

Research and Publication Strategies for International Scholars in a Globalizing World

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Abstract

Scholars in emerging economies experience strong institutional pressures to accelerate their output of research and publication in leading academic journals. These pressures arise from global and local dynamics that affect educational institutions in their competition for international prestige and reputation. At the same time, scholars confront entry barriers to publication in leading academic journals that are solidly anchored within a prevailing Anglo-American paradigm that includes language, research topics, and methodology. This article examines: the importance of publication to scholars and institutions; the varieties of scholarship (discovery, teaching and application); the life-cycle of faculty publication (audience, outlets and topics); channels for publication; selecting a target publication (qualifying the buyer) with respect to audience, topics, methodology and ranking; crafting an article format; and strategies for success through collaboration.

Keywords: Research, Publication, Strategies, International Scholars

Introduction

International business (IB) scholarship in the post-WWII period has been dominated by an Anglo-American paradigm that includes language, research topics, and methodology. The English language is the dominant, if not exclusive, vehicle for publication in leading international business journals. The top entrants on “journal quality lists” (see below) are invariably English-language journals, and their editors and editorial boards hail predominantly from Anglo-American countries. Similarly, the top research topics in the field of international business reflect the concerns of scholars from Anglo-American countries, and those concerns themselves ethnocentrically reflect issues that arise from their national business systems. Peter Buckley [1], for example, identified three core topics in recent years that comprised “big research questions” in the field of international business: foreign direct investment, the multinational corporation, and globalization. These questions arose from concerns endemic to developed, western economies. In other regions, issues that preoccupy scholars may be quite different. The research methodologies that predominate in western journals also reflect concerns about scholarship and scientific credibility that arose within the American business school community from the 1950s onward. Scientific legitimization was an outgrowth of Gordon and

Howell's 1959 seminal report [2] asserting that existing management education was too vocational to meet the needs of American business.

In recent years, the forces of globalization have expanded the scope of international business research to include scholars with origins outside the Anglo-American consensus. Many of these scholars experience institutional pressures to publish their research in western journals. These institutional pressures arise from local political and economic dynamics such as the push within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to harmonize their educational systems and encourage institutional collaboration [3]. Emerging nations now account for 64 percent of all business schools and they will probably generate most, if not all, of the increase in demand for business education in the coming decades [4]. Already, several elite Asian business schools have stepped forth and have achieved prestigious accreditation and seek to enroll western students [5]. Their ability to accomplish these goals depends heavily on the research and reputation of their faculty. It is consistent with this shift in the center of gravity of international business research that, since 2004, the best-attended annual conferences of the Academy of International Business, the premier association of IB scholars in the world, were in non-US venues: Beijing in 2006 with 1055 attendees and Milan in 2008 with 1201 attendees [6]. It is partly a result of these developments that western educational institutions themselves are making unprecedented forays into international operations [7].

The purpose of this paper is to suggest strategies for international scholars to increase their success in gaining access for their research in international publication venues. Over time, such access by international scholars to leading journals will have effects on those journals themselves in the composition of their editorial boards, the research they choose to publish, and the reigning methodologies. As guest editors Harry Barkema *et al* announced in a Call for Papers for a Special Research Forum in the *Academy of Management Journal* on "West Meets East: New Concepts and Theories:" "It's time to go beyond Western settings to tap into the empirical phenomena of the East and its cultural, philosophical, and broader intellectual tradition..." [8]. There are encouraging signs of such change in governing boards of publications such as the *Journal of International Business Studies* (JIBS) [9], but the immediate challenge for international scholars is to publish their research in respected international venues. This paper addresses the importance of publication, the varieties of scholarship, the life-cycle of faculty publication, channels for publication, target journal selection, crafting an article format, and strategies for success.

Why Publish?

Scholars and the educational institutions that employ them have different but compatible reasons to support the publication of scholarly research. Universities exist to diffuse and expand the boundaries of knowledge through teaching and research. Institutions vary in the relative emphasis they place on these two facets of their mission. In the US, for example, the Carnegie Foundation classifies educational institutions into six categories according to common criteria including their research emphasis [10]. External accreditation requirements can also drive research, as does the need to attract students to ensure institutional survival.

For faculty, research is integral to the triad of professional activities that includes teaching, research and service. Research and publication can be essential for hiring, retention, promotion and tenure. It is certainly requisite for the peer recognition necessary for occupational mobility among institutions.

