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The Construction and Contributions of "Implications for Practice": What's in Them and What Might They Offer?

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"Most reviewers' checklists of leading management journals list the criterion, "relevance for practice." Authors comply with this criterion by pointing out what implications their results might have for practice. Evidence in the form of successful implementations of the results in practice is not required. Essentially, the authors are only supposed to point out what implications practitioners, *as they socially construct them*, can possibly draw from their results. If the reviewers' construction of relevance is in accordance with the author's, the criterion of relevance has been met . . ." (Kieser & Leiner, 2009: 522–523; italics in original).

"All studies have limits. It is only in their combination that evidence reveals itself" (Rousseau, Manning, & Denyer, 2008: 506).

Are "Implications for Practice" sections in management journals as useless to practitioners as Kieser and Leiner imply? Are they, like a particular journal's required reference formatting, ultimately trivial to both science and practice? And if Rousseau and colleagues' observation is true, can a single study ever truly have meaningful implications for practice?

In 1997, Locke and Golden-Biddle empirically examined "how contribution is constructed" (1023) in management research texts. Specifically, they analyzed the introductory sections of journal articles to see how authors (1) locate their studies in a particular literature, and (2) establish that their findings make a contribution over and above that of previous literature. In other words, Locke and Golden-Biddle (1997) examined the rhetorical devices by which management researchers communicate their studies' contributions to *theory and research*. One main outcome of their work was revealing multiple features of article Introduction sections that, although always present, had not really been salient before.

In this article we examine the construction of contributions of management research to *practice and practitioners*. Like Locke and Golden-Biddle (1997: 1023), we focus on "situated microprocesses of language use," this time within the "Implications for Practice" (IFP) sections of manuscripts. To do so, we address five general questions:

1. How often do academics who publish in top-tier journals communicate implications of their research for practice?
2. To whom do academics address their recommendations?
3. What are the most common recommendations?
4. What are the intended outcomes of following implications or recommendations?
5. What are some of the rhetorical features of IFP sections?

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For each question, we also examine whether the answers vary over time and across journals. Based on our findings, we then offer several implications for *academic* practice that might be taken to enhance the future contributions of implications for practice in scholarly journals.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Since its founding in 1936, the Academy of Management has had a mission to improve the practice of management. In the inaugural (1958) issue of the *Journal of the Academy of Management* (now known as the *Academy of Management Journal* or *AMJ*), Editor Paul Dauten stated: "The Academy was founded to foster the search for truth and the general advancement of learning through free discussion and research in the field of management. The interest of the Academy lies in the theory and practice of management, both administrative and operative" (Colquitt & Zapata-Phelan, 2007).

From the beginning, the journal included some types of implications for practice. Mowday (1997: 1400) commented wryly on the form of these in early issues of *AMJ*:

> The journal was also a source of practical advice for managers, as this early contribution from "News and Notes" suggests: "The Industrial Relations News has recently issued a sharp warning regarding the giving of medals and awards to female employees for long service. Their study of this widespread practice concluded that: (1) making a fuss over their long stay in the company reminds the girls of their age; and (2) the more diamond and gold pins, scrolls, watches, and so on a worker sports, the farther over the hill she is" (News and Notes, 1960: 69). Today, many Academy members lament the fact that practicing managers don't pay attention to what is written in the journal. Back in 1960, one could only hope that they didn't.

Mowday's example suggests that the early advice offered by *AMJ* was not likely to have been based on extensive theoretical conceptualization or on findings from rigorous empirical research. In fact, most business school teaching prior to the 1960s lacked such a foundation.

The idea that theory and research might be useful for improving management practice was a fundamental conclusion of two influential reports that sought to improve the professionalism of business schools in the 1950s. These reports, funded by the Ford (Gordon & Howell, 1959) and Carnegie Foundations (Pierson, 1959), argued that business schools would benefit by moving away from a "trade school" model toward one based on the research traditions of mainstream academia (Crainer & Dearlove, 1999). In order to upgrade their research capabilities, business schools began hiring research-trained faculty from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and economics rather than faculty whose main qualification was prior business experience.

There is little question that since these influential reports were published, research has played an increasing role in the operations, and outcomes, of business schools. For years, however, questions have been raised about whether the emphasis on research has gone too far or whether the research that is produced is useful for practice (cf. Porter & McKibbin, 1988). Disillusionment with what is regarded by some as excessive preoccupation with theory and research (relative to teaching and practice) can be seen in such titles as "What If the Academy Actually Mattered?" (Hambrick, 1994); "How Business Schools Lost Their Way" (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005); "Bad Theories are Destroying Good Management Practices" (Ghoshal, 2005); and "The End of Business Schools? Less Success Than Meets the Eye" (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002).

Although management faculty disagree about such issues as the extent to which current management research is relevant to practitioners (e.g., Bennis & O'Toole, 2005, *vs.* Rousseau, 2009) or the extent to which it "should be" relevant (e.g., Latham, 2007, *vs.* Hulin, 2001), few disagree that top-tier management research is aimed primarily (some would say exclusively) at academics rather than practitioners (e.g., Hambrick, 1994; Oviatt & Miller, 1989). Moreover, considerably more emphasis is placed in top-tier management research on theory than practice (Colquitt & Zapata-Phelan, 2007; Golden-Biddle & Locke, 2006), and perhaps even more emphasis on theory than on empirical findings (e.g., Hambrick, 2007). In fact, only in the IFP sections of most journal articles are practitioners addressed at all.

Kieser and Leiner (2009) are correct that most top-tier journals ask for evidence of contributions to practice. But the fact that this section of academic journal articles is largely unexamined (a singular exception is Bartunek, 2007) indicates how little prominence it has had in comparison with theoretical and empirical contributions.

Thus, here we seek to describe how implications for practice are typically constructed. We do so by exploring the extent to which they are present in top-tier journal articles, to whom they are addressed, what they recommend, outcomes toward which they are aimed, and the kind of language used to make these recommendations. Our ultimate purpose in doing so is to offer suggestions on how such sections might be made more useful in the future.

METHOD

Sampled Articles and Time Periods

We gathered IFP sections from five management-related journals: *Academy of Management Journal (AMJ), Journal of Applied Psychology (JAP), Journal of Organizational Behavior (JOB), Organization Science (OS),* and *Personnel Psychology (PPsych).* These were selected because they are all high-quality academic journals that focus, at least in part, on operational and behavioral issues that are confronted by most organizational managers.[1] In addition, all five journals have—as part of their missions or editorial statements—the intent of publishing research relevant to real organizations and practicing managers.

