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EMJ Incoming Editor Editorial

Sarah Robinson

Hello, I am Professor Sarah Robinson, and now, having served *EMJ* as Co-Editor for the last three years, it's my great honour and privilege to step into the role of Editor in Chief, taking over the reins from Professor Minas Kastanakis. Firstly, I would like to congratulate Minas for the many successes during his leadership as outlined in his outgoing editorial letter above - the journal has certainly moved from strength to strength under his leadership both in terms of metrics and reputation. The journal enjoys a well-deserved reputation as a strong generalist management journal that publishes strong and innovative papers which are well received and cited, across a wide range of management subjects. The readership, authorship and editorial board have become more global and the journal is gaining an increasingly stronger presence on social media. Secondly, I think it is important to recognise that during the last year Minas has done a fantastic job in navigating the journal through stormy waters, ensuring that the journal continues to thrive despite the pressures facing editors, reviewers and authors alike brought on by the COVID-19 crisis. Thirdly, I would like to personally thank Minas for all his help and support over the past three years, for his gentle guidance, mentorship and comprehensive handover. I hope I can do justice to his legacy and wish Minas all the very best in his forthcoming projects and ventures and look forward to our continued collaboration. Finally, I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to Joannah Duncan, the Managing Editor, for all her help, support and guidance and I look forward to working closely with her over the next three years in jointly continuing to guide the journal from success to success.

It is with some trepidation then, that I take on the curation of not only Minas's legacy but that of a line of former editors through whose leadership *EMJ* has grown exponentially over the past 10 years. As the journal now approaches its 40th year, its maturity is showing. In leading the journal into its fourth decade, I hope to have the pleasure of helping *EMJ* to continue to develop confidently and thrive into its middle age. I do not anticipate introducing big structural changes as, is clearly demonstrated above in Minas's outgoing editorial, the journal is working very well as it is.

However, these are challenging times, and it is a certainly a strange feeling to take on editorship of a journal in the midst of this COVID-19 storm, when our conceptions of 'business as usual' have been thrown up in the air and we are still working out what the 'new normal' looks like. As we are all painfully aware, these are very difficult times for all of us personally, but also for management and organisations. During my time in office therefore, I would like to encourage, develop and support knowledge creation and theorising which will aid the efforts of recovery and rebuilding following the end of the immediate COVID-19 crisis. In so doing, I aim to work with and support (associate) editors, reviewers and authors in developing work that engages with the espoused aims of the journal in ways which speak to the challenges and needs of our current times. Crisis encourages reflection, so I would like to take the opportunity of my incoming editorial to

provoke and encourage reflection on what in practical terms the intent and content of articles published in *EMJ* over the next three years might look like.

In order to do that I thought a good place to start is the EMJ's website itself.

Firstly, the website avows that:

'EMJ articles challenge the status quo through critically informed empirical and theoretical investigations, and present the latest thinking and innovative research on major management topics, while still being accessible and interesting to non-specialists. EMJ articles are characterized by their intellectual curiosity and diverse methodological approaches, which lead to contributions that impact profoundly on management theory and practice (my emphasis).

Although written some time ago, I cannot think of a more apt statement in terms of supporting and encouraging relevant knowledge creation during these times of crisis. There is certainly need for *critically informed* research which challenge received thinking and creative solutions and innovations, underpinned by methodological pluralism. In order to produce such work, we need I think, to engage in reflexivity as management scholars, in terms of what we do, why we are doing it and who we are doing it for. The emphasis here on being *accessible and interesting to non-specialists* could never be more pertinent as managers grapple with understanding the challenges of this new world. The crisis perhaps also makes us pay more attention with *intellectual curiosity* to what is happening around us and what new challenges we personally face, such our own home working, household management, consumption, healthcare and personal safety, all of which relate to different management subject areas and surface new research questions and directions.

EMJ is a broad management journal and the COVID-19 crisis has brought challenges to all elements of management, from supply chain management and marketing to a focus on small business survival, to healthcare and public sector management, to human resource management and changes in working practices and the intensification of home and digital work. In all these subdisciplines (and others) there are many opportunities to develop *management theory and practice* which will support post-COVID recovery and repair.