Institutional and faculty interests converge when it comes to ensuring the resources needed to support faculty research. These include sufficient time for faculty research, access to online digital resources, and opportunities to network with professional peers. Institutional appreciation for the critical nature of these resources is especially essential in resource-scarce environments.

Varieties of Scholarship

The traditional view of scholarship centered on the discipline-based research of “discovery” that adds to the accumulation of knowledge or extends its boundaries. In 1990, Ernest Boyer published *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professorate* [11] and recommended that in addition to the traditional “scholarship of discovery,” scholars should be encouraged to engage in other forms of research that are appropriate to both the school’s mission and the needs of society, including the “scholarship of teaching” and the “scholarship of application.” These recommendations and other influences had a significant impact. In 1991 the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) made major changes to its accreditation standards, including the wholesale elimination of the term “research” throughout the standards and its replacement by “intellectual contributions,” which were defined broadly to reflect Boyer’s tripartite proposal. The AACSB also broadened the range of acceptable outlets for intellectual contributions beyond traditional peer-reviewed journals. As a result of these developments, many academic associations extended their menu of acceptable topics and in some cases introduced additional publications with a specific orientation towards teaching or practice. The Academy of Management (AOM), for example, introduced a journal named *Learning & Education* as well as a practitioner-oriented publication called *Perspectives*. The Academy of International Business (AIB) added *AIB Insights* to its mainline research outlet, the *Journal of International Business Studies* (JIBS). These developments significantly extended the range of topics and outlets acceptable for publication as well as the total number of articles published each year. At the same time, it complicates the task of targeting an appropriate journal for submission of specific research.

Channels for Publication

Scholars may choose among numerous channels for publication, depending on their immediate needs and the type of research. This varies with each faculty member and the purposes of the research. In general, publication channels differ in their intended audience: academics, students, general public, or policy elites. For professional advancement, the “gold standard” is generally publication in peer-reviewed journals (PRJ) for which reviews are “double blind” (both authors and reviewers are unknown to each other). Other channels include textbooks, trade books, book chapters, conference proceedings, book reviews, cases with instructional materials, technical reports, and instructional software.

The Lifecycle of Faculty Publication

There are many seasons in a scholar’s life and, as the nature and needs of research change, choices about publication topics and venues evolve. There is a conventional lifecycle to publication by scholars working in academic environments. Young scholars in western environments face probationary periods during which publication in peer-reviewed journals of

the highest quality is essential to gain promotion or tenure. Once this brass ring is secured, ongoing publication in such outlets may be necessary to secure continued institutional benefits (e.g. teaching release time, travel and research funds), but the maturing scholar's focus of attention often shifts from an audience of academic peers to the broader general public (trade books), students (textbooks), or policy elites (technical reports, etc). These are all legitimate forms of research and publication, and each scholar must determine his or her most appropriate portfolio.

Selecting a Target Publication (Qualifying the Buyer)

To borrow a marketing metaphor, academic journals represent a "buyer" in a transaction with a "seller" (the scholar). In such a transaction, the scholar should "pre-qualify" the buyer to ensure the best fit for research and thereby maximize the chances for publication. This requires considerable effort in advance of submission, but in a process as time-intensive as publication, this preparation can save considerable time and grief.

Every journal has an editorial scope of interest with respect to the kinds of material it seeks to publish. Often, this reflects the journal's audience of subscribers. In many cases, there also emerges a methodological bias that remains implicit but can be discerned by a casual review of articles published in several issues of the journal. The identity of members of the editorial review board can also suggest areas of content or methodological preferences. Practical considerations for authors include the normal time-to-publication for articles submitted. Every journal has a certain number of issues in each annual volume and publishes an average number of articles in each issue. Other important considerations include the journal's instructions for authors, including word limits and style requirements.