For example, the *Academy of Management Journal* (http://www.aomonline.org/aom.asp?id=230) seeks manuscripts "that test, extend, or build strong theoretical frameworks while empirically examining issues with high importance for management theory and practice." The *Journal of Applied Psychology* (http://www.apa.org/journals/apl/description.html) publishes "articles that are conducted in either the field or the laboratory . . . so long as the data or theoretical synthesis advances understanding of psychological phenomena and human behavior that have practical implications." *Personnel Psychology* (www.personnelpsychology.com) publishes "applied psychological research on personnel problems facing public and private sector organizations," while the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* (http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/4691/home/ProductInformation.html) is concerned about both human resources policies and practices, as well as broader topics in organizational behavior, and *Organization Science* (http://orgsci.journal.informs.org/) seeks papers that "discuss findings in terms of improving organizational performance."

We selected two time periods—1992–1993 and 2003–2007—for study. The first was chosen because budding signs of a rising interest in research "usefulness" arose during the early 1990s. For example, OS was founded in 1990 to "enhance research relevance . . . encourage the joining of theory to practice, and anchor organization research in relevant problems" (Daft & Lewin, 1990: 2, 9). In that same year, Murphy and Saal (1990) published an edited volume examining the integration of science and practice in industrial and organizational psychology, and Dunnette (1990) made a plea for a revitalized "science-practitioner model" in the second edition of the *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. A few years later, Donald Hambrick delivered his memorable Academy of Management presidential address, arguing that our research could—and ought to—"matter more" in the world of organizational practice (Hambrick, 1994). Thus, we selected the years 1992–1993 as a "before" period—one where most published research would not yet reflect the ideas being advanced by Daft and Lewin (1990), Dunnette (1990), Hambrick (1994), and others.

In contrast, we chose the years 2003–2007 to reflect recent research in management and organizations. This was also a time period when academic–practitioner relationships were very salient, as indicated by a special research forum in *AMJ* on knowledge transfer between academics and practitioners (Rynes, Bartunek, & Daft, 2001) and by multiple AOM presidential addresses that emphasized academic–practitioner relationships (e.g., Bartunek, 2003; Cummings, 2007; Pearce, 2004; Rousseau, 2006; Van de Ven, 2002). By examining research studies at least a decade apart, we hoped to determine whether the concerns about research usefulness expressed in the early 1990s have translated into greater emphasis on practical implications in management research.

Our sample consisted of all *empirical* articles published in the five target journals during 1992–1993 and 2003–2007. We did not include articles that appeared in the front matter (e.g., "From the Editors" columns or introductory essays in special research forums) or articles that were purely conceptual (e.g., theoretical models), or methodological (e.g., new ways of calculating utility or reliability). These selection criteria resulted in a sample of 1738 articles.

Of these articles, 380 (22%) came from *AMJ;* 683 (39%) from *JAP;* 283 (16%) from *JOB;* 221 (13%) from *OS;* and 171 (10%) from *PPsych*. In terms of year published, 196 (11%) were published in 1992; 246 (14%) in 1993; 227 (13%) in 2003; 258 (15%) in 2004; 239 (14%) in 2005; 278 (16%) in 2006; and 294 (17%) in 2007.

Operationalization of Implications for Practice

We operationalized implications for practice as explicit statements that the findings suggested the value of implementing some type of activity or practice (with one exception, noted below). We fo-

[1] We did not include *Strategic Management Journal,* which is also a top-tier journal, because its focus is mainly on the types of issues confronted only by top managers (e.g., strategy).

cused on explicit statements for three reasons. First, we wanted to be sure that the authors truly were addressing practitioners, at least minimally, since previous research has shown that practitioners are highly unlikely to use research findings unless they are given a rather explicit explanation of what the results mean and how they might use them (Argyris, 1985; Mohrman, Gibson, & Mohrman, 2001). Second, those who attempt to "translate" important academic findings to practitioners (e.g., editors of practice journals or university publicists) are most likely to key on explicit statements concerning implications for practice. Third, our initial attempts at independently coding the articles revealed that there was considerable subjectivity in assessing whether a particular finding had implications for practice, if not explicitly stated. All three factors pointed in the direction of only including explicit statements as indicating implications or prescriptions for action.

We conducted an initial scan of the Discussion section and any subsequent sections (e.g., "Implications," "Limitations," or "Conclusion") that might conceivably include some sort of implications for practice. We began by conducting computerized searches for the terms "implication," "practic*," "appl*," "prescri*," in each article. If found, we determined whether the associated material indeed included implications for practice. If none of those terms was found, we searched further by reading the entire set of material. In some cases, we found statements about what managers or organizations "should" do, even if these were not clearly labeled as implications. We included these statements.

In order to be sure that we, as individual authors, had the same understanding of what material constituted implications for practice, we separately scanned 14 initial articles and picked out what we considered to be the segments of the text related to implications. We compared our selections and discussed any differences until we reached agreement. We then independently selected implications-related texts from 24 other articles (8 each from *AMJ*, *JAP*, and *JOB*) and checked the extent to which the words selected were in accord with each other's selections. To assess interrater reliability, we used the weighted kappa coefficient, a correlation that corrects for the degree of convergence between raters that would be expected by chance. We attained a kappa value of .83 with respect to agreement in words coded, a level that suggests "excellent" agreement according to Fleiss (1981). Because this level of interrater reliability indicated that we had substantially similar understandings of what constituted IFPs, we subsequently divided the remaining 1700 articles to determine implications for practice (or the lack of such) in each one. We then entered full citation information for each article and its IFP section (if any) as a separate case into an Atlas.ti database.

For each journal, one author coded three volumes and the other author coded the remaining four. This was done to prevent possible coding biases that might occur if each author were linked exclusively to some journals, but not to others. Whenever there were questions about a particular article, we checked with the other author to clarify meanings of particular codes. We tested our level of agreement in nine of the categories that were coded separately. Our average kappa over those nine categories was .82. As noted earlier, this represents an excellent level of agreement. Thus, for some of the later analyses, one of the authors coded the categories alone.

RESULTS

Frequency of Implications for Practice

Our first research question concerned how often top-tier journal articles include explicit implications for practice. Table 1 shows the percentage of articles by journal that included implications for practice, over the sampled time periods. Across all journals and time periods, 51% of the articles included explicit implications for practice.

