

## FROM THE EDITORS

# EXAMINING THE IMPACT AND ROLE OF SPECIAL ISSUE AND REGULAR JOURNAL ARTICLES IN THE FIELD OF MANAGEMENT

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One of the key ways in which many scientific fields (including management) develop is through scholarly journal publication (McWilliams, Siegel, & Van Fleet, 2005; Spencer, 2001). The top journals in a field serve as a collection and dissemination system, annually gathering in thousands of submissions that are then carefully evaluated and critiqued by reviewers. Ideally, this process plays out as a sort of intellectual Darwinism, with manuscripts that survive the peer review process being published by a journal and those not meeting the journal's standards being discarded.

Recently there has been a trend toward dedicating a relatively high proportion of journal space to topics that a subset of scholars have deemed as important to study. Issues featuring such topics are often labeled “special” (as compared to “regular”) journal issues. Because the way in which “scientific journals select the papers they publish has critical effects on both the development of individual scientists and of scientific fields” (Beyer, Chanove, & Fox, 1995: 1219), it is essential to explore how regular and special issues influence the

variety of goals that scholarly journals pursue. In this study we sought to answer two comparative questions: First, compared to regular issues, do special issues better promote the scholarly advancement of the field of management, as evidenced by their acceptance as a foundation upon which to build scholarly research? In other words, are special issue articles being cited more or less than regular issue articles? Second, do special issue articles generate different patterns of authorship than regular issue articles? In other words, do these issues constrict or expand the pool of authors of journal publications? In addition, we examined two goals that journals might seek to achieve with special issues: enhanced breadth and enhanced novelty of the work published. We sampled nine upper-echelon journals over 18 years, thus providing a comprehensive investigation of special and regular issue articles in the leading management journals.

### SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND JOURNAL PUBLICATION STRATEGIES

In the last two decades, scholars have increasingly relied on special issues in the management field. Consider the articles published between 1984 and 2005 in what are arguably the upper-echelon journals (Glick, McKelvey, Cooper, Huber, & Zmud, 1997; Jarley, Chandler, & Faulk, 1998; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Bachrach, & Podsakoff, 2005) in the management field: *Academy of Management Journal* (AMJ), *Academy of Management Review* (AMR), *Administrative Science Quarterly* (ASQ), *Journal of Applied Psychology* (JAP), *Management Science* (MS), *Organization Science* (OS), *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* (OBHDP), *Per-*

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*sonnel Psychology (PPsych)*, and *Strategic Management Journal (SMJ)*. Figure 1 reveals that in these nine journals, the proportion of special issue articles to regular issue articles has increased from 2 percent in 1984 to 10 percent in 2005 ( $F_{1,21} = 19.47, p < .001$ ), reaching a peak of almost 25 percent in 2000. Trend analyses reveal that the number of special issue article has been increasing over time (linear trend  $F_{1,20} = 193.35, p < .001$ ) and increasing at a faster rate (quadratic trend  $F_{1,19} = 87.25, p < .001$ ) than regular articles.

### Special Issues and Scientific Impact

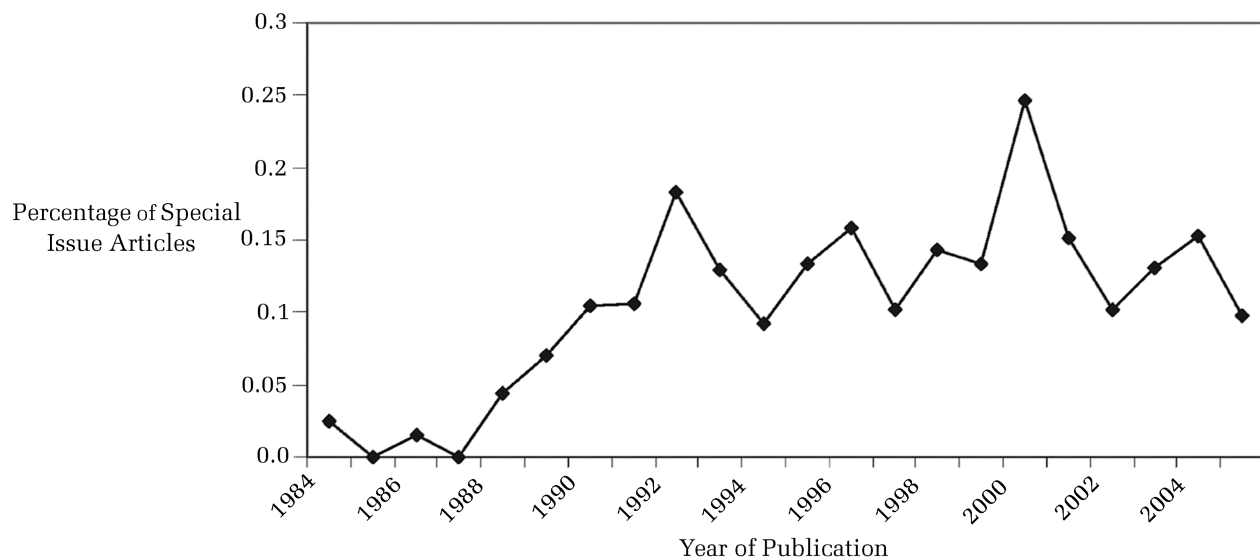
Although different reasons for publishing special issues have been advanced (DeNisi, 1994; Klimoski, 1992; Rynes, 2003; Tsui, 1999), perhaps the best-recognized goal is to enhance the scientific impact of work through focusing the field on the most potentially fruitful topics. The pursuit of a goal of enhancing scientific impact is in line with the argument that the field of management suffers from fragmentation (Zammuto & Connolly, 1984). Rynes (2003) addressed the issue of impact when she noted that the announcement of a special issue may (1) attract completed or almost completed manuscripts in an area of growing importance, (2) stimulate additional new research that would not have occurred if not for the special issue call, and (3) make the announcing journal more interesting to the extent that special issues highlight emerging areas of cutting-edge research. If special issues serve the field by designating areas that are ripe for scholarly exploration, then they should facilitate

the development of management by conferring legitimacy on certain emerging topics as worthy of study, which should broaden consensus and acceptance of these topics as central to the field. Greater agreement about and acceptance of a topic should spawn an increasing amount of research on the topic area, which should result in articles that are published in special issues having more impact.

