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## Building the future on solid foundations

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2018 has been a year of changes in BRQ. Six months ago, I was elected Editor-in-Chief, and the Editorial Board was expanded to recruit international talent. Nine new associate editors (Ignacio Requejo, Mircea Epure, Seppo Leminen, Sibin Wu, Jordi Trullén, Cristina Quintana-García, Alicia Rodríguez, María José Sanchez-Bueno and José Pla-Barber), along with the six ongoing associate editors (Yana Temouri, Umut Konus, Anju Seth, Claudio Giachetti, José Moyano and Francisco Javier Sesé) make up our renewed editorial team. We are, however, open to recruiting new editorial members this year.

In my first Letter from the Editor, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all those who have enthusiastically contributed to the development of BRQ. I am grateful to the Spanish Academy of Management (ACEDE), sponsor of BRQ, for entrusting me with this exciting and challenging responsibility. I thank the former editor-in-chief, Xosé H. Vazquez, for his guidance and continuous support during my first months in BRQ, and for his help during the editorial transition. I want to recognize our outgoing associate editors for their excellent work and dedication to the journal. I am also indebted to the editors-in-chief and the editorial teams who preceded me in BRQ. They all shared a clear vision of what BRQ should aspire to, and transformed the journal from a Spanish publication to an international journal in the fields of business and management. They have delivered the journal to me in excellent condition and allowed me to begin my term as editor on solid foundations. I am fortunate to be able to follow in their footsteps and to continue the work they began 20 years ago when BRQ was created as *Cuadernos de Economía y Empresa* (CEDE). This recognition, nevertheless, is accompanied by a great sense of responsibility.

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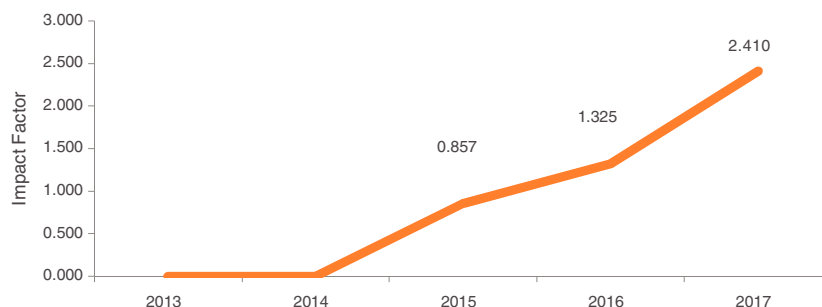
The first Letter from the Editor is an excellent opportunity to summarize the most important accomplishments of BRQ and to offer my vision of the journal and the aspirations I will pursue in the coming years. With this aim, I will first summarize what I consider the main achievements of BRQ, and in doing so, I will emphasize what BRQ offers to both our readers and potential contributors.

An overview of the evolution of BRQ can be found in the Letters of the Editors that preceded me. All of them showed their determination to improve the position of BRQ both in the academic world and in relation to other economic and social agents (Vazquez, 2015, p. 2). I would like to highlight three main achievements in the short history of BRQ. Firstly, the change in 2014 from CEDE to BRQ and the decision to publish the journal in English (Fuentelsaz, 2014). Secondly, the inclusion of CEDE and BRQ in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) database. Finally, the internationalization of our editorial team, with the arrival of associate editors from long-standing scientific research communities in the field of management (Vazquez, 2017, p.2). Six of the 15 current associate editors (40%) have affiliations outside Spain, a clear indicator of BRQ's determination to build a solid editorial team with a broader geographical diversity.

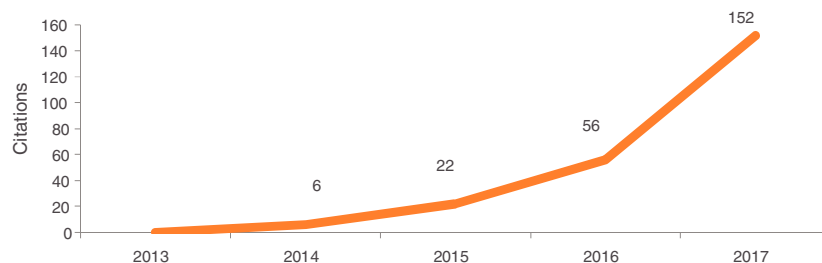
The continuous effort made by past editors in pursuing BRQ's recognition as an international journal has had a positive influence on the impact of the journal. BRQ is currently ranked in the Business and Management categories of the JCR. As shown in Figure 1, BRQ's impact factor has followed a steady upward trend, rising from 0.857 in 2015, the first year BRQ received an impact factor, to 2.410 in 2017. These figures show that, in comparison with the impact factor reached by CEDE (an average of 0.299 in the period 2012–2015), the transformation of CEDE into BRQ, and the publication of the journal in English have boosted its impact factor, the most reliable indicator that BRQ is on the rise.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brq.2019.01.003>

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**Figure 1** Evolution of BRQ Impact Factor (2013–2017).