Because we had three categorical variables (journal, year, and presence/absence of IFP sections), we used hierarchical log linear analyses as our primary analytic approach (cf. Gersick, Bartunek, & Dutton, 2000; Lee, 1999). Given our focus here, we will primarily discuss descriptive findings, simply alluding to results of the statistical analyses. However, all the preferred models resulting from the log linear analyses (i.e., the outcomes that best describe the relationships among the variables) are shown in Table 2.

Table 1 shows how often articles in each journal included IFP sections. Differences across journals were statistically significant; the proportion of articles with IFP sections ranged from 54% in *JOB* to 47% in *AMJ* and OS. There also were significant differences across decades, with 58% of articles

TABLE 1
Proportion of Articles With Implications for Practice by Journal and Time Period

Journal	Overall	1990s	2000s
AMJ	47%	27%	55%
JAP	50%	30%	58%
JOB	54%	40%	58%
OS	47%	46%	47%
PPsych	51%	34%	79%
All journals	51%	32%	58%

TABLE 2
Preferred Models[a] Resulting From Hierarchical Log Linear Analyses for Associations Among Journal, Decade, and Characteristics of Implications for Practice[b]

Preferred model	χ^2	G^2	*df*	p^c
Presence/absence of implications for practice	0.00	0.00	0	.00
Implications addressed to:				
Organizations [decade] [journal] [organizations][d]	15.11	14.83	13	.30
Managers [decade] [journal x managers][d]	14.31	14.96	9	.11
Types of recommendations				
Increase awareness [decade] [journal x increase awareness]	6.37	6.32	9	.70
Training [decade] [journal x training]	3.52	3.51	9	.94
Learning [decade] [journal] [learning]	18.61	20.09	13	.14
Design and structure [decade] [journal] [design and structure]	16.81	17.84	13	.21
Recruit/Select/Hire [decade] [journal x recruit/select/hire]	6.30	8.00	9	.71
Expected outcomes				
Productivity [decade] [journal x productivity]	7.92	7.62	9	.54
Satisfaction [decade] [journal] [satisfaction]	16.03	17.38	13	.25
Characteristic language				
Tentative [decade] [journal x tentative]	9.72	10.04	9	.37
Prescriptive language [decade] [journal x prescriptive language]	6.89	6.24	9	.65
Contingencies [decade] [journal x contingencies]	8.30	8.11	9	.51

[a] The preferred model is the outcome that best describes the relationship among the variables.
[b] Decade had two levels (1990s and 2000s); Journal had five levels, *AMJ, JAP, JOB, OS,* and *PPsych*; and each characteristic of implications for practice had two levels, presence or absence.
[c] The *p* values correspond to the likelihood ratio chi squares (G^2s).
[d] Brackets indicate main effects and interaction terms in the model. For example, [decade] [journal] [organizations] represents a model containing decade, journal and organizations as main effects. In contrast, [decade] [journal x managers] represents a model containing decade, journal and managers as main effects, plus an interaction between journal and managers.

from 2003–2007 containing implications for practice as compared with only 32% in 1992–1993. *PPsych* changed most over time (+45 percentage points), while *OS* (+1) changed the least.[2]

Stated Audience

The second research question involved the stated audience for the implications. Audiences ranged widely, with more than 60 categories of individuals, groups, or other entities to whom at least one implication was addressed (e.g., venture capitalists, hiring agencies, health care administrators, government agencies, part-time professionals, job analysts, etc.). The two most frequently mentioned audience categories were, by far, organizations (39%) and managers (35%), followed by leaders (8%), practitioners (8%), firms (7%), employers (4%), applicants (4%) and companies (3%).

Because the terms "firm, company, and organization" frequently overlapped or were used as synonyms, we combined these into one category ("organization" = 46%). For similar reasons, we combined "leader" and "manager" into a single "manager" category (37%).

The journals did not differ meaningfully in the extent to which they addressed implications for organizations; however, as displayed in Table 3, they did differ in how often they addressed managers, ranging from a high of 60% in *AMJ* to a low of 20% in *PPsych*.

Most Common Recommendations

The third research question investigated the most common recommendations embedded in the IFP sections. The five most frequent recommendations and how often they were given in the five journals are reported in Table 3.

Become More Aware

As Table 2 shows, the most common recommendation, given in 30% of IFP sections, was for managers, organizations, or other referents to *become more aware* of certain phenomena. Common synonyms for being aware included "attentive, cognizant, recognize, and be sensitive to." Illustrative excerpts include the following:

[2] This last figure is consistent with Daft and Lewin's (2008) acknowledgment that *OS* has stepped back from its original objective to "enhance research relevance . . . and encourage the joining of theory to practice" (Daft & Lewin, 1990: 2, 9), arguing that this goal "was unrealistic and has not been realized . . . *OS* has not been and should not strive to be an immediate source of knowledge for practical implications" (Daft & Lewin, 2008: 177).

TABLE 3
Most Frequent Responses Across Decade and Journal Regarding to Whom Implications Are Addressed, Types of Implications for Practice, Expected Outcomes of Enacted Implications, and Types of Language Used

	1990s					2000s					Totals					
	AMJ	*JAP*	*JOB*	OS	*PPsych*	*AMJ*	*JAP*	*JOB*	OS	*PPsych*	*AMJ*	*JAP*	*JOB*	OS	*PPsych*	Overall
Implications addressed to:																
Organizations	46	43	25	41	65	48	47	42	40	55	48	46	39	40	59	.46
Managers	50	11	25	59	18	61	27	49	50	20	60	24	45	52	20	.37
Recommendations for practice																
Increase awareness	29	19	32	47	41	38	24	37	31	24	37	23	36	34	27	.30
Training	18	33	18	12	47	24	32	27	9	33	23	33	25	10	35	.27
Learning	7	28	11	41	24	33	24	27	33	26	29	24	24	23	26	.27
Design and structure	29	11	14	35	18	32	23	27	31	28	32	21	24	32	27	.26
Recruit/select/hire	7	26	11	0	18	20	24	15	7	32	18	25	14	6	30	.20
Expected outcomes of practitioner action																
Productivity	50	48	25	35	53	47	43	48	34	66	48	44	44	34	64	.46
Satisfaction	14	11	7	0	29	11	11	13	5	17	12	11	12	4	19	.11
Type of language used																
Tentative	89	76	54	88	77	81	74	70	62	76	82	74	67	66	76	.74
Prescriptive language	50	43	46	65	59	60	46	68	62	58	58	45	64	62	58	.55
Contingencies	43	22	25	47	59	45	30	46	35	48	45	29	42	37	50	.38

> Special attention should be paid to . . . individuals with low neuroticism who usually appear . . . calm and capable of handling . . . turbulence. This "quiet" group consists of those who may become extremely vulnerable to falling into the trap of "throwing good money after bad" (Wong, Yik, & Kwong, 2006: 293).

