

# Letter from the Editor

Rebecca J. Morris

## Validating the quality of *The Case Journal (TCJ)*

On September 13, 2019, the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) will release a draft Journal Ranking List to the public. It is our sincere hope that *TCJ* will be among the new additions to that list. We submitted *TCJ*'s nomination packet in May 2019.

As many are aware, the ABDC Journal Ranking List is being used by many universities and accreditation groups to assess the quality of the journals where faculty research is published. Inclusion in the ABDC list has become important because the “status of researchers’ work, their career advancement and the international rankings of universities are closely tied to publication and citations in quality academic journals” (Tattersall, 2019). The pursuit of *TCJ*'s inclusion on the ABDC List is one of the ways we are working to achieve the CASE Association’s mission – “to foster high quality case research, writing, instruction, and publication and to promote appreciation of cases as respected intellectual contributions” (The CASE Association Mission, 2017).

To be included on the ABDC list, journals must complete an application and include supporting documentation and letters that provide evidence that the journal meets the following criteria:

1. the journal has reached the necessary quality threshold;
2. the journal adheres to scholarly principles such as scholarly peer review;
3. the journal is relevant to the discipline areas of the ABDC; and
4. the journal is not predatory (Falkiner-Rose, 2019).

We could easily make the case that *TCJ* had met and exceeded the expectations for the last three criteria on the list, but had more difficulty providing objective evidence that the journal had surpassed the quality threshold. Traditional academic journals demonstrate quality by providing evidence of their inclusion on externally validated journal ranking lists or by using citation metrics (such as journal impact factors), none of which exist for case journals.

Lacking traditional indicators of quality, we chose to solicit letters of support from key constituents. Submitters were invited to write about the importance of case research and writing and to highlight the unique contributions of *TCJ*. We received many thoughtful contributions from the CASE Association president, editorial board members, authors and others. Together these letters made a strong statement about both the quality and unique contributions of *TCJ*. Excerpts from some of the supporting letters are provided below.

On the topic of the importance of case research and writing, current CASE President, Miriam Weismann (2019), wrote:

Case studies require substantial research rigor in order to gain publication. Cases are peer reviewed by highly qualified scholars and case writers in the field. All cases must represent true factual situations. While research articles have value at the scholarly level, case studies provide innovative learning and cutting-edge curriculum in the classroom. Case studies prepare students to undertake major managerial roles in the marketplace and engage in real business problem solving both domestically and globally.

Moreover, case studies provide an interactive learning environment. In addition to the importance of these analytical lessons, cases require students to develop team skills, as well as written and oral communications skills. Case studies likewise satisfy the requirements of Bloom’s Taxonomy providing for excellence in learning in the classroom.



*TCJ* Editorial Board member and author, Heidi Bertels (2019), emphasized the AACSB's recognition of cases as an external validation of the quality of case research and writing. She wrote:

According to the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business' (AACSB) faculty qualification standards, cases are intellectual contributions classified as 'teaching and learning scholarship' (See Table 2.1 in "2013 Eligibility Procedures and Accreditation Standards for Business Accreditation" published by AACSB). Most business colleges that I am aware of that focus on undergraduate education include cases as an acceptable form of intellectual contribution as long as they are published in a peer-reviewed journal, hence it is critical that case study journals be ranked so institutions can evaluate their relative quality.

Eastern Academy of Management Treasurer, Mariana Lebrón (2019), wrote about "aha" moments that were attributable to case research and writing:

[...] the joy of scholarship is inherent in the fact that we must see what has not yet been seen, have the courage to engage in critical discussion with other scholars and executives, and then have the courage to motivate other scholars through research to embrace this new knowledge that can advance our business world today. The scholarship of teaching and learning in case research integrates theory and practice to create not only curricular-based "aha" moments of students' discovering new ways for applying knowledge in real-world application, but also creating new doorways to scholars' "aha" moments for discovering new knowledge that has been missed. [...] Truly, case research, when legitimized, communicates clearly how scholarship is relevant and valuable to understand, analyze, and predict challenges facing our business leaders today.

Members of the Editorial Board of *TCJ* wrote about the way cases permit us to see the links between research and practice and the value of cases in teaching. They wrote:

Most of us have chosen to write cases because we wanted our scholarly endeavors to matter – to have an impact and/or to make a difference. Cases matter because they are used to teach our students to evaluate complex problems in a variety of settings. Cases provide students with opportunities to address ambiguities and incomplete information that is very similar to decision situations that are encountered regularly in business. Students learn how to think, plan and reason through cases. While much has been said about the lack of impact of management research on the practice of management, cases help students discover the links between research and practice. The effectiveness of business education would be significantly challenged if new cases were not developed to enable students to engage in the experiential learning provided by case studies. Morris *et al.* (2019)

Why should *TCJ* of all case journals be included in the ABDC Journal Ranking List? Our supporters were unanimous in their praise.

