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### JMS at 50: Trends over time

Timothy Adrian Robert CLARK

*Singapore Management University*, [timothyclark@smu.edu.sg](mailto:timothyclark@smu.edu.sg)

Mike WRIGHT

Zilia ISKAUJINA

Philip GARNETT

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# **JMS at 50: Trends over Time**

## **TIMOTHY CLARK**

Durham University Business School, Durham University,  
Mill Hill Lane, Durham, DH1 3LB, UK  
Email: [Timothy.Clark@durham.ac.uk](mailto:Timothy.Clark@durham.ac.uk)  
Tel: +44 (0) 191 334 6169

## **MIKE WRIGHT**

Imperial College Business School, Imperial College  
Exhibition Road, London SW7 2AZ, United Kingdom  
Email: [Mike.Wright@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:Mike.Wright@imperial.ac.uk)  
Tel: +44 (0) 7725 159 837  
and  
University of Ghent, Belgium

## **ZILIA ISKOUJINA**

St Mary's College, Durham University,  
Elvet Hill Road, Durham, DH1 3LR

## **PHILIP GARNETT**

Department of Anthropology, Durham University,  
Dawson Building, South Road, Durham, DH1 3LE,

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Abstract: We present an analysis of the articles published in the *Journal of Management Studies* (JMS) since its inception to assess to what extent JMS has: maintained its leading international ranking; maintained its founding mission as a broad based management journal; remained a broad based management journal compared to other general management journals. In terms of its impact factor and citations despite reaching a low point in 2001, we find that JMS today ranks higher than it has ever done throughout its 50-year history. From our content analysis covering the life-cycle of JMS we find four areas have been the most frequently represented, although their relative importance varies between decades: Organizational Management/Behaviour, Strategy, Human Resource Management and General Management, accounting for 67% of articles published over the period. JMS has strengthened its international author distribution through the increase in authors from the EU especially and the period 2000-2004 which saw the predominance of UK authors was an anomaly. There are marked differences between type of article and author country of origin. Our comparative analysis of the word networks between the journals JMS, AMJ, ASQ and HRM shows that over each decade the papers in the first three normally form a single cluster indicating that the words used in the papers in the different journals are similar, while papers from HRM often form an outlining group. Notably, in the early 2000s papers in JMS form a distinct cluster with papers from HRM paralleling the anomaly identified in the content analysis. Overall, JMS has regained its distinctiveness as a broad-based international management journal, not favouring any particular theoretical or empirical approach.

## INTRODUCTION

The past half-century has seen a remarkable growth in research and education in the management field worldwide. This has been accompanied by an expansion in journals to support the broad intellectual development of the discipline as well as that in sub-disciplinary fields. Few general management journals can claim such longevity, though *Administrative Science Quarterly* (ASQ) reached its 50th year in 2005 and, the *Academy of Management Journal* (AMJ) attained the same milestone in 2007. Now the *Journal of Management Studies* joins this select group of foundational general management journals.

Since its inaugural issue JMS has positioned itself as an inclusive broad based international journal that attaches no priority to either the subjects of study or the theoretical and methodological approach adopted (Lockett, 1977; Clark and Wright, 2009). The policy as stated on the back cover of the Journal was as follows:

*The Journal of Management Studies* is designed to contribute to the advance of knowledge directly related to the practice of management. It publishes articles on organization structure, management selection and development, delegation and control, patterns of supervision, decision-making, communication theory and other topics relevant to the analysis and solution of problems facing managers at all levels. The Editors believe that the present state of management studies demands that major emphasis be given to systematic investigation. Whilst drawing primarily on the rapidly growing body of teachers and research workers in this field in Great Britain, they also welcome contributions from practising managers and management consultants, and from overseas.

As an incoming editor in 1977, some 13 years after the founding of JMS, Geoff Lockett assessed how well JMS had met its original objectives, concluding that: "...it does appear that *the Journal* has already found a role and is not greatly deviating from it... JMS

has consistently devoted half of its pages to field research, while dividing the rest between theory and speculation.... there has been a noticeable decline in the U.K. percentage, and there is now a substantial percentage from the U.S.A. ... Although being strongly biased towards the behavioural sciences [*OB*], it nevertheless publishes articles on a wide variety of subjects. A consistent pattern over time emerges and there are no noticeable trends of any significance.” (Lockett, 1977, pp. 127-130).

He therefore concludes that a little over a decade from its foundation the Journal had maintained its broad base and there was no evidence of it narrowing its scope of interests. The question asked by Geoff Lockett is perhaps even more pertinent at this juncture in the Journal’s history because in the intervening thirty-seven years there has been a significant growth in journals serving different parts of the management community. A number of additional generalist management journals have been launched subsequent to JMS (for example, *Journal of Management* (1970), *Organization Science* (1990), *Organisation Studies* (1981)) but the main expansion has been in sub-disciplinary areas (for example, strategy, human resource management, international business, marketing, leadership, entrepreneurship and so forth). As many of these journals, including established journals like AMJ and ASQ, have become highly regarded and ranked they have threatened both the Journal’s position as a leading outlet for high quality work and its ability to maintain its stance as a broad based journal open to all areas that comprise the field of management.

