

New SAGE White Paper Argues Business Schools Should ‘Hack the Status Quo’ in Business Research

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THOUSAND OAKS, CA (January 3, 2023)—SAGE, an independent academic publisher focused on developing resources that make impact, released a white paper identifying critical gaps in the metrics that business schools use to evaluate research.

Co-authored by Dr. Usha Haley, professor of management at Wichita State University, and Andrew Jack, a global education editor for the *Financial Times*, “Measuring Societal Impact in Business & Management Research: From Challenges to Change” examines the challenges of measuring societal impact in business research. Pulling from surveys of business school academics from the Academy of Management, SAGE, *Financial Times*, and *Times Higher Education*, the authors review the commonly used measures of scholarly impact and address their concerns, including policies and practices of academic journals. They conclude with recommendations for a more responsible research environment within the business school ecosystem.

“We have found that research tends to be measured by its scientific quality rather than by its impact on society,” said Dr. Haley. “Our goal is to move the dial towards ways in which societal impact could become more central to the assessment of business research.”

Key takeaways from the report include:

- While historically academics in management have seen their work as being most influential within their field, the survey found that 54 percent consider wider impacts as either strongly or intensely important.
- 59 percent agree that interdisciplinary research—research that breaks out of the management-only silo—is more important than purely disciplinary research. However, “interdisciplinary research is also more difficult to publish.”
- Those surveyed still see traditional markers of impact—specifically, publishing in journals with high impact factor—as the most used proxy for academic standing in their field.

Amid this background, the white paper’s authors find that the business school ecosystem is beginning to “hack” the “publish or perish” research culture. For example, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the major global accreditation body for business

schools, prioritizes both intellectual contributions and the impact of those contributions in accreditation standards.

The authors provide a suite of recommendations for providing measurements of impact, including:

- Refining citation data to distinguish between good and bad references and self-citation
- More recognition by administrators to acknowledge impact outside of academia
- Involving more practitioners in research design to ensure greater relevance of eventual findings
- Harnessing text-mining tools to connect published research with relevant societal initiatives (such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals)

“SAGE believes that the research we produce can enable current and future business practitioners to make positive social impact and that metrics should reflect that success,” said Kiren Shoman, senior vice president, editorial, at SAGE Publishing. “We are thrilled to share this report in hopes that our work continues to support business schools in addressing persistent societal problems and facilitating social change in order to make the world a better place.”

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