to examine the enlarged action spaces from which the state is retreating from traditional service delivery. This process has opened up possibilities for wider constellations of entrepreneurial and innovative endeavour to plug perceived gaps in coverage.

2.2 Crowdsourcing as a New Frontier for Public Service Delivery
Much recent literature has focused on the need for more innovation and enterprise in the public sector [32; 33], based on the view that innovation can contribute to enhanced quality of performance, and an improvement in governmental problem solving in dealing with "wicked" societal issues [34]. A systematic review of literature on innovation in the public sector led researchers to examine the antecedents and outcomes of public as well as ascertaining definitions, types and goals of public innovation [35]. However, their comprehensive research was published with a cautionary note because it was only a first step in looking beyond the rhetoric of numerous public innovations and reform programmes. Public innovation is often considered to be a magic concept, but the reality is that little is known about this novel field of enquiry. The findings that follow on crowdsourcing offer tremendous scope for understanding levels of innovation and enterprise, though it remains to be seen whether or not they can replace over two hundred years of state intervention and policy making. The findings are a response to the call for more empirical and theoretical knowledge and research in the field of innovative public service financing and delivery.

The employment of crowd-based practices in the public sector, as new forms of governance and innovation need be aligned with the concepts of co-creation and co-production, which appear to be used interchangeably in the existing literature in terms of how they are defined [4]: in both cases, citizens are considered valuable partners in developing and designing public services [36; 2]. The idea of co-creation is based on the active involvement of end-users in the production process [5; 6; 4]:when this active involvement is present, it's common to also find the term "co-production" in the literature [4]. The main distinction appearing between the two concepts is that in co-creation citizens are involved as initiators or co-designers of services, while in co-production they are only engaged in the co-implementation phase.

But in order to ensure sustainable innovations and growth within society, it becomes necessary to implement the quadruple helix, fostering the shift from technical to social innovations [10; 11; 12]. Nevertheless, recent studies have indicated that civil society participation continues to be low [37; 38; 39; 40].

For what concerns crowdsourcing, since the term's introduction in 2006 by Jeff Howe [15], a variety of definitions have emerged. Of course, according to Bott and Young [1], it can be seen as a core mechanism of new systemic approaches to governance addressing the highly complex, global, and dynamic challenges of climate change, poverty, armed conflict, and other crisis. Howe [7] identifies three conditions that define crowdsourcing: (i) the outsourcing of a specific task (ii) to a generic crowd (iii) based on an open call. The peculiarity of crowdsourcing is the employment of the "crowd" as a partner [41], with the aim of exploiting the wisdom of the crowd of people not working for the company which outsources the task, based on the assumption that groups of people working together can achieve better results than individuals would [8]. We gathered 28 definitions of crowdsourcing by several authors, and we analysed them on the basis of the following variables: the object of the action of crowdsourcing; the recipient of the action; the medium used to perform crowdsourcing; the technique used; the goal of crowdsourcing and the

issue to compensation for participants. 11 definitions take into account the object of the action of crowdsourcing: most of them define it as "the outsourcing of a task" [42; 43; 7; 13; 44; 14; 45; 46], while others focus on the aspect of "interactive value creation" and on the "intentional mobilization of creative ideas" [47]. The recipient of the action is mentioned in 18 definitions: in most cases, the task is outsourced to what is defined as a large, generic and possibly dispersed community or group of people, which represents "the crowd". Others describe it as " a motivated, interested crowd of individuals" [48] and take into account the fact that the task might be outsourced to specific people because of their personal or group skills [19]. Several definitions describe members of the crowd as "workers" [49; 50; 7], which brings up another important variable: the possibility that these crowds are paid for their work. Only 7 definitions mention the aspect of remuneration, which is seen as optional [50; 13; 51] and quantified as "micropayments, social recognition or entertainment value" [15]. Another significant aspect is that the payment is normally much lower than the actual value of the contribution to the firm that outsources the task [13]. For what concerns the tools employed to perform crowdsourcing, the 12 definitions that take this aspect into account all state that the Internet and web-based tools are essential in gathering a large crowd of individuals. The use of the Internet thus appears to be a key pillar of crowdsourcing [49]. Crowdsourcing is usually carried out in the form of "an open call for contributions" directed at the "crowd" [7; 13; 14; 15]. Finally, the goal of crowdsourcing appears to be, according to the majority of authors that mention it, problem solving. Others see the objective as accessing a large pool of external knowledge [52; 43; 44].

Considering all these definitions, the four key pillars of crowdsourcing emerge: the crowd, the crowdsourcer, the task to be performed and the crowdsourcing platform. Based on these, Hosseini et al. [53] provide a taxonomy of crowdsourcing, and define it as "a new business model, which enables business owners to rely on the power of crowd to get jobs done".

What emerges from the literature so far is that crowdsourcing was born, and is mostly used, in the private sector; we also mentioned, however, the co-creation and co-production processes that take place in the public sector, where citizens are somehow involved in the design and production of public services. The employment of crowdsourcing in the public sector is defined as citizensourcing [54; 55], which represents "a new relationship between a government and its people, based on a set of emerging practices and principles applied from the private sector" [54]. Citizensourcing is "the act of taking a task that is traditionally performed by a designated public agent and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open call" [54]: it is based on the same four key pillars as traditional crowdsourcing, with the additional feature that the crowdsourcer must be a "public agent". According to the authors, citizensourcing includes three dimensions: (i) citizen ideation and innovation, (ii) collaborative administration and (iii) collaborative democracy.

Nam [56] analyzes the dimensions of citizensourcing from a different perspective, considering its purpose, the strategy that is employed and the type of collective intelligence that is collected. For what concerns the purpose, there are two main groups: the first one regards the actions that public agents take to "look cool" (i.e. image making) without really modifying their behavior; the second regards the actions they take to make actual changes to their strategy, by requesting information (information creation), co-producing services with citizens, involving them in solving problems and in policy making. The strategy can consist of holding a contest among citizens on a specific issue, on creating a wiki to collect and improve information, on adopting social networking techniques and on asking citizens to submit ideas and vote others' ones (social voting). Finally, the collective intelligence employed can be either professional knowledge, i.e. the opinions of citizens who are experts on a given topic, or innovative ideas, coming from the general public.

Crowdsourcing is not only for industrialized countries, since also developing countries need to implement appropriate tools to efficiently manage growth and changes, looking at crowdsourcing as a useful instrument able to facilitate sustainable urban development planning process [20]. Indeed, in spite of common belief, in developing countries crowdsourcing has quietly assumed a leadership role in the space, registering records if compared with developed countries [57]. In

such contexts crowdsourcing is mainly applicable in the framework of popular consultation, election monitoring, constitution drafting processes, or in order to ensure that voices of diverse ethnic and minority groups are heard. More in-depth, in Pakistan crowdsourcing has been applied to manage natural disasters, while in Libya in order to solve civil wars and in Kenya it has been useful to track human rights abuses and violence. Furthermore, while the rise of crowdsourcing in Asia is not widely discussed, the reality is that Asia has welcomed crowdsourcing like no other region, hosting many if the world's largest or leading crowdsourcing sites, benefiting from it more than any other country in the world. And it is going to quadruple in the next five years. For several years, India has been seen as the "King of Crowdsourcing" [57], with the government that crowdsourced the design of the currency symbol.

Given these experiences, crowdsourcing can be seen as a new approach to governance, able to address the highly complex, global, and dynamic challenges of climate change, poverty, armed conflict and other crisis [1]. Crowdsourcing requires significant contributions by volunteers, but they are less predictable and less controllable than formal processes and fragile states could lack the power and resources to institutionalize it – the main obstacle to the development of such phenomenon. If developed states tend to regulated and institutionalize crowdfunding, in developing ones there are not government regulations and actions able to support it: they are characterized by a greater crowd and bottom-up practices, aimed to ensure the same rights for all.