If the “incumbent’s curse” holds, dominant existing journals will likely fail to adapt to new entrants through inertia, rigidities, cognitive biases, incompetence, arrogance or a perception that their identity lies in a particular domain (Rothaermel and Hill, 2005; Tripsas, 2009). However, this is not inevitable as incumbents may have advantages that enable them to adapt more readily if they have an environment supportive of change and the capabilities to recognize emerging trends (Chandy and Tellis, 2000). On the other hand, the development

of an established international “conversation” in management may make it difficult for a journal to create and sustain a distinctive approach that departs from this norm if it is to remain front ranked. For example, adoption of a so-called “European” approach to management research may involve a narrowing of the appeal of a journal (Baum, 2011; Lampel, 2011). Key to sustaining the leading position of a general management journal like JMS therefore is the ability to constantly accommodate a range of contributions by drawing material from the sub-disciplinary peaks that comprise the field and ensuring that the journal speaks to an international research audience. In the context of this starting point in this article we examine the following research questions:

1. *To what extent has JMS maintained its leading international ranking?*
2. *To what extent has JMS maintained its founding mission as a broad based management journal?*
3. *To what extent has JMS remained a broad based management journal compared to other general management journals?*

The article is structured into four sections. In the first section we review JMS’s performance over a 30 year period in the international rankings that have attempted to rank management journals, complemented by trends data on impact factors. We then present our methods to address to the second two questions before summarising the key findings from these studies. Finally we provide some speculative suggestions for future developments.

## **TRENDS IN THE CITATION RANKING OF JMS**

Since 1980, a number of articles have compared the standing of journals in the management and strategy fields (see Table 1 for a list). The journals encompassed by these analyses has varied considerably and the measures used have ranged from subjective judgements by leading researchers and department chairs to more objective measures based on citations. In

terms of its ranking the position of JMS has varied from being viewed as an ‘appropriate quality’ journal for strategy scholars (MacMillan and Stern, 1987) to a ‘premier’ or top tier publication by Gomez-Mejia and Balkin (1992). If a trend over time can be discerned from these studies, it would appear that JMS ranked more highly in the early part of the 1980s and the 1990s than in the early 2000s. Thus although it has remained a leading journal in the field, the degree to which it has been viewed as a premier journal has varied over time.

INSERT TABLES 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE

However, over the last decade, JMS has experienced a notable turnaround in its impact and ranking on the management field. From experiencing a declining impact factor and ranking among Business and Management journals based on impact factors at the end of the 1990s which reached its nadir in 2001, coupled with a fluctuating decline in submissions, there has been a marked reversal of this trend from 2003 onwards (Table 2). The two-year impact factor in 2011 was over six times that at the nadir in 2001. Further, from a low point in both the business and management impact factor rankings that year, JMS recovered to be ranked 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, respectively, in both 2010 and 2011. JMS also entered the prestigious ‘FT45’ list of journals used in the calculation of the top 100 MBA Schools in the World. Simsek, Heavey and Jansen (2012) conclude at the end of their study of total impact profiling of journals, that JMS has become a prestigious platform for disseminating influential management knowledge among premier journals. Indeed, despite the launching of new generalist journals and the proliferation of specialist journals supporting specific disciplinary areas, JMS today ranks higher than it has ever done throughout its 50-year history. This trend is also reflected in the proportion of citations accounted for by leading management journals. Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Bachrach and Podsakoff (2005) analyse the citation trends for 28 management journals between 1981 and 1999. They report that the *Journal of Management Studies* accounted for 1.6% of the citations generated by these

journals during this period. This grew from 1.1% between 1981 and 1984 to 1.8% from 1995-1999. By 2011 JMS accounted for 2.2% of citations in the Web of Knowledge Journal Citation Report for the 113 journals on the Business list and 1.6% of the citations produced by the 168 journals on the Management list.

In summary, despite reaching a low point in the impact factor rankings in 2001, JMS has retained, recently improved and consolidated its position as an influential Journal that has published high quality work which has contributed substantially to the development of the field. In what follows, we examine whether the content and topic focus of articles have changed over the life of JMS. We consider how this relates to the evolution of the citation rankings. As such, our aim is to ascertain whether JMS has continued to remain a broad-based management journal and how this compares to other early-founded general management journals.

## **METHOD**

We conducted two studies. In the first study we analysed the content of all articles published since JMS's foundation in 1964 until the end of 2010. In this period JMS published a total of 47 volumes and 1653 articles. To analyse these articles we used a directed content analysis approach (see Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). As a first step in identifying the categories for the content analysis, we initially searched for similar content analytic studies in a range of journals with a similar publication strategy/approach to JMS such as *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of Management*, and *Strategic Management Journal* (e.g., Aronoff (1975); Ayanso, Lertwachara and Vachon (2007); Cascio and Aguinis (2008), Clark, Gospel and Montgomery (1999); Craighead and Meredith (2008); Giunipero, Hooker, Joseph-Matthews, Yoon and Brudvig (2008); Lockett (1977)). Although these authors conducted content analytic studies from different



perspectives, we sought to draw relevant categories from these previous studies as well as developing inductively our own categories when identifying the content of an article.