However, it could also be argued that the traditional journal review and publication system may be better suited for maximizing the goal of scientific impact. This advantage may arise because special issues might reduce the diversity of scholarship present in a knowledge field and, subsequently, impede the field's ability to capitalize on research by restricting publication to certain topics. This dynamic could lead to work published in special issues being perceived as lower in quality because it was forced to fit within the specific domains defined for the special issues. In their review of special issues, Olk and Griffith (2004) reported that some of the journal editors they contacted expressed concerns about the quality of special issue articles. Others raised concerns that the acceptance rates for special issues might be higher than the acceptance rates for regular submissions to the same journals (e.g., Smith, 1999). If higher acceptance rates equate to special issues being less selective, articles of lower-than-typical quality could be published, and these articles would be likely to have less impact than articles in regular issues of the same journals.

Unfortunately, data on submissions and acceptance rates for special issues are largely unavail-

**FIGURE 1**  
Special Issue Articles in Nine Management Journals, 1984–2005



able. The only reported data with which we could compare regular and special issues come from *AMJ*. Using data reported by Tsui (1999) during her editorship at *AMJ* (June 15, 1996, to June 15, 1999), we determined that the overall acceptance rate for special issues was 16.1 percent as compared with 9.7 percent for regular submissions. In other words, special issues had a 66 percent higher acceptance rate than regular submissions. Thus, the limited data we have access to suggest that the acceptance rate for special issues is higher than that for regular issues.<sup>1</sup>

In short, we see competing perspectives regarding the influence of special issues on the scientific impact of articles. From one perspective, if special issues allow journals to focus attention on emerging topics of interest, granting these topics increased legitimacy and attention, articles in these special issue are likely to generate greater scientific progress and higher impact. On the other hand, if special issues reduce the diversity of perspectives in a journal and publish work that is seen as lower in quality than the work in regular issues, their impact is likely to be lower than the impact of regular issues.

**Impact over different types of special issues.** In addition to the possible general differences in the impacts of special and regular journal articles, unique patterns over different types of special issues may also exist. Special issues originate from various sources, and these different origins may lead to variations in scientific impact. Some special issues are generated from open calls for papers on a specific topic. Submissions are then subject to peer review, although the editors and reviewers may be unique to those special issues. Others grow out of miniconferences or sessions in larger conferences and typically contain papers by conference participants as their centerpieces (e.g., the “Jazz Improvisation and Organizing” special issue in *OS* in 1998). Finally, some special issues are comprised of articles from authors who were invited to write for them. For example, *SMJ*’s 1993 special issue “Organizations, Decision Making, and Strategy” was developed by having the journal’s editors ask certain individuals in the field to submit articles.

Although these submissions may still receive editorial review prior to publication, invited submission often signals a tacit commitment on the part of a journal to publish the resulting article.

The type of special issue may influence impact. Conference-based special issues are likely to have the highest impact. Such a special issue likely focuses on an emerging, topical subject and has a built-in audience familiar with the topic because of the conference connection; the prior visibility of the conference might lend these articles more impact. An open-call special issue may not have the same impact because it does not have the benefit of visibility lent by a conference focused on the special issue topic. An invited issue may have a lower impact because it benefits neither from association with a conference nor from vetting through a full peer review.

**Impact across journals.** Up to this point, our discussion has related to all nine focal journals. Yet effects may differ depending on which journal offers a special issue. Journals differ in their overall prestige or status. Although most authors would be pleased to publish in any of our nine focal journals, there is also some consensus in the field that the journals vary in prominence or prestige. A journal’s prominence in the management field could influence the impact of special versus regular issue articles.

The most prominent journals are likely to be regularly and faithfully read by most active academic researchers and to be more widely cited than other journals (Podsakoff et al., 2005). Given the unimpeachable reputation of the most prominent journals as well as their wide readership, the editor of one of these journals may have the discretion to pursue special issue topics that are not high profile but that, instead, give voice to scholarship that might otherwise not “fit” the journal (Rynes, 2003; Tsui, 1999). Motivations and consequences may, however, be different for less prominent journals. These journals may use special issues strategically to raise and broaden their profiles in the field. If the special issue area that a less prominent journal chooses is seen as topical and as tying into a fashionable research issue (Abrahamson, 1991, 1996), the special issue format may generate additional interest and readership that goes beyond the journal’s normal subscriber base. This greater readership is likely to increase the scientific impact of the special issue. This would suggest that journal prominence moderates the influence of special issues on scientific impact, with a stronger relationship being likely for less prominent journals.

<sup>1</sup> We applaud Tsui for her candor while serving as editor at a major journal. Many special issue editors were unable to provide information on the number of submissions or acceptance rates for special issues as they did not maintain submissions records after their special issues’ publication dates. In addition, the only special issue that has been completed during Sara Rynes’ term (up to this point) had an acceptance rate of 8.3%, which is nearly identical to the overall acceptance rate at *AMJ*.

### Special Issues and Author Inclusiveness

In addition to conferring legitimacy on topics to be investigated, special issues may also affect patterns of authorship. We see two distinct potential authorship patterns for special issues. First, prominent, well-published authors may dominate a special issue. Cole (1983) argued that consensus is advanced when a scientific field allows an insular set of individuals to serve as gatekeepers, thereby influencing what research gets published. Because a special issue stipulates a topic area to be researched, it is more likely than a regular issue to create conditions in which a particular social network of authors is influential. The special issue editor is likely a central player in this social network (which is why he or she was chosen to be the special issue editor in the first place), and the reviewers for the special issue and the authors who submit papers for it are part of this insular set. This situation should lead to a greater likelihood that the authors who publish in the special issue come from this insular set or social network of authors who have already published in prominent journals. Relative to regular issues, special issues may be dominated by authors who are already well-represented in our focal set of journals. Prolific authors will thus appear more frequently in special issues than in regular issues of such journals. Consequently, special issues may reflect decreased author inclusiveness.

On the other hand, if special issues are developed in part to achieve a goal of inclusiveness, then, relative to regular issues, they should enhance voice opportunity by providing representation to subgroups within the field whose work might not otherwise receive attention (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988). For example, Tsui explicitly stated that one goal of special research forums in *AMJ* was to “expand inclusion and to make the *Journal* accessible to all members of the Academy” (1999: 349–350). Similarly, Rynes (2003) noted that four former *AMJ* editors with whom she spoke expressed a desire for special issues to showcase work from smaller divisions, a goal that might also lead to a wider set of authors and topics being published. If this is the case, we would expect to see articles in special issues more frequently authored by scholars with little or no prior publication experience within this (albeit limited) set of nine prominent journals. From this perspective, special issues would promote greater author inclusiveness within the field. Thus, as we did with article impact, we see conflicting arguments—one suggesting that special issues will have more authors who are already well published in these jour-

nals, and one suggesting that special issues will have more authors who are less published.