3. METHODOLOGY

As introduced before, our research question is: what is the extent to which crowdsourcing is adopted in financing and delivering public services within New Public Governance arenas? Consequently, our intention is to understand what is the possible role of Third Sector and civil society and we try to do this by providing a descriptive overview of citizensourcing practices in the public sector. The descriptive approach generally describe the crowdsourcing phenomenon, looking at *what, where, when,* and *how* it occurs, without investigating the *reasons why* of it [58]. Descriptive research is usually used to achieve several scopes, such as identification of object characteristics, measurement of data trends, comparisons between phenomena, validation of existing conditions: we chose it in order to observe how certain variables change within different contexts [59]. After a literature review on New Public Governance, underlining a strong need for public innovation, several experiences of crowdsourcing have been investigated with the aim to understand whether and how it can be considered as novel forms of public service finance and delivery.

Experiences of crowd-based practices have been selected on the basis of the convenience sampling [21], since the units of our target result easy to access. Some of them can be seen as "accidental samples" as they have been included in the analysis just because near to researchers. In this sense, we collected secondary data, that we obtained through the analysis of existing contributions and public policy reports.

Once individuated, experiences have been classified according to the following parameters:

- their country or geographical area of origin;

- the dimension, which refers to the phase where citizens are engaged, so what is their contribution within the initiative i.e. citizen ideation, collaborative administration and collaborative democracy [54], and the sub-dimensions, which indicates the specific object of the initiative (e.g. feedback provision, improvement of public services, contests promoted by public institutions, etc.);

- their purpose [56], which regards the potential outcome of the initiative in society, it can be image-making, information creation, service co-production, problem solving or policy making;

- the strategy or instrument that was employed [56], more deeply, how social media are used in the experience, i.e. social voting, social networking, contest and wiki. Social voting refers to platforms that allow citizens to share ideas, opinions, feedbacks, but also to report malfunctions about specific aspects of their civic life, while social networking regards the use of social networks (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to achieve the scope of the initiative. Contests are calls launched to collect innovative solutions to common problems, associated with monetary prizes and, finally, through wiki the public sector is able to collect the experts' contribution on specific topics.

- a brief description of the content of the initiative.

Then we analyzed data in a qualitative way, making general considerations on the role played by the Third Sector.

By doing this, we will gain a better understanding of how citizensourcing is actually implemented in the public sector and what actors are involved in the process. Of course, potential disadvantages could affect our approach: first of all, convenience sampling could not be representative of the entire phenomenon, then we have to take into account the risk to influence the results with our personal opinion and, as anticipated, the limit of our scope, that is to the *what* of research, without providing information on *why.*

4. RESULTS

This section is dedicated to results: first of all we will provide an overview of collected experiences of crowd-based practices in the public sector all over the world, then data will be analised qualitatively.

As anticipated, 30 experiences have been selected because easy to access and consult for researchers, Table 1 summarizes them on the basis of established criteria.

Initiative	Country /area	Dimension	Sub-dimension	Purpose	Strategy	Description
FixMystreet.Com	UK	Citizen ideation and innovation	Feedback and advice given by citizens	Information creation	Social voting	Website available for citizens to report malfunctions in the streets.
Twitter profile of the municipality of San Francisco	US	Citizen ideation and innovation	Feedback and advice given by citizens	Information creation	Social Networking	Citizens communicate via Twitter with the municipal office in charge of street maintenance.
Patient Opinion	UK, Ireland, Australia	Citizen ideation and innovation	Feedback and advice given by citizens	Information creation	Social Voting	Platform to share feedbacks and experiences with the national health system.
ExpertNet	US	Citizen ideation and innovation	Feedback and advice given by citizens	Information creation	Wiki	Wiki allowing public institutions to reach out to the public asking questions on the topics they are working on, in order to reach the most experts citizens on each topic.
Citizen's Briefing Book	US	Citizen ideation and innovation	Feedback and advice given by citizens	Information creation	Social Voting	Call for ideas to be presented to the President of the US
Initiative by the General Services Administration (GSA)	US	Citizen ideation and innovation	Feedback and advice given by citizens	Information creation	Social Voting	GSA asked citizens to submit short videos detailing how the website USA.gov had helped in

					making their lives easier.
Open for Questions	US	Citizen ideation and innovation	Feedback and advice given by citizens	Information creation	Social Voting	Call for 100.000 questions to be presented to the President of the US.
CitizenLab.org	Europe	Citizen ideation and innovation	Feedback and advice given by citizens	Information creation	Social Voting	Website created to improve civic engagement, allowing to collect feedback from citizens as well as their ideas.
Hunchbuzz.com	New Zealand	Citizen ideation and innovation	Feedback and advice given by citizens/Innovation contest	Information creation/Problem solving	Social Voting/Contest	Cloud-based software that allows private and public agents to create challenges and start discussions that lead the community to cooperate to find solutions.
USAID Development 2.0 Challenge	US	Citizen ideation and innovation	Contest created by public institutions	Information creation/Problem solving	Contest	Call for ideas to help solve development problems in areas such as healthcare, agriculture and education.
Prizes and incentives by National Science Foundation	US	Citizen ideation and innovation	Contest created by public institutions	Information creation/Problem solving	Contest	NSF implemented a program offering cash prizes to those who submit innovative ideas in various research fields to strengthen the country's infrastructure.
Citizensourcing initiatives by NASA	US	Citizen ideation and innovation	Contest created by public institutions	Problem solving	Contest	NASA offered 30.000$ to anyone who could provide a formula to estimate the solar flare.
Bright Tomorrow Lighting Prize	US	Citizen ideation and innovation	Contest created by public institutions	Problem solving	Contest	The Department of Energy launched a contest offering cash prizes to those who could create and develop solid lighting products to substitute traditional fluorescent lamps.
Initiative by the US Department of Health and Human Services vs. H1N1 Flue	US	Citizen ideation and innovation	Contest created by public institutions	Problem solving	Contest	The Department of Health and Human Services called for citizens to create video to support prevention against the H1N1 virus.
Showusabetterway.co.uk	UK	Citizen ideation and innovation	Improvements of public services	Information creation/Problem solving	Contest	The UK government set a 20.000£ prize for those who could suggest innovative ways to use the big amount of data it routinely collects.
IdeaFactory by Transportation Security Administration (TSA)	US	Citizen ideation and innovation	Improvements of public services	Problem solving	Social Voting	The TSA allows its workers to submit innovative ideas to improve the national transportation system.
Mimedellin.org	Colombia	Citizen ideation and innovation	Improvements of public services	Information creation/Problem solving	Social Voting	The city of Medellin uses its citizens' collective wisdom to find innovative solutions to its issues.
FutureMelbourne.com.au	Australia	Collaborative administration	Urban planning	Policy making	Social Voting	The city of Melbourne asked its citizens to give their input and feedback on urban planning policies for the city centre.

IdeasForSeattle.org and The Unified New Orleans Plan	US	Collaborative administration	Urban planning	Information creation/Problem solving	Social Voting	The websites allow the citizens of Seattle and New Orleans to discuss the issues affecting their cities, to share their ideas, suggest solutions and comment on others' suggestions.
Peer-to-patent	US, Australia	Collaborative administration	Public examinations of patents	Service coproduction	Social Voting	Website opening the patent evaluation process to the public, where citizens can check patents waiting for approval and suggest feedbacks.
Community Patent Review	Japan	Collaborative administration	Public examinations of patents	Service coproduction	Social Voting	Application of Peer-to-Patent in Japan.
Peoplefinder	US	Collaborative administration	Public security	Information creation/Problem solving	Social Voting	Website allowing to locate friends and family in the event of natural disasters.
Texas Virtual Border Watch	US	Collaborative administration	Public security	Information creation/Problem solving	Social Voting	Program created by the State of Texas allowing citizens to control the Mexican border and signal problems.
Twitter Earthquake Detector	US	Collaborative administration	Public security	Information creation/Problem solving	Social Networking	Software that allows to trace and map citizens' account of earthquakes on Twitter.
AMBER Alert Europe	Europe	Collaborative administration	Public security	Information creation/Problem solving	Social Networking	National alarm system, connected to Facebook, used in cases of missing children, allowing citizens and police to cooperate.
Google Person Finder	All over the world	Collaborative administration	Public security	Information creation	Social Networking	Web application allowing individuals to ask for information about their friends and family living in areas hit by natural disasters.
Americaspeaks.org	US	Collaborative democracy	21st century public assembly	Policy making/Problem solving	Social Voting	Website allowing citizens to be engaged in public policies that have an impact on their lives, and providing a space where they can meet to solve public problems.
European citizens consultations	Europe	Collaborative democracy	21st century public assembly	Information creation	Social Voting	Project that involved a limited amount of citizens who were asked to provide their opinion and discuss specific topics.
New Zealand Wiki Policing Act 2008	New Zealand	Collaborative democracy	Collaborative legal coding	Policy making	Wiki	Modification of the law concerning the police, made by using a wiki system to which all citizens could contribute.
Regulations.gov	US	Collaborative democracy	Collaborative legal coding	Information creation	Social Voting	Website allowing citizens to view and comment laws, regulations and documents published by the US government.