We undertook the coding in a series of stages. To ensure the coding framework was broad and inclusive enough to cover developments over the years, one of the authors conducted an initial analysis of articles from a range of years in each decade. The results were then discussed by the first three authors to resolve ambiguities. Possible gaps in the initial coding frame were discussed and additions to the coding frame agreed. In addition where there were ambiguities of classification articles were assigned to those categories where there was considered greatest overlap. To minimize subjective coding bias during the main phase of coding we worked in stages. Each batch of coding was discussed by the team and any ambiguities, vagueness or differences in coding were discussed by the research team in detail. Two members of the research team also independently coded identical content of the Journal. We then compared the different sets of codings. In the coding comparison variations of 75% to 90% between the variables were coded the same by the different coders. Further trial coding raised these averages above 90%. Analysis of the subsequent database was undertaken using SPSS.

The second study built on the first and sought to establish whether the content in JMS diverged from other general management journals founded at a similar time. Drawing on Moody and Light (2006) we conducted a longitudinal study of the language used in JMS as well as *Academy of Management Journal* (AMJ) and *Administrative Science Quarterly* (ASQ). To investigate whether the language of these journals differs from that of specialist sub-discipline journals we compared this group to *Human Resource Management* (HRM), a journal which also celebrated 50 years of publication in 2011. Because of computational demands, we downloaded all the papers published for three years out of every decade since 1960. For most decades this was the first three years, however for the 1960s we took the

earliest three years available for each journal. We then extracted all the words used in the papers. It was necessary to clean this data up to remove errors introduced by the extraction process and words that are present in high frequencies but are not part of the content of the papers (such as journal titles). A common English stop list was also used to remove common English words. All remaining words were then stemmed using Porter's Algorithm (Porter, 1980) and a vector of the frequency of the stemmed words was created for each paper. The correlation between any two papers in the data set was then determined by taking the dot product of the normalised word vectors. Weighted networks of papers were then created by connecting papers together that have a correlation of greater than 0.4.

Networks were then laid out using the Fruchterman Reingold algorithm (Fruchterman, 1991) with the gravity set at 3.0 and the area set to a suitable value dependant on the number of nodes in the network. The Fruchterman Reingold algorithm is a spring graph layout method, where the weight of the edges between nodes determines the strength of the spring connecting those nodes. This produces a network of papers where highly correlated papers are positioned closely together. All graphs were visualised using Gephi (Bastian, Heyman and Jacomy (2009)) and the Gephi Toolkit. We then extracted the coordinates of the node positions before performing a 2D density estimate on the node positions to see if papers are clustering by language into distinct separate groups. R (R Development Core Team, 2013) was used for all statistical analysis.

## **RESULTS**

### *Content analysis*

*Principal Topics and their Trends in JMS.* In this section we give a brief overview of key features from our findings that highlight whether and how the nature of the content of the

Journal has changed over time. Examination of the research themes that have developed in JMS over the last five decades has been developed elsewhere (see Vogel, 2012). Here we drill down further to focus upon the principal topics and major themes represented in JMS over its first half century, which are shown in Table 3.

### INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Table 3 shows that JMS published in fifteen topic areas and these can be broadly split into three tiers depending on the number of articles published: Tier 1=200+; Tier 2=50-90; Tier 3=under 50. The composition of these different tiers has changed over time. In terms of Tier 1 in the Journal's first decade whilst papers were published on a broad range of topics the great majority clustered into human resource management (n=27, 24%), organisational behaviour (n=17, 15%), general management (n=13, 12%) and economics and accounting (n=12, 11%). Across the five decades organisational behaviour (n=360, 22%), human resource management (n=258, 16%), and general management (n=220, 13%) have remained dominant. Economics and accounting was the fourth most frequent topic area in the 1960s, but in the next two decades it declined and then peaked in the 2000s so that it accounted for 4% of articles (n=73) over the whole period. Although strategy articles were published in the Journal from its outset, this area became increasingly significant in from the 1980s and grew to become the second most frequent topic area at the end of the period (n=264, 16%). Table 3 shows that the top four topic areas (organisational behaviour, strategy, human resource management and general management) accounted for 67% of articles published over the period. No other topic area recorded a total number of articles exceeding 100 over the whole period.

In terms of the next two tiers of topics since the 1990s entrepreneurship, performance management, knowledge management and international business have developed as important subsidiary areas. By contrast, a number of areas that were significant in the first

two decades of the Journal's lifespan have declined to a point where they represent secondary and tertiary tiers of articles. These areas include decision making, operations management, information systems, marketing and management education. Perhaps what distinguishes these areas along with economics and accounting is that they are each strong sub-disciplines. They have well-developed learned societies and established journals that compete with the general management journals for positions in the upper reaches of citation ranking lists.

*Themes.* Further analysis of the topics within these disciplinary clusters indicates that in the 1960s HRM concentrated on processual issues related to employee management such as career management, manpower planning in different industries and wage and payment systems. In subsequent decades there was greater emphasis on behavioural aspects such as workplace satisfaction, attitudes and participation. These developments were later augmented by examinations of the meaning and value of work as well as the nature of managerial tasks and careers. Latterly, attention has on the one hand focused on remuneration at the higher board and CEO levels and on the other hand on dealing with issues relating to gender, stress, bullying, mentoring and workplace voice or silence.

Organisational behaviour initially concentrated on organisation theory, design, forms, change and democracy. Organizational change is a theme that runs throughout the whole period, but emphasis has shifted from an initial static focus on planning and organizational design to a more dynamic focus on learning, routines, teams, life-cycles and new forms of organization.