**Author inclusiveness in different types of special issues.** It is also likely that the type of special issue will influence the type of author found publishing in it. Because invited special issues allow a journal to decide who receives an invitation to publish, the articles in such an issue are more likely to be authored by prominent, well-published scholars in the field (those whom Olk and Griffith [2004: 128] called the “in-crowd”), whose appearance in the journal will reinforce the legitimacy of the special issue topic or even of the journal itself. This scenario implies low author inclusiveness in invited special issues.

**Author inclusiveness patterns across journals.** Like article impact, authorship patterns are likely to differ depending on the overall prestige or status of a journal. As suggested earlier, the unimpeachable reputation of the most prominent journals may offer editors greater discretion to pursue special issues that give voice to topics that might otherwise not “fit” the journal (Rynes, 2003; Tsui, 1999). This extensive discretion may, by extension, also offer an opportunity to members of the scholarly community who might not normally publish in the journal, thereby increasing inclusiveness. In contrast, editors of less prominent journals may not have the same latitude. They may, instead, prefer to pull in previously well-published authors for their special issues to help raise the perceived legitimacy and readership of their special issues and journals. Consequently, journal prominence is likely to moderate the link between special issues and author inclusiveness patterns.

### Other Goals Related to Special Issues

Not all journals’ special issues are likely to focus on directly enhancing goals of impact or inclusiveness. Some special issues may be efforts to stake out or capture new ground for a journal, or to establish the journal as a place where the newest ideas are presented. Other special issues may be used to expand the range of topics being published in a journal (Rynes, 2003; Tsui, 1999), thereby increasing its appeal. Building on these ideas, one can view publishing novel research and expanding the breadth of research published as two proximal goals worthy of study.

Such proximal goals may ultimately influence more distal goals related to scientific impact or authorship. More specifically, we think each proximal goal is likely to influence one of our distal goals, but not the other. For instance, a special issue that embraces the proximal goal of being

viewed as novel or innovative might ultimately have considerable scientific impact, because it is seen as leading the institutionalization of its topic within the field of management (Mizruchi & Fein, 1999). In contrast, a proximal special issue goal of expanding journal breadth is likely to influence who publishes in the special issue. Expanding the breadth of a journal means accessing research topics that have not been among the foci of the journal in the past. If the journal has not published work on a topic, it probably has not published work by the authors who write about this topic, given that most scholars publish in only a couple of research niches. Thus, the breadth, or expansion, goal is likely to lead to submissions from authors who are less widely published in these prominent journals.

### Summary

To summarize, in our research we sought answers to the following questions: Do special issue articles achieve more impact than regular issue articles? Does the impact of special issue versus regular issue articles depend on the type of special issue or the prominence of the publishing journal? Do special issues lead to different levels of author inclusiveness than regular issues? Does the level of author inclusiveness inherent in special issues versus regular issues depend on the type of special issue or the prominence of the journal that is putting it out? Finally, when one considers only special issues, are the goals of higher impact and more author inclusiveness facilitated when special issues are seen as high in novelty or as capturing new territory for the journal?

## METHODS

### Data and Sample

Data for this study were collected from both archival and primary sources. The archival sources included the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) Web of Science's Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) database and a database of all the articles in a set of nine top management journals published from 1984 to 2001, inclusive. The primary source data were collected via a survey of current and former editors and editorial board members of the journals studied. The nine journals studied (*AMJ*, *AMR*, *ASQ*, *JAP*, *MS*, *OS*, *OBHDP*, *PPsych*, and *SMJ*) were selected because all appear on recent lists of prestigious scholarly management journals (Glick et al., 1997; Jarley et al., 1998; Podsakoff et al., 2005) and conform to high standards for peer review (Johnson & Podsakoff, 1994). In addition,

each of them published at least one special issue during the period studied. We excluded book reviews and rejoinders as these do not go through the same review process as regular submissions. Our citation analyses included 8,839 publication observations, whereas the authorship analyses had 18,648 author-level observations (the second number is greater because a single publication can have multiple authors).

### Measures

**Independent variables.** Numerous objective characteristics of published articles were measured, including *article length*, *number of authors listed*, designation as a *research note* or full article, and inclusion in a regular issue or a *special issue*; for special issue articles, we also measured whether an article was an *editorial comment* (editor introduction or summary) or a featured paper and the type of special issue the article was from: *open call* (representing approximately 60 percent of all special issues in our sample), *conference*, or *invited*. Although most of these data were straightforward and could be taken directly from journals' tables of contents, article length was not. Page size, the number of columns on a page, and font size vary among journals and even within some journals over time. To control for these differences, following a technique outlined by Wiseman and Skilton (1999), we multiplied each article's original number of pages by an index that converted the article to standard pages the size of those in the 1993 *Academy of Management Journal*. Because we collected citation counts at one time point and these counts are affected by time since publication, it was essential to control for the year an article was published. Failure to do so would have biased estimates of the impacts of articles published in different years. Thus, we included *year of publication* in the analyses.

Journal prominence was derived through data from four different assessments of the historical impact or perceived quality of journals: Hunt and Marsh (2002), Johnson and Podsakoff (1994), Starbuck (2002), and Tahai and Meyer (1999). All of these studies except for Hunt and Marsh used historical citation rates to assess journal impact and prominence. Hunt and Marsh surveyed 280 management scholars on the perceived quality and influence of 45 academic management journals. From these four sources, we computed a set of mean ratings of prominence in the management field; the most prominent journal from each source was rated as a 9 and the lowest as a 1. From most to least prominent, the journals (and their mean ratings)

were as follows: *ASQ* (8.25), *AMJ* (7.50), *AMR* and *JAP* (both 6.75), *SMJ* (5.25), *OBHDP* (4.25), *PPsych* (2.75), *OS* (2.00), and *MS* (1.75).<sup>2</sup>

**Proximal goals.** We procured measures of the extent to which special issues met the proximal goals of novelty and breadth by surveying 160 current and former editors, associate editors, and editorial board members of our nine focal journals. Individuals received a cover letter asking for their help in evaluating a small number of special issues (participants received about 3 special issues to review). Efforts were made to (1) match individuals to special issues that they would be familiar with (i.e., that were in their general areas of expertise), (2) exclude individuals from evaluating special issues they had edited or published in, and (3) have each of the 115 special issues sent to 4 individuals (for a total of 460 response sheets). With each special issue response sheet, individuals received the journal name, the special issue title, article titles (but not authors' names), and the year of publication.