TABLE 1: Overview of the main experiences. Our elaboration.

4.1 Data Analysis

As we see from the table, out of 30 experiences 19, so more than 63% of the total, were implemented in the United States, and only very few of them occurred outside English-speaking countries; only one experience is applied all over the world and only another one in Japan. This aspect could represent a consequence of the convenience sampling, according to which experiences from developing countries have not taken into account (representing a limitation of our work). Furthermore, all European initiatives came from the Union level, not from individual member countries.

For what concerns the dimension investigated, the most, almost 57%, is about citizen ideation and innovation, the other 30% is about collaborative administration and only 13% is about collaborative democracy, confirming a low rate for civil society participation. While for what concerns the sub-dimension, 30% is about feedback and advice given by citizens, about 16% represents contests created by public institution and another 16% regards public security. Only 10% is dedicated to improvements of public services, while lower percentages are about urban planning, public examinations of patents, 21st century public assembly, and collaborative legal coding.

Looking at the specific purpose pursued, 37% of the investigated experiences is classified for information creation, the 13% for problem solving and the 33% combines information creation with problem solving. Rates about 7% are for policy making and service co-production, while only one experience is for both policy making and problem solving.

Finally, the instrument used is social voting for almost 57%, social networking for 13% and contest for 20%. Only 7% of the experiences uses wiki to collect the experts' contribution on specific topics and only one experience is based on social voting and contest.

5. DISCUSSION

The most interesting finding is that "information creation" and "problem solving" are the main purposes for which crowdsourcing is applied in the public sector: citizens are consulted on selected matters by the public administration, but they rarely cooperate in policy-making activities [37; 38]. This occurs mainly by asking citizens to share opinions, ideas and feedbacks through a dedicated platform. In this sense, we can state that even if governments have started to involve citizens, their engagement still results in a preliminary phase, requiring further efforts in order to become a common and institutionalized practice [39; 40]. Moreover, public administrations tend to address citizens (or groups of citizens) for very specific issues, rather than including non profit organisations and associations. So far, it appears that the Third Sector itself (i.e. non profit organisations) only plays a limited role in crowdsourcing/citizensourcing initiatives, presumably because its involvement would require a broader perspective in managing the co-production of public services. At the same time, however, Third Sector organisations often have a strong grasp and perception of social issues, and they could improve crowdsourcing processes by taking a leading role in transmitting information from the civil society to the public sector and vice versa. The suggestion of such possible role for Third Sector organisations as "transmission belts" between public administrations and citizens can be seen as the practical implication of the work, a new contribution in a context that is not completely understood.

Crowdsourcing represents a valid way to improve the provision for developing countries too [20], but it is especially there that an active involvement of the Third Sector is needed in order to support the crowd ensuring the right to share opinions and participate to the public activity for all [1].

Given the descriptive approach that characterizes the study performed in a specific time, researchers are not able to retrace outcomes related to crowdsourcing experiences and benefits for citizens, that require more time to be verified: they will be investigated in a future perspective.

6. CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Within the realm of New Public Governance and in response to the inadequacies of New Public Management, new relational forms of governance are a challenge to the role of government in advanced democracies in the 21st Century because they raise questions on what type of institutions, organizations and capacities are needed in future to integrate the state's own resources, capacities and knowledge with those of the market and civic institutions. The fourth helix model has been developed and the plurality of inter-relationships between state, market and civic institutions have become the focal point for co-production and co-responsibility of public service delivery and production of public value [9], fostering the shift from technical to social innovations [10; 11; 12]. As Governments experiment with new forms of citizen engagement and the use of digital or other forms of technology to facilitate this, crowdsourcing is a good example of the movement away from hierarchical, top down, bureaucratic forms of financing and delivery services, towards more horizontal, bottom up, facilitative or innovative mechanisms for achieving public value by co-producing services. Properly, it can be seen as a new way to governance addressing the highly complex, global, and dynamic challenges of climate change, poverty, armed conflict, and other crisis [1]. Several definitions have been provided, presenting the "crowd" as the true main pillar of crowdsourcing, requiring a huge contribution from volunteers, that remains less predictable and less controllable than formalized processes.

Existing literature on public sector reform and innovation is limited mainly because much of it is aspirational and lacking a clear empirical or theoretical foundation. Globally governments continue to seek novel solutions to a myriad of social and economic problems, and in doing so they are easily persuaded by quick fixes and innovative ways of addressing some key issues.

In this sense, crowdsourcing is not only for industrialized countries, but is has been adopted also in developing regions to facilitate sustainable urban development processes [20]. However, despite the need for new ways of financing and delivering public services, limited data exists on how new approaches are working in practice: even if we are able to retrace experiences, describing *what*, *where*, *when*, and *how* they occur, we just can hypothesize the *reasons why* they occur, without point out which are the related outcomes within society. There is no magic wand to be used for bringing about novel ways of working, and we need greater understanding on how social and public innovation can be stimulated and operationalised. The findings on crowdsourcing in this paper offer useful and timely empirical data in the field and as such provide a starting point to examine this significant field of enquiry.

Given the public sector's attitude towards openness and cooperation with citizens, crowdsourcing is being employed by public administrations as an important form of public service delivery and innovation; it is focused on citizensourcing (requiring that the crowdsourcer is a public agent), mainly asking for feedback and innovative ideas on public issues. At the same time, we found that public administrations mainly consult citizens on selected issues, rather than involving them in broader policy-making strategies. Moreover, non profit organisations do not seem to be included in this consulting process, so thus far the role of the Third Sector appears to be marginal. However, for what concerns practical implications related to this paper, we believe that its role could be strengthened and improved if the public sector assigned non profit organisations a leading role in crowdsourcing processes. For example, they could act as transmission belts between the citizens and public administration, and they could leverage their deep understanding of social issues and needs to bring them forward to the public administration. Consequently, the adoption of a leadership role by the Third Sector could enhance crowdsourcing processes by making them more than mere consultation and actually creating a privileged communication channel between citizens and public administration. And, in a context where there are no universal solutions to complex problems, unified understanding to effectively plan and implement crowdsourcing, this suggestion represents the practical implication of our work.

Limitations regard the selected sample since selected experiences could not be representative of the entire phenomenon over the world. Furthermore, other limitations regard the lack of

objectivity, since results could be influenced by researchers' opinions and the scope of the analysis that could be restricted to the *what*, without investigating the *why* of the research.

We believe that future research, including further empirical developments, should start by focusing on Third Sector organisations in order to get their opinion on such processes, with the objective of crafting a strategy for a broader engagement of all actors in crowdsourcing processes.

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Back to the Future: A Review and Editorial Agenda of the International Journal of Business Research and Management

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Abstract

In September 2020, in the tenth year of its life, a strong editorial turnaround happened within the *International Journal of Business Research and Management* (*IJBRM*). In this vein, editorial and review board members, together with the Journal's current and future authors, should be made aware of the history of the Journal as well as its future agenda. Thus, this contribution aims to: *i)* identify the major research themes faced by the Journal's articles in the past, and *ii)* define a research agenda for the Journal's future development. All the 98 articles published in *IJBRM* up to August 2020 have been initially analyzed according to: *i)* number of papers published per year, *ii)* authors' nationality, and *iii)* number of papers per research design. Thus, all papers have been thematically analyzed to identify the main research areas they represent. Results show that authors' institutions are mainly based in Asian countries and the main areas addressed were "Marketing" and "Technology and Innovation Management". Important implications for editors and future authors arise from the analysis. In particular, to exploit potentially fruitful collaborations in Europe and the Americas, editors and highly involved reviewers are asked to build their own sub-communities around the Journal, including the encouragement of Special Issues on all research areas within the management realm. In addition, authors are asked to explore unfulfilled research areas and to increase the scientific soundness of proposed works.