General management as a topic in the Journal was initially focused on middle management examining a range of management techniques, specifically scientific management, management development and the roles and styles of management in a range of manufacturing industries. Over the decades the focus on the nature and role of management

has remained but the contexts within which management is examined have expanded into the public sector and a range of knowledge-intensive industries.

Concerning strategy, an evolution can be discerned from a detailed focus on the development of product and business strategies within firms to, initially, an examination of the role of competition between firms in the form of strategic groups. A subsequent renewed examination of strategy formulation, decision-making and implementation was accompanied by an emerging emphasis on the role of alliances, global strategy and strategy for organizations in different contexts.

These developments probably partly reflect the life-cycle of topic areas. But there is also a reflection of a more fundamental shift over time to examine the implications of increasing competitive market conditions associated with globalization and shareholder value. These developments required attention to greater flexibility, new forms of organization, managerial agency, and also downside aspects on workplace behaviour.

*Trends in the Location of Authors and its Impact on Types of Articles.* We recorded the country of location of the first authors of each article where it was noted. In the 1960s and 1970s the presentation of articles was less standardised and consequently this information was very rarely recorded. However, from the 1980s it became increasingly common practice to note authors' affiliations and therefore their locations. As Table 4 shows the Journal has always been international in the sense that there has been a strong UK and US presence with very similar proportions of first authors being located in these countries in the 1980s and 1990s. In these decades, first authors from these two countries accounted for 74% and 80% of articles in the Journal respectively. However, in the 2000s the proportion of articles accounted for by UK and US first authors fell to 63% as the number of first authors from the EU, Canada, Australasia and China increased substantially in comparison to the previous decade (from 19% to 36%). This shift in the location of first authors occurred in the period

2000 to 2004 during which the number of US first authors declined to below thirty percent for the first time (22%), the proportion of UK first authors remained virtually static (48%) and first authors from the EU increased to 14% from 8% in the previous five years. The proportion of first authors from Canada, Australasia and China remained virtually unchanged at 14% of articles. This five-year period represents a watershed for the UK's presence in the Journal. In the next five years the proportion of US first authors increased to 28%, the UK declined to 29%, and the EU, Canada, Australasia and China became increasingly important growing to account for 41% of authors (28% in the previous five year period). These data indicate that prior to the early 2000s authors from the US and UK dominated the Journal but their influence waned in the early 2000s as the proportion of first authors from the EU in particular increased significantly. The early 2000s is therefore a period of transition from a UK-US dominated Journal to one which is US-UK-EU dominated with first authors from Australasia and China accounting for a small but growing proportion of articles.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

When we examine how the location of a first author impacts on the nature of articles published in the Journal a number of interesting differences emerge (see Table 4). With regard to the focal topic of an article, in the UK HRM is more frequent accounting for 18% of articles. In the US (7%), Canada (10%) and the EU (7%) it is less significant and slightly more frequent in Australasia (13%) and China (15%). Overall, the UK accounts for 56% of all HRM articles published in the Journal with the US accounting for 19%. The frequency of general management is broadly similar in the UK (26%), US (23%), Canada (23%) and in China (21%), higher in the EU (29%), and much lower in Australasia (17%) and the EU. Strategy is least frequent in China (6%) followed by Australasia (9%), UK (10%), Canada (13%) and the EU (14%). Whereas in the US it is much more frequent accounting for a little over a fifth of articles (22%). Indeed, the US accounts for 51% of all strategy articles

published in the Journal with the UK being responsible for 26%. Finally, OB is a highly frequent topic in Canada (28%). In the other five countries its frequency ranges from 12-18%. The UK (33%) and US (33%) account for the majority of OB articles published in the Journal.

Second, in terms of the type of article, regardless of decade, US authors tend to write empirical rather than conceptual articles. Similarly, authors from Canada, the EU, Australasia and China also write a much higher proportion of empirical than conceptual articles. In contrast, for authors from the UK there is greater evenness between empirical and conceptual articles.

Finally, with respect to the methods employed in empirical studies, 68% of UK authors use qualitative methods. In contrast, 64% of US authors use quantitative methods. For Canadian and Australasian authors there is much more equal balance between quantitative and qualitative methods, whereas for China 72% of authors use quantitative methods.

#### *Word Networks between Journals over Time*

In this section we present our analysis of the word networks between JMS, AMJ, ASQ and HRM. Figure 1 shows 2D density estimates for these networks and indicates how the papers cluster by word content in each decade from the 1960s to the 2010s. The general pattern shows that although the papers in the leading management journals JMS, ASQ, and AMJ group together under their journal name, they normally form a single cluster of relatively highly correlated papers. This indicates that the words used in the papers in the different journals are similar. However two general exceptions are also noticeable. The papers from the journal HRM often form an outlining group that distorts the shape of the cluster. Recalling that our analysis took the first three years in each decade, this effect is most

noticeable in the 1970s, 1990s and 2010s (Figure 1b, d, and f). In the early 2000s two separate clusters form, one formed largely by papers from AMJ and ASQ, and the other by papers from JMS and HRM. To determine themes (or topics) for the different decades we produce ranked normalised mean frequency lists of words for the centre of clusters. We also compared the normalised mean-frequency lists of the centre of the cluster with lists for papers grouping under their publishing journal where present to get a sense of what words were causing the grouping of papers into their journals.