Participants were asked to answer a set of questions that all began with the phrase, "Given the state of the management field at the time of this special issue, as well as the journal in which it was published, to what extent did this special issue. . .?" *Novelty* was measured with two questions ( $r_{wg} = .72$ ;  $\alpha = .96$ ) on the extent to which the special issue represented "emerging issues" and "cutting-edge issues." *Breadth* was measured with two questions ( $r_{wg} = .73$ ;  $\alpha = .87$ ) on the degree to which the special issue "represents a broadening of the range of work published in this journal" and "expands the kind of research published in this journal." All ratings were made on a scale anchored by 1, "not at all," and 5, "to a very large extent."

Responses were received from 90 of the 160 surveyed individuals (56.25%), who returned 257 of the 460 response sheets (55.87%). Respondents had an average 18.5 years of management faculty experience and on average had been on the editorial boards of two journals. For informational purposes, the special issues rated highest for novelty (scoring 4.75 or higher on the 5-point scale) were "Frontiers of Organization Science" (*OS*, 1995), "Knowledge Transfer between Academics and Practitioners" (*AMJ*, 2001), and

"Change and Development Journeys into a Pluralistic World" (*AMR*, 2000). The special issues rated highest for breadth (scoring 4.0 or higher on the 5-point scale) were "Emerging Economies" (*AMJ*, 2000), "Financial Modeling" (*MS*, 1992), "Electronic Communication and Changing Organizational Forms" (*OS*, 1995), "Management of Innovation" (*AMR*, 1996), "Knowledge of the Firm" (*SMJ*, 1996), and "Critical Perspectives on Organizational Control" (*ASQ*, 1998).

**Dependent variables.** *Impact* was measured as the sum of all citations received by an article as of July 2006, as reported by the SSCI. Thus, at least four and a half years, a time span that has been argued to be an appropriate benchmark for gauging article impact (Daft & Lewin, 2005), had elapsed since the publication of each article. SSCI collects citation data from over 7,000 journals (ISI, 2003) and thus reasonably thoroughly reflects article impact. The average citation count for all articles in our sample was 38.98 (s.d. = 60.81) with a median count of 21. Only 21.8 percent of the articles had earned more than 50 citations, and 8.2 percent of the articles had earned more than 100 citations. As citation counts are highly skewed, we log-transformed the values prior to conducting any analyses.

Inclusiveness was operationalized as prior author publications. This variable was examined at the author level and collected for each author of each publication. We included each author of a paper as an independent observation in this analysis, obtaining a total of 18,648 observations. *Prior author publications* was each author's total number of past publications (excluding the focal one in the special issue of interest) appearing in our nine journals from the start of 1984 up to the year of the focal publication. We focused on only publications to date because we were aiming to capture each author's record at the point that the article of interest was published. This variable is the final one (number 15) in our correlation matrix.

Research questions related to citations were analyzed using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis. Missing citation data for 18 of our 8,839 articles (.002 percent of our sample) reduced the number of articles in the citation regressions to 8,821. Research questions related to authorship were analyzed with Tobit models. Because our dependent variable for testing these research questions was a count of the number of other publications by authors, the data range was "left-censored" at 0. Tobit regression analysis corrects for violations of the assumptions of OLS in analyses of censored data (Greene, 1993). The same control measures were incorporated in both the regression and Tobit analyses, with the exception that the OLS

<sup>2</sup> Though our mean ratings match those in other research well (e.g., McWilliams et al., 2005), our aim is not to create argument about the relative positions of the journals in this array but merely to establish that some journals are seen as more prominent than others and that the order above provides a reasonable proxy for journal prominence.

regressions also included aggregate publications by all authors of a publication over the entire period studied (*total author publications*, variable 11 in our correlation matrix), as a control for the possibility that articles by prolific authors might receive more citations.

## RESULTS

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations among our variables of interest. As expected, number of citations was negatively correlated with year of publication, indicating the importance of statistically controlling for year of publication. Compared to older articles, newer articles tended to be longer and to have more authors, and they were more likely to be in special issues. Although total author publications may look surprisingly high ( $\bar{x} = 9.36$ ,  $s.d. = 11.02$ ), keep in mind that this measure represents the number of publications by all authors of a focal article over the entire study period. The value of this control variable is significantly higher than that for our prior author publications dependent variable because total author publications (1) is calculated at the publication level and is the sum of the publications of all authors and (2) counts all publications for the entire study period rather than just prior publications.

Table 2 presents some descriptive information for each journal. As can be seen in the table, the journal that has relied most heavily on special issues is *Organization Science* (OS), which has published 35 percent of its articles over our study period in special issues, whereas the *Journal of Applied Psychology* (JAP) has had only one special issue during the 18 years sampled. In terms of the different types of special issues, the *Academy of Management Journal* (AMJ) and the *Academy of Management Review* (AMR) have shown the highest use of open-call special issues, whereas OS and *Management Science* (MS) have shown the highest use of conference-based special issues, and *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* (OBHDP) and *Strategic Management Journal* (SMJ), the highest use of invited special issues. Readers may be interested to know that the four special issues with the highest mean levels of logged citations were “Organizational Design” (MS, 1986), “Organizational Learning” (OS, 1991), “Intra- and Interorganizational Cooperation” (AMJ, 1995), and “Total Quality” (AMR, 1994).

## Questions Related to Scientific Impact

Our first research questions focus on whether special issue articles have lower or higher impact than regular issue articles. As can be seen in model 1 of Table 3, which gives the results of analyses for citation counts and author inclusiveness, special issue articles have higher citation rates than regular issue articles ( $\beta = 0.15$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, as seen in model 2, this result holds for both open call ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and conference ( $\beta = 0.13$ ,  $p < .01$ ) special issues but not for invited special issues. Thus, overall, special issue articles achieve higher impact than regular issue articles, possibly by focusing interest on emerging research areas and granting legitimacy to these areas. In addition, as expected, conference-based special issues have greater impact than the other special issue types. Finally, we note that a variety of control variables were significant predictors of citations, including number of authors and research note status (both had negative effects on impact), and article length and total author publications (both had positive effects on impact).

