Validating the quality of *The Case Journal* (TCJ)

On September 13, 2019, the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) will release a draft Journal Ranking List to the public. It is our sincere hope that TCJ will be among the new additions to that list. We submitted TCJ’s nomination packet in May 2019.

As many are aware, the ABDC Journal Ranking List is being used by many universities and accreditation groups to assess the quality of the journals where faculty research is published. Inclusion in the ABDC list has become important because the “status of researchers’ work, their career advancement and the international rankings of universities are closely tied to publication and citations in quality academic journals” (Tattersall, 2019). The pursuit of TCJ’s inclusion on the ABDC List is one of the ways we are working to achieve the CASE Association’s mission – “to foster high quality case research, writing, instruction, and publication and to promote appreciation of cases as respected intellectual contributions” (The CASE Association Mission, 2017).

To be included on the ABDC list, journals must complete an application and include supporting documentation and letters that provide evidence that the journal meets the following criteria:

1. the journal has reached the necessary quality threshold;
2. the journal adheres to scholarly principles such as scholarly peer review;
3. the journal is relevant to the discipline areas of the ABDC; and
4. the journal is not predatory (Falkiner-Rose, 2019).

We could easily make the case that TCJ had met and exceeded the expectations for the last three criteria on the list, but had more difficulty providing objective evidence that the journal had surpassed the quality threshold. Traditional academic journals demonstrate quality by providing evidence of their inclusion on externally validated journal ranking lists or by using citation metrics (such as journal impact factors), none of which exist for case journals.

Lacking traditional indicators of quality, we chose to solicit letters of support from key constituents. Submitters were invited to write about the importance of case research and writing and to highlight the unique contributions of TCJ. We received many thoughtful contributions from the CASE Association president, editorial board members, authors and others. Together these letters made a strong statement about both the quality and unique contributions of TCJ. Excerpts from some of the supporting letters are provided below.

On the topic of the importance of case research and writing, current CASE President, Miriam Weismann (2019), wrote:

> Case studies require substantial research rigor in order to gain publication. Cases are peer reviewed by highly qualified scholars and case writers in the field. All cases must represent true factual situations. While research articles have value at the scholarly level, case studies provide innovative learning and cutting-edge curriculum in the classroom. Case studies prepare students to undertake major managerial roles in the marketplace and engage in real business problem solving both domestically and globally.

Moreover, case studies provide an interactive learning environment. In addition to the importance of these analytical lessons, cases require students to develop team skills, as well as written and oral communications skills. Case studies likewise satisfy the requirements of Bloom’s Taxonomy providing for excellence in learning in the classroom.


*THE CASE JOURNAL*

Rebecca J. Morris
TCJ Editorial Board member and author, Heidi Bertels (2019), emphasized the AACSB’s recognition of cases as an external validation of the quality of case research and writing. She wrote:

According to the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business’ (AACSB) faculty qualification standards, cases are intellectual contributions classified as “teaching and learning scholarship” (See Table 2.1 in “2013 Eligibility Procedures and Accreditation Standards for Business Accreditation” published by AACSB). Most business colleges that I am aware of that focus on undergraduate education include cases as an acceptable form of intellectual contribution as long as they are published in a peer-reviewed journal, hence it is critical that case study journals be ranked so institutions can evaluate their relative quality.

Eastern Academy of Management Treasurer, Mariana Lebrón (2019), wrote about “aha” moments that were attributable to case research and writing:

[... ] the joy of scholarship is inherent in the fact that we must see what has not yet been seen, have the courage to engage in critical discussion with other scholars and executives, and then have the courage to motivate other scholars through research to embrace this new knowledge that can advance our business world today. The scholarship of teaching and learning in case research integrates theory and practice to create not only curricular-based “aha” moments of students’ discovering new ways for applying knowledge in real-world application, but also creating new doorways to scholars’ “aha” moments for discovering new knowledge that has been missed. [ ... ] Truly, case research, when legitimized, communicates clearly how scholarship is relevant and valuable to understand, analyze, and predict challenges facing our business leaders today.

Members of the Editorial Board of TCJ wrote about the way cases permit us to see the links between research and practice and the value of cases in teaching. They wrote:

Most of us have chosen to write cases because we wanted our scholarly endeavors to matter – to have an impact and/or to make a difference. Cases matter because they are used to teach our students to evaluate complex problems in a variety of settings. Cases provide students with opportunities to address ambiguities and incomplete information that is very similar to decision situations that are encountered regularly in business. Students learn how to think, plan and reason through cases. While much has been said about the lack of impact of management research on the practice of management, cases help students discover the links between research and practice. The effectiveness of business education would be significantly challenged if new cases were not developed to enable students to engage in the experiential learning provided by case studies. Morris et al. (2019)

Why should TCJ of all case journals be included in the ABDC Journal Ranking List? Our supporters were unanimous in their praise.

Miriam Weismann stressed the quality of our processes and partnerships saying:

The CASE Journal conducts very high-quality peer review and publishes only the most well researched and innovative cases. The prestigious Emerald Publishing Co. has partnered with the CASE Journal and serves as the publisher. The CASE Journal also publishes special issues devoted to current business trends and issues. Authors from all over the globe share business and cross-cultural issues.

Mariana Lebrón wrote about TCJ’s rigor and innovation:

[... ] I ask you to consider the innovative nature of this journal [TCJ] in its influence on novel research through rigorous development of cases, facts, data, and detail that makes the “real world” come alive in our minds as scholars and in our students’ minds as future executives and leaders. It is this TCJ rigor for quality analysis, challenging ideas, and high-quality peer review that characterizes ABDC quality journals. [ ... ] For me personally, I believe that TCJ innovative scholarship is the valuable kind that will always be used, remembered, and built on for a long-time to come.

