

ENTREPRENEURSHIP JOURNAL RANKINGS ACROSS THE DISCIPLINE

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we report on the results of a survey of 230 members of the Small Business Institute® and the U.S. Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship on journal rankings. The top four entrepreneurship journals were Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice, the Journal of Business Venturing, the Journal of Small Business Strategy, and the Journal of Small Business Management. Suggestions for improving the status of specialized entrepreneurship journals are provided.

Keywords: journal rankings, Small Business Institute®, U.S. Association of Small Business and Entrepreneurship

INTRODUCTION

Why do entrepreneurship faculty members engage in scholarly activity and publishing? Why should we be interested in journal rankings of entrepreneurship journals? This paper addresses these questions while presenting information about the perceptions of journal rankings by entrepreneurship faculty members.

At the core of scholarly research and activities (e.g., Chen, Gupta, & Hoshower, 2006) is the recognition that an assessment of such efforts should include an evaluation of the contribution to the field of study by that scholarly activity. The need to recognize the contribution revolves around personnel decisions in the areas of hiring, promotion, tenure, and salary increases (Chrisman, Chua,

Kellermans, Matherne, & Debicki, 2008; Park & Gordon, 1996) as well as instructional currency (Singh, Haddad, & Chow, 2007). In support of these needs, academics may access numerous conceptual definitions of scholarship (e.g., Gomez-Mejia & Balkin, 1992; Katz, 2003), and may peruse studies that have addressed numerous methodologies in attempts to measure the contributions that institutions and individuals make to the specific disciplines (e.g., Johnson & Podsakoff, 1994; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1992; Shane, 1997). The variability in conceptual definitions of what constitutes scholarship and the numerous methodologies of assessing scholarly effort notwithstanding, journal publications continue to be the most frequently cited component of scholarly output, and as a result, interest in

the area of journal rankings continues unabated (Katz, 2003).

Since entrepreneurship is an emerging or developing field (Busenitz et al., 2003; Wiseman & Skilton, 1999), one particular emphasis in the study of field specific journal rankings has been the attempt to identify journals that make up an acceptable forum for the exchange of entrepreneurial thought. In a series of early studies (MacMillan 1989; 1991; 1993), experts in entrepreneurship ranked related scholarly journals on the basis of appropriateness and record of contribution. While there were some positive and some negative changes in rankings from the initial research to the first follow-up study, most outlets had either recovered or increased their overall ranking score during the course of MacMillan's studies.

In the MacMillan studies, journals that were considered to be outstanding included the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Strategic Management Journal*, and *Journal of Business Venturing*. The next tier included *Management Science*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, *Harvard Business Review*, *California Management Review*, and *Organization Science*. Third-tier journals were *Sloan Management Review*, *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *IEEE Transactions*, *Organization Dynamics*, *Journal of High Technology Management Research*, *Journal of Small Business Economics*, and *Organization Studies*. Four journals were ranked in the lowest tier: *Journal of Technology Transfer*, *Journal of Small Business Management*, *International Small Business Journal*, and *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*.

More recent studies have confirmed these early findings. For example, using citation counts, Singh, Haddad, and Chow (2007) reported top-tier rankings for *Academy of Management Review*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Academy of Management Journal*, and *Strategic Management Journal*. They also report significant citation activity for *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice* and the *Journal of Business Venturing*. Chrisman et al. (2008) reported similar results for the top tier journals as well as "near top tier" rankings for *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice* and the *Journal of Business Venturing*.

Given the emergence of the possible top-tier status of *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice* and the *Journal of Business Venturing*, one may question the relative position of other journals in the field of entrepreneurship. Accordingly, this study was designed to address that question as well as whether the ranking of the aforementioned premiers had solidified. In the present study we seek to examine the relative ranking of entrepreneurship journals across a wide range of entrepreneurship researchers.

METHODS

In order to examine perceptions of journals in the field of management relevant for entrepreneurship, we began by creating a list of management and entrepreneurship journals. Katz's article on the history of entrepreneurship education (2003) and Gomez-Mejia and Balkin's article on the impact that journal rankings in management have on faculty pay (1992) were used as the primary sources for journals to include. A questionnaire was then developed which listed the journals and asked respondents if their departments considered the

journals to be “top tier” or not “top tier.” This was the strategy used by Gomez-Mejia and Balkin (1992). However, in order to allow greater variability in responses, a 9-point scale was used with 1 being “certainly not top tier” and 9 being “top tier” as opposed to a five-point scale of top tier or not top tier.

