
A Vision for Responsible Research in Business and Management

-Striving for Credible and Useful Knowledge

A White Paper Co-Authored by the Community for
Responsible Research in Business and Management

Jerry Davis
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White Paper Content

(Consultation Draft RRBM.NETWORK)

Executive Summary

Vision 2030

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Current Research Eco-system

Science for a Better World

Community for Responsible Research in Business and Management

Accounting and Finance

Rashad Abdel-Khalik, Franklin Allen, Ulrich Hommel, Maureen O'Hara

Management

Mats Alvesson, Jerry Davis, Thomas Dyllick, Bill Glick, Peter McKiernan, Katrin Muff, Howard Thomas, Anne Tsui

Marketing

Mary Jo Bitner, David Reibstein

Operations Management

Serguei Netessine, Christopher Tang

Deans

Ingmar Bjorkman, Hongbin Cai, Gerry George, Xiongwen Lu, Ira Solomon, Xiaobo Wu, Bernard Yeung, Sri Zaheer

Institutions

Jonas Haertle (PRME), Dan LeClair (AACSB), Matthew Wood (EFMD), Claire Preisser (ASPEN, BSP)

Community for Responsible Research in Business and Management

16 senior scholars, 8 deans and 3 institutional supporters

5 business disciplines, 23 universities and 10 countries

Collectively, they are:

- Intellectual leaders of their fields
- Lead journal editors and association leaders
- Disciplinarily and regionally diversified

White paper on RRBM.NETWORK

What is Responsible Research in Business and Management?

- Responsible research produces **credible and reliable** knowledge with either direct or indirect **usefulness** for addressing problems important to both business and society
- Based on the belief that “**business can be a means for a better world**”
- White paper: What, How, Who, Why, and So What?
 - System level change on the research ecosystem

Vision 2030

“In 2030, business and management schools worldwide are ...produc[ing] well-grounded knowledge on pressing problems. Both schools and scholars are committed to the *principles of responsible research*... Research has helped ... to develop effective systems leading to high economic performance, great innovations, positive employee and customer wellbeing, a clean environment, and strong communities. Many schools have contributed valuable knowledge to support humanity’s highest aspirations, e.g., poverty alleviation; access to food, clean water, and education; a green environment, gender and social equality; economic growth and fair wealth distribution...”

Background: Two Core Issues

Results - Credible, reliable and trustworthy

- Rigorous but not reliable – non-reproducible results
- Questionable research practices – threat to integrity

Knowledge - relevant and useful for practice

- Topics of research very distant from practices or challenges in business and society
- Publication numbers and citation counts as primary measures of success

**“Without the assurance of credible research findings, the question of relevance is irrelevant”
(white paper, p. 9)**

Principles of Responsible Research

1. *Service to society*
2. *Stakeholder involvement*
3. *Impact on diverse stakeholders*
4. *Valuing both basic and applied contributions*
5. *Valuing plurality and multidisciplinary collaboration*
6. *Reliable knowledge*
7. *Broad dissemination*

Principles of Responsible Research

1. Service to Society

- *Business research aims to develop knowledge that benefits business and the broader society, locally and globally, for the ultimate purpose of creating a better world.*

2. Stakeholder Involvement

- *Business and management schools value the involvement of stakeholders who play critical roles at various stages of the research process, from selecting problems to creating impact on practice.*

3. Impact on Diverse Stakeholders

- *Business and management schools measure and reward research that has a positive impact on diverse stakeholders, especially recognizing the importance for business and society.*

Principles of Responsible Research

4. Value Both Basic and Applied Contributions

- *Business school deans, journal editors, and other stakeholders respect and recognize contributions in both theoretical and applied research.*

5. Value Plurality and Multidisciplinary Collaboration

- *Business school deans, senior leadership, ... value diversity in research themes, methods, forms of scholarship, types of inquiry, and especially interdisciplinary collaborative research to reflect the plurality and complexity of societal problems.*