Figure 1a shows that the 2D density estimate for the 1960s network presents as a single cluster, papers published in JMS, ASQ and AMJ group by journal within the cluster. In the 1960s the cluster has a number of common themes present in the journal papers represented by high frequency words including; *management, business, organisation(s)(al), administrative(ion), research, social, economic, system(s)* and *power*.

In the 1970s the cluster is denser, as indicated by the tighter contour lines on the 2D density estimate (Figure 1b). Similar to the 1960s, papers published in JMS, ASQ and AMJ group by journal within the cluster. Again there are common themes present in the papers of the cluster; *management, managers, organisation(s)(al), training, subject, research, system(s), business, process*. Many of these themes are common to both the 1970s and the 1960s. In addition, there are an increasing number of more analytical terms present at high frequencies in papers published in ASQ and AMJ (for example; *variables, data, science, analysis, and model*), that are not present in as high frequency in JMS. This analysis suggests that ASQ and AMJ are attracting more analytical papers than JMS during this period.

In the 1980s we again see one cluster, however the centre of the cluster sits over a concentration of AMJ papers (Figure 1c). This concentrated centre is formed by a number of highly correlated AMJ papers producing a highly (relative to the network as a whole) connected region of the network. In the 1980s the JMS papers are mixed with HRM papers



and do not form a well-defined group within the network. ASQ papers do form a group that is somewhat separate to (but highly connected with) the AMJ papers. Again topics from the 1960s and 1970s are present with the addition of, *job, satisfaction, performance, individual, employees, measures* and *psychology*. More analytical terms are again present, *variables, data, science, analysis, model, and theory*. As this network is dominated by AMJ and ASQ papers (accounting for 63% of the papers) it is clear that these journals are able to attract papers on a diverse range of both analytical and more qualitative themes.

In the 1990s there is once again a single cluster (Figure 1d), however now papers published in ASQ and AMJ mix together in the network and do not form distinct groups within the network. HRM and JMS do form distinct groups and are strongly connected together. The topics present in this decade are a mixture of more analytical and qualitative themes. For example, *management, managers, organisation(s)(al), performance, social, employees, individual(s), business, strategy, information* and *systems* are again present. In addition we also observe: *research, data, analysis, theory, variable, and model*. There are also a number of more people-centric themes coming out of HRM and JMS papers including, *human, values, culture, people, and pay*.

The pattern of a single cluster representing the network with papers sometimes grouping into journals is not present in the analysis covering the early 2000s (Figure 1e). Instead we see two separate clusters forming. One is centred over papers published in JMS and HRM, and the other over papers published in ASQ and AMJ. In the JMS/HRM cluster the papers group by journal, whereas in the ASQ and AMJ cluster the papers are mixed together. This suggests that the ASQ and AMJ papers are almost indistinguishable by their word use. Whereas there is more difference between JMS and HRM, they are much closer to each other than they are to either AMJ or ASQ.

The JMS and HRM cluster contains words such as; *work, hr, management, managers, business, employee(s), knowledge, human, training, resource, job, practices, learning, development, work(ers), social, culture, pay, and people*. The more human-centric of these words first start to appear at high frequency in the 1990s, indicating that JMS moved closer to HRM in terms of themes. The ASQ and AMJ cluster contains words such as; *firm(s), management, market(s), research, strategic, research, organizational, performance, business, industry, model, knowledge, data, international, process, theory, industry, model, organizational, performance, foreign, technology(ical), resources, data, hypothesis, growth, innovation, and variables*. These include many of the more general management related terms found in JMS, but also include more analytical terms and terms indicating international relevance such as *international* and *foreign*.

In order to determine the words used in the papers that were responsible for the difference between the papers in the HRM/JMS and AMJ/ASQ we produced a list of anti-correlated words. This was done by taking normalised mean word-frequency lists of the two clusters, then searching through the lists and where they share a common word taking one mean frequency from the other. The absolute value of this value then gives an indication of the anti-correlation between the two clusters for this word. If we look at the anti-correlated words between these two sub-clusters, those words responsible for the difference between the papers, present in JMS and HRM are; *work, hr, management, managers, employees, training, human, workers and people*. In ASQ and AMJ the corresponding words are; *firm(s), market(s), research, strategic, industry, model, organizational, performance, foreign, technology(ical), resources, data, hypothesis, growth, innovation, and variables*. This suggests that JMS was not attracting as wide a range of themes as ASQ and AMJ, and had instead become more like HRM in this period.

If we connect these findings with the content analysis of the Journal we see the period 2000-2004 differed from the previous and succeeding five years in three ways. First, HRM accounted for the highest proportion articles (20%) with strategy in particular at a much lower level than in previous years (14%). Second, the proportion of articles published by UK authors was at a high of 48%. Third, and related to the previous two points, this work was predominantly qualitative. This occurred because the UK was responsible for a disproportionate number of HRM articles (56%) and this work is primarily qualitative (62%). In subsequent years the proportion of HRM articles fell as general management and organisational behaviour increased substantially. UK authorship also fell to similar proportions as the US and EU and qualitative research declined.