We also suggested that journal prominence is likely to moderate the impact of special issues. To test this research question, we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis; results are in model 3 of Table 3. Step 1 included the same independent variables as our prior analysis. In step 2, we entered the interaction between journal prominence and special issue. The interaction term entered significantly ( $\beta = -0.04$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting that journal prominence moderates the impact of special issues on citations. Figure 2a is a graph of this result. As can be seen, special issues in less prominent journals have higher impact than regular issues of these journals; a comparison among the five journals perceived as the least prominent of our nine prominent journals revealed significantly higher citations for special issues than for regular issues ( $F_{1, 5,120} = 52.32$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Meanwhile, special and regular issue articles in the four more prominent journals showed no difference in impact (citations) for special and regular issues ( $F_{1, 3,697} = 0.10$ , n.s.). These results support our contention that less prominent journals may use special issues to raise the profile and legitimacy of articles.

We also investigated this same interaction in separate regressions for each journal (complete results from these analyses are available from the authors on request), including the same control variables described above. These results indicated that the significant, positive main effect of special issues on citations was driven by the effects they had in four journals: MS, OBHDP, OS,

**TABLE 1**  
**Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among the Measures<sup>a</sup>**

Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Year of publication	1,992.79	5.13														
2. Number of authors	2.12	0.97	.14**													
3. Research note	0.07	0.26	-.08*	-.03**												
4. Article length	20.56	9.08	.41**	.09**	-.31**											
5. Editorial comment	0.01	0.11	.06**	-.03*	-.00	-.13**										
6. Special issue	0.10	0.31	.17**	-.05**	-.05**	.10**	.31**									
7. Open call special issue	0.07	0.25	.16**	-.02	-.03*	.10**	.22**	.80**								
8. Invited special issue	0.02	0.15	.05**	-.05**	-.04**	.02*	.19**	.44**	-.04**							
9. Conference-based special issue	0.01	0.11	.05**	-.03**	-.03**	.01	.08**	.33**	-.03**	-.02						
10. Journal prominence	4.76	2.31	-.05**	.04**	.14**	.02*	-.00	-.01	.05**	-.03**	-.12**					
11. Total author publications	9.36	11.02	-.01	.38**	-.01	.04**	.05**	-.03**	-.02*	.00	-.03**	.16**				
12. Novelty rating of special issue	2.95	0.88	.12**	.10**	-.04	.03	.00	.29**	-.22**	-.15**	-.15**	-.15**	.01			
13. Breadth rating of special issue	2.80	0.68	.00	.04	.07*	.06	-.04	.19**	-.26**	.08*	.18**	.18**	-.08*	.34**		
14. Citations	38.98	60.81	-.16**	-.03**	-.07**	.13**	-.03*	.05**	.04**	.03**	.01	.19**	.12**	.13**	.12**	
15. Prior author publications	2.41	3.99	.21**	.05**	-.01	.03**	.08**	.03**	.02*	.03**	-.00	.09**	.00	-.08**	.01	

<sup>a</sup>  $n = 8,839$ , article-level variables and correlations (variables 1–12);  $n = 18,648$ , author-level variable (no. 15) and correlations. For novelty and breadth (variables 13 and 14),  $n = 848$ , article level, and 1,646, author level.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$



**TABLE 2**  
**Characteristics of Regular and Special Issues by Journal**

Journal	Average Citations per Article				Total Author Publications per Article				Number of Articles			
	Regular Issue	Special Issue, Open Call	Special Issue, Conference	Special Issue, Invited	Regular Issue	Special Issue, Open Call	Special Issue, Conference	Special Issue, Invited	Regular Issue	Special Issue, Open Call	Special Issue, Conference	Special Issue, Invited
<i>Academy of Management Journal</i>	50.30	43.94			11.06	8.90			857	143	0	0
<i>Academy of Management Review</i>	69.14	66.88			8.65	7.74			529	137	0	0
<i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>	82.21	42.12		24.00	8.85	6.94		2.56	400	17	0	9
<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	38.98			1.00	13.01			3.00	1,607	0	0	5
<i>Management Science</i>	23.57	33.77	53.30	4.83	4.82	6.31	5.17	3.83	2,020	83	46	6
<i>Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes</i>	24.44			27.03	10.30			7.37	944	0	0	81
<i>Organization Science</i>	32.99	33.00	38.30	132.83	6.99	6.22	8.19	11.35	287	79	53	23
<i>Personnel Psychology</i>	32.43	46.61		22.45	17.23	16.20		23.30	487	20	0	20
<i>Strategic Management Journal</i>	40.98	56.53	48.27	72.54	8.38	10.11	3.45	9.19	782	123	11	70
All journals	38.32	48.94	45.57	51.50	9.48	8.36	7.02	9.48	7,913	602	110	214

**TABLE 3**  
**Results of Regression Analyses for Citations and Tobit Analyses for Author Inclusiveness, Full Sample<sup>a</sup>**

Variable	Tobit Results Predicting Logged Citations					
	Model 1:	Model 2:	Model 3:	Model 4:	Model 5:	Model 6:
	<b>Base</b>	<b>Type of Special Issue</b>	<b>Interaction Term</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Type of Special Issue</b>	<b>Interaction Term</b>
Intercept	57.92*** (2.02)	58.15*** (2.02)	57.68*** (2.03)	-1.023.32*** (25.86)	-1.023.79*** (25.77)	-1.026.11*** (25.84)
Year published	-0.03*** (0.00)	-0.03*** (0.00)	-0.03*** (0.00)	0.51*** (0.01)	0.51*** (0.01)	0.51*** (0.01)
Number of authors	-0.02*** (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.01)	0.38*** (0.06)	0.40*** (0.06)	0.38*** (0.06)
Research note	-0.09*** (0.03)	-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.62* (0.25)	-0.58* (0.25)	-0.61* (0.25)
Article length	0.02*** (0.001)	0.02*** (0.001)	0.02*** (0.001)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Editorial comment	-0.25 (0.05)	-0.24*** (0.05)	-0.25*** (0.05)	4.28** (0.64)	4.22** (0.64)	4.30** (0.64)
Total author publications	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.45*** (0.03)	0.47*** (0.03)	0.50*** (0.03)
Journal prominence	0.15*** (0.01)	0.15*** (0.01)	0.15*** (0.01)	-1.17*** (0.22)	-2.11*** (0.26)	1.34** (0.51)
Special issue	0.15*** (0.02)		0.15*** (0.02)			
Open call special issue		0.19*** (0.02)				
Conference special issue		0.13** (0.04)				
Invited special issue		0.05 (0.03)				
Special issue × journal prominence			-0.04** (0.02)			-0.55*** (0.10)
Overall model statistics	Overall $R^2 = .25$ $F(8, 8,812) = 366.86***$	Overall $R^2 = .25$ $F(10, 8,810) = 295.64***$	Overall $R^2 = .25$ $F(9, 8,811) = 326.96***$	$n = 18,648$ $\chi^2 = 2,200.84***$	$n = 18,648$ $\chi^2 = 2,258.02***$	$n = 18,648$ $\chi^2 = 2,233.88***$