In order to maximize the possible response rate and survey as wide a range of entrepreneurship researchers as possible, a non-random sampling procedure was utilized. The survey was passed out to all individuals attending a luncheon at the 2007 U.S. Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE) and Small Business Institute® (SBI) meeting. This is a commonly used survey technique when seeking to examine results for a finite population, rather than the general population (Getz, 2007). This type of survey method has been previously used in medical (Spence, 2007), health care management (Carragher, Parnell, Carragher, Carragher, & Sullivan, 2006), marketing (Prendergast & Wah, 2005), education (Carragher & Buckley, 1996; Krieg, Simpson, Stanley, & Snider, 2002), psychology (Sawyer, 1991), entrepreneurship (Carragher, 2005), small- and medium-sized enterprise management (Carragher & Carragher, 2005; Carragher & Buckley, 2005), and human resource management (Carragher, Gibson, & Buckley, 2006) fields of study.

Surveys were distributed to an estimated 500 attendees. Of the 500 surveys distributed, 230 were collected with usable information on journal rankings. In addition to the journal rankings, information about faculty rank, associational membership, and demographic information was collected. The majority of respondents were male (75.5%); 58.5% were professors in management and entrepreneurship and 95.2% had earned a doctorate degree. On

average they were 54-years-old, had published .77 books and 24.2 articles, and had been a professor for 22.5 years. Of those responding, 63 identified themselves as USASBE members, 62 as both USASBE and SBI members, and 21 as members only of SBI. Eighty-four respondents chose to not identify their association membership.

ANALYSIS

The statistical data for the 50 general management and entrepreneurship journals are provided in Table 1. The top-ranked specialty journal in entrepreneurship was *Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice (ETP)*, followed by the *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Journal of Small Business Strategy*, and *Journal of Small Business Management*.

For the sub-sample of 146 who identified their associational memberships in Table 2 we have compared the results for the top four entrepreneurship specialty journals based upon associational membership—whether respondents were (1) USASBE members, (2) both USASBE and SBI members, or (3) SBI members in order to see if results were influenced by organizational affiliation. There are significant differences in terms of the responses of USASBE, joint membership, or SBI membership on three of the four journals. In all journals, the USASBE-only members were the most conservative while the SBI-only members provided the highest ratings, although the difference for *ETP* was not statistically significant at traditional levels ($t = 1.198, p = .235$). For the *Journal of Business Venturing* and the *Journal of Small Business Strategy*, the SBI and joint USASBE/SBI members did not provide significantly different ratings from one another at the .05 level of significance, but their ratings were significantly higher than those provided by USASBE members. For the *Journal of*

Table 1
Ranking of Entrepreneurship & Management Journals

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Academy of Management Journal	1	8.72	0.695
Journal of Applied Psychology	2	8.64	0.840
Academy of Management Review	3	8.55	0.926
Strategic Management Journal	4	8.10	0.991
Journal of International Business Studies	5	7.67	1.453
Harvard Business Review	6	7.06	2.092
Journal of Management	7	7.06	0.819
Personnel Psychology	8	6.88	1.988
Administrative Science Quarterly	9	6.71	2.391
Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice	10	6.65	1.583
Journal of Business Venturing	11	6.41	2.082
Journal of Small Business Strategy	12	6.22	1.759
Journal of Small Business Management	13	6.02	2.081
Journal of Applied Management & Entrepreneurship	14	6.01	1.323
International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research	15	6.00	1.542
Entrepreneurship and Regional Development	16	5.93	1.378
Case Research Journal	17	5.88	1.505
Global Business and Finance Review	18	5.83	1.316
International Journal of Family Business	19	5.71	2.416
Journal of Business Strategies	20	5.51	1.971
Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal	21	5.24	1.969
Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship	22	5.19	1.606
Journal of Entrepreneurship	23	5.04	2.116
International Journal of Sustainable Strategic Management	24	5.00	1.398
Journal of International Entrepreneurship	25	4.86	1.920
Family Business Review	26	4.73	1.795
Journal of International Business and Entrepreneurship	27	4.52	1.889
International Journal of Entrepreneurship	28	4.50	1.365
Small Business Economics	29	4.46	1.782
International Journal of Technological Innovation and Entrepreneurship	30	4.42	1.257
Organizational Dynamics	31	4.40	2.201
Small Enterprise Research: The Journal of SEAANZ	32	4.30	2.149