Keywords: Management, Research, Systematic Literature Review, Publication, Thematic Analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

In September 2020, in the tenth year of its life, a strong editorial turnaround happened within the *International Journal of Business Research and Management* (*IJBRM*).

The turnaround resulted in the appointment of a new Editor in Chief and a series of drastic but necessary decisions have been made in order to revitalize the Journal's life. In particular, the Editorial Board underwent an initial cut of Editorial Board Members, from 43 to 13, in order to eliminate all those Editors who had not made any kind of contribution to the Journal over the years (in terms of publications, reviewing activities, promotion of the Journal, etc.) and to create openings for new members. The same has happened with the Reviewer Board, which had grown

considerably by adding experts in management research areas that had not previously been covered (e.g., accounting and financial management).

Accordingly, a *continuous ongoing* selection process of editors and reviewers is in place in search of scholars who would like to proactively engage with the Journal, giving it new important lifeblood. As of November 2020, this process has resulted in the appointment of 32 new Editorial Board Members, 12 new Review Board Members and a new Associate Editor in Chief – from 5 different continents and 18 countries. This has helped to build the fundamentals for really becoming an International Journal.

Stemming from the above, this is an appropriate moment to chronicle the history of the *Journal* and to clearly define its future agenda. This exhaustive overview could allow editorial and review board members, together with the Journal's current and future authors, to better understand how to best play their role within the Journal and the contributions to be made in order to ameliorate its performance, especially in the long term. In other words, this paper does not want to simply record the topical contents of *IJBRM*, but it wants to shed light on how the Journal can better fulfill its mission by proposing an editorial and research agenda.

Accordingly, the aim of this paper is twofold. On the one hand, it identifies the main research areas addressed by the papers published by the Journal to date and, on the other hand, it defines an editorial and research agenda for the Journal's future development. In order to do so, the authors undertake a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of all the articles published by *IJBRM* during its life from 2010 to August 2020). The resulting 98 articles have been initially analyzed in order to provide information on: *i)* number of papers published per year, *ii)* authors' affiliation nationality, *iii)* number of papers published per research area, and *iv)* number of papers per research design. In particular, in order to identify the main research areas of the published papers, a mixed thematic analysis has been adopted.

Results of this investigation provide important implications for the Editors of the *Journal* as well as for scholars who would like to publish their article in *IJBRM*. In particular, to scientifically develop *IJBRM*, Editors have been asked to build their own sub-communities around the Journal, with the aim of exploiting potentially fruitful collaborations in Europe and the Americas, considering that Asian countries have been already highly involved. Moreover, with just four main areas, i.e., "Marketing", "Technology and Innovation Management", "Operations and Supply Chain Management", and "Strategizing Activities and Practices", having been addressed by published *IJBMR* articles until now, authors have been asked to explore the numerous other fields of research within the management realm. This will allow the Journal to become a 'true' generalist scientific outlet.

After this introduction, the paper is structured as follows. The second section is devoted to the methodology and provides information on the data collection and data analysis at the basis of the SLR. The third section reports the study results, which are mainly divided into two subsections: the first one provides descriptive statistics of the analyzed sample, whilst the second presents the results from the thematic analysis. The fourth section concludes this investigation by providing numerous implications for current and prospective *IJBRM* editors, reviewers, and authors.

2. METHODOLOGY

Similarly to Schwarz (2015) – who conducted a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of the *Journal of Management History* to inform its audience and editors – this paper performs a SLR of all the papers published in *IJBRM* (from the first issue published in October 2010 to the issue published in August 2020) to introduce editors and authors (current and future) to the history of the Journal and its future editorial and research agenda. The SLR has been identified as the suitable research design to consolidate and synthesize the identified academic research into a comprehensive framework (Crossan and Apadyin, 2010; Cristofaro, 2019). Moreover, according to Tranfield et al. (2003), this method differs from the traditional narrative reviews by: *i)* assisting

in linking future research to the questions and concerns that have been posed by past research, and *ii)* being more explicit in the selection process, by employing rigorous and reproducible evaluation methods.

In particular, all the 98 papers have been downloaded from the Journal's website and then an Excel spreadsheet has been created with the following variables pertaining to each paper: *i)* year of publication, *ii)* authors' name, *iii)* authors' affiliation nationality, and *iv)* keywords.

Alongside the collection and analysis of these variables, a mixed thematic analysis of all the 98 published papers has also been performed aimed at identifying the research areas in which they fall. To implement this analysis, the mixed thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) has been followed. In particular, the mixed thematic analysis is based on both deductive analysis (by which communication messages are thematized according to an initial codebook) and inductive analysis (by which new themes are free to emerge).

Concerning the deductive analysis, the initial codebook used for codifying the papers' themes has been derived from the *research divisions* pointed out by the *Academy of Management*, which is the most important association for management studies with over 17,000 associated scholars (Academy of Management, 2020). These research divisions – also called areas – reflect the broad range of scholars' interests across 26 different management disciplines. However, following the inductive approach, new themes – not represented in the initial codebook – were free to emerge. Accordingly, the Marketing (MKTG) research area – described as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large" (American Marketing Association, 2017) – has been added as the consequential effect of the inductive thematic analysis of the papers. The resulting final codebook is presented in Table 1.

Division	Acronym	Definition
Careers	CAR	It supports research, teaching, and practice focused on people's lifelong succession of work experiences, the structure of opportunity to work, and the relationship between careers and other aspects of life.
Conflict Management	CM	It focuses on the: nature and management of conflicts at the individual, group, organizational, interorganizational and societal level; power processes including influence, coalitions, coercion, deterrence, and persuasion; bargaining and negotiation, negotiator characteristics and behaviors; collaboration and competition; third party interventions (such as facilitation, arbitration, mediation); distributive and procedural justice and dispute resolution procedures.
Critical Management Studies	CMS	It is characterized by skepticism concerning the morality and social and ecological sustainability of prevailing forms of organization. The Division promotes management research and education, which is dedicated to interrogating relations of power and control and giving voice to marginal and oppressed voices.
Entrepreneurship	ENT	It promotes the scholarship and advances in the field of entrepreneurship; that is, in the purposeful activity of initiating, developing, and maintaining an enterprise.
Gender and Diversity in Organizations	GDO	It focuses on the content relating to gender and diversity within and outside organizational boundaries including cultural, societal, and worldwide levels, and to the influence of group relations on the structuring of societies and the production of knowledge.
Health Care Management	HCM	It is dedicated to enhancing the population's health and wellbeing through developing and testing management theory. Division members seek to understand the role of professionals and organizations in providing effective health care that is low cost, high quality, and enhances population health and wellbeing at the local, national, and global levels.
Human Resources	HR	It is dedicated to understanding, identifying, and improving the effectiveness of HR practices to facilitate organizational competitiveness nationally or internationally, encourages individual growth and development, and enhances individual performance, work-related attitudes, and well-being.
International Management	IM	It focuses on content pertaining to the theory, research, and practice of management in various global settings, such as the cross-border management of operations, including multi-country, multi-unit, strategy formulation and implementation, evolving organizational forms and management practices in cross-border business and the cross-border differential impact of culture.
Management Consulting	MC	It aims to advance the knowledge and understanding of management consulting and to aid in the development of management consultants through research, practice and teaching.
Management Education and Development	MED	It supports theory development and research in management education (academic) and leadership/management development (non-credit instruction).
Management History	MH	It encourages the pragmatic investigations into the historical evolution of managerial thought and action, such as the chronological tracing of the development of contemporary managerial concepts.
Marketing	MKTG	According to the American Marketing Association (2017), Marketing can be described as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large."
Management, Spirituality and Religion	MSR	It explores how spirituality and religion can influence organizational dynamics and affect management outcomes. In that regard, MSR is devoted to defining the relevance and impact of spirituality and religion in management, organizations and society.
Managerial and Organizational Cognition	MOC	It is devoted to understanding individual, relational, and collective cognition in organizational contexts.
Operations and Supply Chain Management	OSCM	It is focused on the management of the transformation processes that create products or services. These processes are found in all organizations including profit and non-profit organizations.
Organization and Management Theory	OMT	It involves building and testing theory about organizations, their members and their management, organization-environment relations, and organizing processes. Theoretical advances in organization theory have included strategic choice, resource dependence theory, organizational ecology, and