> Managers can alleviate the negative impact of breach (of a psychological contract) by paying closer attention to employees' emotional states and putting out the "fire" before negative behaviors occur (Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007: 671).

There were significant differences across journals in how often increased attention was recommended, with this recommendation occurring in *AMJ* IFP sections 37% of the time, but in *JAP* IFP sections only 23% of the time. No significant differences occurred across decades.

Conduct Training

Two recommendations were made in 27% of the articles. The first of these was to *conduct training* of some sort. Examples of recommendations to *train* include the following:

> Given that people in many occupations appear to seek out and persist in highly challenging jobs, organizations could implement training . . . that could effectively reduce the associated strain (Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007: 448).

> To avoid absenteeism and possible turnover, we encourage firms to . . . provide high quality diversity training, by competent trainers, to eliminate potential sources of bias (Avery, McKay, Wilson, & Tonidandel, 2007: 895).

Once again there were significant differences across journals, with IFP sections in *JAP* (33%) and *PPsych* (35%) recommending training most frequently and IFP sections in OS (10%) recommending it least frequently. Decade did not have a meaningful impact.

Learning

The second recommendation made in 27% of IFP sections was the importance of learning or gaining additional knowledge in some area. Examples of recommendations to *learn more or gain more knowledge* include the following:

> Organizational members' dissent could lead to organizational learning and improvement. By not giving workers a voice, organizations stand to lose a potentially highly valuable source of constructive feedback (Parker, 1993).

> Individuals who desire to be successful in their careers would benefit from knowing that some influence tactics, especially ingratiation and rationality, appear to be effective means of influencing others (Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003).

There were no significant differences across journals or decade regarding this recommendation.

Design and Structure

The fourth most common recommendation (26%) was to (re)design or (re)structure something, including boundaries, reporting relationships, careers, and accountability. Examples include the following:

> . . . A redesign of career development may also prevent the fear of losing one's competence by facilitating resource gain perspectives (Neveu, 2007: 38).

> Managers can also foster trust by crafting formal reporting requirements to increase and broaden communication ties (Ferrin, Dirks, & Shah, 2006: 882).

There were no significant differences across journals or decade regarding this recommendation.

Change Recruitment, Selection, or Hiring Procedures

The fifth most common recommendation (23%) was to change recruitment, selection, or hiring procedures. Examples include the following:

> In their employment selection procedures, managers may consider applicants' levels of conscientiousness and extraversion, among other selection criteria, to improve customer service performance (Liao & Chuang, 2004: 54).

> The framework may also suggest some ideas for selecting group members or composing groups, given that issues such as self-monitoring, similarity, and personal OCB norms play a role in the development of OCB norms in the group (Ehrhart & Naumann, 2004: 972).

Journals differed significantly in the extent to which they offered implications related to recruitment or selection, with the highest percentages in the two psychology journals (25% at *JAP* and 30% at *PPsych*) and the lowest (6%) in *OS*. There were no differences across decade.

Intended Outcomes

Our fourth question concerned the intended outcomes of adopting the implications. Following Walsh, Weber, and Margolis (2003), we examined two of these: how often implications focused on economic objectives (specifically performance/productivity) and/or social ones (specifically satisfaction). An example of an IFP section focusing on performance/productivity follows:

> Interventions aimed at the fairness climate thus seem likely to improve organizational performance (Simons & Roberson, 2003).

The following is an example of an IFP section focusing on satisfaction:

> Despite the potential challenges, however, initiatives to increase job complexity and control over work time for nonmanagerial workers are worth the effort to develop, given that these factors are strongly related to satisfaction with work-family balance (Valcour, 2007).

Table 3 shows that performance was an intended outcome in 46% of the articles, while satisfaction was an intended outcome in 11%. There were significant differences across journals in terms of the number of IFP sections focusing on productivity (ranging from 64% in *PPsych* to 34% in *OS*), but no significant differences in a focus on satisfaction.

Rhetorical Strategies

The fifth research question involved some general rhetorical practices used by academics in writing IFP sections. We examined several of these.

Tentative Language

Because practitioners tend to prefer clear prescriptions over the tentative recommendations that academics typically are expected to make (e.g., Bazerman, 2005; Kelemen & Bansal, 2002), we examined the IFP sections for tentative language (e.g., the use of words such as "may," "speculate," and "potentially"). Table 3 showed that 74% of IFP sections exhibited tentativeness, as in the following examples:

> Managers may have little control over promises made by recruiters or senior managers

> involved in the hiring process, but they may be able to help employees make more realistic assessments of fulfillment (Ho & Levesque, 2005: 286).

> It is possible that if the system had been explained better, or differently, pay satisfaction may not have declined to the extent that it did (Brown & Huber, 1992: 307).

There were significant differences in tentative language across journals, (but not across decades) with *AMJ* authors using tentative language most often (82% of the time) and *OS* authors using it least often (66%).

Prescriptive Language

A second rhetorical feature pertains to how often IFP sections contain language suggesting that targets "should" do something (i.e., explicit use of words such as "should," "must," or "need to"). Examples include the following:

> Employees should focus more on reinterpreting a negative situation or focusing their thoughts on more positive experiences (Beal, Trougakos, Weiss, & Green, 2006: 1063).

> Because intervention activity affects parts of a work setting other than those changed directly by the intervention, practitioners must insure that the various work setting changes are congruent with each other (Robertson, Roberts, & Porras, 1993: 629).

Table 3 shows that 55% of the IFP sections including prescriptive language. There were significant differences across journals, with 64% of *JOB* articles using prescriptive language *versus* 45% in *JAP*. There were no differences across decades.

Contingencies

A third issue concerns the extent to which IFP sections include contingencies, moderators, or other qualifications to their recommendations. On the one hand, mentioning contingencies might be positively regarded by practitioners, given their sensitivity to context and the "uniqueness" with which they regard their own situation (e.g., Gephart, 2004; Highhouse, 2008; Johns, 2001). On the other hand, contingencies represent complexity and qualifications, which may deter readers from trying to apply them.

