Some helpful sources for prospective authors in *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*

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At *Asia Pacific Journal of Management (APJM)* we receive many queries from prospective authors about publishing in *APJM*. In response, we have been running a series of articles that aim to assist prospective authors in that endeavor.¹ This paper briefly summarizes those *APJM* articles along with some other helpful publications that have appeared elsewhere in the management literature so authors will have a quick reference to this work (cf. Ahlstrom, 2011b).²

Aims and scope

APJM has published three articles that have discussed the journal's aims and scope at some level (Ahlstrom, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a), one of which was primarily dedicated to that topic (Ahlstrom, 2011a). This is important for prospective authors

¹The *Academy of Management Journal* is also running a series of seven editorial articles on publishing in *AMJ* in 2011 and 2012 that authors should find very helpful (e.g., Colquitt & George, 2011).

²It is impossible to mention even a small percentage of the many works helpful to management and organization scholars in their research. For some helpful instructions, review articles, and summaries of the research design literatures see Bono and McNamara (2011), Creswell (2008), Cummings and Frost (1985, 1995), Huff (1999, 2008), Ismail and Ford (2010), Kilduff (2007), Machi and McEvoy (2008), and Van de Ven (2007).

The *Asia Pacific Journal of Management* would like to announce our first impact factor as published by Thomson Reuters in their Social Sciences Citation Index. That impact factor for 2010 (the most recent year) was 3.36, placing *APJM* in the top 18 management journals, just after the *Strategic Management Journal* and *Personnel Psychology*. Thanks are due to all of *APJM*'s Senior Editors, the Editorial Advisory and Review Boards, our reviewers, and of course all of our authors for their hard work on behalf of the journal. Thanks also go to our former Editors-in-Chief Mike Peng of UT-Dallas, and Andrew Delios and Kulwant Singh of the National University of Singapore for all their previous (and continuing) efforts on behalf of the journal. *APJM* would also like to recognize the hard work of our managing and copy editors, Rachel (Rae) Pinkham in Texas, USA, Saraswathi (Sara) Ramaswamy in Chennai, India, and Jurgen Torres, in Manila, Philippines. Thanks also go out to Dean T.J. Wong of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Faculty of Business, as well as Professor Garry Bruton and Dean Homer Erikson, of the Neeley School of Business, Texas Christian University for their help and financial backing of *APJM*.

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to understand as *APJM* is still receiving a significant number of submissions that have little to do with theory in management and organizations, such as papers on using the Balanced Scorecard or describing the activities of a single firm. These topics are certainly interesting but prospective authors need to recognize that *APJM* (like most academic management journals) does not publish “how to” articles directed mainly at managers and supervisors (Ahlstrom, 2010c; Kilduff, 2007). Rather, we encourage papers that ask (and answer) research questions addressing or improving management theory, that is, questions first and foremost of interest to management researchers (e.g., Christensen, 2006; Christensen & Carlile, 2009).

Research published in *APJM* often includes the reporting of interesting conceptual or empirical results that are theory-driven, contribute to management theory, and are (potentially) useful to managers and organizations (Ahlstrom, 2010b; Fang, 2010; Stevens & Cooper, 2010). Textbook-type chapters and articles geared more for business magazines, or research that contributes primarily to disciplines other than management, such as economics, marketing and consumer behavior, accounting and finance do not fit the aims and scope of *APJM* (see Ahlstrom, 2010c, 2011a). Case studies that build and clarify theory are certainly welcome. But cases that simply explain something that is well understood by management academics and are geared more for teaching purposes should be submitted to journals that specialize in classroom-oriented case research such as the *Asian Case Research Journal*. For more information on case study research see Flyvbjerg (2006), Siggelkow (2007), and Yin (2009), and on building theory from cases, see Christensen and Carlile (2009), Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), and Suddaby (2006).

Introductions and research questions

Many papers' chances are hurt by having a weak introduction and a confusing (or no) research question (Ahlstrom, 2010b; Huff, 1999). For further explanation on introductions and research questions, prospective authors should refer to my editorial articles (Ahlstrom, 2010a, 2010b) which give several examples and summarize some other helpful works in this area.³ One such work is Scott Shane's (2008) interesting book *Illusions of Entrepreneurship*, which uses a research question to head each chapter, such as Chapter 3: Who Becomes an Entrepreneur? Other works include review and commentary articles that summarize and discuss potential research questions and future research in a particular area (e.g., Bhagat, McDevitt, & McDevitt, 2010; Fang, 2010; Hayton, George, & Zahra, 2002; Locke & Latham, 2009). For example, the Hayton et al. (2002) paper in *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice* has a long table listing articles on culture and entrepreneurship, with their research questions and findings.

On theory

Some work that is helpful in terms of defining theory and how to test and improve it include Christensen and Raynor (2003), Cummings and Frost (1985, 1995), and

³ For some additional good examples of introductions see Carney et al. (2009) and Meyer et al. (2009).

Sutton and Staw (1995). For additional examples of theory building in the organizational research field see Abbott (2004), Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), Rynes and Gephardt (2004), and Smith and Hitt (2005). Clayton Christensen's 2003 article in *Harvard Business Review* with Michael Raynor also provides a succinct explanation of the value of theory and how it is developed, tested, and improved. A submission to *APJM* should have a primary focus on theory: theory building, theory testing, or theory improvement.⁴ When an editor or reviewer tells an author that his or her paper “lacks theory,” it may be that the paper's research focus is only on management practice or describing a case while failing to provide good theory justification and contribution to theory (Ahlstrom, 2010c; Sutton & Staw, 1995).

On contributions

An author should also be sure that the submission makes a meaningful contribution to the literature (Ahlstrom, 2010b; Rynes et al., 2005). Just testing what is already well known without providing clear contributions or some new information is likely to lead to rejection in good academic journals (e.g., Kilduff, 2007; Rynes, 2002; Rynes et al., 2005). Additional guidance on contributing to theory is available in a number of sources in the management literature (e.g., Colquitt & Ireland, 2009; Corley & Gioia, 2011; Van de Ven, 2007; Whetten, 1989). For contributions to practice, some helpful works include Bartunek and Rynes (2010), Christensen and Raynor (2003), and Peng and Dess (2010). For some good discussion and examples of empirical contributions (as well as other contributions) see Meyer, Estrin, Bhaumik, and Peng (2009), as well as Peng, Li, Xie, and Su (2010), Rynes et al. (2005), and Su, Tsang, and Peng (2009). Authors should remember that their contributions, particularly those to theory and practice, should provide actionable insights for interested readers. More will be written on important topics such as contributions and the literature review in upcoming issues of *APJM* “(cf. Edmondson & McManus, 2007).

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⁴ It bears repeating that although theory is very important at *APJM*, it is not the only contribution that a paper should make. Submissions should suggest contributions to practice, and if data are collected, some empirical contribution should be provided. Others include contributions to research design and methods (Ahlstrom et al., 2009; Peng, 2004).

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