
Editorial: A new vision for the Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development

Editorial

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For the past several decades, no field in the domain of business studies has matched the growth and impact of entrepreneurship. From business and commercial perspectives, entrepreneurship constantly generates new ways for organizations and industries to grow and evolve. This impact is increasingly attractive to leaders of new and existing firms. From an educational perspective, entrepreneurship is one of the most popular and in-demand areas of study in higher education, which makes it attractive to universities around the world that are seeing rising interest in entrepreneurship among their students. From public and economic policy perspectives, entrepreneurial activity is the principal job generator for the development of economies and society. Policymakers know that entrepreneurship serves to revitalize communities and stimulate economic development, which is always important to human society. From a research perspective, there are more opportunities than ever before for scholars to study these entrepreneurial phenomena. Such research contributes distinct theories and conceptual frameworks that shed new light on entrepreneurship from all of these perspectives and more.

The new editorial team and the publishing team at the *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development (JSBED)* are aware of these trends and familiar with the field of entrepreneurship. *JSBED* already has a proud history spanning almost three decades (since 1994). The journal has published many high-impact contributions to the field. However, over the past several months, our teams have looked closely at the historic and current evolution of the entrepreneurship field and its myriad forms of impact on theory, practice and policy. We have created a new vision for *JSBED*, pivoted the conceptual and empirical aspects of its mission, and restructured the journal's internal operations and processes. In this editorial, I briefly illustrate and summarize these changes.

Evolution of our mission

The new mission of *JSBED* is more comprehensive than ever before. Over the past 30 years, the world of practical entrepreneurial activities has grown larger. The various forms of entrepreneurship have diversified tremendously. We are thus widening the focus of *JSBED* to capture more sundry research questions and lines of inquiry. To undertake such research, entrepreneurship scholars do not need to import theories directly from other domains of study and apply those theories to entrepreneurial settings. To be sure, no field of study exists on an island, and research and theory are more powerful conceptually when informed by larger systems of thought.

Yet, entrepreneurial ventures are not merely small versions of established firms. Moreover, entrepreneurs often have career tracks and life journeys that are patently unique. The uniqueness is especially apparent when it comes to radically innovative high-technology ventures and progressive social enterprises. Indeed, theories from other areas in the domain of business studies often transcend their own boundaries when applied to entrepreneurial phenomena. *JSBED* thus seeks to publish distinct research and theory that reflect the novelty of entrepreneurial phenomena. Our objective is to make an impact on what is understood about real-world entrepreneurship in ways that are robust, practical, conceptually grounded and theory driven.



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Research methods

The new *JSBED* mission also carries implications for the empirical aspects of the research we publish. We intend for *JSBED* to be the premier outlet for appropriately designed research that advances what is understood about entrepreneurial phenomena with defensible methodologies. Rather than merely copying methods of studies in other fields, empirical entrepreneurship research is at its best when its methods are designed in explicit reference to the unique questions and data in a particular study. Rigorous qualitative studies with novel research designs that provide deep insights into entrepreneurial cases are thus welcome at *JSBED*. We especially seek to publish research that includes both quantitative and qualitative work. After all, large-scale empirical studies are usually more contextually insightful when they add a “Study II” that provides rich qualitative perspectives on quantitative results. *JSBED* welcomes empirical studies with both kinds of data, especially studies that carefully integrate quantitative and qualitative results and findings.

JSBED intends to be a model for intentionally-designed entrepreneurship research methods. Entrepreneurship data have been known (for decades) to violate the assumptions of commonly-used parametric statistics that are based on the general linear model (GLM: e.g. multiple regression/correlation, ANOVA). *JSBED* thus regards tests of these assumptions to be important. Such tests are simple additions to a research paper. The editorial team recommends including tests for homogeneity of variance, normality of sampling distributions, independent sampling, outliers and other assumptions germane to the methodology being used. Violations of such assumptions are not necessarily grounds for rejecting a manuscript, but rather an opportunity for authors to describe those limitations for the benefit of future research. Additional tests of the robustness of a research design (e.g. manipulation checks) are also encouraged when appropriate. Non-parametric statistical methods, which are sample specific but have far fewer assumptions about sampling distributions than parametric methods do, are also welcomed in submissions to *JSBED*. Approaches to empirical studies involving “big data” offer potentially promising avenues. They reduce the importance of inferential statistics that use GLM parameters to assume population characteristics based on sample characteristics because, at least in theory, big data approaches can capture an entire population. If that is the case, then there is no need for a traditional sample. The requisite nonparametric methods can also evade the issue of unduly high statistical power generated by the enormous numbers of cases in big data research, which can confound the parametric assumptions of inferential statistics.