		institutional theory.
Organization Development and Change	ODC	It focuses on the empirical research, theory development, and practical application that concerns all forms of organization change. The ODC content domain focuses on the processes and outcomes of organization change and development at the individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels using multiple methods and perspectives.
Organizational Behavior	OB	It is devoted to understanding individuals and groups within an organizational context. The field focuses on attributes, processes, behaviors, and outcomes within and between individual, interpersonal, group, and organizational levels of analysis.
Organizational Communications and Information System	OCIS	It promotes an interdisciplinary approach to further the understanding of the behavioral, social, and economic processes at the intersection of communication, technology, and organizing. OCIS emphasizes communication topics that reflect changes in the contemporary nature of work enabled through the use of mainstream and emerging technologies and systems.
Organizational Neuroscience	NEU	It is dedicated to using neuroscience knowledge and approaches at different levels in organizations, as well as promoting linkages to management practice.
Organizations and the Natural Environment	ONE	It focuses on the research, theories, and practices regarding relationships between organizations and the natural environment, such as the ecological sustainability, environmental philosophies and strategies, ecological performance and environmental entrepreneurship.
Public and Nonprofit	PNP	It focuses on civil society, which includes public and nonprofit organizations, such as government agencies, the military, social services, cultural and educational institutions, membership and professional associations, and advocacy, religious, and charitable organizations.
Research Methods	RM	It is committed to advancing and disseminating techniques for the collection, evaluation, and interpretation of information pertinent to Management scholarship.
Social Issues in Management	SIM	It examines the social issues, institutions, interactions, and impacts of management. SIM shares an interest in understanding the behavior of organizations and the people and groups working in and around them. The group questions the ethical systems, roles, functioning, and legitimacy of business institutions.
Strategic Management	STR	It supports the development and dissemination of knowledge that is relevant to general managers and those who study, shape, or influence the strategy of organizations, and promotes effective teaching of these issues. Division scholars seek to understand and predict when and why some firms perform better than others over time. The Division covers several topics associated with strategic decision-making processes, their antecedents/context, and their consequences.
Strategizing Activities and Practices	SAP	It advances the knowledge and understanding of strategy as something people do and not just something organizations have, and therefore the work involved in doing strategy. Empirically the focus is on the day-to-day-work, activities and practices of strategists, with an interest in how this work socially accomplishes a wide range of individual and organizational outcomes, and also relates to broader societal and institutional trends.
Technology and Innovation Management	TIM	It encourages interdisciplinary scholarship and dialogue on the management of innovation and technological change from a variety of perspectives, including strategic, managerial, behavioral, and operational issues. The problem domain includes the management of innovation processes, research and development, information technologies, e-commerce, and process technologies.

TABLE 1: Final Codebook: Research Areas within the Management Field.
Source: *Academy of Management (2020) and American Marketing Association (2017).*

Due to their prior experience with this method, all the 98 papers published in *IJBRM* have been thematically analyzed by two of the three authors of this paper with the aim of identifying the *primary* research area of each paper in the sample. Each author analyzed papers individually and the inter-rater reliability between them was high (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.93). However, when disagreeing, together they extended the analysis in order to arrive at a shared vision of the sentence meaning and related theme. Hence, the formed thematic categories are characterized by "internal homogeneity" (i.e., inductive and deductive themes merged into new meaningfully coherent categories) and "external heterogeneity" (there are clear and identifiable distinctions among the final set of themes). It is worth notice that keywords of papers have not been analyzed *per se* within this work; indeed, they were looked at by researchers only after the categorization of papers in order to confirm or generate doubts about the performed thematic analysis.

3. RESULTS
3.1 Descriptive Statistics
Articles published in *IJBRM* have been initially analyzed according to: *i)* number of papers published per year, *ii)* authors' affiliation nationality, *iii)* number of papers published per research area, and *iv)* number of papers per research design. Each of these aspects is described in detail.

According to Figure 1, which shows the number of papers published per year, *IJBRM* saw an increase in publications during its first 3 years of life, from 2010 to 2012, rising from 7 to 25 published papers (+257%). However, starting from 2013, the number of publications slightly declined until 2018 (with only 4 published papers). From 2018 to 2019, the number of publications seemed to increase again. Finally, it seems there is a second decrease of papers through 2019, but it is not possible to provide a final statement for that last trend due to the fact that the last issue of 2020 will be published after this paper has been written.
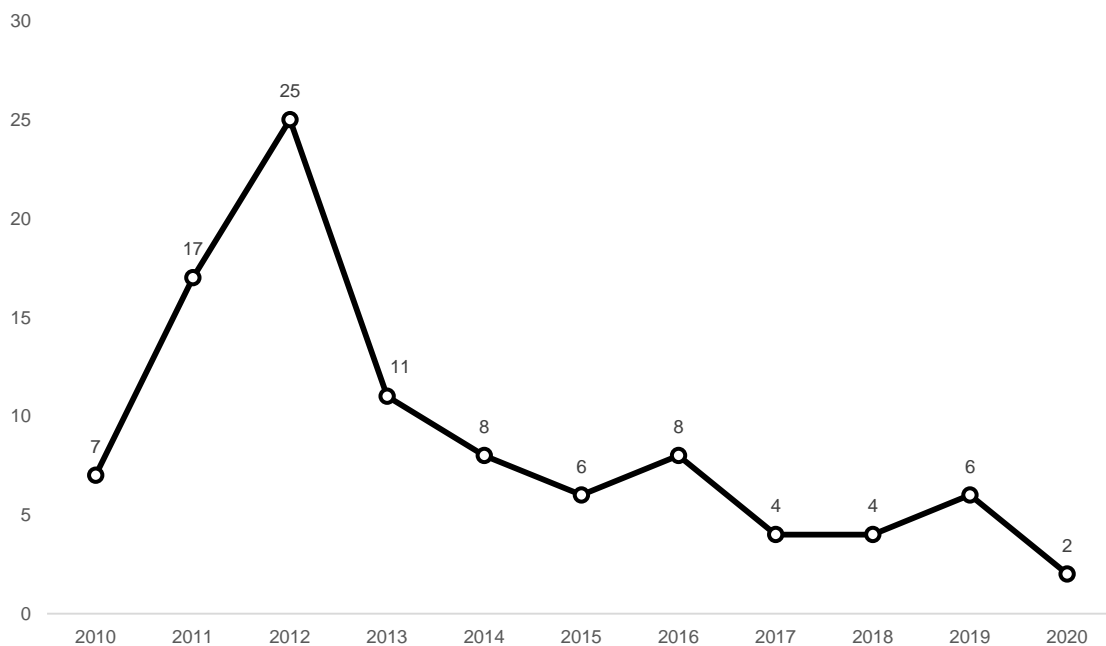
FIGURE 1: Number of papers published per year.

Table 2 depicts the authors' nationality. It can be derived that most of the authors come from Asian countries (54%), followed by European (22%), American (14%) and African (10%).

Country	Number of authors	Percentage
India	12	13%
Taiwan	10	10%
Malaysia	7	7%
Italy	6	6%
Iran	5	5%
Bangladesh	4	4%
Canada	4	4%
China	4	4%
Indonesia	4	4%
United States of America	4	4%
Others	38	39%
Total	**98**	**100%**

TABLE 2: Authors' affiliation nationality.

In particular, within the Asian continent, the major represented countries are India, Taiwan, and Malaysia; whilst in Europe, most of the authors are from Italy, Greece, Ireland, Finland, and Sweden. Concerning the American continent, the main represented countries are the United States of America, Canada, and Brazil. Lastly, with regard to the African continent, authors are mainly from Nigeria, Oman, and Tunisia.