Table 1
Ranking of Entrepreneurship & Management Journals
Continued

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Venture Capital	33	4.26	2.317
Journal of Business & Entrepreneurship	34	4.17	2.062
Journal of Entrepreneurship Education	35	4.09	1.901
Entrepreneurship Innovation and Change	36	4.08	1.926
Journal of International Business and Enterprise Development	37	4.01	1.222
The Entrepreneurial Executive	38	3.73	1.241
International Journal of Entrepreneurship Development, Education & Training	39	3.69	1.480
Journal of Asia Entrepreneurship and Sustainability	40	3.59	1.287
Enterprise & Innovation Management Studies	41	3.55	1.151
New England Journal of Entrepreneurship	42	3.44	1.547
Small Business and Enterprise Development	43	3.42	1.278
International Indigenous Journal of Entrepreneurship Advancement, Strategy, & Education	44	3.40	1.780
Journal of Technology Transfer	45	3.35	1.259
Entrepreneurship Development Review	46	3.26	1.361
Journal of Enterprising Culture	47	3.25	1.708
Asian Journal of Business & Entrepreneurship	48	3.23	1.287
Journal of Private Enterprise	49	3.18	1.252
Business Journal for Entrepreneurs Quarterly	50	2.80	0.907

N = 230

Table 2
Comparison of scores based upon USASBE, Joint, or SBI membership

		Sig. differences	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice	1	None	6.32	2.205	0.292
	2	None	6.82	0.892	0.115
	3	None	6.90	0.700	0.153
	Total		6.62	1.572	0.134
Journal of Business Venturing	1	23	5.74	2.934	0.399
	2	1	6.80	0.855	0.116
	3	1	7.15	0.489	0.109
	Total		6.41	2.068	0.183
Journal of Small Business Management	1	23	4.86	2.004	0.261
	2	13	6.14	1.686	0.220
	3	23	8.10	0.301	0.066
	Total		5.89	2.028	0.172
Journal of Small Business Strategy	1	23	4.78	1.762	0.229
	2	1	7.07	0.835	0.110
	3	1	7.33	0.730	0.159
	Total		6.13	1.750	0.149

N = 146

1 = USASBE Member

2 = USASBE and SBI Member

3 = SBI member only

Table 3
t-Test Results

articles	t-test Sig.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Journal of Business Venturing	≥ 16	6.87	1.171	0.158
	< 16	6.00	2.556	0.301
Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice	≥ 16	6.73	1.473	0.187
	< 16	6.49	1.688	0.195
Journal of Small Business Management	≥ 16	6.06	1.934	0.242
	< 16	5.68	2.133	0.248
Journal of Small Business Strategy	≥ 16	6.62	1.800	0.230
	< 16	5.70	1.617	0.185

Small Business Management (JSBS), all three sets of ratings were significantly different. Because *JSBS* is published for SBI (whereas *JSBM* and *ETP* are affiliated with USASBE), these results were not expected. A comparison of the USASBE-only and SBI-only members did not provide any clear guidance as to why these results were found or why the USASBE-only members were more conservative in their ratings.

The results of the t-tests performed on journal rankings based upon publication levels and a median split (taken from 16 journal articles) are provided in Table 3. Of those surveyed, those who received more publications were also more conservative in their rankings than those who received fewer publications (difference = .6025). The average rating of the top four journals for the higher publishing group was 5.97; for the lower publishing group, it was 6.57. Those who received fewer publications rated *JBV* as the top entrepreneurship journal followed by *ETP*, *JSBS*, and *JSBM*; those who received more publications rated *ETP* as the top entrepreneurship journal, followed by *JBV*, *JSBS*, and *JSBM*.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Since 2003 there has been an ongoing debate about entrepreneurship education and research (Katz, 2008). As an emerging discipline, entrepreneurship departments are still uncommon at most universities. Fewer than 10% of the respondents worked in an independent entrepreneurship department, with a majority of the respondents located in a Department of Management. As seen in Table 1, the top general management journals still rate higher than journals that specialize in entrepreneurship, although entrepreneurship journals are making headway. As entrepreneurship continues to develop as a discipline the journals

should continue to increase in stature and be more accepted as A-level publications within schools of business across the country.