In the 2010s there is one cluster, the centre of which is over a group of JMS papers (Figure 1f). AMJ papers are distributed around this central cluster of JMS papers with the ASQ papers mixed in. (There are relatively few ASQ papers in this period.) HRM papers form a connected sub-group just outside of the centre of the cluster. In this cluster the high frequency words representing clusters are; *management, firm(s), knowledge, organization(al), research, performance, social, strategic, business, theory, model, innovation, international, analysis, market, data, governance, science, and industry*. This strongly suggests that JMS has reoccupied the more general themes of management studies. The presence of words like *analysis, market, data* and *model*, suggest that JMS has moved more into areas that traditionally ASQ and AMJ occupied.

This analysis of the themes determined by word frequencies suggests that from the 1960s to the 1990s JMS was successfully occupying the general management space, with a slight specialism towards more people-centric themes present in HRM as indicated by terms like; *human, employee(s), worker(s), values, culture, people* and *pay*. It could also be argued that during this period JMS increased its specialism in the direction HRM. By contrast ASQ

and AMJ were becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish from each other by the language used in their papers, but were remaining separate from JMS and HRM. By the 2000s JMS had drifted so far towards HRM that two separate clusters formed, indicating that JMS no-longer occupied the same space as the other leading general journals (ASQ and AMJ). By 2010 JMS successfully reversed this trend and once again occupied the same space as the other two general management journals, in fact it occupied the centre of the cluster with AMJ and ASQ papers spread around the edges, and HRM off to one side. This is likely due to JMS broadening its range of accepted papers and including more analytical papers.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

In this article we set out to address a number of research questions as JMS approached its half-century. In this section we discuss the trends presented above in the light of these research questions and then conclude with some suggestions for future directions.

### *Trend analyses*

Our *first* question concerned the extent to which JMS has developed and maintained a leading international ranking. Our review of previous studies that have ranked journals and of the trend in impact factors showed quite clearly that over the last five decades JMS has established its position as a premier tier journal and now ranks at the highest point in its history. In the context of the full duration of JMS' publication, the period 2000-2004 which saw a peak in the predominance of UK authors and HRM is something of an anomaly. Interestingly, this period is also associated with the nadir in the Journal's Impact Factor and its ranking among business and management journals.

Throughout the life-cycle of JMS to date, we have seen initially three and subsequently four topic areas sustained as the most frequently represented in the Journal:

organisational behaviour, strategy, human resource management, and general management. However, within these areas we have seen changes in the topics covered and the methods adopted to study them. A number of less frequently published topic areas such as operations management, information systems, marketing and management education have declined perhaps because specialist journals in these areas have both become more established and reputable. In this respect it appears that the Journal is skimming more lightly a range of sub-disciplinary peaks and has increasingly focused on organisational and general management sub-disciplinary topics areas either where there are weaker institutional structures (i.e., no high reputation publishing outlets such as performance management and knowledge management) or the Journal is viewed as a key sub-disciplinary journal (e.g., HRM, strategy).

The management discipline has become more international over time, as evidenced for example by the growth in the international (i.e. non-US) membership of the Academy of Management. The trend in the country of authors submitting to and publishing in JMS also reflects this trend as the UK-US axis has been replaced by a US-UK-EU troika. The international reach of JMS has also increasingly been echoed in the scope of its editorial team and its editorial board. Further, in contrast to the paucity of non-US or UK based authors noted up to the late 1970s (Lockett, 1977) there has also been a growth in both the number of European authors and Europe as a context for empirical analysis. Perhaps this reflects growing emphasis in Europe on publishing in mainstream international journals and the accompanying research training to equip scholars to publish in such outlets (Saunders et al., 2011). However, looking further ahead an additional dimension of internationalization of authorship is unfolding. While submissions from Europe have started to reach the proportions of those from the UK and US, according to tracking of submissions by the JMS editorial office, in 2011 submissions from Asia became the largest regional sources of submission for the first time – 277 papers (30.7%) as opposed to 240 papers (26.6%) from Europe, a pattern

that was maintained in 2012. At present these articles are disproportionately less likely to be accepted for publication. However, the growth in the number of submissions is such and the anecdotal evidence from developmental events in Asia, such as the JMS special conference and paper development workshop held in Hong Kong in 2012, suggest that this pattern is likely to change quite dramatically in the near future as both the volume and quality of academic work shifts East.

In relation to our second question, JMS has retained its distinctive mission as a broad-based international management journal, not favouring any particular theoretical or empirical approach. However, JMS does appear to have shifted from that part of its mission which was to focus on practical problems facing management and which contributed to the initial sponsorship of JMS from local businesses in the Manchester region where it was founded. It is also hard to agree with Legge's (1977) view that JMS is an "applied management journal" in the sense that it closely focuses upon the practical problems facing managers. We have noted, however, the rise in importance of empirical articles and the relative decline of purely theoretical and prescriptive articles. In a paper published as part of the 50th anniversary special issue of the *Academy of Management Journal*, Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007) note that over the period 1963-2007 papers that were largely reporting results from once being quite dominant had effectively disappeared while there had been a growth in papers concerned with theory building and testing. Yet there is growing concern about the fixation with theoretical contribution at the expense of seeking to understand phenomena related to managerial problems (McGrath, 2007). In their article celebrating 50 years of *Human Resource Management*, Hayton et al. (2011) note a sharp decline in but not an elimination of practice-based articles and a growth in empirical papers.