Table 3 shows the reclassification of the 98 analyzed articles according to the previously identified research areas. It is important to notice that the largest share of publications can be re-ordered into four main themes: *1)* Marketing, *2)* Technology and Innovation Management, *3)* Operations and Supply Chain Management, and *4)* Strategizing Activities and Practices.

Cluster	Acronym	Number of papers	Percentage
Marketing	MKTG	19	20%
Technology and Innovation Management	TIM	14	15%
Operations and Supply Chain Management	OSCM	11	11%
Strategizing Activities and Practices	SAP	10	10%
Strategic Management	STR	6	6%
Human Resources	HR	6	6%
Organization and Management Theory	OMT	5	5%
Entrepreneurship	ENT	5	5%
Social Issues in Management	SIM	4	4%
Managerial and Organizational Cognition	MOC	4	4%
Organization Development and Change	ODC	3	3%
Research Methods	RM	2	2%
Management History	MH	2	2%
International Management	IM	2	2%
Gender and Diversity in Organizations	GDO	2	2%
Public and Nonprofit	PNP	1	1%
Management Education and Development	MED	1	1%
Non defined	-	1	1%
Total		**98**	**100%**

TABLE 3: Number of papers published per cluster.

Moreover, according to data in Table 3, it is possible to state that there are different research

areas that are not addressed by papers published in *IJBRM*, such as Management, Spirituality, and Religion (MSR), and Organizational Communications and Information Systems (OCIS), amongst others.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that it has been not possible to classify one particular paper of the sample. We refer to the paper by Sohail et al. (2011) that, in addressing the role of social media and its impact on the 2011 Egyptian revolution, does not fall within any management research areas and can be considered more as a social/political science paper.

Lastly, papers have been analyzed according to the research design adopted and the results show that the sample is composed of: 37 empirical quantitative papers (38%), 25 empirical qualitative papers (26%), 25 review papers (26%), and 10 conceptual papers (10%). Table 4 highlights the different research designs adopted by the published papers, providing detailed information on a representative part of them (both chronologically and in terms of research areas).

Authors	Year	Category	Type of paper	Setting	Data collection	Data analysis	Main results
Kirchwehm, H.	2014	ENT	Empirical qualitative	Online resources	Secondary sources	Best Practice Approach	The author claimed the importance concerning the implementation of the found success factors in a strategy at company level.
Barbar, K., Bou Orom, B., and Al Jardali, H.	2019	GDO	Empirical quantitative	200 Lebanese women	Survey	Kaisers-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and regression analysis	Women in Lebanon suffer from the lack of corporate values that enable them to move ahead and become big managers or owners of their own business.
Senter, K. Y., and McClelland, A. Sr.	2015	HR	Review	-	-	-	The authors have proposed a list of ten skills that is provided for consideration of a future workforce, which will face an environment in rapid change.
Scalera, S.	2019	IM	Empirical qualitative	80 Italian companies	Survey	Thematic analysis	After the "Arab Spring", many more organizations are looking to invest in the Maghreb area.
Herrero de Egaña Espinosa de los Monteros, A., and van Dorp, C. A.	2011	MED	Empirical qualitative	UNED students	Secondary data and observations	Descriptive statistics	Authors claimed that there is no conclusive evidence that a distance education approach to entrepreneurial education is wrong or unfeasible.
Hlochova, H.	2019	MH	Review	-	-	-	The author shows the origins of CSR lie in the practical world and it is the studies of the 'proto'-CSR that enable the understanding of its inception.
Rohani, K., Rohani, L. S., and Barth, J.	2017	MKTG	Conceptual	-	-	-	Marketing managers can take advantage from e-coupons because they provide multiple opportunities for attracting new consumers.
Khairuddin, K. N., and Sapuan, D. A.	2016	MOC	Empirical quantitative	398 Malaysian CSOs	Survey	Structural equation modeling	The authors pointed out that understanding the employees' emotions is important to improve overall organizational performance.
Dorda, B., and Shtëmbari, E.	2020	OB	Review	-	-	-	Covid-19 proved to be extremely important for the organizational culture. Flexible companies proved their ability to manage insecure situations.
Köllen, T.	2012	ODC	Conceptual	-	-	-	The author proposed the corporate jester as a tool to promote a corporate climate of inclusion.
Trequattrini, R., Russo, G., and Lombardi, R.	2012	OMT	Review	-	-	-	The authors aimed to investigate, from the business economics standpoint, the emerging phenomenon of company networks.
Sartzetaki, M., Dimitriou, D., and Karagkouni, A.	2019	OSCM	Empirical quantitative	Open source data on air traffic networks	Primary and secondary data	Objective functions	Authors have provided evidence about the importance of air connectivity in remote tourist destinations, especially in the Mediterranean region.
de Oliveira Dias, M., and Teles, A.	2018	PNP	Empirical quantitative	1618 Brazilian agriculture cooperatives	Secondary data and archival data	Thematic analysis	According to the authors, the current agriculture cooperative model proved to be a success in Brazil.
Ring, J. K.	2018	RM	Empirical	1103 U.S. transportation	Survey	Linear regression	Organizational support is shown to mediate the relationship

			quantitative	companies			between safety climate and voluntary turnover.
Allouche, M. A.	2010	SAP	Empirical quantitative	Performance of 170 industrial machineries	Primary data	Author's own algorithms	The author has presented a new metaheuristic approach to solve multi-criteria permutation flowshop problems.
Mausumi, N.	2017	SIM	Empirical qualitative	46 stakeholders and online materials	Survey and secondary data	Thematic analysis	The author described the importance of a good and solid relationship between managers and workers in order to achieve corporate goals
Di Tullio, P., Valentinetti, D., and Rea, M. A.	2018	STR	Review	-	-	-	The authors have argued that the concept of Business Model lacks a common definition and characterization.
Iddris, F.	2018	TIM	Empirical qualitative	Comfort Audio AB and other Swedish companies	Primary data	Thematic analysis	The author claims that there is the need to invest in resources of the supply chain members or perform activities in order to stimulate their ability to be committed to the focal firms' innovation capability.

TABLE 4: A portion of the papers published in *IJBRM*.

3.2 Thematic Analysis

From the SLR conducted on all the volumes published in *IJBRM*, it appeared that the main areas of research are: Marketing, Technology and Innovation Management, Operations and Supply Chain Management, and Organizational Behavior. Each area is discussed in detail below in a dedicated section.

3.2.1 Marketing

From the number of published *IJBRM* articles, the first area of research results to be Marketing. Following the American Marketing Association (2017), marketing studies have three main drivers: customers, product, and brand awareness. This is the rationale used for approaching the description of papers published within this area.

With regard to the analysis of customers' behavior, it is noteworthy to remember the contributions made by scholars such as Huang and Lin (2010). The authors have verified that in the modern market – where goods are consumed faster and the product life span is reducing – one of the main threats concerns the difficulty, for marketing and design departments, to be able to understand the quick changes in consumers' choices and, consequently, the new potential target customers. In addition, thanks to the fast global spread and growth of the Internet, the sales of goods and services have exhibited an astonishing growth in recent decades, depicting the unquestionable role that digital platforms are holding. In this vein, Ahmadi (2011) studied and described the relationship between Internet-based companies and customers (B2C), developing a new model for evaluating such relationships, also taking into consideration the consequences related to market risks that could affect customer behavior in the future. On the same field of application, Nilashi et al. (2011) have arranged a new model based on the Fuzzy Logical System that is able to describe some of the hidden links between critical customer needs – i.e., security, familiarity, and easy access to websites – and the ability of firms to meet such needs. The model proposed by Nilashi et al. (2011) converges with the assumption suggested by Khan and Emmambokus (2011) who studied the adoption of new IT services in the Mauritius' banking system, pointing out the importance of factors, such as age, income, previous familiarity with IT solutions and risk factors, as the main variables that can lead people to opt for online banking services rather than more traditional ones.