The "quality" or ranking of a journal can be a major factor for faculty seeking to identify an appropriate journal. Journal quality remains an imprecise assessment and it therefore can assume inordinate importance that is unmatched by its own precision. Individual educational institutions often create internal lists for purposes of faculty evaluation. A common shorthand reference for qualifying a journal is its acceptance rate, which refers to the percentage of total submissions to the journal that are accepted for publication. Citation indexes like Google Scholar and the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) rank journals based on the frequency with which their articles are cited in other "core journals." A journal's "impact factor" (IF) represents the number of citations in core journals divided by the total number of articles published in that journal. The impact factor is normally calculated for a given year based on data from the two previous years. There also exist independent, external "journal quality lists" that perform an aggregation function for these different approaches to measuring quality. Some commonly cited journal quality lists include: The Association of Business Schools (ABS) Academic Journal Quality Guide [12], Financial Times [13], University of Melbourne (Anne-Wil Harzing) [14], University of Queensland [15], Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) [16], Australian Research Council (ARC) [17], ESSEC Business School [18], Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique [19], University of Texas Dallas [20].

Crafting the Article Format

Over time, most publications acquire a preferred format for articles and the chances for acceptance increase if an article is compatible in its structure with the conventional section headings, layout, and citation format found in the journal. A cursory perusal of a target journal's

published articles reveals this standard format. These will vary with each publication. Reviewers grow accustomed to the format of their journals and it creates unnecessary friction for an author to neglect their comfort level. An abstract precedes virtually all published articles and provides a capsule description of the contents, and the abstract is followed by a list of keywords that identify the main themes. An introduction and problem statement is the gateway to the article for readers. This gate will close unless readers are engaged by the statement of the significance and interest of the topic. A literature review then provides the context within which the paper fits--it identifies key theories and past research that situate the paper within the stream of prior scholarship. A description of methodology and data collection informs readers about the empirical and conceptual framework for the article. The presentation of results identifies principal outcomes and is often followed by a discussion of the implications of those outcomes. Finally, a section on limitations and future research both qualifies the implications and identifies pathways for further development. References in the journal's preferred style come last.

A Strategy for Success

Much of the above discussion pertains to the strategic positioning of research and its adaptation to a chosen channel for publication. At a more elemental level, many international scholars face serious barriers to producing publishable research in the first place. These may be barriers of language, research methodology, or conceptual apparatus and professional perspective. Many international scholars are simply unable to produce a perfectly written manuscript that will be accepted for publication in a non-native language like English. They may also be unfamiliar with certain methodological approaches like case study writing, which has its own subtle conventions. A scholar's lifetime experiences may be insufficient to trace in depth the policy implications of their research.

These are not new problems, but they are increasingly common with the globalization of research and publication in higher education. It is becoming critical, in the eyes of their institutions, for international scholars to establish themselves in respected academic journals. Earlier phases of this process have occurred, for example, in East and Central Europe during the transition to a market economy in the last decade of the twentieth century. In such cases, collaborative research with a western co-author served as at least a transitional step to successful publication. Significant success was registered during these years by numerous western scholars and institutions that engaged in institution-building throughout this region. The present author participated in two of these experiments, at the Czech Management Center in Celakovice and the Sarajevo Graduate School of Business in Bosnia. In both cases, western faculty partnered with local professors to produce case studies and theoretical research that led to an enviable record of publication in respected western journals and books.

This process represents a negotiated tradeoff of complementary skills by western and local scholars. Western academics possess the requisite linguistic skills, and usually have the conceptual and methodological mindset for publication in western venues. They often have contacts, networks and data sources that can facilitate the process. Local faculty, on the other hand, possess attributes that facilitate access to local sources of data and contacts that can be essential to gathering appropriate information for *in situ* research. In one such case, for example, the author collaborated with two Bosnian faculty on a project that resulted in publication of a book chapter on the internationalization of Bosnian small-and-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) [21]. In another case, the author collaborated with the general manager of Alcatel's silicon wafer production plant in eastern Slovakia [22]. The western author brought English-language skills,

familiarity with the literature on internationalization and export development, and contacts with western publishers and editors. The local partners were indispensable in gathering data from local companies and export development associations, and in massaging the data.

While such a strategy of collaborative research and publication can be very effective, it requires some self-promotion and marketing by each party. Making contacts is essential to developing the rapport that can eventuate in a research partnership. Institutions can be partners in stimulating and supporting such networks. Collaborations may not last forever, but they can provide a critical transition for international scholars to gain a foothold in the globalizing world of research and publication.

