



A year at the helm: Reflecting on roles, responsibilities and progress



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1. Introduction

It is a year since we took up the post of Editor-in-Chief (EiC) of the Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management (JPSM). It has been an interesting year with plenty of challenges, several surprises – some pleasing, but others less so – and several important developments. In this editorial we report on recent progress, and discuss the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the publishing process.

2. Strategy issues

2.1. Continuity and growth

Our long-term goal is to maintain the upward trajectory of the quality and standing of the journal, building its contribution to the field and its international reputation (Knight and Tate, 2016). The Journal was founded with a focus on purchasing and supply management (PSM) and has stayed true to its roots. The field of PSM is evolving rapidly, both shaping and being shaped by the overarching field of supply chain management. This goal means aiming for measured growth in the quality and quantity of manuscripts submitted and published (Knight and Tate, 2016). We prioritize quality, evaluated in terms of originality, rigor and significance. Importantly, articles need to have explicit academic and managerial significance to purchasing and supply management. The issue of rigor is diligently scrutinized.

Our first year has been focused on continuous improvement in all aspects of publishing at the Journal, including reviewing and editing manuscripts and procedures for timely processing from submission through to publication. There have been some snags with dealing with some manuscripts in the transition between editors and editorial offices but these are now all addressed, and mostly resolved.

For 2017, JPSM continues to be published in four issues per year, though the average number of articles per issue will increase. This increase reflects good news: the number of submissions to the journal is increasing, and the geographical spread of submissions is also on the rise. During 2017 we will review ‘supply and demand’ and quality and consider our policy for the number of articles and issues per year from 2018 onwards. For now, the acceptance rate remains fairly constant, and is consistent with other prestigious journals in the supply manage-

ment area. The Journal’s reputation has continued to climb with many authors, reviewers and Associate Editors (AE) promoting its significance to their departments and their deans.

2.2. Diversity

As promised, we continue to encourage diversity in research questions and methodologies. To support this, we have recruited more Associate Editors to better cover the range of methodologies and methods, and levels and units of analysis.

We hope the recent JPSM special issue (2016, issue 4) on ‘novel methods’, initiated in 2014 by Asta Salmi, Joanne Meehan and Aristides Matopoulos, and us when we were JPSM Associate Editors, will serve as an important resource for researchers and research supervisors in promoting innovation in the research process. In addition to empirical articles using novel (to PSM) methodologies, the issue includes a set of ‘Notes and Debates’ articles on specific types of methodologies including experiments, secondary data, and modeling. These articles and Notes and Debates have generated much discussion and are being read and circulated across many outlets.

2.3. Community

The relationship with IPSERA has continued to expand with both co-editors serving on its executive board. We greatly appreciate and value this relationship and will work to sustain, and indeed enhance it. We have continued to seek out and engage other professional associations such as the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals, the Institute for Supply Management, the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply and the International Federation of Purchasing and Supply Management as well as others. With input also from Associate Editors, both Editors have participated in panel presentations and discussion with these organizations in terms of alignment of goals and ways in which the organizations can work together to move the field of PSM forward.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Much has been written about what constitutes a good manuscript

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but there is less on what it takes to be a good academic and meet the needs of the growing academic community as it relates to publishing. [Guide and Ketokivi \(2016\)](#) called this “proper author etiquette”. Below, we highlight some of the issues we have encountered recently and set out JPSM policy in terms of what we believe can be expected from various stakeholders in the publishing process. The issues and expectations are explicitly related to the long term strategic goals for the Journal.

3.1. Resourcing

The number of submissions is rising. We are asking more of everyone, with rising expectations at every stage of the process – from quality of initial submission, to quality of reviews, guidance from Associate Editors, detailed response to reviewers. We have recruited more AEs and more reviewers. We still need more, responsive reviewers and would be pleased to hear from potential new reviewers or have reviewers nominated by authors, Associate Editors and other reviewers.

3.2. Contributing manuscripts and reviews: what if everyone were too busy?

Unfortunately, the JPSM editorial team is contending with a significant number of declined invitations to review manuscripts. This seems to be a common problem for journal editors as discovered during a recent Elsevier editor event and through many discussions with editors of other supply chain journals. Reviewing is an essential part of our job as academics. *If your goal is to publish in the Journal, academic etiquette requires that you should also be willing to serve as a JPSM reviewer!* ([Guide and Ketokivi, 2016](#)).