The TCJ Editorial Board wrote about TCJ’s unique value proposition:

In editorial board meetings we have discussed the value proposition for the journal. We believe that TCJ differs from other case journals in the quality of the published cases, the journal’s developmental and supportive peer-review process and in the quality of the instructor support we provide in our peer-reviewed instructor’s manuals. Most of the cases published in the journal have been classroom-tested before publication to ensure that they deliver a high-quality learning experience to students.
As editor, I tried to demonstrate the ways TCJ fulfilled the specific criteria outlined in the application writing:

The CASE Journal (TCJ) is worthy of inclusion in the ABDC list for the following reasons:

1. Substantive business element test: The CASE Journal publishes cases in all business disciplines [...] Over the last four years, authors from eleven countries (Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, India, Japan, New Zealand, Philippines, United Kingdom, and the United States) published cases in the journal. Users around the world downloaded cases. The top ten countries by downloads were the US, Australia, China, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Ireland, United Kingdom, South Africa, and Germany.

1. Rigorous Review Process: The CASE Journal has an editorial board comprised of scholars from institutions around the world [...] All cases submitted to the journal are double-blind peer-reviewed by members of the editorial board and reviewers. Since 2018, 130 individual reviewers completed one or more reviews for the journal (298 total reviews were completed). Reviewers are rated on the number of reviews completed, the quality of the reviews, and the timeliness of the reviews. A “Best Reviewer” award is presented at The CASE Association’s annual meeting. TCJ differs from other case publications in that an Instructor’s Manual (IM) is required for all case submissions and the IM is rigorously reviewed along with the case.

1. Innovative Scope: The CASE Journal publishes cases, Compact Cases (an innovation pioneered by TCJ in 2015), New Case Forms, articles relating to case teaching, case writing, and case reviewing [...] Unlike other case journals, TCJ also publishes industry or technical notes as well. TCJ is currently working on two special issues for 2019/2020 publication. The first special issue focuses on cases with African-American protagonists, while the second highlights innovative case forms.

1. Commitment to Quality: The CASE Journal strives to maintain the highest quality in terms of the cases and articles we publish [...] We also recognize our obligation to develop and encourage new case writers. We host case writing workshops at the annual meeting of The CASE Association each May and at other case conferences [...] The CASE Journal is one of the top case journals in the world and is deserving of a place on the ABDC list. Morris (2019),[1]

Nominations for the ABDC list must be submitted by a business school faculty member located in Australia or New Zealand. Fortunately for TCJ, we had an author from New Zealand who graciously agreed to submit our nomination packet. Thank you, Eva Collins[2]!

We must also acknowledge the many contributions that helped get TCJ to this point. The quality of any journal is derived from the many individuals who have contributed their time and talent over the years and TCJ has been fortunate to have benefitted from many creative and dedicated contributors. Thank you to:

- The CASE Association for creating and supporting TCJ.
- Past TCJ Editors Herb Sherman, Peggy Naumes and Gina Vega[3] for establishing the editorial policies and guidelines that resulted in a quality publication.
- Present and past TCJ Editorial Board members for upholding our quality and ethical standards in blind peer review.
- Reviewers for critical yet constructive reviews to significantly improve the quality of submissions.
- Authors for submitting their very best work to TCJ and for diligently working on revisions to further improve the quality of that work.
- Emerald Publishing Group for all of its support for TCJ. Many thanks too to the many people at Emerald (Claire, Gabi and Carla) who directly work to publish and promote the journal.

Next steps

The next steps require patience on our part. Appointed panels of academic experts will review all submissions. A draft journal ranking list will be publicly released in mid-September with the
final 2019 ABDC Journal Ranking List to be announced early in December 2019. We believe that TCJ represents the apex of quality business case journals and is worthy of inclusion in the ABDC list and are hopeful that the review panels will agree. Watch the CASE Association website and Emerald’s website for updates on this influential process. Let us plan to celebrate this notable milestone in TCJ’s history at the next CASE Association Annual Meeting in Portland, Maine on May 13-16, 2020!

In this issue

This issue includes four cases: two compact cases and two traditional cases (see Table I) focused on a wide variety of companies, locations and issues. Each case has a strong IM providing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table I</th>
<th>Cases in this issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Case title and target audience</strong></td>
<td><strong>Authors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humans, monkeys and diesel fumes; Oh my! COMPACT CASE</td>
<td>Nai Lamb, Katherine Karl and Olivia Young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Million Dollar Gamblers: a case of embezzlement in South Whitehall Township COMPACT CASE</td>
<td>Jillian Alderman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnsonville Sausage LLC: finding new opportunities beyond the pork commodity markets</td>
<td>Keith Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norilsk Nickel: the longest corporate war in a leading Russian Company</td>
<td>Olga Kandinskaia, Alla Dementieva, and Olga Khotyasheva</td>
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effective teaching strategies, theoretical linkages and complete answers and analysis to all discussion questions. TCJ IMs have been rigorously peer reviewed to ensure that adopting faculty can teach these cases as well as the authors. Enjoy!

Notes

1. An edited version of this list became the executive summary for our application to the ABDC Journal Ranking List.

2. Eva is the Executive Director and Associate Dean of Research for the New Zealand Institute of Business Research, Waikato Management School, University of Waikato. Her case is Eva Collins et al. (2016).

3. Herb Sherman was the founding editor and served from 2004 to 2006. Margaret (Peggy) Naumes served as editor from 2006 to 2009. Gina Vega served as editor from 2009 to 2016.

References