With respect to our third question, our word network analysis shows that JMS remained a broad based management journal compared to other international general

management journals, throughout the period except for the early 2000s when it came to look closer to a more specialist HRM journal. One might argue that distinctiveness needs to be seen in terms of favouring a particular paradigm or research approach, but this would be to reduce the inclusive and narrow the potential scope of JMS as an outlet for leading research. Further, one might also argue that distinctiveness should be in the form of a “European” approach to management. Again, such an approach would reduce the inclusiveness of JMS and be contrary to the Journal’s long-term trajectory. This would raise the implication that a particular European approach is identifiable, an issue which has been the subject of some debate (Lampel, 2011; Davidson, 2012). The evidence from our analysis indicates that European authors publishing in JMS adopt a range of paradigms and methods. Further, our comparison of the language used in JMS with two other leading general management journals, AMJ and ASQ, indicates a notable commonality. This commonality was evident throughout much of the period except for the departure during the early 2000s before a return to commonality most recently. This departure coincided with high shares of JMS articles accounted for by HRM, for a high share of UK authors who were disproportionately likely to publish HRM work, and a low in the JMS impact factor. This analysis provides evidence that attempts to develop a sustainable departure from the 'norm' of management research or an imbalanced focus on a particular sub-area are not sustainable if a general management journal wants to remain front ranked, especially with a more (and increasingly) internationally diffuse research community.

#### *Future directions*

Our analysis suggests a number of future directions. Prescriptive essays have essentially disappeared from JMS. However, the emergence of the impact agenda worldwide, in various guises, suggests an opportunity if not an imperative to rekindle such contributions. Greater interaction with practitioners to identify the challenges they face and then linking these to key

debates in management in order to give conceptual grounding may be a further way to make articles more relevant (McGrath, 2007). Of course, one of the challenges is to be able to engage practitioners in academic research, which appears to have become even more difficult since Legge (1977) noted it as a problem over 30 years ago. For example, Lambert (2003) noted this as a problem in the development of industry-university interactions in technology transfer. Such interactions and collaborations are difficult but not impossible (Hodgkinson and Rousseau, 2009). One potential way forward is to harness participations in executive development programmes. Another possibility is for editors to commission speculative or prescriptive articles based upon seminars that involve interactions between academics and practitioners. Such articles may need a developmental review process but could be a way to demonstrate what is feasible.

There has also been considerable debate about the potentially adverse impact of the requirement for conceptual contributions in management journal articles on their interest and relevance (Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan, 2007; Hambrick, 2007). The creation of the Academy of Management Discoveries is aimed at being one way to address this problem by introducing a forum where articles that seek to shed light on new and interesting phenomena can be published without a requirement to develop new theory. Other journals such as JMS may want to consider introducing sections that cater for such articles.

The strategy as practice agenda has aimed to create a research stream that is more relevant to the problems facing senior managers. However, notwithstanding some continued studies on middle managers, there has also been something of a gap in research agendas focused on the nature of managerial work and decision making below the strategic level (for an exception see Rouleau and Balogun, 2011). The growing availability of large datasets may be conducive to increasingly sophisticated empirical techniques but do little to overcome



the challenges facing researchers trying to gain access to study problems that such managers actually face.

For the future, we also see maintenance and extension of an international perspective of authors and studies as being central to maintaining and extending the reputation of JMS. Although it was founded in the UK, the reach of JMS always has been international. However, the growth of continental European and especially Asian contributors marks something of a departure from the traditional trajectory of JMS. To some extent, this development is part of a worldwide phenomenon that is seeing a massive development of management research in Asia and other emerging economies. In this context, to retain a predominantly UK and US authorship base or to be seen as a “European” journal would be to miss out on major opportunities for future growth and impact of JMS. The implication of this development is a need for a further enhancement of the editorial team and editorial board to strengthen its Asian representation.

Managerial research has long held out a plea for more multi-disciplinary research, as noted by Legge (1977) in JMS but also in other fora. As we seem to be little nearer this goal, there may need to be initiatives to stimulate such work through commissioned articles or special issues. However, this seems likely to remain problematical if incentives for business school academics continue to be based on silo mentalities that rate certain journals higher in one field than another.

Incentives and rewards for publishing in top tier academic journals have hitherto done much to help establish the legitimacy of management research and the ranking of business schools. If behavioural changes by academics in terms of producing research that more closely addresses the problems of managers are to emerge, there is a need to change the nature of incentive systems. The environment for business schools is changing quite rapidly with the maturity if not decline of the traditional MBA market, the development of alternative

modes of delivery using the internet and new providers, and government policy that is questioning the traditional role of research in business schools. These developments seem to us likely to create greater pressures to change the incentive systems for academics to encompass a wider set of rewards than just for publishing abstruse articles in top tier academic journals.