A second component of the marketing research area is represented by the analysis of the product/service-centric phenomenon. Under this lens, it is crucial to remember the contributions made by scholars such Wang and Chou (2011) who have investigated how people perceive and understand the usefulness brought from using a specific product or service. In particular, Wang and Chou (2010) paid attention to those visual features that are more likely to transmit messages in an efficient and effective way, helping customers to understand and fully appreciate the value of using the products and services. A short while later, Hsu (2012) highlighted the importance for firms to have a marketing department that is able to work in symbiosis with the department devoted to product/service innovation and design. In fact, Hsu (2012) claimed that only efficient and effective cooperation between these two departments is able to trigger and boost product/service innovation that, undoubtedly, represents one of the main key elements to ensure the survival of a company in the medium and long term. Moreover, one year later, the same author argued that co-creation is a valuable form of marketing and strategic approach, which is able to enhance the iterative renovation of well-established modus operandi and the creation of new ones with a consequent boost for the establishment of mutual firm-customer value (Hsu, 2013). Accordingly, it is possible to assume that, within an organization, highly harmonized, efficient and daily-based interactions among the Research and Development (R&D), marketing, and design areas are key factors in order to allow the company to achieve outstanding performance. Furthermore, the design and delivery of products and services have to focus on the needs of final users and these needs are likely to change according to the population and, also, which segment of population the organization is focusing on. In this vein, Shuler et al. (2016) have claimed that specific features are going to diversify the behaviors of each generation; thus, the firm's ability to grasp such intangible differences will play a fundamental role in the success or failure of a product or service.

A third component of the marketing field of study is represented by the analysis of the brand-centric phenomenon. It is noteworthy to remark the contribution in *IJBRM* made by Horng and Lin (2014a) who studied how the Taiwan based YULON Group has vigorously developed its self-owned brand LUXGEN. In particular, those researchers have investigated how LUXGEN – even though it was subject to insufficient popularity during its initial exposure in the marketplace – was able to convince its customers that its automotive products were characterized by a perfect match between quality and price through *ad hoc* marketing strategies and differential threshold stimulation. Yet, Horng and Lin (2014b) have also carried out a study to investigate how to achieve advertising effectiveness; they analyzed a sample of 200 marketing campaigns by using descriptive statistics and a two-way ANOVA test. The results have shown that an effective advertisement represented a crucial factor in the amelioration of "Brand Attitude" and "Advertising Attitude", disregarding how the brand was perceived during the customers' purchase intention with a consequent annulment of the comparisons between different brands' perception.

3.2.2 Technology and Innovation Management
The second main area of interest for many *IJBRM* authors is Technology and Innovation Management that, according to the Academy of Management (2020), encourages "interdisciplinary scholarship and dialogue on the management of innovation and technological change from a variety of perspectives, including strategic, managerial, behavioral, and operational issues. The problem domain includes the management of innovation processes, research and development, information technologies, e-commerce, and process technologies."

Several *IJBRM* scholars have covered this topic. For instance, through a literature review, Suárez-Barraza et al. (2010) have investigated the management cornerstones theories – i.e., Taylor's principles, Fayol's operations, Systems theory frameworks, Peter and Waterman's eight excellence attributes, the EFQM European Excellence model, the ISO 9000 norms, Toyota's 4P model, and Kaplan and Norton's Management System – with the aim of helping stakeholders to determine the qualitative, quantitative, and strategic frameworks around which organizations should operate. In addition to the literature review, Suárez-Barraza et al. (2010) have highlighted the importance of having an efficient and integrated set of both hard and soft skills in order to reach the organizational equilibrium through the use of Integral Management Systems (IMSs). In fact, according to the results of their investigation, for internal processes, many organizations tend to focus only on technical and financial views, ignoring the soft dimension of the management system, which concerns the human aspect. Consequently, Suárez-Barraza et al. (2010) have demonstrated that when organizations also try to implement the soft dimension in their business models (i.e., an IMS), they will be more likely to achieve a better overall performance.

A couple of years later, Sarosa (2012) argued the fact that implementing and adapting innovation (IT in particular) within an organization should be thought of as an interactive process between the stakeholder, organizational architecture, and external environment. One of the emerging theories concerning this interactive process is the Actor Network Theory (ANT), proposed by Bruni and Teli (2007), according to which the adoption of IT solutions is classified as a process comprising five steps – i.e., problematization, interessement, enrolment, mobilization, and dissidence – aimed at generating a normative response for the decision maker. In this vein, Sarosa (2012) argued that ANT is much more useful in illustrating the adoption of IT compared to other theories due to its ability to diagnose not only the elements, but also the processes and the circumstances in which it is more likely to achieve success in the adoption of IT solutions.

Alongside the implementation of IT into the managerial processes, the need to manage and run the massive flows of information required new general methodological approaches. Related to this aspect, Buckley (2012) examined and demonstrated – through the use of several empirical evidences – how Information Aggregation (IA) can be used as an IT tool capable of supporting the decision-making processes and achieving effective and practical results thanks to the fully integrated adoption of such new IT into the organizations' business models.

Also, other *IJBRM* scholars have studied the effect of the use of IT solutions in pre-existing business architectures. For instance, Al Shamy et al. (2012) have carried out an in-depth analysis regarding the situation of Egyptian business organizations showing that there is an existing gap between the local and the more developed western environments in terms of IT solutions adoption. In the same year, Vousinas (2012) published a research that aimed to understand the possible positive correlation between IT investments and economic performance, at both micro and macroeconomic levels. Results show that the hypothesized positive correlation exists but, as demonstrated also by Durst and Ståhle (2013), there are several circumstances – which, certainly, may differ around the globe – that need to be taken into consideration when organizations are going to implement IT methodologies into their business models. In particular, Durst and Ståhle (2013) highlighted that these circumstances can be grouped into nine general categories: *i)* relational aspects, *ii)* people involved in the process, *iii)* governance, *iv)* facilitators, *v)* provision of resources, *vi)* strategy, *vii)* process management, *viii)* leadership, and *ix)* culture.

3.2.3 Operations and Supply Chain Management
The third main area of interest concerns Operations and Supply Chain Management (OSCM), which is defined by the Academy of Management (2020) as that area "focused on the management of the transformation processes that create products or services. These processes are found in all organizations including profit and non-profit organizations."

Many *IJBRM* scholars have produced scientific research on this topic. For example, Ainapur et al. (2011) have pointed out that the field of Supply Chain Management was subject to rapid growth in recent decades, given its intrinsic usefulness as an outstanding tool for organizational development. Those scholars have also identified that the success of supply chain initiatives mainly lies in the choice of the appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) using the most suitable supply chain framework, and that these KPIs – to be fruitful – have to be measured, monitored and controlled with a proper review mechanism. Accordingly, Ainapur et al. (2011) have suggested a technique to identify the KPIs' limits by applying the Supply Chain Operations Reference (SCOR) framework. In addition, they have also used the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) to break down the goal into micro portions with the aim of producing a more efficient and effective analysis of those KPIs. Subsequently, those scholars have compared the most adopted KPIs for each segment of the industry and created a list of average "best practices". In the same year, Gill (2011) has also highlighted the importance of finding the proper KPIs. In his study, he proved that in SCM a significant share of the costs is linked to constant actions; thus, he underlined the importance, for organizations, to have a well-structured and designed supply chain network that can considerably reduce costs and save time with a consequent increase in the overall organization performance.

In 2012, Nagaraja carried out a deeper investigation in order to determine the key factors that influence the value generated by SCM in the collaborative network of the automotive sector, in particular in India, and the magnitude of the information sharing process in a Business-to-Business (B2B) set up with the consequential implications on the decision-making processes. The major empirical findings claimed by Nagaraja (2012) demonstrated that the adoption of e-based collaborative agreements and the practice of information sharing, based on trust and long-term alliances, are likely to improve the creation of added value resulting in the ensuing SCM.