<sup>a</sup> Unstandardized coefficients are shown, with standard errors in parentheses.

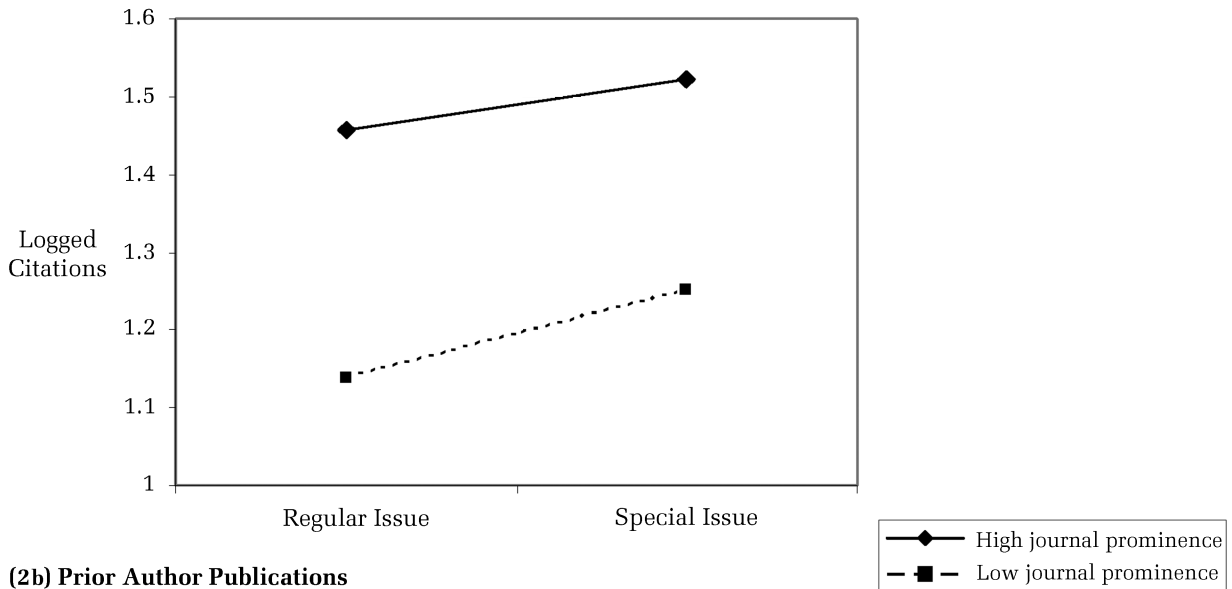
\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

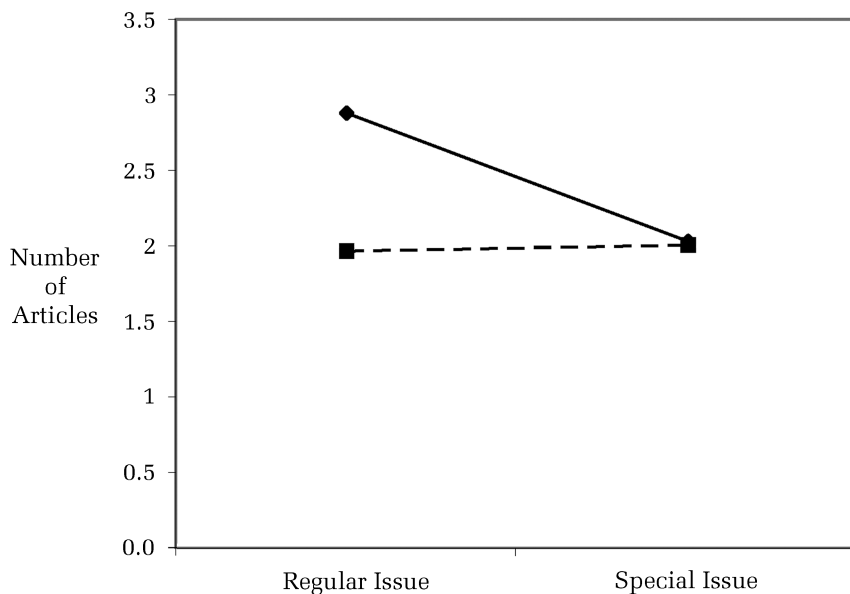
\*\*\*  $p < .001$

**FIGURE 2**  
**Effect of Publication Type and Journal Prominence on Impact and Author Inclusiveness**

**(2a) Impact**



**(2b) Prior Author Publications**



and *SMJ*. For these four journals, articles published in special issues had higher citations than those in regular issues ( $\beta = 0.19, p < .001$ ;  $\beta = 0.13, p < .01$ ;  $\beta = 0.11, p < .05$ ; and  $\beta = .21, p < .001$ , respectively). Given that these four journals are our fifth, sixth, eighth, and ninth least prominent journals, this result further supports our argument that less prominent journals can use special issues to enhance their scientific impact. In contrast, special issues generally had no impact on citations for the most prominent journals, though they did have a significant, negative effect on citations for *AMJ* ( $\beta = -0.09, p < .05$ ).