JSBED intends to publish research from a wide range of perspectives that are all distinct to the entrepreneurship area, featuring research methodologies that are robust, defensible and appropriate. Therefore, similarly to the practices of many scholarly journals, *JSBED*’s editorial team strongly recommends including effect size estimates (e.g. Cohen’s *d*; Hedges *g*; eta-squared; omega-squared; nonparametric alternatives and more) when appropriate. Such estimates complement statistical significance (i.e. *p*-values), which shows the reliability of an effect but not its magnitude. These considerations are not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive, but to indicate that a conceptual approach and its theoretic assumptions call for research methods to be designed intentionally.

Entrepreneurship education

In addition to the kinds of research illustrated above, given the historic and current evolution of entrepreneurship education programs worldwide, *JSBED* also intends to begin publishing entrepreneurship education research. The journal’s description on the website has already been entirely redrafted. However, the editorial and publishing teams are preparing to add an

entrepreneurship education and pedagogy component to *JSBED's* mission. The journal description will thus be updated again to reflect this emphasis. We will add a new associate editor (AE) to shepherd the review process for education-themed submissions. These changes will occur in late 2022 or early 2023.

The specific kinds of education-themed contributions that *JSBED* will publish (e.g. case studies, tools for teaching settings, editorials, empirical research and other formats) will be determined purposefully and based on our reading of various trends in the entrepreneurship field. We welcome input from the scholarly and practical communities with respect to these trends. On all these grounds, we are pivoting *JSBED's* strategy to maximize its present and future impact on the entrepreneurship field, as well as on the practicing entrepreneurs of today and tomorrow.

Restructuring the operation

As structure follows strategy, so have we transformed *JSBED's* operational process for receiving, reviewing and making publication decisions in order to coordinate it with the journal's renewed mission. The new operational model supports the strategic aspects of the *JSBED* mission while promoting certain efficiencies. Its effectiveness and efficiency give the editorial team and the editorial board (EB) greater administrative capacities for effectively reviewing entrepreneurship research from a wide range of diverse perspectives.

In what follows, I describe *JSBED's* new operational model and structure in detail for the benefit of submitting authors who will appreciate the transparency. As well, this description may be of interest to editors and publishers of other scholarly journals who are intending to restructure their own operational processes for review and publishing research that best serves their scholarly fields. These operational and structural changes were implemented near the beginning of 2022, and they have proven to be instrumental to our new mission.

Reviewing and internal processes

All papers submitted to *JSBED* undergo an initial format check by the editorial assistant (EA). The EA examines all submissions for proper formatting, as described on the journal's website. Papers not formatted properly are not submitted, and the author(s) is/are invited to correct the formatting, ask questions if necessary and resubmit the manuscript. This early-stage quality control is instrumental to the integrity and reliability of the review process, as it yields a common format for the editorial team and the reviewers as they evaluate the many submitted manuscripts that we receive.

The EIC and the senior AEs have a range of external responsibilities that support the strategic positioning of *JSBED* as a respected, leading entrepreneurship journal. Once a submitted paper clears the EA, as described above, it is assigned to one of the two senior AEs. At this initial stage, the senior AEs read each paper and make an evaluation based on overall harmony with the journal's mission. These evaluations are facilitated in part by *JSBED's* new Entrepreneur and Practitioner Advisory Board (EPB). The journal's website lists the members of our EPB, which is composed of actual entrepreneurs from around the world who have founded, acquired, sold or are currently running entrepreneurial firms. These individuals are categorized internally based on their specific expertise areas, to facilitate our engagement of them for the purposes of evaluating a submitted paper.

The senior AEs may consult with the EPB regarding the practical implications of submitted papers. Members of the EPB do not review papers in the same way that a scholarly EB member would. Instead, consistent with the mission of *JSBED*, they evaluate the

relevance of a paper's implications with a view toward strong practical relevance and impact, which means they usually focus on the final sections of a research paper. After reviewing these evaluations from the EPB, the senior AEs can either reject papers or assign them to AEs, who then shepherd the review process with the EB. Papers rejected at this juncture are routed to the editor-in-chief (EIC) before a decision is communicated to the submitting author(s). The EIC reads the papers and the evaluations, and makes an informed final editorial decision.