In order to have a clearer idea of how to increase Supply Chain performances, Marwah et al. (2014) have tested how various parameters, taken from a wide literature review – i.e., supplier-buyer relations, external supply chain, environmental factors, human metrics, information sharing and performance measurement approaches – affect SCM performance and, therefore, grant its competitiveness, in the context of Indian manufacturing organizations. In addition, based on an experimental study with a sample population made up of 100 respondents, they demonstrated that organizations are able to strengthen SCM performance by developing ongoing practices and strategies by paying attention to the elements that significantly influence their own SCM performance. These findings were also confirmed by Iddris (2018) who, basing his analysis on a

literature review of 60 scientific articles concerning SCM, found that the main drivers of Digital Supply Chain Management (DSCM) pertain to the novelty of applied technologies, the degree of digitalization, and its integration into the organizational architecture with the consequent level of collaboration and coordination between internal and external stakeholders.

3.2.4 Organizational Behavior

The last main area of interest regards Organizational Behavior, which has been defined by the Academy of Management (2020) as the "understanding of individuals and groups within an organizational context. The field focuses on attributes, processes, behaviors, and outcomes within and between individual, interpersonal, group, and organizational levels of analysis."

Notably, in *IJBRM*, several scholars have investigated this topic. For example, Markova and Jones (2011) demonstrated that the benefits provided by the organization to suit employee needs generate highest benefits satisfaction. In fact, employees who are satisfied, thanks to the benefits received, are less prone to consider leaving the organization, with a consequent higher degree of commitment. Thus, Markova and Jones (2011) highlighted the importance for executives to understand the affective and cognitive side of the employees' behavior.

Other important aspects were investigated by Preko and Adjetey (2013) who examined the inter-correlations of employees' fidelity and their commitment as independent variables and their impact on how these factors are able to influence the conduct of salespersons working in commercial banks. Their findings revealed that there are significant linear correlations between those factors, which also exhibit significant positive correlations between other variables, such as human relations, leadership style, job content, personal development, and creativity.

Another emerging aspect to consider in the perception of commitment, both from inside and outside the organizations, regards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In fact, as explained by Huang and Chiu (2017), the enormous implementation of CSR policies through shared values and a sustainable corporate culture are core elements that are able to enhance organizations' competitiveness, with the consequential creation of social welfare and the increasing perception about the positive added value produced by the employees across the whole range of internal and external processes.

During the life of companies, employees and managers can suffer a lot of stress related to internal circumstances and, in this context, Goyal and Joshi (2012) have investigated the possible effects derived from the processes of merger and acquisition. These scholars pointed out that both psychological factors (i.e., uncertainty, insecurity, job changes and threat of job loss) and cultural factors (i.e., technology, reporting systems, working hours, relationships with new colleagues and managers) are the main stress elements affecting people in organizations that are facing these managerial processes. In the same year, Authayarat and Umemuro (2012) tested the effect of other environmental characteristics (i.e., job satisfaction, less conflict, autonomy, camaraderie, authentic leadership, fitness, and role clarity) that may, positively or negatively, evoke individuals' affective experiences towards both colleagues and their working environment. In addition, Authayarat and Umemuro (2012) have investigated such relations under the lens of gender differences. Accordingly, it is possible to state that the changing nature of the workplace is likely to create different employees' expectations and needs. Accordingly, Nabi and Ismail (2016) claimed that working environments are no longer populated by employees performing rigid and static tasks, but by employees that proactively develop and adjust their role and functions (i.e., their working environment) according to their needs and preferences. Nabi and Ismail (2016) defined this employee behavior as job crafting and tested its existence in a sample composed of 150 public sector employees.

Lastly, Dorda and Shtëmbari (2020) pointed out that Organizational Culture (OC) is one of the main drivers in charge of the success of both private/public and profit/non-profit organizations; in fact, OC represents a unique feature that is powerful enough to shape the identity of each organization. Thus, according to those authors, organizations should continue to invest time and

energy in order to build their best working culture, especially nowadays when the COVID-19 pandemic crisis is challenging what organizations have done for years.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRENT AND PROSPECT EDITORS, REVIEWERS, AND AUTHORS

The profound editorial reorganization of *IJBRM* during September 2020 looks to be the perfect moment to make editorial and review board members, together with the Journal's current and future authors, aware of the Journal's history as well as its future editorial and research agenda.

Accordingly, this paper performed a SLR of all the articles published by *IJBRM* during it whole life (2010-August 2020) in order to identify the main research features, areas addressed by the papers published by the Journal, and to define the Journal's future developments.

Results show that, although during the first three years of life the Journal has witnessed an exponential increase in publications, the number of published articles has declined. Moreover, most of the authors came from Asia, mainly India, Taiwan, and Malaysia. Concerning the research areas addressed by the published papers, the thematic analysis carried out on the sample was based on the existence of 27 different research areas. Of these, only 17 can be found in the Journal's publications, with a far greater relevance of four areas: *1)* Marketing, *2)* Technology and Innovation Management, *3)* Operations and Supply Chain Management, and *4)* Organizational Behavior. Lastly, according to the methodology adopted, it is possible to state that most of the published papers adopted a quantitative approach; whilst only 10% of the articles tried to provide a purely conceptual contribution. According to these results, important implications for editors, reviewers, and authors can be derived.

Concerning the *implications for current and prospective editors and reviewers*, results of this investigation call for opening the Journal's editorial and reviewer boards to a greater number of European and American scholars, according to an *audience development strategy* (in terms of both the *Journal*'s authors and readers) to really become an *International Journal*. Thus, the *IJBRM* Editors have to pursue a twofold objective: 1) *Exploit* existing geographical areas from which submissions are already received, and 2) *Explore* new geographical areas that may precipitate suitable contributions of interest for the *Journal*. Moreover, the editors are asked to verify that submitted articles are in line with the "Journal's aim & scope"; thus, that the submitted articles fall within (at least) one of the 27 research areas identified in this work. In this respect, the reviewers' role is also crucial in increasing the quality of articles by providing accurate suggestions aimed at ameliorating the article's scientific soundness. In other words, Editors and Reviewers are requested to verify the novelty provided by the submitted papers, to be sure they are based on rigorous methodology, and that the relevant literature – including that already published in *IJBRM* – is properly cited. Lastly, the total absence of Special Issues emerges from the analysis of the various volumes published during the *Journal*'s life. Accordingly, *IJBRM* strategically orients itself in this direction; the possibility of promoting a Special Issue through the Journal, in fact, allows a greater involvement of those who will cover the role of guest editors for a particular Special Issue. In this way, many different research communities dedicated to specific specializations will be formed around the *Journal*, which will therefore allow it to: *i)* increase the scientific community's awareness of the *Journal*'s presence, *ii)* increase the number of publications, and *iii)* increase the number of *Journal* citations. All of this will have a positive influence on the *Journal's* ranking, triggering a fundamental virtuous cycle for the Journal's survival in the medium-long term.

Finally, current Editors and Reviewers are encouraged to link with their colleagues and peers with regard to the *Journal*'s activities and to propose their evaluation as new potential members of the Editorial and Reviewer Boards. The scientific direction of the Journal would be as democratic as possible and provide the opportunity for all those willing to act to demonstrate their value as Editor or Reviewer.

Concerning the implications for future authors, results of this investigation call for papers that deal with different management aspects, according to the research areas identified in this work. Thus, authors specializing in all the areas still not addressed by *IJBRM* – e.g., Conflict Management (CM), Management, Spirituality, and Religion (MSR), Organizational Communications and Information Systems (OCIS), and Organizational Neuroscience (ON) – are highly encouraged to consider the *Journal* as a potential outlet for their contributions. In this regard, authors are encouraged to clearly identify, in their article, the research area into which their paper falls and, consequently, to join the conversation on that specific research area that is already in place in the *Journal*. This allows newly submitted papers to drastically reduce the possibility of being desk-rejected or out of scope; thus, increasing their chances of publication. Moreover, future authors are called upon to be particularly rigorous from a methodological point of view. In particular, articles using quantitative methods should focus more on explanatory approaches which are able to better demonstrate the causality among phenomena than descriptive ones. Regarding qualitative papers, these should clearly identify how the qualitative contents were analyzed and the nature of the research paradigm adopted. Lastly, submissions of review papers that are able to critically discuss specific literature, by identifying methodological problems and pointing out research gaps, are highly encouraged, and also help to increase the *Journal*'s visibility.

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