Contingencies were indicated by terms such as "on the other hand," "weighed against," "contingent upon" and "depends on." For example:

> The results of this study suggest that third parties who are supervisors are likely to use both autocratic and mediational behaviors to resolve disputes. Third parties who are peers, on the other hand, generally refrain from using autocratic behaviors; they rely instead on mediational behaviors (Karambayya, Brett, & Lytle, 1992: 435).

> It is clear that programs intended to increase employee retention should be customized for an organization's own workforce. Retention programs that might work for one organization might not work for another (Donnelly & Quirin, 2006: 73).

Table 3 shows that contingencies were mentioned in 38% of implications sections. Once again, there were significant differences between journals (but not decades), with the percent of IFP sections including contingencies ranging from 49% in *PPsych* to 29% in *JAP*.

Readability

The fourth rhetorical area of interest relates to the readability of IFP sections. To assess readability, we applied the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Formula (Farr, Jenkins, & Paterson, 1951) to every fifth implications section in our database, using the website http://www.addedbytes.com/tools/readability-score/. The formula for grade level readability is based on word length and sentence length, and reflects the number of years of education generally required to understand a text (e.g., a score of 8.2 indicates that the text is expected to be understandable by an average student in the 8th grade; Wikipedia).

Table 4 shows that none of the journals examined have easy-to-read implications sections. The average required grade level was 17.2. Differences across the journals (although not across decades) were statistically significant ($F(4) = 2.62$, $p = .037$); the grade level of the writing ranged from 18.8 in *AMJ* to 16.3 in *JAP*.

DISCUSSION

In a recent Exemplary Contribution in *AMLE*, Adler and Harzing posed the following question:

> Do today's universities, operating more than sixteen centuries after the founding of (the world's first university), remember that their

TABLE 4
Readability of Articles Across Journals and Decades

Journal	Decade	Mean Grade Level
AMJ	1990s	17.41
	2000s	19.02
	Total	18.83
JAP	1990s	17.00
	2000s	16.20
	Total	16.31
JOB	1990s	18.37
	2000s	17.59
	Total	17.71
OS	1990s	14.47
	2000s	17.16
	Total	16.62
PPsych	1990s	15.23
	2000s	16.93
	Total	16.52
Total	1990s	16.59
	2000s	17.31
	Total	17.20

> primary role is to support scholarship that addresses the complex questions that matter most to society? (Adler & Harzing, 2009: 72–73).

Assuming for the moment that this is indeed the role management academics wish to play in society, what do our analyses suggest about reasons for optimism and causes for concern, at least in terms of implications for practitioners in academic articles?

The number of top-tier articles that offer explicit implications for practice has risen notably since the early 1990s in four of the five journals examined. This trend suggests that greater importance is being attached to articulating implications for practice by authors, editors, or researchers (or some combination of the three). Although the underlying sources of this trend cannot be known for sure, it is consistent with both the increasing resource dependence of academics on the private sector (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997) and escalating calls both inside and outside academia for greater attention to research relevance or usefulness (e.g., Bartunek, 2003; Crainer & Dearlove, 1998; Cummings, 2007; Hambrick, 1994; McGrath, 2007; Mowday, 1997; Pearce, 2004; Rousseau, 2006; Rynes & Shapiro, 2005; Van de Ven, 2002).

In terms of mattering to *society*, IFP sections in the journals we studied are far more likely to address managers or organizations than other sectors of society (e.g., employees, customers, nonprofits, or government agencies) and to emphasize performance far more than satisfaction or related nonmonetary outcomes such as sustainability (Walsh et al., 2003; Hinings & Greenwood, 2002). Indeed, several prominent scholars have argued that these trends in management research and teaching may have been at least partially responsible for the dramatic enrichment of those at the top of the private sector relative to others (e.g., Ghoshal, 2005; Ferraro, Pfeffer, & Sutton, 2005), as well as the global economic crisis of 2008–2009 (Kochan, Guillen, Hunter, & O'Mahony, 2009).

Further, IFP sections are also not always written in ways that are likely to be immediately actionable. For example, while three of the most common implications suggested "doing" something (i.e., selection, training, or restructuring), two—to "become aware of" or to "learn" something—are solely cognitively oriented, and it could be argued that training is also more cognitively than doing oriented. Nevertheless, as we have noted above, stimulating active cognitive processing, as may happen in situations of greater awareness, learning, and training, is likely to be of value in itself.

In addition, although most IFP sections that provide implications also make prescriptions (i.e., 55% include "shoulds" or "musts"), they offer those suggestions tentatively, using language such as "may" or "possibly" 74% of the time, and adding contingencies or other qualifications to their recommendations 38% of the time. This writing style, which is consistent with academics' reluctance to make claims that go beyond their immediate data, probably discourages practitioners from imagining ways in which academic findings might be applied to a variety of situations.

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Finally, IFP sections are written at a level consistent with material found half-way through the first year of graduate school—a level that is probably too high for many managers, particularly in smaller organizations. Moreover, the actual grade level required to understand IFP sections may be greater than that implied by the Fleisch Index, since word and sentence length are often complicated further by specialized terminology or technical jargon. This situation is probably both cause and effect of the fact that IFPs are far more likely to be read by academics than by practicing managers.

What does this mean for the future of IFP sections in top-tier management journals? We discuss below some implications of our findings for academics pondering the appropriate role of implications for practice.

IMPLICATIONS FOR (ACADEMIC) PRACTICE

Although many academics would like to have a stronger impact on practice, there is considerable confusion (and even disagreement) about the extent to which this goal can, or should, be advanced by way of IFP sections. For example, Bartunek presented our preliminary findings at several small gatherings of management academics and held informal discussions about the promise—and peril—of IFP sections. A similar discussion was held at a well-attended AOM Professional Development Workshop in Chicago (Duncan, Issel, Fullam, & Sanders, 2009).

Participants in these venues raised several concerns about IFP sections. One involved whether they should be included at all in top-tier journal articles (as opposed to other formats). For example, one participant said, "Very few practitioners read these journals, so why should we address them directly in our articles? Why not focus on translations instead?" Another added, "If we're taking this world apart, why are we doing it? I liked the translations in the old *Academy of Management Executive*."

A second concern had to do with academics not feeling very comfortable with writing IFP sections. These concerns seemed to center on two issues: (1) concern about whether it is legitimate to offer implications for practice, given the types of data collected in much management research (e.g., convenience samples, low response rates, small samples, laboratory or survey research), and (2) uncertainty about whether academics are qualified to derive implications, given that many are quite removed from practice. The first concern was articulated by researchers who said, "I'm fearful that I'll go beyond legitimate generalizations of my data," or "In doing lab studies you're taking a slice of a slice of a slice of someone's life and trying to make conclusions. How could you draw implications for practice from that?" The second point was reflected in comments such as, "Unless I'm engaged in the field, what do I say?"

