

## Editorial for EJBRM Volume 17 Issue 2

It is alright to talk about publication success, but what does this really mean? Is it quality of the output alone, or does this need to be combined with quantity?

Academic research in the field of management is under continual pressure. Funding for higher education institutions is tied, at least in part, to its research output, and careers in academia are strongly linked to publication success. Through funding there is also an increasing pressure on the impact of research – so the traditional demand on rigour and quality is now exacerbated by the need for empirical research to inform the management profession in the short term.

There is little doubt that the route to publication in journals that are indexed and thus lead to career advancement is getting more and more demanding. The research output has outpaced the capacity of these journals. Tertiary education institutions in the traditional academic centres of the world have multiplied, and they are now challenged by non-traditional centres that are developing highly prestigious institutions that host top class academics with a need to publish as well. This has led to a publication game of increasing intensity and production volume.

This special issue of EJBRM attempts to take a step back from this world of hyperactivity, to analyse the challenges, particularly for young doctoral researchers, to learn the research trade, finish their doctoral voyage, and establish themselves as researchers with a career opportunity in academia.

The special edition opens with the paper by Pather which is an introspection on the requirements to be a successful academic researcher. Pather defines academic success in terms of internal values, in contrast to France's definition in the subsequent paper that does so more in terms of external metrics. Pather gives an interesting overview of the history of research in universities which, we learn, is a relatively recent development. Consequently, doctoral degrees such as the PhD and DPhil are also recent developments, and originally were seen as a license to teach; it is in more recent times that it developed as a way of training novice academics in the trade of research. Pather goes on to present and develop seven personal values that are key attributes for a successful researcher. This is a must read for doctoral candidates and experienced researchers who would like to self-assess their research competences.

France does a qualitative piece of empirical research to understand how research topics are generated. This paper arrives at the conclusion that topics emerge from two macro sources. On the one hand, there are what the author denominates 'professional capacity' motivators, which include such things as the interaction and discussion with students, particularly in institutions that have research students. Other triggers for themes in this category are consultancy projects and demands from industry. These will, naturally multiply for the more experienced researchers. And finally in this category we have past research, as all research leads to new questions. On the other hand, the author talks about 'individual' motivators. Within this we find reading on themes that are of special interest to the researcher and detecting gaps in the literature. Personal fulfilment is a key element often paired with discussions with co-authors, seeking funding grants or reacting to policy demands. This paper offers a useful read to both doctoral candidates and early career researchers who are attempting to construct a research roadmap, and to more experienced academics who find a need to re-design their research agenda.

The third paper by Ramos is a literature review. Ramos presents the Delphi method for qualitative research and tells us that the method was originally developed by the Rand Corporation for use exclusively in the security and defence spaces, and later released for use by companies and researchers. The author provides a thorough description of how the Delphi Method needs to be set up to increase the reliability and validity of the results obtained, and then does a literature review of its application in the field of IS research. The review scans the top-eight ranked IS journals between the years 2004 and 2017. At a time when qualitative methods have established themselves in the IS research field, it is surprising that Ramos has found that the Delphi Method has not yet become a mainstream method. Considering that it is broadly accepted that 'harvesting' evidence through one-way interviews has many limitations, the Delphi Method that promotes interactions is a

tool to be duly considered by doctoral researchers. Ramos shows us that what originally was a method purely for building long-term predictions, is now being used for other purposes. Another interesting finding is that the majority of papers address in detail the steps, challenges and weaknesses of the method which creates confidence in the method and guides the reader on how to maximise its strengths and overcome its weaknesses. Finally, and interestingly, Ramos finds that the Delphi Method in IS research has been applied in combination with quantitative methods but not with other qualitative methods. So, the doctoral researcher that is interested in mixed methods will find here opportunities to expand methodological horizons.

The final paper in this special edition is a case study whose unit of analysis is a Viva Voce conducted for a mature doctoral candidate supervised by the author. Remenyi gives background information on the candidate and his research, narrates tips given to the candidate in preparation for the exam, describes in depth the proceedings of the viva including the behaviour observed in all the participants in the event. The author then does a critical analysis of the performance of the candidate, the external examiner, the internal examiner and the chair of the viva. The critical analysis then leads to some reflections on the examination process itself, the role of examiners and the chairperson, and brings to the table the possible need to review the whole doctoral examination process. One may differ on some of the opinions expressed, such as the assumption that there should not be a pursuit of equivalence in standards for a doctoral degree across institutions, but the outcome is a highly valuable guideline to the candidate on the mental state on which the viva should be addressed and actions that need to be taken by the candidate in preparation for and during the viva itself.

Two of the papers in this Special Edition tackle the questions at the opening of this editorial note, on what does publication success mean. Pather and France address the issue from different, but both valid, approaches. But what is more important, the four papers in this Special Edition give the reader pointers in the direction of how to achieve this. They use different methods (i.e., an introspection, a quantitative empirical study, a literature review and a qualitative case study) and their content address four key domains that the doctoral degree candidate and the more experienced academic need to reflect on to conclude their research in a form that leads to publication success: Attributes of a successful researcher; the selection of a research theme; a relatively unexplored method that can help extend knowledge horizons; and guidelines for being successful both as a doctoral examinee and an examiner. I hope that, like me, you find these papers highly worthwhile reading.

Paul Griffiths PhD  
EMD-Normandie  
Oxford, UK



**Dr Paul Griffiths** BSc, MEng, DBA, A.Dip.C is Professor of Banking, Finance and Fintech and Academic Director of the MSc in Banking and Fintech at the Ecole de Management de Normandie and is based at the UK Campus in Oxford. Prior to becoming a full-time academic Paul spent many years in leadership positions at global management consulting firms, serving Boards of blue-chip companies, particularly in the financial services sector. He specialises in the management of intangible assets such as intellectual capital and artificial intelligence. He helps organisations and industry sectors set up knowledge networks on technological platforms such as cognitive computing, augmented reality and blockchain. Having lived in nine and worked in 15 countries he defines himself as multicultural.