Summary and Conclusions

Globalization is a process with many facets. At one level, it involves the intensification of flows and transactions around the globe. At another level, this augmentation of international traffic leads to interconnectedness and network effects so that perturbations anywhere in the system have repercussions elsewhere. At still another level, these preceding changes bring the diffusion of skills, capabilities and resources and the rise of new geographic regions. These processes lead to the integration of new players into existing world regimes. Education is one such regime in which both institutions and individual scholars in emerging markets seek recognition and access to established centers of power. In doing so, they wish to advance their own interests, but at the same time it is in the interest of established parties to incorporate them effectively. If this occurs in a mindful and intentional way, it can lead to higher levels of performance by all.

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Abstract

Scholars in emerging economies experience strong institutional pressures to accelerate their output of research and publication in leading academic journals. These pressures arise from global and local dynamics that affect educational institutions in their competition for international prestige and reputation. At the same time, scholars confront entry barriers to publication in leading academic journals that are solidly anchored within a prevailing Anglo-American paradigm that includes language, research topics, and methodology. This article examines: the importance of publication to scholars and institutions; the varieties of scholarship (discovery, teaching and application); the life-cycle of faculty publication (audience, outlets and topics); channels for publication; selecting a target publication (qualifying the buyer) with respect to audience, topics, methodology and ranking; crafting an article format; and strategies for success through collaboration.

Keywords: Research, Publication, Strategies, International Scholars

French version*

Research and Publication Strategies for International Scholars in a Globalizing World

Stratégies de recherche et de publication pour des chercheurs internationaux dans un monde globalisé

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Résumé

Les chercheurs académiques dans des économies émergentes subissent de fortes pressions institutionnelles pour accélérer leur production de recherche et de publication dans des revues spécialisées. Ces pressions résultent de dynamiques globales et locales, qui influent sur les établissements d'enseignement, dans leur compétition pour le prestige et la réputation internationale. En même temps, les chercheurs font face à des barrières à la publication dans des revues spécialisées, car celles-ci sont solidement ancrées dans un paradigme dominant anglo-américain, qui comprend la langue, les thèmes de recherche et la méthodologie. Cet article examine: l'importance de la publication pour les chercheurs et les institutions, les variétés de connaissances académiques (découverte, enseignement et application), le cycle de vie de publication de chercheurs (écoute, journaux et sujets), les canaux de publication, la sélection d'une publication cible par rapport à l'auditoire, les sujets, la méthodologie et le classement; élaboration d'un format article, et des stratégies de réussite grâce des collaborations.

Mots-clés: Recherche, publication, stratégies, chercheurs internationaux

* Translated by: Johannes Schaaper, Senior professor in International Management, BEM Bordeaux Management School

German version*

Research and Publication Strategies for International Scholars in a Globalizing
World

Forschungs- und Publikationsstrategien für internationale Forscher in einer globalisierten Welt

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Zusammenfassung

Forscher in Schwellenländern verspüren einen starken institutionellen Druck ihre wissenschaftlichen Veröffentlichungen und ihre Forschung in internationalen Top-Journals zu voranzutreiben. Dieser Druck wächst aus einer globalen und lokalen Dynamik, die die Forschungseinrichtungen in einem Wettbewerb für internationale Reputation und Prestige bringen. Gleichzeitig sehen sich Forscher unterschiedlichen Eintrittsbarrieren in internationalen Top-Journals gegenüber, immer noch vornehmlich dem anglo-amerikanischen Forschungsparadigma verbunden sind, insbesondere was die Sprache, die Forschungsthemen und die Methodik angeht. Der vorliegende Beitrag untersucht die Wichtigkeit von Publikationen für Forscher und Institutionen; die Arten von Stipendien (Erkundung, Lehre und Anwendung); den Lebenszyklus von Publikationen einer Fakultät (Reichweite, Ausfluss, Themen); Publikationskanäle; die Auswahl der Zielpublikation (Ansprache des Abnehmers) mit Bezug zum Empfänger, Themen, Methoden und Rankings; die Fertigstellung eines Artikels und Strategien für eine erfolgreiche Zusammenarbeit.

Keywords: Forschung, Publikation, Strategien, internationale Forscher

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Spanish version*

Research and Publication Strategies for International Scholars in a Globalizing World

Estrategias de Investigación y Publicación para Académicos Internacionales en un Mundo Globalizado

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Resumen

Los académicos de los países con economías emergentes experimentan fuertes presiones institucionales para obtener aceleradamente resultados en forma de publicaciones en las principales revistas académicas. Estas presiones surgen de las dinámicas global y local que afectan a las instituciones educativas en su competencia por el prestigio y la reputación internacionales. Al mismo tiempo, los académicos se enfrentan a serias barreras de entrada para publicar en las principales revistas académicas que están sólidamente ancladas en un predominante paradigma angloamericano que incluye el lenguaje, los temas de investigación y la metodología.