The Perspectives on Europe article, by Thomas Anker, that I have the pleasure of publishing in this issue, takes up this challenge and identifies a post-COVID research agenda for Business and Management Research in Europe and beyond. Using a reflexive method and focusing on three areas of management, consumer behaviour, supply chain management, and political CSR, he identifies and articulates fundamental changes in underlying assumptions about what it means to do business in 'the new normal'. I would encourage prospective authors to read this and to apply similar reflexive thinking to their own subject areas in identifying how post- COVID research agendas are emerging and to craft submissions accordingly.

Three years ago, we published a combined editorial where each subject editor pointed to new and upcoming areas worthy of further investigation in their field of study. Following Anker's method (2021), I would encourage authors to revisit this editorial to reflect on how such suggestions may now be more or less relevant and what other research areas have emerged as important in the post-COVID recovery process.

As well as producing conceptual and theoretical knowledge around the combined editorial themes, and many other management topics, there is a very real opportunity to develop relevant engaged knowledge with and for management practitioners. This meshes well with the journal's aim to produce *accessible knowledge* interesting to non-specialists and with applicability to practice. As such, I would like to see articles which include combined author teams of practitioners and academics and papers using collaborative methodologies such as Participatory Action Research (PARs).

In addition to applying intellectual curiosity to discrete management topics, I think we need to apply it to considering how the wider environment intersects with our research areas. COVID-19 has, as crisis often does, widened inequalities. There is now an opportunity to shine a spotlight on how explicit inequalities relating to race, gender and disability and the intersection of these has led to widening disadvantage within the workplace and as part of the recovery process, to reflect on what can be done to address them. The past several years, including during the COVID period, has seen increased protest and activism about societal inequalities, discrimination and injustice as evidenced by the #metoo and Black Lives Matter movements. Perhaps this is also time to reflect on how such wider issues might be picked up and more fully integrated into management research.

Continuing my reflections and provocations, I would like to return to the *EMJ* website which also states:

'We welcome interdisciplinary research that synthesizes distinct research traditions to shed new light on contemporary challenges in the broad domain of European business and management. Cross-cultural investigations addressing the challenges for European management scholarship and practice in dealing with global issues and contexts are strongly encouraged.'

Again, this statement is of enormous relevance to our immediate situation. The Covid-19 crisis is a global one, so work that transcends national boundaries and makes comparisons as to responses to management of and the support for recovery which we can all learn from, has never been so important. *EMJ* is now a global journal with a global readership and authorship and thus is in a good position to create and disseminate knowledge about this global crisis and works towards global recovery. It would be great to see cross cultural, cross country and cross continent author teams comparing experiences and sharing lessons learnt and working towards creative solutions. It would be interesting to see how or if experiences from Europe are generalisable to other parts of the world and how research from all over the world can be adapted to European contexts.

Finally, although currently at the forefront of our minds, the COVID-19 crisis is not the only crisis of our time: there are other crises such as ecological and financial ones and more local political and social ones all of which impact on management and organisations and as such come under the remit of management research. In the face of all the complexities of Covid-19 and its relationship to and intersection with other crises of our time, interdisciplinary research really comes into its own to shed new light on contemporary challenges. I would

love to see mixed author teams from different management subject areas and related disciplines working on wicked management issues.

In conclusion, I would therefore encourage and welcome work that rises to any of the above challenges and speaks to the espoused aims of the journal as cited above. I hope this has piqued your interest and both encouraged you to send your best papers to EMJ and to start new writing projects addressing some of the points I have drawn up above. Please also remember to keep an eye out for calls for papers for any of our Special Issues and Management Focus special sections which fit with your research interests. In preparing your papers for submission to *EMJ*, I would like to draw your attention to the set of best practice videos we have produced [add link] which we hope you will find helpful.

I very much look forward to receiving your papers and to working closely with all members of the EMJ community.

(1723 words)

References:

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Anker, T. B. (2021) At the Boundary: Post-COVID Agenda for Business and Management Research in Europe and Beyond. *European Management Journal*