Academics should not expect to submit their paper to a journal without also expecting to review for that journal. This includes colleagues who are new to the academy. Submitting papers and yet refusing to review indicates a lack of respect for all those who take the time to deal with the submission, and a lack of collegiality. At JPSM we try to limit the number of review requests to four per year. However, when the reviewer pool is restricted by so many that ‘don’t have time’ the work falls disproportionately on those that do demonstrate commitment to the community. We want to reduce the frustration experienced by these supportive colleagues, the effort needed by handling editors to find suitable reviewers and the delays that declined invitations cause in the review process. Therefore *if you see JPSM as a potential outlet for your work, expect to receive requests to review for JPSM.*

Your help with this is much appreciated. From 2017, the EIC reserves the right to desk reject a manuscript if none of the authors on the manuscript volunteer their time to review for the journal or consistently decline review requests. With mutual consideration and collaborative effort we can, together, improve the academy, and it is the only way that we can maintain JPSM’s increasing impact and quality trajectory!

3.3. Authors: some requirements and requests

We have noticed a number of issues relating to authors’ behaviors and the work they submit to the Journal, all of which relate in one respect or another to ethics ([Guide and Ketokivi, 2016](#)). JPSM only publishes research which is both relevant and original. Problems with originality can relate to copyright or plagiarism, but can also reflect poor judgment about publishing multiple articles from one dataset. In this section we also discuss the need to disclose a manuscript’s history and to ensure the most has been made of any previous reviews.

3.3.1. Relevance

Make sure that there is a good fit between your work and the

Journal. Occasionally at JPSM a quick check by the editorial team for words like “purchasing”, “supply”, “procurement”, etc. reveals a lack of relevance to the PSM community! This lack of fit is the most common reason for a desk rejection (i.e. the paper is rejected without being sent out for review). The second most common reason that an article does not make it out to the review process is the lack of explicit managerial and theoretical relevance to PSM. As explained in our inaugural editorial ([Knight and Tate, 2016](#)), we welcome contributions ‘at the boundaries’ of the field. Just as we seek to encourage methodological diversity, we are keen to receive papers which bridge to other fields, disciplines or new (to JPSM) theoretical perspectives. We do however need authors to demonstrate the relevance of their work to the JPSM readership, so that the contribution can be effective in developing the field of PSM.

3.3.2. Copyright and plagiarism

We have encountered duplication of previously published material, sloppy re-wording, or missing references/citations. This most often involves self-plagiarism: re-using or misrepresenting material that has been used in the authors’ previous publications. Before a manuscript is passed along to an Associate Editor it is run through CrossCheck which is a software that detects plagiarism. The output of CrossCheck is a percent of material recognized in other published sources. There are times where the authors are unaware that their material is already available in the public domain – for example, posted on a conference website or as a working paper somewhere on the Internet. Such situations can breach copyright. Authors must only submit work when they are sure they are entitled to do so.

Each Cross-Check report is evaluated separately – a high percentage of recognized material could be perfectly legitimate, and conversely a very short item of recognized text could indicate a fundamental problem. Where the problem seems to be inadequate paraphrasing of past research, we may invite the authors to correct the problem and resubmit the manuscript. Similarly if we can see that the submission is a developed version of a conference paper, we will give the authors the opportunity to resolve the matter. At all times, the ‘burden of proof’ lies with the authors, who will need, for example, to negotiate to have working papers removed from websites, conference papers taken down from websites, etc. and then explain to us how they have dealt with the problem. In all other cases, unless we have been alerted to an issue by the authors in their covering letter, we will desk reject submissions. There is extensive advice on copyright and plagiarism available via JPSM’s publisher’s website (www.elsevier.com).

3.3.3. Disclosure about manuscript history and data

Transparency is key to ethical publishing. It is not uncommon to receive papers that have been rejected from other journals. Usually this is fine, but we have some advice for authors in this situation. Since the reviewer pool across in the PSM community is relatively small, a paper rejected from another journal may well be sent by us to a colleague who has previously reviewed the paper for another journal. Since time is so limited, reviewers don’t want to (and most likely will refuse to) review the same paper twice if the original comments have not been addressed. *Be considerate of the time of others!* Always take into account the comments and concerns of previous reviewers and editors before submitting to a journal. It is helpful to the JPSM editors if authors explain that the paper was rejected from another journal but changes have been made, and show the paper has practical and conceptual ties to PSM. In this case, the transparency can only benefit the authors. *Let us know upon submission the history of the article!*

It is also important to explain how the manuscript submitted relates to an empirical project and other papers – whether published, in preparation or just planned – based on the same project. We share concerns expressed by other editors on this issue and we also recognize the considerable pressure to publish experienced by academics. It can sometimes be difficult to judge how best to balance research inputs and

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