**Questions Related to Author Inclusiveness**

We also presented competing arguments regarding whether authors of special issue articles are more or less prolific than authors of regular issue articles. The results in model 4 of Table 3 show that authors of special issue articles have, on average, fewer prior publications in these journals than authors of regular issue articles ( $\beta = -1.17, p < .001$ ). Thus, our analysis supports the argument that special issues broaden the author pool for these leading journals, promoting inclusiveness. As can be seen in model 5, this finding appears to be driven

primarily by open-call special issues ( $\beta = -2.11$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In fact, the pattern is significant in the opposite direction for invited special issues, meaning that the latter are more likely to be authored by more scholars with more prior publications ( $\beta = 1.66$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This last finding supports the view that invited special issues are more likely to be authored by prolific scholars, thereby reducing inclusiveness. As in our model of impact, in this model a variety of control variables were significant predictors of prior author publications, including number of authors and editorial comment status; both variables were positively related to prior author publications.

To test the potentially moderating effect of journal prominence on authorship patterns, we conducted a Tobit analysis. As seen in model 6 of Table 3, the interaction term entered significantly ( $\beta = -0.55$ ,  $\Delta\chi^2 = 33.08$ ,  $p < .001$ ), providing evidence that journal prominence moderates the relation of special issues with prior author publication experience. As can be seen in Figure 2b, special issues in more prominent journals have less prolific authors than regular issues in more prominent journals. Meanwhile, in less prominent journals the authorship patterns of special and regular issue articles do not differ. Thus, the increased inclusiveness associated with special issues appears to be primarily driven by the most prominent journals.

As we did for citations, we also conducted nine separate journal-level Tobit analyses examining the effect of special issues on authorship patterns. Further supporting the argument that authors with fewer prior publications write special issue articles in very prominent journals, we found that the authors of special issue articles were less likely to be well-published than the authors of regular issue articles for the three most prominent journals (*ASQ*:  $\beta = -3.10$ ,  $p < .05$ ; *AMJ*:  $\beta = -1.99$ ,  $p < .01$ ; *AMR*:  $\beta = -2.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The less prominent journals showed little effect, save for one, *Personnel Psychology*; the authors of special issue articles were more likely to be well-published than the authors of regular issue articles in this journal (*PPsych*:  $\beta = 3.69$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

### Questions Related to Novelty and Breadth

Finally, special issues can potentially address the proximal goals of novelty and breadth. We expected that the proximal goal of novelty would be related to the distal goal of scientific impact (citations), whereas the proximal goal of breadth would be related to the distal goal of inclusiveness (a greater preponderance of less prolific scholars). These research questions concerned only special issues and required that we integrate our archival data with the data provided by our sample of editorial board members. Table 4 presents the results

**TABLE 4**  
Results of Regression and Tobit Analyses for Effects of Novelty and Breadth on Citations and Author Inclusiveness, Special Issues Only<sup>a</sup>

Variables	Model 1: OLS for Logged Citations	Model 2: OLS for Logged Citations	Model 3: Tobit for Prior Author Publications	Model 4: Tobit for Prior Author Publications
Intercept	82.59*** (8.25)	81.77*** (8.39)	-535.22*** (99.52)	-568.60*** (100.55)
Year published	-0.04*** (0.004)	-0.04*** (0.01)	0.27*** (0.05)	0.29*** (0.05)
Number of authors	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.19 (0.19)	-0.08 (0.19)
Research note	-0.04 (0.12)	-0.06 (0.09)	0.66 (0.95)	0.84 (0.94)
Article length	0.02*** (0.002)	0.02*** (0.002)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Editorial comment	-0.21*** (0.08)	-0.20*** (0.06)	4.57*** (0.60)	4.49*** (0.60)
Total author publications	0.004* (0.002)	0.004* (0.002)		
Journal prominence	0.14*** (0.02)	0.12*** (0.02)	-0.17 (0.09)	-0.21* (0.10)
Issue enhances journal breadth	0.04 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	-1.46*** (0.31)	-1.24*** (0.33)
Issue highlights novel areas	0.12*** (0.02)	0.10*** (0.02)	0.65** (0.22)	0.69** (0.24)
Conference special issue		-0.10 (0.06)		0.29 (0.76)
Invited special issue		-0.08* (0.04)		1.59** (0.50)
Overall model statistics	$R^2 = .28$ $F(9, 836) = 36.80^{**}$	$R^2 = .29$ $F(11, 834) = 30.76^{***}$	$n = 1,646$ $\chi^2 = 136.02^{***}$	$n = 1,646$ $\chi^2 = 146.48^{***}$

<sup>a</sup> Unstandardized coefficients are shown, with standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

of OLS and Tobit analyses that addressed these research questions. As can be seen in the table, both arguments were supported. The results shown in model 1 indicate that articles in special issues that were evaluated as highlighting novel areas were more highly cited ( $\beta = 0.12, p < .001$ ). Turning to model 3, we see that articles in special issues that were evaluated as enhancing the breadth of a journal were more likely to be written by less prolific scholars ( $\beta = -1.46, p < .001$ ). These results held even after we controlled for the type of special issue (refer to models 2 and 4).

## DISCUSSION

This study explored discipline-level implications for the generation of knowledge and advancement of science in the field of management via regular and special issue publication strategies. Some see special issues as a means to enhance scientific impact and author inclusiveness. Our results provide partial support (depending on the dependent variable) for both regular and special issue approaches to publishing. In the aggregate, our data show that special issues enhance citation rates and increase publications for less prolific authors. However, these differences are not uniform across journals, as the influence of special issues on impact and author inclusiveness is contingent on the prominence of a journal.

Special issues increase citations for the somewhat less prominent (among a set of highly prominent) journals such as *MS*, *OBHDP*, and *OS*. On the other hand, special issues do not enhance citations for the most prominent journals in our sample—in fact, they were associated with lower citation rates for *AMJ*. In addition, well-published scholars are less likely to author special issue articles than regular issue articles in the more prominent journals (specifically, *AMJ*, *AMR*, and *ASQ*), whereas among the less prominent journals (with the only exception being *PPsych*), there are no differences. This pattern of findings suggests that the more prominent journals can meet the goal of inclusiveness via special issues and incur only minimally negative effects on scientific impact. Thus, no trade-off between impact and inclusiveness occurs for the more prominent journals (save the exception noted for *AMJ*). For less prominent journals, special issues can enhance the scientific impact of articles and have no effect on authorship patterns.