6. Reliable Knowledge

- *Business research implements sound scientific methods and processes, acknowledging different standards of reliability in deductive and inductive work.*

7. Broad Dissemination of Discoveries

- *Business and management schools value diverse forms of knowledge dissemination that collectively advance basic knowledge and practice.*

Principles of Responsible Research



Current Research Ecosystem: Persistent and Systemic Institutional Problems

Entrenched and inter-twined norms, practices and incentive structures at all levels of the business school research ecosystem

B-school reputation based on faculty publications in journals defined as prestigious based on self-referential criteria

Within academics, rewards are clear and self-sustaining, but benefits to the public are not so clear

Pressure to conform – rankings and assessments - hard to change by any one group or any one school

Actors and Possible Actions toward Vision 2030

1. *Journal editors and publishers*
2. *Scholarly association leaders*
3. *University and school leadership*
4. *Business school associations and accreditation agencies*
5. *Funding agencies and governments*
6. *Scholars*
7. *Other stakeholders: alumni, businesses, students*

Possible Actions: Scholarly Groups

1. Journal Editors and Publishers

- a. Publish research important to business and society...
- b. Emphasize research context, phenomena...
- c. Publish replications, negative findings, and nonsignificant findings

2. Scholarly Association Leaders

- a. Issue professional commitment...to a higher aim of service to society...
- b. Identify ...opportunities for research with impact...
- c. Promote applied and impactful research in their mission statements...
- d. Encourage inter-disciplinary research...

6. Scholars

- a. Commit to pursue scholarship that contributes to ...
- b. Engage in responsible review of other scientists' manuscripts
- c. Follow the principles of responsible science in their roles as authors, reviewers, editors, educators, and evaluation committee members...

Possible Actions: Other Groups

3. Univ Leaders, Deans, Department Heads, Senior Scholars

- a. Develop a vision ...
- b. Design promotion and tenure criteria....
- c. Expand the metrics for assessing research contributions ...
- d. Revamp the PhD program....

4. Business School Associations and Accrediting Agencies

- a. Include impact of research in assessment standards...
- d. Share best practices...

5. Funding Agencies and Government

- a. Broaden the criteria for funding decisions ...
- b. Expand the criteria for assessing research accomplishment...
- c. Funding agencies provide grants on studying grand challenges....

What about the “Do Nothing” Option?

Falling behind on the educational mission

- “Fail to prepare students for the changing business landscape”.

Slow to meet the challenges of technology, globalization and emerging markets

- New industries, new organizational forms, new work arrangements, negative externalities (inequality, un- and under-employment, sustainability)

Legitimacy and survival of business schools at risk

- Global competition (140K business schools), declining enrollment, increasing cost, MOOCs, corporate universities, increasing call for impact, accountability and transparency, talent exit

Call to Action

**“Responsible
research for better
business and a
better world.”**



Current Initiatives to Improve Research Credibility

Center for Open Science offers the Transparency and Openness Promotion (TOP) guidelines

SMJ calls for repeatable results with emphasis on data accessibility and transparency

MOR policies of replication, data accessibility and two stage review process (pre-approvals) to prevent the problem of post-hoc hypothesizing and cherry picking

Also *JIBS*, *AER*, *OBHDP*, *SIOP*, *AEA*, etc.

Current Initiatives to Improve Research Usefulness

UK Research Excellence Framework 20% social impact

UK Stern Report – 35% on social impact

U.S. NSF funding criteria – science and social impact

Journal initiatives: AMJ, JMkt, AMD, M&SOM, POMS

Engaged research – e.g., Van de Ven co-production

RRBM Community: Current Actions and Future Ideas

- Panel discussions at association meetings, university workshops and open forums
- Responsible research “jam”
- Deans and editors retreat
- Pioneer schools
- RRBM awards
- Accreditation standards
- Media publicity

Discussion Questions

- Is RRBM realistic?
- Is RRBM really good for science?
- What might be the downside of RRBM?
- Who or which groups should be added?
- Any other warning, advice, or suggestion?