A third concern involved the perception that editors and reviewers are not very supportive of IFP sections. Illustrative quotes included the following: "Even though I'm speaking to something personally meaningful, there's institutional pressure not to (write implications)"; "Journals delegitimize implications for practice," and "There are institutional forces that prevent people from writing good implications sections." There was a related concern as well—that focusing on implications might reduce the academic credibility of an article: for example, "I don't want to reduce the theoretical legitimacy of my articles by adding practical implications" or "I'm concerned that I'd write them in a way that would seem too practical."

These are important concerns, even if we cannot respond adequately to all of them in this exploratory paper. However, we want to address several and offer recommendations that are designed to stimulate further discussion of the value and appropriate aims of IFP sections. We also suggest some ways in which they might be made more useful.

Should Implications for Practice Be Offered in Top-Tier Articles?

This is an important question, with credible arguments on both sides. For example, a major argument against IFP sections is that very few practitioners read top-tier research articles (Rynes, Colbert, & Brown, 2002). Thus, a case can be made that implications should only be offered in venues aimed directly at practitioner audiences (e.g., articles in bridge journals, such as *Industrial and Organizational Psychology* or translations in practitioner journals, such *HR Magazine*). A second argument is that many (some would argue most) individual studies have limitations that make offering implications a dubious venture (e.g., Greenberg, 2009; Rousseau et al., 2008; Starbuck, 2006). A third argument is that even if IFP sections are permitted or encouraged, they should not be *required* because not all research has to have immediate applications in order to be valuable (Daft & Lewin, 2008; Duncan, 2009; Hulin, 2001). Yet another argument against IFPs is that they risk making academics look condescending on the one hand, or naïve on the other (Duncan, 2009).

Taken together, these are powerful arguments for being cautious about offering IFPs. However, there are also good reasons for thinking hard about the implications of our research and articulating them to others. For one thing, at least some practitioners do read our articles and find them useful. For example, as of this writing 6% of the library subscriptions for *AMJ* go to nonacademic organizations. Further, Offermann and Spiros (2001) found that a sizable minority of AOM members who are full-time team development practitioners find top-tier Academy journals to be helpful (*AMJ,* 33%; *AMR*, 26%). They also found that practitioner familiarity with recent relevant literature was associated with better self-reported intervention outcomes, while Rynes and colleagues (2002) found that HR practitioners who read the academic literature are in fact more aware of important research findings.

There are other reasons as well, even if few practitioners read our articles directly. First, as Adler and Harzing (2009) point out, the public expects academics to pursue research in service of the broader society. Second, bad management practices tangibly damage human (and other) lives (Adler & Jermier, 2005; Ghoshal, 2005; Rousseau, 2006). Third, management is an applied discipline, even though it often appears otherwise in our top-tier research journals (e.g., Ghoshal, 2005; Hambrick, 2007; Oviatt & Miller, 1989). Fourth, transfer of research findings to practice is very slow (Rogers, 2003), in part because proponents of weak research claims often press their case with the general public more effectively than do purveyors of stronger claims (e.g., Abrahamson & Eisenman, 2001; Duncan, 2009; Mooney, 2006; Rynes, Giluk, & Brown, 2007).

Given the higher social purpose of management research at its best (e.g., the 2010 AOM meeting theme "dare to care"; Hambrick, 1994; Ouchi, Riordan, Lingle, & Porter, 2005), we agree with Abrahamson and Eisenman (2001: 67) that management scholars "must intervene strategically in the knowledge market." We believe that IFP sections have an important role to play in this regard. However, the legitimate concerns expressed about them suggest that careful attention should be given to several issues regarding their role and format.

What Are Appropriate Roles for IFP Sections?

The very words, "implications for practice," seem to imply that the main function of IFP sections is to facilitate implementation of a study's findings. However, as our results show, currently IFP sections are not written in ways that are likely to facilitate direct application of research findings (see also Bazerman, 2005, and Bartunek, 2007), or what Beyer (1997) called the "instrumental" use of research. As we have shown, most implications for practice are tentative, written in complicated language, and short on details about *how* to apply findings.

Although it is difficult to see how complicated language is an asset in communicating directly with practitioners, it seems to us that tentativeness in communicating recommendations for practice is entirely appropriate for much top-tier management research. For example, because most top-tier publications describe single or a small number of studies rather than meta-analyses or other forms of systematic reviews, the extent to which their findings are generalizable is in question (Hunter & Schmidt, 2005; Rousseau et al., 2008). Indeed, even the generalizability of meta-analyses or systematic reviews is in question when one gets to the level of the single organization because what applies "on average" may not work with specific individuals or organizations. Furthermore, being tentative gives practitioners some choice in how they decide to use research findings (or not). Such choice may be important in avoiding boomerang effects that can result if readers feel they are being given a "hard sell," particularly by someone with a doctorate degree (e.g., Cronshaw, 1997; Rogers, 2003).

These considerations suggest that the goals of most IFP sections in top-tier journals should probably be something other than instrumental use (i.e., direct application of research findings) and that a tentative tone is appropriate.[3] However, there are other ways (besides immediate application) in which IFPs can be useful to practitioners. For example, IFP sections may help to explain certain phenomena, show alternative ways of accomplishing something, teach something new, invite new ways of looking at an issue, provide an idea to "tuck away" for future use, and so on.