Data from current and former editorial board members allowed us to examine other goals that journals might pursue via special issues. We identified novelty and breadth as two proximal goals that journals might seek to achieve through special

issues. Our results suggest that adherence to one of these goals helps a journal achieve impact, and adherence to the other helps with inclusiveness. Special issues evaluated as publishing more novel research had articles that were more frequently cited (as predicted) but were also more likely to have been authored by highly productive scholars. In other words, the proximal goal of novelty influenced both distal goals. In contrast, special issues that were evaluated as enhancing breadth only influenced one distal goal: authorship by less prolific scholars. These patterns highlight how editors' decisions can have a marked influence on the field. Thus, it is important to be cognizant of the goals of a special issue and the likely outcomes of pursuing those goals. For example, focusing on novelty may be a method by which a less prominent journal ultimately enhances its citation rate, whereas focusing on increasing the breadth of topics published may be a method by which a more prominent journal diversifies its author pool.

It is worth considering why our conclusions about special issues differ from the conclusions reached by Olk and Griffith (2004), who also focused on the impact of special issue articles. Olk and Griffith examined fewer journals over a shorter time span and did not include controls such as year of article publication, number of authors, or length. These are essential control variables that, if omitted, can affect the nature and ultimately the interpretation of results. Additionally, our research included a measure of journal prominence, considered different types of special issues, and investigated additional goals beyond impact. These measures allowed us to develop a more complete understanding of the consequences of special issues on knowledge development within the management field.

Another contribution made by our study is the examination of how special issues are developed. Invited special issues lead to more prolific authors being published yet overall do not enhance impact in terms of additional citations, though the effect of invited special issues varies dramatically across journals. Among our journals, *OBHDP* and *SMJ* used invited special issues most frequently (*OBHDP* used them exclusively during the years of our study), whereas some journals (*AMJ* and *AMR*) never used them. Our data suggest that, depending on the goals that are salient to these journals (e.g., diversifying the author pool, scientific impact), heavy reliance on invited special issues might be reconsidered. Other types of special issues might appear to have different effects, though again the prominence of a journal is important to consider. Of particular interest is the rather frequent use by *OS*

and *MS* of conference-based special issues. As these are also two journals for which special issues had higher citations, these journals may have identified a useful strategy to increase article impact (and in the case of *OS*, perhaps a method to increase prominence, which has implications for the financial success [Begley, 2006] as well as scholarly importance of a journal). Having a conference on a topic provides the field with some topic familiarity and visibility, which may lead to a ready pool of readers interested in the topic and demand for a special issue.

Our findings also have implications for management practice. The research published in premier management journals influences management practice through the dissemination of knowledge in textbooks and articles in more practitioner-oriented journals, as well as through class lectures, consulting, and other avenues. For this reason, we believe that developing a better understanding of the role of special issues in the development of management knowledge has important indirect implications for managers. For example, it may be that special issues viewed as highly novel facilitate the transfer of new knowledge to practitioners. Alternatively, perhaps the information flow is in the other direction, with novel ideas from practitioners becoming more quickly integrated into scholarly thinking through special issues.

At the same time, these results may speak more directly to managers in certain organizational contexts. For example, funding organizations that sponsor original research, such as the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, face difficult decisions about what kind of research to fund and how directive to be when issuing calls for research. Our results indicate that it is possible to achieve the proximal goals of novelty and breadth, with their attendant effects on impact and inclusiveness. This conclusion suggests that research sponsors should explicitly identify their goals and evaluate results with these goals in mind.

### Concluding Comments

As is the case with any study, our work has a number of limitations. We went to great lengths to increase the accuracy of the archival data prior to analyses and can only hope that any remaining errors or oversights are randomly distributed. Our use of archival data also means that our independent variables were measured rather than manipulated. One consequence of using a minimally invasive operationalization is that effect sizes are often small. If such a minimal manipulation still ac-

counts for variance in the dependent variable, however, the effects should be regarded as very important (Fichman, 1999; Prentice & Miller, 1992). Moreover, just as small changes in one's starting salary can lead to large changes over time in what one gets paid, small initial enhancements in citation rates may lead to articles having significantly more impact over time as well, with important implications for faculty members' tenure and promotion.

Limitations also exist in our sample of editorial board members. A trade-off inherent in our procurement of an expert sample to evaluate the special issues was that the experts were not blind to the issues they were reviewing. Thus, rater bias, particularly hindsight bias, was possible: If reviewers noticed the titles of impactful articles in their materials, they may have rated the special issues containing these articles inappropriately high on the measures of novelty or breadth. Although we cannot rule out issues related to causality, it was encouraging to see that the special issues that were the most highly cited were not the same issues rated highest in novelty and breadth, and although the ratings of novelty and breadth were moderately correlated (.34), both were more modestly correlated with citations (.13 and .12, respectively). We also recognize that our question stems, which asked reviewers to consider the state of both the field and the publishing journal at the time of a focal special issue, forced reviewers to make complicated judgments. Although we hope our participants were up to the task, given their high levels of education and experience in the field, we recognize that this demanding situation was less than ideal.

Additionally, although we assessed the effect of journal prominence, if one considers all the journals in the field of management, one could view all of our sampled journals as very prominent. It is an interesting and open question whether our findings would extend to other management journals. It might be that the articles in a well-conceived special issue at a much less prominent journal could be highly cited with no deleterious effects on author diversity, but we were unable to assess this extension with our data.

Our study merely begins to address all the interesting questions related to special issues and journal publication. Although our focus was at the discipline level, perhaps future work will examine how special issues impact the statuses of specific journals over time. For example, Podsakoff et al. (2005) noted that over the period 1981–99, 6 of the top 7 journals in their study of 28 journals remained in the top quartile, with only *MS* dropping out (and being replaced by *PPsych*). Although this

finding suggests more stability than change, it may be that the use or nonuse of special issues has produced some changes in position within this upper echelon of journals. For instance, whereas *ASQ* was in a class by itself in terms of average citations per article in the 1980s, by 1999 *AMJ* and *AMR* had joined it. Perhaps special issues partially explain changes in journal prominence over time. We hope our study will encourage others to think carefully and creatively about the many interesting issues that relate to journal publication.

Our intention with this study was to begin a dialogue in the management research community regarding the most valuable path for the development of scientific knowledge. With the recent increase in the frequency of special issues, we believe it is an appropriate time for researchers to take a step back and assess the contribution of these issues to the advancement of the field as well as the author pool that these issues draw from. We do not see this study as offering definitive evidence for those that either support or condemn special issues. However, we do believe the results presented here offer cautionary evidence regarding when special issues ought to be used and what influence these issues have on the impact of articles and the diversity of authors in the top journals in the field of management.

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