**Figure 2** Evolution of the number of citations of articles published in BRQ.

This clear tendency was anticipated by former editor Xosé H. Vazquez (2016, p. 1), who acknowledged that broadening out “diffusion of the journal to participate in the global market for ideas” would have a positive effect on the impact factor. Since the number of papers published in the last years has remained constant (around 20 articles per year), the growth of the impact factor is due to the increasing number of citations received by the articles published in BRQ, which reached its peak in 2017 with 152 citations (Figure 2). The positive evolution of BRQ’s impact factor took the journal into the Q2 quartile in both categories in 2017: in the Management category BRQ is ranked 79th out of 209 journals, and in the Business category it is 65th out of 140 journals. Undoubtedly, this major achievement would have been impossible without the efforts of previous editorial teams.

The evolution of BRQ, in terms of its impact, reflects the transformation of the journal from a Spanish publication to an international journal competing in the global market for management ideas (Vazquez, 2017). We are committed to this one-way journey. Our future challenges are, thus, to consolidate our position without sparing any effort or letting up our endeavors to improve. Let me now highlight two of BRQ’s strengths (the legacy of the previous editorial teams) that must be the foundations for the immediate future: our editorial policy, and our constructive review process. This also offers an excellent opportunity to describe what we want BRQ to be, and what readers and contributors will find in the journal.

### A generalist journal with a broad editorial scope

BRQ is the official journal of the Spanish Academy of Management (ACEDE), the association that sponsors the journal. The aim of BRQ is to promote and disseminate the work

of scholars from any field of business and management research. As stated in our editorial policy (<https://www.journals.elsevier.com/business-research-quarterly>), BRQ is a general and multidisciplinary journal that aims to publish high-quality papers that “have strong theoretical foundations, meet the highest analytical standards, and provide new insights that contribute to the better understanding of managerial phenomena”. Therefore, we are keen to receive contributions that will interest a large proportion of scholars rather than highly specific contributions that are only accessible to a small percentage of our readers (these contributions are best suited to other more specialist management journals). In addition, BRQ encourages submissions from a wide diversity of topics and welcomes methodological plurality. Due to our broad editorial scope, we are interested in a variety of submissions, including theoretical and empirical articles employing quantitative and qualitative methods, literature review articles, and methodological contributions with a focus on novel methodologies or significant improvements to conventional techniques that have immediate practical relevance for management researchers.

The editorial policy of BRQ mirrors the structure of ACEDE, which is organized into strategic interest groups (i.e., divisions) covering an extensive range of research interests: human resource management, organization theory, strategic management, corporate governance, managerial economics, marketing, finance, accounting, operations management, international management, the family firm, and entrepreneurship. BRQ provides, thus, widespread coverage for high-quality research in a broad range of management fields. For example, a review of the articles published in the regular issues in 2018 attests to the great variety of topics covered by BRQ: strategic management, marketing, family firm, innovation management, human resource management, corporate governance, entrepreneurship, and international management. This

outline evidences the diversity of topics published by BRQ, which covers all subfields of management. In addition, and with the aim of extending our impact beyond ACEDE, BRQ is also open to new topics and emerging research streams.

## A constructive review process

BRQ offers a constructive peer review process that is grounded on the thoughtful selection of the manuscripts that are sent for review. A high rate of desk rejections reduces high risk reviews (i.e., review processes involving many rounds and with a high probability that, in the end, the manuscript will not be accepted), shortens the turnaround time, and frees up our editorial resources. The review process does not prevent us, however, from rejecting papers that may benefit from a careful review process to become valuable contributions. To avoid this undesirable outcome, we encourage authors to submit papers in line with our editorial policy, that could interest a large number of potential BRQ readers, and that can demonstrate a significant contribution from the start (Vazquez, 2015, p. 2; Vazquez, 2016, p.1). Our editorial team is ready to guide authors through the review process, providing constructive feedback based on their own expertise and the comments of the two blind peer reviewers. Some figures on the performance of our editorial process (updated to September 2018) confirm our policy: 74% of the manuscripts sent to BRQ were “desk rejected” (by either the editor-in-chief or the associate editors), while only 16% were rejected during the standard review process.