The diverse expertise areas of the AEs at *JSBED* make for a comprehensive reflection of the field of entrepreneurship. Papers that clear the senior AEs are assigned to AEs based on individual expertise areas as well as operational backlog. Once an AE receives a manuscript, the AE reads the paper and then either rejects it or selects 2–3 *JSBED* reviewers. For papers sent to the EB, AEs select reviewers based on expertise area. AEs are also responsible for keeping the process on track with respect to deadlines and also communicating with authors. Papers rejected by the AEs are also routed to the EIC for a final editorial decision before the author(s) is/are notified.

For papers that merit publication at *JSBED*, the EIC undertakes one more final round of evaluation with the author(s). This round may include another review by the EPB. During this final round, the EIC reads the paper, the senior AE and AE evaluations, and the EPB and EB evaluations. The EIC may reject the paper, offer a conditional acceptance and/or have final feedback for the authors before choosing to publish the paper in *JSBED*.

Overall, this operational process is designed to maximize integrity, conceptual quality and practical relevance pursuant to *JSBED*'s mission. The structure and process are also designed to streamline operational efficiency in the interest of reviewing papers in a timely manner. We are grateful to the outgoing editorial team, led by EIC Jeffrey P. Vanevenhoven, for carrying *JSBED* through the last few years and providing a foundation for the new team to serve the entrepreneurship field and to execute this strategic pivot and restructuring of *JSBED*.

New editorial and publishing teams

The EIC, two senior AEs (João J. Ferreira and Thom Pittz) and five AEs (Craig Armstrong; Dennis Barber III; Frances Fabian; Artem Kornetskyy and Stephanie E. Raible) are full-time tenured or tenure-track professors in the field of entrepreneurship and all are active entrepreneurship researchers. As noted above, we expect to add another AE in late 2022 or 2023. Altogether, the expertise on the team covers all of the various and diverse sub-areas making up our field. As such, the new and comprehensive scope of *JSBED* is matched by the scholarly breadth of our editorial team. The EA (Karri Green) plays a pivotal role, as described above, and the entire EB and its many reviewers also bring a universe of experience to *JSBED*.

When it comes to reviewing papers, we prefer to rely directly on our EB's expertise and participation in the journal's mission as members of the *JSBED* team, instead of relying heavily on *ad hoc* reviewers. However, *JSBED* does have a large *ad hoc* reviewer database that we can utilize if needed. We extend an open invitation to scholars interested in joining the EB at *JSBED*. Over the year of 2022 and into 2023, we expect to continue to grow the EB strategically in order to build our administrative capacity to be on par with the number of submissions we receive each year. Our operational model is geared for efficiency, but it is important to the editorial team that all papers receive the benefit of full and focused consideration from expert scholars and practitioners.

Last but not least, *JSBED* has a strong publishing team supporting the operation, providing guidance and maintaining our strategic coordination with Emerald Publishing. Commissioning Editor Chloe Campbell works closely with the EIC on *JSBED* strategy and direction. Commissioning Assistant Sophie Reckless oversees EB changes and website

updates. The *JSBED* editorial office team includes Manmeet Nirmal, who oversees the ScholarOne system and works especially with papers that are going through the review process. The journal editorial office includes a Supplier Project Manager, Karthik Sivajumar, who oversees production, publication scheduling, issue composition and papers post-acceptance. All of these individuals play a vital role in the performance of *JSBED*.

It is my hope that this brief editorial illustrates *JSBED*'s new vision and explains the many strategic and operational changes we are making. It was a distinct pleasure to describe our team members and their various roles. Everyone has done a lot of excellent and hard work over the past several months as we have implemented these changes. I wish to thank the entire *JSBED* team for their service leadership.

Of course, the most important element of all is the many entrepreneurship researchers who submit their research to *JSBED*. We aim to support and develop the field of entrepreneurship by serving the scholars who populate this field. We intend to be the outlet of choice for you to publish your most interesting and practical entrepreneurship research. Thus, on behalf of the editorial and publishing teams, I invite you to contact us if you have feedback about how we can improve our mission and make *JSBED* even better. Please submit your best scholarly work to *JSBED*, and enjoy the excellent papers in this issue.

Patrick J. Murphy