En este artículo se analizan: la importancia de las publicaciones para los académicos, investigadores e instituciones; la variedad de tareas académicas (de descubrimiento, de enseñanza y de aplicación), el ciclo de vida de las publicaciones del profesorado (audiencia, producción y temas); los canales de publicación, la selección de la publicación de destino (clasificar al “comprador”), la audiencia a la que se dirigen, los temas, la metodología y ranking; la elaboración de un formato de artículo, y las estrategias para el éxito a través de la colaboración.

Palabras clave: Investigación, Publicación, Estrategias, Académicos Internacionales

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Arabic version*

Research and Publication Strategies for International Scholars in a Globalizing World

استراتيجيات البحث والنشر للباحثين الدوليين في عالم متعولم

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ملخص

يواجه الباحثون من بلدان العالم الثالث ضغوطا مؤسسية هائلة لتحسين مخرجات الأبحاث والنشر في كبرى المجالات الأكاديمية. هذه الضغوط منبثقة عن المتغيرات العالمية والمحلية التي تؤثر على تنافسية المؤسسات التعليمية. في الوقت ذاته هناك عوائق عديدة تواجه الباحثين للنشر في المجالات الأكاديمية الكبرى المتمركزة على أصحاب الامتيازات الانجلو- الاميركان من حيث اللغة ومواضيع البحث و الطرق البحثية. هذه الدراسة تدرس أهمية النشر بالنسبة للباحثين و المؤسسات، وللتنوع المعرفي (الاستكشاف و التعليم و التقدم)، دورة حياة المنشورات (الجمهور، المخرجات، و المواضيع)، طرق النشر، إختيار الناشر (تصفية المشتركين) بالاضافة الى الجمهور، المواضيع، الطرق و الترتيب، تصميم الدراسة، و استراتيجيات النجاح من خلال التعاون.

الكلمات الدالة: الأبحاث، المنشورات، الاستراتيجيات، الباحثين العالميين

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Italian version*

Research and Publication Strategies for International Scholars in a Globalizing World

Strategie di ricerca e pubblicazione per studiosi internazionali in un mondo che si globalizza

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Abstract

Nelle economie emergenti gli studiosi sono sempre più sotto pressione istituzionale per accelerare il ritmo delle loro pubblicazioni in riviste accademiche primarie a livello internazionale. Queste pressioni sono generate da dinamiche globali e locali che hanno un impatto sugli istituti educativi locali che vogliono affermare la loro reputazione e prestigio internazionale. Allo stesso tempo gli studiosi si confrontano con barriere nel pubblicare su riviste accademiche primarie perché sono solidamente ancorate su paradigmi Anglo-Americani formati dalla lingua, argomenti di ricerca e metodologia. Questo articolo esamina: l'importanza del pubblicare per studiosi e istituti educativi; varietà di studio; il ciclo di vita di una pubblicazione accademica (audience, distribuzione e argomenti); canali di comunicazione; selezione dell'audience di riferimento (qualificare il compratore) non solo come audience in se ma anche in termini di metodologia e ranking; generare il format di un articolo; strategie di successo tramite il collaborare.

Keywords: Ricerca, Pubblicazione, Strategie, Studiosi Internazionali

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Chinese version*

Research and Publication Strategies for International Scholars in a Globalizing World

在全球化世界里国际学者的研究与发表策略

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摘要

新兴经济体的学者正在经历加速他们的研究产出以及在国际期刊上发表强烈的制度性压力。这些压力来自于全球和地方的动力，这些动力会影响教育机构为国际威望和声誉的竞争。同时，学者们面临着顶级学术期刊发表的进入障碍，因为这些期刊几乎全部被盎格鲁-美国范式牢固地主宰，从语言、研究题目，到方法。本文分析了：发表对于学者和机构的重要性；学术的多样性（发现，教学，应用）；学者发表的生命周期（读者，出路，题目）；发表的渠道；选择发表的目标包括读者、题目、方法和排序。构造文章的格式；通过合作取胜的战略。

关键词： 研究，发表，战略，国际学者

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