In 2003, Katz argued that the discipline of entrepreneurship education was a mature field but one that still trailed other business disciplines with regards to its legitimacy. Kuratko, on the other hand, has suggested that entrepreneurship as a field of study is legitimate, but that the field is not fully mature (2005). In 2005, there were over “2,200 courses at over 1,600 schools; 277 endowed positions; 44 refereed academic journals, mainstream management journals devoting more issues (some special issues) to entrepreneurship; and over 100 established and funded centers” (Kuratko, 2005, p. 583). The accumulated wealth of the positions and the centers exceeded \$440 million (Katz, 2003; Kuratko, 2005). However, Kuratko argued that entrepreneurship researchers still need to continue to fight for “respectability and leadership” (p. 587). He asked four key questions about the legitimacy of entrepreneurship: (1) how many departments of entrepreneurship exist? (2) how many faculty members gain tenure based upon their teaching and research exclusively in entrepreneurship? (3) how many entrepreneurship faculty rise to become deans? and (4) how many business schools rank entrepreneurship specialty journals as being top tier? The implied answers are that few schools of business include entrepreneurship journals on their lists of top tier journals, few deans come from entrepreneurship, few faculty members gain tenure from entrepreneurship research, and few stand-alone entrepreneurship departments exist (Kuratko, 2005). The results of the current survey research lend credibility to this, as fewer than 10% of the respondents came from an Entrepreneurship Department and general management journals

ranked higher than even premier entrepreneurship journals such as *ETP*, *JBV*, *JSBS*, and *JSBM*.

Kuratko writes that real “maturity and complete academic legitimacy of the entrepreneurship field has yet to be experienced” (2005, p. 587). Katz quoted these same questions and then wrote, “the attainment of legitimacy is the area in which entrepreneurship faces its greatest challenges in academia” (2008, p. 551). He argued that this was due to the noted instability in the market for entrepreneurship chairs, where faculty members with little or no interest in entrepreneurship are used to fill positions, and where the recent dissolution of the entrepreneurship division by a top 25 business school went unchallenged (Katz, 2008). Katz contends that the field of entrepreneurship is mature but not stagnant, moderately legitimate but with a long way to go to gain full academic legitimacy, and is increasingly central to the entrepreneurial passion found on campuses around the world (2008). Katz concludes that the legitimacy of entrepreneurship as an academic field of study “is stronger the farther one gets away from its home in business schools” (Katz, 2008, p. 553). Kuratko maintains that entrepreneurship educators need to be leaders in their respective schools of business, and take an active role in moving entrepreneurship into a leadership position in terms of curriculum development, research, faculty, and fundraising (2005). Entrepreneurship researchers should continue to study the ranking of journals within our discipline as well as across multiple disciplines and over time. We believe that within the next several years *ETP*, *JBV*, *JSBS*, and *JSBM* should become more widely accepted as top-tier publications, not just within the entrepreneurship discipline but also across all business disciplines. To examine

changes in the status of entrepreneurship journals over time, we propose that surveys examining journal quality should be performed at regular intervals as was previously done by MacMillan (1989, 1991, 1993). Future research should also examine in greater detail how factors such as job tenure, publication levels, and experiences with particular journals might influence faculty members rankings of particular journals. It is our expectation that the greater the positive experience a faculty member has had with a particular journal the more positive their perceptions would be of that journal, which could then lead to higher rankings for that journal.

Building on the suggestions of Katz (2003, 2008) to continue to increase the positive perceptions of entrepreneurship journals, we recommend that more entrepreneurship journals seek to be indexed with the Social Science Citation Index, be included in GoogleScholar.com, and offer full text access in EBSCO, Lexis-Nexis, Info-Trac, and ProQuest. These actions should increase the availability of cutting-edge entrepreneurship research while at the same time increasing the visibility of the journals. As the field continues to develop and mature, more departments of entrepreneurship should continue to develop, additional entrepreneurship centers should be funded, and young entrepreneurship faculty members should be able to gain tenure and promotion with research published primarily, or even exclusively, in entrepreneurship journals such as *ETP*, *JBV*, *JSBS*, and *JSBM*.

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