Miriam Weismann stressed the quality of our processes and partnerships saying:

*The CASE Journal* conducts very high-quality peer review and publishes only the most well researched and innovative cases. The prestigious Emerald Publishing Co. has partnered with the *CASE Journal* and serves as the publisher. *The CASE Journal* also publishes special issues devoted to current business trends and issues. Authors from all over the globe share business and cross-cultural issues.

Mariana Lebrón wrote about *TCJ*'s rigor and innovation:

[...] I ask you to consider the innovative nature of this journal [*TCJ*] in its influence on novel research through rigorous development of cases, facts, data, and detail that makes the "real world" come alive in our minds as scholars and in our students' minds as future executives and leaders. It is this *TCJ* rigor for quality analysis, challenging ideas, and high-quality peer review that characterizes ABDC quality journals. [...] For me personally, I believe that *TCJ* innovative scholarship is the valuable kind that will always be used, remembered, and built on for a long-time to come.

The *TCJ* Editorial Board wrote about *TCJ*'s unique value proposition:

In editorial board meetings we have discussed the value proposition for the journal. We believe that *TCJ* differs from other case journals in the quality of the published cases, the journal's developmental and supportive peer-review process and in the quality of the instructor support we provide in our peer-reviewed instructor's manuals. Most of the cases published in the journal have been classroom-tested before publication to ensure that they deliver a high-quality learning experience to students.

As editor, I tried to demonstrate the ways *TCJ* fulfilled the specific criteria outlined in the application writing:

*The CASE Journal (TCJ)* is worthy of inclusion in the ABDC list for the following reasons:

1. Substantive business element test: *The CASE Journal* publishes cases in all business disciplines [...] Over the last four years, authors from eleven countries (Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, India, Japan, New Zealand, Philippines, United Kingdom, and the United States) published cases in the journal. Users around the world downloaded cases. The top ten countries by downloads were the US, Australia, China, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Ireland, United Kingdom, South Africa, and Germany.
1. Rigorous Review Process: *The CASE Journal* has an editorial board comprised of scholars from institutions around the world [...] All cases submitted to the journal are double-blind peer-reviewed by members of the editorial board and reviewers. Since 2018, 130 individual reviewers completed one or more reviews for the journal (298 total reviews were completed). Reviewers are rated on the number of reviews completed, the quality of the reviews, and the timeliness of the reviews. A "Best Reviewer" award is presented at The CASE Association's annual meeting. *TCJ* differs from other case publications in that an Instructor's Manual (IM) is required for all case submissions and the IM is rigorously reviewed along with the case.
1. Innovative Scope: *The CASE Journal* publishes cases, Compact Cases (an innovation pioneered by *TCJ* in 2015), New Case Forms, articles relating to case teaching, case writing, and case reviewing [...] Unlike other case journals, *TCJ* also publishes industry or technical notes as well. *TCJ* is currently working on two special issues for 2019/2020 publication. The first special issue focuses on cases with African-American protagonists, while the second highlights innovative case forms.
1. Commitment to Quality: *The CASE Journal* strives to maintain the highest quality in terms of the cases and articles we publish [...] We also recognize our obligation to develop and encourage new case writers. We host case writing workshops at the annual meeting of The CASE Association each May and at other case conferences [...]

[...] *The CASE Journal* is one of the top case journals in the world and is deserving of a place on the ABDC list. Morris (2019),[1]

Nominations for the ABDC list must be submitted by a business school faculty member located in Australia or New Zealand. Fortunately for *TCJ*, we had an author from New Zealand who graciously agreed to submit our nomination packet. Thank you, Eva Collins[2]!

We must also acknowledge the many contributions that helped get *TCJ* to this point. The quality of any journal is derived from the many individuals who have contributed their time and talent over the years and *TCJ* has been fortunate to have benefitted from many creative and dedicated contributors. Thank you to:

- The CASE Association for creating and supporting *TCJ*.
- Past *TCJ* Editors Herb Sherman, Peggy Naumes and Gina Vega[3] for establishing the editorial policies and guidelines that resulted in a quality publication.
- Present and past *TCJ* Editorial Board members for upholding our quality and ethical standards in blind peer review.
- Reviewers for critical yet constructive reviews to significantly improve the quality of submissions.
- Authors for submitting their very best work to *TCJ* and for diligently working on revisions to further improve the quality of that work.
- Emerald Publishing Group for all of its support for *TCJ*. Many thanks too to the many people at Emerald (Claire, Gabi and Carla) who directly work to publish and promote the journal.