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Table 1: Trends in Citation Rankings of JMS

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>JMS Ranking</b>	<b>Method and comments</b>
Sharplin and Mabry (1985)	1980-83	18/20 14/20 14/20	Times cited in ASQ/AMJ Citations per average # of articles per year Citations per 10,000 words published annually
Salancik (1986)	1983/84	22/24	Importance Index calculated from SSCI 1983/84
MacMillan and Stern (1987)	1984 1986	9/20 11/13	Rating by tenured strategy professors in highly regarded institutions; 4 point rating scale, JMS rated as 2 [=appropriate quality]
MacMillan (1989)	1988	9/14	As above
Franke et al. (1990)	1985 1987	11/17 9/17	Strategy journals; journal impact; low awareness of JMS by experts; JMS placed in low editor research status group associated with low impact
Extejt and Smith (1990)	1988?	35/54	Academics' Rating (scale 1-4); Mode score =2 (good journal) Comparison with 1985 SSCI ranking of 17/39
MacMillan (1991)	1990	10/16	As MacMillan above
Gomez-Mejia and Balkin (1992)	1990	14/56	Survey of Chairs of Management Departments Rating of 3.43 on 5 point scale Journals in top 21 "considered premier publication"
Johnson and Podsakoff (1994)	1981 1986 1991	25/40 24/40 31/40	Adjusted ranks; Salancik's index of influence
Park and Gordon (1996)	1987 1990 1981-92	9/20 10/20 12/20	Article impact factors and publications by 96 PhD strategy graduates who became faculty; JMS acceptance rate quoted as 1981= 21-30%; 1994 = 11-20%
Tahai and Meyer (1999)	1993/94	27/65 23/65	Citations as a proportion of all citations As above but truncated at mode
Podsakoff et al. (2005)	1981-99	18/28; 15/28 19/26; 14/26 18/27; 16/27 18/28; 16/28 20/28; 21/28	1981-99 – total citations; citations/article over period 1981-84 1985-89 1990-94 1995-99

Note: Coe and Weinstock's (1984) analysis of journals excludes JMS; Stahl et al (1988) based on Coe and Weinstock and Sharplin and Mabry



Table 2: JMS trends in submissions and impact (1995-2011)\*

	Number of submissions	% Increase over previous year	Impact Factor	Ranking in ISI Business list	Ranking in ISI Management list
1995			1.162		10/38
1996			0.743		18/48
1997	183		0.662	21/51	22/58
1998	162	-11.48	0.729	21/51	18/61
1999	192	18.52	0.685	22/52	24/61
2000	188	-2.08	0.646	26/54	29/60
2001	241	28.19	0.634	28/55	30/61
2002	242	.41	0.856	24/54	27/65
2003	342	41.3	1.104	21/57	26/67
2004	438	28.1	1.180	16/57	19/67
2005	538	22.8	1.326	15/61	18/71
2006	508	-5.5	2.000	11/64	11/78
2007	618	21.7	1.926	10/72	16/81
2008	628	1.6	2.558	13/77	14/89
2009	550	-	2.805	13/87	14/122
2010	828	50.55	3.817	5/101	10/140
2011	902	8.9	4.255	5/113	10/166
<b>2012</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>-7.5</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>n.a.</b>

\*taken from Clark, T. and Wright, M. (2009) 'So farewell then ... reflections on editing the Journal of Management Studies', *Journal of Management Studies*, 46, 1, 1-9. 2008 - data added later on ISI IF and management category for 1995-2000 taken from. Cookson, R., Scoones, P., Emery, B. and O'Connor, P. (2001) *The Journal of Management Studies Publishing Review*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, (2 November 2001)

Table 3: Frequency Counts of Topic Areas of Articles Published in JMS (1964-2010)

<b>Main Theme</b>	<b>1964-1969</b>	<b>1970-1979</b>	<b>1980-1989</b>	<b>1990-1999</b>	<b>2000-2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Total</b>
Organisational Behaviour	17	35	92	70	135	11	360
Strategy	4	9	32	109	99	11	264
Human Resource Management	27	54	43	47	85	2	258
General Management	13	32	33	38	93	11	220
Entrepreneurship	3	8	7	26	30	12	86
Economics/Accounting/Finance	12	4	8	13	31	5	73
Performance Management	4	5	8	22	33	1	73
Knowledge Management	0	0	1	9	42	8	60
International Business	3	4	3	6	40	2	58
Decision Making	4	11	18	9	7	2	51
Leadership	3	3	6	8	17	2	39
Information Systems	5	11	6	6	4	2	34
Operations and Production Management	6	13	4	3	2	0	28
Marketing	2	10	8	2	3	0	25
Management Education	9	4	5	2	4	0	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>1653</b>

Table 4: Topic, Article Type and Method by Location<sup>1</sup> of Authors (1964-2010)

	<b>UK (%)</b>	<b>USA (%)</b>	<b>EU (%)</b>	<b>Canada (%)</b>	<b>Australasia (%)</b>	<b>China (%)</b>
<b>HRM</b>	18	7	13	10	10	15
<b>General Management</b>	26	23	19	23	17	21
<b>Strategy</b>	10	22	14	13	9	6
<b>Organisational Behaviour</b>	15	12	17	28	18	12
<b>Conceptual</b>	31	31	26	29	17	12
<b>Empirical Research</b>	38	50	45	46	55	79
<b>Discursive/Descriptive</b>	26	17	27	24	25	6
<b>Quantitative</b>	28	64	41	46	50	72
<b>Qualitative</b>	68	30	55	46	45	24
<b>Mixed</b>	4	6	4	8	5	4

Source: authors' analysis

<sup>1</sup> These six countries account for 99% of the articles published in JMS during the study period.