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More formally, Beyer (1997) argued that research can be used *conceptually*, for enlightenment and

[3] Less tentative, more prescriptive implications may be appropriate in practitioner and bridge journals, particularly when articles draw on multiple studies and examples from practice to make their claims.

as a lens through which to view a variety of phenomena. In conceptual usage, practitioners' actions are influenced less directly and specifically than would be the case with immediate implementation of a particular result. Instead, what is actually used over time turns out to be an "amalgam of various results and concepts, rather than the results from a particular study or researcher" (Beyer & Trice, 1982: 605). In addition, research can be used *symbolically,* to support a position that practitioners have already decided to take (Beyer, 1997).[4]

Viewed from this perspective, IFPs might be useful to practitioners in a variety of ways other than direct application. Consider the most common type of advice in IFP sections: to "be aware" of something. Such a recommendation is important because newly acquired awareness often leads to active rather than automatic processing of information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), which is crucial in nonroutine situations. A recommendation to increase awareness in a journal article is one of the few ways such conscious processing may be stimulated outside of major challenges (e.g., role transitions or a negative performance review; cf. Louis & Sutton, 1991), and may lead to important changes. Thus, a manager who first becomes aware of the existence and possible effects of "faultlines" (e.g., Lau & Murnighan, 1996) or "deep-level diversity" in teams (e.g., Harrison, Price, Gavin, & Florey, 2002) may begin to form teams differently, observe team behavior more closely, interact with team members more proactively, as well as note the results of attempted interventions. In other words, simply through awareness of research-based concepts and findings, practitioners may become both more reflective (e.g., Czarniawska & Sevon, 2005; Schön, 1984) and more effective users of both "Big E" and "little e" evidence (Rousseau, 2006).[5]

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What Scholars Can Do to Enhance the Usefulness of Implications for Practice

Link Findings of Individual Studies to Generalized Principles

With these broader ideas in mind, writers of IFP sections might take several steps to make conceptual, instrumental, or symbolic research usage more likely. One is to link immediate, specific findings to well-established, generalizable principles (Locke, 2007; Rousseau, 2009). For example, if a particular study shows that students with high intelligence test scores are more receptive to arguments about the importance of intelligence in job performance than students with low scores, the researcher might link this finding to the general principle of self-enhancement (or its opposite, self-protection). The IFP section might then indicate that this principle has been shown to explain a wide variety of power- and influence-related phenomena, such as escalation of commitment, similarity attraction, in-group favoritism, disinhibiting effects of power, and the persistence of hierarchical structures (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005). In this way, readers are encouraged to think about this specific finding in a broader way, and about the broader principle in a wider range of settings.

The strategy of linking specific findings to general principles has been used very successfully by MIT professor Daniel Ariely (2008) in his book, *Predictably Irrational*. The research base of this book consists almost entirely of laboratory experiments, which are generally regarded by practitioners (and some academics) as having very limited generalizability. In an attempt to lessen reader skepticism, Ariely (2008: xxi–xxii) takes a preemptive strike:

> If the lessons learned in any experiment were limited to the exact environment of the experiment, their value would be limited. Instead, I would like you to think about experiments as an illustration of a general principle, providing insight into how we think and how we make decisions—not only in the context of a particular experiment but, by extrapolation,

[4] Academics use research findings for symbolic purposes as well. For example, in their role as teachers, researchers use studies such as Huselid (1995) and Welbourne and Andrews (1996) to support the position that human resource management practices are important to organizational success (and hence, that it is important to teach HRM in an MBA curriculum). Also, a principal rationale for systematic reviews is that less thorough forms of review often exclude studies that do not conform to a particular epistemology, methodology, or point of view.

[5] Big E evidence refers to "generalizable knowledge regarding cause–effect connections derived from scientific methods," while little e evidence is "local or organization-specific, as exemplified by root cause analysis and other fact-based approaches . . . for organizational decision making" (Rousseau, 2006: 260).

> in many contexts of life. In each chapter, then, I have taken a step in extrapolating the findings from the experiments to other contexts, attempting to describe some of their possible implications for life, business and public policy. The implications I have drawn are, of course, just a partial list. To get real value from this, and from social science in general, it is important that you, the reader, spend some time thinking about how the principles of human behavior identified in the experiments apply to your life. . . . This is where the real adventure lies.

Note that in addition to taking a principles-based approach, Ariely (2008) also encourages readers to take an expansive, imaginative stance toward how they might apply the information in ways not mentioned by the author. This is an explicit invitation to encourage conceptual use of research findings that at the same time communicates respect, enthusiasm, and optimism to the reader rather than a "do as I say" tone (e.g., Cohen, 2007; Cronshaw, 1997).

Ariely's (2008) strategy has been quite successful beyond the academic population. At the time of this writing, *Predictably Irrational* is the best-selling book in three Amazon.com categories (cognitive science, cognitive psychology, and reasoning), and the 421st best-selling book in all categories. A similar strategy of linking specific experiments with broader research-supported principles was employed by Thaler and Sunstein (2009) in *Nudge,* which currently ranks third in both social sciences and decision making/problem solving, and 271st overall.

Provide More Information About Context

Beyond linking individual studies to general principles and considering a wider variety of ways of being useful to practitioners, there are other steps that might be taken. For example, Johns (2001: 31) recommends that authors provide more information about the context in which a study was conducted, because "properly conveying context contributes to telling a story" and makes research more interesting (Bartunek, Rynes, & Ireland, 2006; Davis, 1971). Johns (2001: 33) adds that although "some might argue that speculation about the effects of (context) is unwarranted, my response is that there is nothing to lose from such speculation and often something to be gained. As long as (authors) have fairly described the institutional and organizational context of their research, readers are free to make their own interpretations about their impact. Better than to keep it a secret!" By speculating about context, authors role model the kinds of behavior that support active processing of available information and show respect for readers by assuming that they will actively process the information in light their own context and experience—something both practitioners and academics do all the time (e.g., Czarniawska & Sevon, 2005; Rousseau et al., 2008).

Link Results to Practice

Another way in which IFPs could be made more useful to practitioners is to discuss how their results and previous relevant research correspond to the current world of practice (Duncan, 2009). At present, top-tier articles focus on situating findings relative to previous research or current theories, but not to practice. By indicating whether findings are consistent with or different from typical practice, researchers can spur instrumental, conceptual, or symbolic use of results among practitioners (e.g., symbolic use if findings are consistent with practice, conceptual if they are not).

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Authors might also get ideas about how to make their implications sections more useful by having practitioners read early drafts and react to both the study and its findings (Duncan, 2009). In this way, academic writers might discover new potential value in what they have found or, alternatively, begin to address some concerns that practitioners might have about its applicability.

Finally, to the extent that a study does seem to have implications for practice, these might be discussed or at least foreshadowed prior to the Discussion section, where most IFPs are found. For example, mention of practical applications might be made in the last line of the abstract, as well as in the final paragraph before the Theory or Literature Review sections of a manuscript (Duncan, 2009) so they are more fully integrated into the manuscript.

Will Taking These Steps Help?