## Next steps

The next steps require patience on our part. Appointed panels of academic experts will review all submissions. A draft journal ranking list will be publicly released in mid-September with the

final 2019 ABDC Journal Ranking List to be announced early in December 2019. We believe that *TCJ* represents the apex of quality business case journals and is worthy of inclusion in the ABDC list and are hopeful that the review panels will agree. Watch the CASE Association website and Emerald's website for updates on this influential process. Let us plan to celebrate this notable milestone in *TCJ*'s history at the next CASE Association Annual Meeting in Portland, Maine on May 13-16, 2020!

### In this issue

This issue includes four cases: two compact cases and two traditional cases (see Table I) focused on a wide variety of companies, locations and issues. Each case has a strong IM providing

**Table I** Cases in this issue

Case title and target audience	Authors	Synopsis
Humans, monkeys and diesel fumes; Oh my! COMPACT CASE Audience: undergraduate students in upper-level management or business ethics classes	Nai Lamb, Katherine Karl and Olivia Young	In 2014, Volkswagen (VW), BMW, and Daimler funded an institute to conduct research to support their position that diesel engines are cleaner and safer than other fuel alternatives. One of the research studies conducted by the institute examined the effects of diesel fumes on humans and monkeys. Researchers put 10 macaque monkeys in sealed rooms and pumped in exhaust fumes from a Volkswagen Beetle for four hours. For comparison, another group of monkeys was exposed to fumes from an older Ford pickup. The monkeys were later anesthetized and examined to see what the fumes did to their bodies. Other tests involved willing human subjects who were exposed to similar conditions
Million Dollar Gamblers: a case of embezzlement in South Whitehall Township COMPACT CASE Audience: undergraduate and graduate students in business ethics, accounting or auditing courses	Jillian Alderman	Employee embezzlement is a common issue in limited resource organizations when adequate controls are not in place to prevent or detect fraud. In such organizations, personal financial hardships can drive individuals to commit crimes that are out of character. This case is a story of a respectable small-town couple implicated in a near million-dollar embezzlement scheme. Students are asked to consider what went wrong and propose solutions for the prevention of similar crimes. Lessons learned from this case emphasize the importance of ethical leadership, creating a strong ethical environment, and how small unethical acts can escalate over time
Johnsonville Sausage LLC: finding new opportunities beyond the pork commodity markets Audience: Undergraduate or graduate courses in business and agribusiness management	Keith Harris	Kevin Ladwig, Vice President, was concerned by the expanded production of ethanol, an attractive supplement to gasoline in the USA. Because most ethanol is processed from corn, expanded production of ethanol heightened the demand for corn. Since corn is a staple feed ingredient for animals, heightened demand for corn increased the cost of Johnsonville's raw material – hogs. In fact, the cost of feed was Johnsonville's major economic input in animal production from farrow to finish, accounting for up to 70% of the total production cost of hogs. The case introduces the nexus of food and energy markets and how the "Johnsonville Way" was used to convert an old idea into an innovation
Norilsk Nickel: the longest corporate war in a leading Russian Company Audience: undergraduate or graduate courses in corporate governance, business ethics or doing business in Russia	Olga Kandinskaia, Alla Dementieva, and Olga Khotyashaeva	This case study is a story of a dramatic corporate conflict at the Russian company Norilsk Nickel, one of the world's leading producers of precious metals. In 2008–2012, the company went through a painful conflict between the majority shareholders (oligarchs Mr Potanin and Mr Deripaska) for the control over the business. The case of Norilsk Nickel was indeed a crucial case for Russia which helped define the "rules of the game." In 2019, however, the situation looked prone to the escalation of the old conflict. The fact that from 2018 both oligarchs were under the US sanctions added further tensions

effective teaching strategies, theoretical linkages and complete answers and analysis to all discussion questions. *TCJ* IMs have been rigorously peer reviewed to ensure that adopting faculty can teach these cases as well as the authors. Enjoy!

## Notes

1. An edited version of this list became the executive summary for our application to the ABDC Journal Ranking List.
2. Eva is the Executive Director and Associate Dean of Research for the New Zealand Institute of Business Research, Waikato Management School, University of Waikato. Her case is Eva Collins *et al.* (2016).
3. Herb Sherman was the founding editor and served from 2004 to 2006. Margaret (Peggy) Naumes served as editor from 2006 to 2009. Gina Vega served as editor from 2009 to 2016.

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