The positive development of BRQ in so short a period compels us to make decisions to tackle what, as editor, I consider must be our priority in the coming years: to consolidate its achievements and ensure that BRQ is considered an attractive alternative for publishing high-quality research in the field of management and business research. It is important to note, however, that our aim to strengthen what BRQ has achieved in recent years should not be interpreted as a refusal to meet new challenges. Rapid growth, if it is not sustainable, can lead to unsatisfactory results, and becoming a victim of one’s own success.

The main challenges facing the new editorial team in the coming years are:

First, to strengthen the structure of the journal to cope with the increasing number of submissions. The evolution of BRQ has been followed by sustained growth in submissions. As shown in Figure 3, the number of submissions in the period 2013–2018 increased from 166 to 400+.

Several factors may explain this substantial growth in submissions. First and foremost, the internationalization of our editorial board, including colleagues from all over the world acting as ambassadors for BRQ, has increased awareness of BRQ in the international publications market. Other contextual factors have also had a positive influence on the rise in the number of submissions, such as the positive evolution of our impact factor, or the incorporation of researchers in developing countries into the publication process that explains a general tendency, not specific to BRQ, of increased volume of submissions.

An average growth rate of 60% in the number of submissions requires thoughtful reflection. At first sight, the

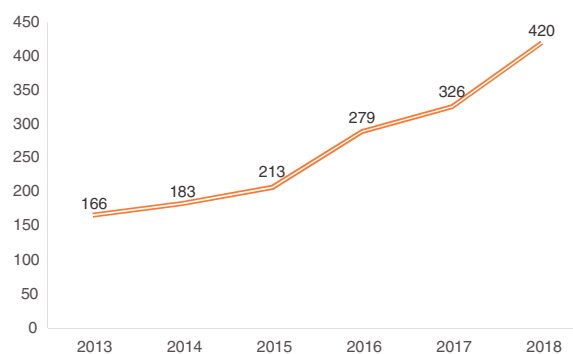


Figure 3 Evolution of the number of submissions.

rise in the number of submissions has helped us to be more selective in deciding which manuscripts are approved for our double-blind peer review process. However, the number of submissions is not a good indicator for assessing their quality (Vazquez, 2017). In addition, we are aware that the current editorial resources of BRQ may place great demands on the journal’s editorial team in facing up to a future scenario of continuous growth in the volume of submissions..

A second challenge is to improve the visibility of the research published in BRQ. The priority of the BRQ editorial team will remain to publish high-quality papers that make a significant contribution and have a high impact on the scientific community and, in particular, on management scholars. Once published, increasing visibility implies making papers accessible to as many researchers and practitioners as possible. We will pursue several lines of action in this regard.

First, to continue publishing BRQ in open access to provide unrestricted availability to our work to the widest range of potential readers. BRQ’s commitment to open access publishing has been a distinctive feature of the journal since its inception as CEDE. As an official journal of ACEDE, our published articles are available free of charge to all researchers and authors. Encouraging signs are the rise in the number of downloads of BRQ articles in the last years (from 18,000 to 174,000 in the period 2014–2018), and that the 10 most downloaded articles have been downloaded more than 3,000 times. These figures provide a good picture of the increasing trend in the usage of our journal. Although downloading an article does not guarantee that the paper will be read and ultimately cited, it is an indicator of the visibility of BRQ.

Second, to include BRQ in the international rankings and in international journal lists frequently used by researchers to publish their research. In 2018 BRQ was included in the list of Economics and Management journals of the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (CNRS). This editorial team will continue to work to ensure BRQ’s inclusion in international rankings and journal lists in the coming years to raise its international visibility.

Third, to increase the exposure of BRQ in social media. We aim to help authors to broaden the visibility and impact of their BRQ research by providing additional resources and tools (e.g., videos, interviews), and promoting the use of social media.

Finally, to encourage our editorial team to proactively seek out promising manuscripts at international conferences and to invite their authors to submit them to BRQ for peer review. Since the quality of a journal depends heavily on the quality of the submitted manuscripts, the ability to attract highly promising manuscripts, along with a constructive review process, will in turn increase the quality of the published articles in BRQ.

In conclusion, BRQ's positive development in recent years does not mean that our work is finished. Indeed, we are acutely aware that much remains to be done, and our main challenge in the coming years will be to consolidate BRQ's position as an international journal able to compete with other journals in the global market for management ideas.

I hope the measures sketched out above will allow us to increase the visibility and impact of BRQ, moving the journal toward a stage of consolidation.

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