At present, academics' knowledge of what practitioners find useful in IFP sections is indirect and inferential. For example, Kelemen and Bansal (2002) made recommendations based on a comparison of an *Administrative Science Quarterly* article by Brown and Eisenhardt (1997) to its practitioner-oriented translation in *Harvard Business Review* (Eisenhardt & Brown, 1998). Shrivastava and Mitroff (1984) outlined differences in academics' and practitioners' underlying assumptions or frames of reference to make suggestions for increasing utilization involving the design (e.g., study managerially controllable variables, match organizational theories with practitioner ideologies); methods (e.g., increased use of nonpositivist methodologies); and reporting of research results (e.g., increased connection of results to context and use of semantically rich language and metaphors that make sense to practitioners). Cloutier (2009) included a practitioner-oriented article at the end of her dissertation that was written at a lower reading level and in a more colloquial tone, gave real-world organizational examples, and was explicit about the types of practitioner problems to which the academic findings might apply. Her approach to this article was based on her prior experience in the managerial position about whose concerns she studied in her dissertation, and was modeled on articles appearing in two well-respected practitioner journals in the field.

Still, research that directly assesses practitioners' reactions to IFP sections is needed (see also Kieser & Leiner, 2009; Latham, 2007). As a modest first step toward finding out what kinds of IFP sections are most helpful to practitioners, we asked one of the research assistants associated with this study to review the IFPs in our Atlas.ti database to determine which ones he found most helpful. We also asked him to take notes about why various IFP sections were, or were not, useful. We considered him a good candidate for this "sample of one" because he had considerable real-world experience, was committed to doing careful work on this project, and had just been through the "indoctrination" of an MBA program that is quite applied in its orientation.

After reviewing the IFP sections, the student decided that, at a minimum, the articles had to include some type of *example* in order to be helpful. This narrowed the number of articles to 249. From this subset, he selected those he found useful (n = 75), which represented 8.1% of the articles containing implications (n = 887).

The implications he found most helpful were those that were clear and concise; incorporated concrete examples (especially of real companies); addressed nonobvious findings (such as managing across cultures); were easy to implement, and were tied to business value (reputation, retention, employee turnover, employee satisfaction, cost savings, revenue growth, risk mitigation, recruitment, and increased productivity). Implications that were not helpful were those that were too general or broad; had too many contingencies or were too complicated; used esoteric language; described problems but did not adequately describe solutions, and raised more questions than answers. Examples of implications he found useful included the following:

> A more comprehensive dispute resolution ... should provide a means to address perceptions of mistreatment, regardless of whether employees want to pursue them formally. For example, a comprehensive system might include employee training on constructive reactions to perceived mistreatment and on seeking the guidance of employee assistance programs. A comprehensive system could also include several dispute resolution alternatives to an appeal process, such as mediation and the use of an ombudsperson and systematic follow-up of the affected relations to ease recovery (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2004: 137).

> A positive reputation and an internally consistent organizational identity (OI) can be realized simultaneously through a meld of substantive management ... and symbolic management ... Examples of the latter include developing a clear mission statement, relating stories and myths that embody and edify the OI, crafting traditions and rituals that honor the organization's history and OI, and championing individuals who exemplify the OI; examples of the former include using the core values and beliefs in the mission statement as an active guide for decision making and practices, emphasizing product quality, institutionalizing high-involvement practices ... (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004: 20).

This, of course, is just one practitioner's viewpoint, and should be followed by a study using a large sample of practitioners (Kieser & Leiner, 2009; Latham, 2007). One objective of such an examination might be to identify a template for effective implications sections, analogous to the templates used to construct business best-sellers (see Clark & Greatbatch, 2004) or to stake claims of contribution in scholarly research (Locke & Golden-Biddle, 1997).

Will Any of This Matter, Since Practitioners Rarely Read IFP Sections Anyway?

As indicated earlier, although some practitioners do read top-tier management journals, other researchers are far and away the predominant audience for management research. Does this make the preceding suggestions futile? We think not.

Practitioners might actually be more inclined to read top-tier research if the preceding steps were taken. However, even if that did not happen, making changes such as these would make it easier for other *researchers* to see how the results might be applied in either their teaching or consulting practices. To the extent that authors make it easier for other researchers to see how their findings (when combined with previous research and well-documented principles) might change what they teach in the classroom or how they help in their consulting practices, researchers are more likely to act as conduits of research findings from journals to practitioners and future practitioners, such as students.

Other steps authors might take would be to offer "Implications for Teaching" (Rynes & Trank, 1999) or develop abbreviated teaching cases as appendices or "boxed" set-asides or sidebars. Or they might provide links to blogs that are available on-line and on which practitioners might comment. For example, some scholars interested in Positive Organization Studies have recently begun a blog, http://www.leadingwithlift.com/blog/, that describes scholarly research regarding Positive Organization Studies they are conducting in conjunction with real-life examples and current events.

Will Editors Welcome These Innovations?

The first author's experience in taking this article "on the road" suggested that authors are very skeptical about whether editors and reviewers will be receptive to any of these suggestions. These are very legitimate concerns; we too have had experiences with editors who do not believe that some (or all) of the preceding ideas are a good thing for the journals they represent.

On the other hand, our comparison of IFPs in 1992–1993 versus 2002–2007 suggests that on average, editors are more receptive to making changes that both reach out to practitioners and make research articles more interesting to other researchers than was the case prior to Hambrick's (1994) presidential challenge. Several journals have explicitly amended their mission statements and published multiple editorials encouraging authors to more fully contextualize their work, increase diversity in research methods and perspectives, and write in a more interesting manner (e.g., Bartunek et al., 2006; Gephart, 2004; Johns, 2001; Rousseau & Fried, 2001; Rynes, 2005). Although there is considerable diversity in editors' views and opinions (e.g., Daft & Lewin, 2008; Baruch, Konrad, Aguinis, & Starbuck, 2008), the climate seems more receptive to this now than in the past.

CONCLUSION

In sum, despite the very real limitations of single studies for drawing implications or making recommendations, we believe it is desirable for management researchers to continue the trend of placing increased emphasis on IFP sections. The point is not so much that managers or other practitioners should immediately implement IFP suggestions, but rather that it is important for academics to keep potential end-users in mind in our research conversations. Even research translations will be more effective if the original researchers, who are deeply involved in their areas of research, devote some effort to thinking about how their research might be used. A possible offshoot of encouraging this practice is that it might even lead to more useful research agendas in the future—agendas derived from the blending of science and practice (e.g., Daft, Griffin, & Yates, 1987).

Presenting research findings as if other researchers are the *only* end-users is hardly an ideal situation for addressing complex questions in a way that contributes to society (Adler & Harzing, 2009). Are we really content to have our work matter so little in terms of solving the world's important problems?

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