

What is applied research anyway?

The above-mentioned question brings no huge mystery. The respected Frascati Manual has a good answer for it. Applied research is original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge; it is, however, directed primarily towards a specific, practical aim or objective (OECD, 2015). It is about using the existing stock knowledge with the appropriate methodology towards a specific objective, which is usually related to the resolution of a practical problem.

It all would be simple, were it not for the unrestrained creativity of scientists to appropriate, interpret, (re)signify and transmute concepts. This is how the above-mentioned question tends to get different answers, which are influenced by the perspective and personal interest of respondents.

Many scholars advocate that every research in Administration is applied; after all, this is an essentially practical field. It does not mean, however, that executives and entrepreneurs will look forward to the latest edition of *Academy of Management Journal* or of RAUSP to solve their problems. There is a time and place for everything. It is expected that the significant amount of published articles in good scientific journals contribute for the advance of the administrative science. In some point, the accurate accumulated knowledge will serve as a basis for books, popular articles, lectures and consulting projects, reaching therefore its final destination.

However, there is an increasing unease regarding the functioning of the massive machine that generates such knowledge. Renowned researchers and academic leaders from several areas and places have been criticizing the system for two decades. They affirm that this powerful machine became wicked, too expensive, inefficient, obsessed with precision and focused only on its self-interests, ignoring the real world. There has been several propositions of diagnosis for a structural reform, which involved scientific journals, business schools, academic associations and certification and regulation entities. In short, it is necessary to redirect the system towards its original noble aim: to help managers facing challenges and building a better world.

Institutional changes are always difficult and time-consuming. It is necessary to overcome the interests of established groups and the inertia of embedded practices. Still, several initiatives towards the construction of bridges between theory and practice have been emerging, such as events that gather academics and practitioners, academic journals focused on managers and professional master and doctorate programs. Important agents, such as the *Academy of Management*, *Academy of Management Journal* and the *Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)* have been showing clear signs of alignment with new times.

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REGE would like to thank all the researchers that placed their trust in the journal and submitted their work for the evaluation. The guest editors would also like to thank all reviewers that contributed to this special issue with their precious time and knowledge.



Considering the context of change, it is important to invite all the readers of this special edition to consider an important aspect: the differentiation between applicable and applied research. Both are important. An applicable research can contribute to the transformation of reality in different ways. It can bring an original explanation of a new phenomenon or a new explanation for an already known phenomenon. It can still offer a new model to help organizations to solve problems or to benefit from business opportunities.

However, the current scenario seems to ask for the accomplishment of real applied research; i.e. the research that follows Mode 2 production of knowledge (observed by Michael Gibbons and his peers Gibbons *et al.* (1994) a quarter of century ago): it emerges from a relevant practical issue; it is developed collectively in a multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary way; it results in an effectively implemented solution; and whose quality is evaluated by groups composed of researchers and managers. In short, a research that is demonstrably relevant and accurate.

The conduction of real applied research is a significant challenge. It implies leaving the academia shelter in order to interact with players that have different mindsets, developing the ability to translate scientific knowledge to these players, and, specially, being open to learn from this practice. This is the path we started to follow.

Aligned with this idea, *REGE* has been accepting applied research papers since 2018. This special issue intends to contribute to the dissemination and development of applied research.

We have received more than 30 papers for this special issue, from Brazil and Latin America. After a careful process of double blind review, six were accepted, bringing a broad view of production in applied research in management, with articles from different regions, countries and research areas.

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