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Editorial

The Leadership Quarterly: State of the journal

The Leadership Quarterly has developed the reputation of being the custodian of the best multidisciplinary scientific research focusing on leadership. This reputation has been the result of the efforts of successive editorial teams who laid important foundations in building the journal (see joint article from former editors: Atwater, Mumford, Tosi, & Yammarino, 2014).

We are passionate about scientific discovery and aspire to publish the best leadership research, on par with that of the top general journals. Thus, as current guardians of the journal's scientific record, we realize the enormous responsibility we have in shaping what is published and in signaling to the field what types of research we value. In this editorial, we discuss the importance afforded to leadership as a scientific discipline, take stock of the first two years of our term, explain the current editorial policy, and report on how the journal is doing and where it is heading.

Overall, various publication numbers and objective success criteria show that the journal is in a very healthy state and the research we publish has a strong impact, whether in academia or elsewhere. Additionally, this editorial team as well as our publisher Elsevier is very active in promoting the journal in the media in general and the social media in particular. For example, the news service of the American Association of the Advancement of Science (publishers of the journal *Science*) has recently featured several articles from *The Leadership Quarterly* (e.g., EurekAlert, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2018d). Articles from *The Leadership Quarterly* often appear in major news outlets (e.g., BBC, 2018; Daily Mail, 2018; The Guardian, 2018). A recent crowning achievement, which gave the journal very extensive media coverage, occurred when Lindie Liang and her colleagues (Liang et al., 2018) won an IgNobel award in economics for their "Voodoo Doll" article[1] (Tanne, 2018).

Currently, leadership is well appreciated in scholarly and applied circles. The doom and gloom period, when leadership was considered an outdated relic of social science research, is long behind us (Miner, 1975); as such, it is all the more important for us to ensure that interest in leadership continues. It should not be a victim of fads, replication crises, or other issues that question its credibility and utility. We must build on and strengthen the foundations put in place by the previous editorial teams and ensure that we publish reliable and accurate knowledge, which, cumulatively, can inform policy in the long run. Much of the research we publish is innovative and has policy implications. However, we also care that the research record is not biased by publishing only statistically significant results truncated at some arbitrary cutoff; the whole distribution of effect sizes is required to accurately estimate treatments in populations. As a result, we recently increased our publication scope to accept replications and null results studies, exploratory and inductive research, as well as to include other modes of publication such as registered reports and results-blind reviews (see details of the editorial policy in Antonakis, 2017a). We explain these decisions, the evolving nature of our science, and our editorial policies in the below sections. We discuss the current importance afforded to the topic of leadership next.

Leadership: what else?

Articles published in *The Leadership Quarterly* speak to several constituents; although scientists are the largest stakeholder, we must also bear in mind the ultimate customers of the journal, education and practice. The findings of articles should thus weave themselves into policy. Of course, not every article has to have direct or immediate policy implications and we publish a lot of basic research too. Because leadership matters, it is encouraging to see that leadership, as a topic of study, has now become mainstream; indeed, most major business and management schools teach leadership, and it is covered in influential management, organizational behavior, and industrial psychology textbooks. Leadership research is published in all top general management and psychology journals.

However, even more intriguing is that leadership is being studied in more distant areas of the social sciences including economics, which now recognizes that principals influence agents by means other than contracts (Acemoglu & Jackson, 2015; d'Adda, Darai, Pavanini, & Weber, 2017; Hermalin, 1998; Jones & Olken, 2005). The appeal and impact of leadership research is now so prevalent that such research is even being published in the natural sciences (e.g., Edelson, Polania, Ruff, Fehr, & Hare, 2018; Powers & Lehmann, 2014; Smith et al., 2016). The importance of leadership is also evident in the world of practice, where leadership ability ranks highly as an assessment criterion for executive selection.

Why all this interest in leadership? The scientific study of leadership has earned its importance because most people today, laypersons, practitioners, and scientists alike, would probably agree that whatever the context, *leadership matters*. Wherever there is social interaction and propensity to influence—whether in close-up or distant settings, strategic or interpersonal, dispersed or centralized, formal or informal—there is leadership (cf. Hunt, 1991). Leadership is evident in a range of milieus including, for example, an operating theater, a sports team, a national parliament, a company board, an army, or a spaceship.

[1] These awards are taken very seriously and honor research that is funny or quirky but makes one think; winners of real Nobels hand out the prizes (see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ig_Nobel_Prize).

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Historians have documented that leadership matters: Whether it was Alexander the Great or Queen Elisabeth I. Leaders of our time like Margaret Thatcher and Nelson Mandela, or current leaders like Justin Trudeau and Angela Merkel are often studied or covered in the press. Leadership was examined by ancient philosophers (e.g., Aristotle, Roberts, Bywater, & Solmsen, 1954; Plato & Jowett, 1901) and interest in the topic continues today. Of course, the mediums of leadership influence are now broader, as is the speed of communication diffusion, all of which give us much more material for studying leadership. In the following section, we look at general trends in *The Leadership Quarterly* with respect to its impact in various fields. We also compare the journal to some top general-interest journals.

Impact of *Leadership Quarterly* articles and comparisons to top general journals

The topic of leadership seems to be gaining traction. Below we examine the impact of *The Leadership Quarterly* on the scientific field by looking at bibliometric trends. We focus on impact of articles in management journals and applied psychology journals, where leadership research is traditionally published, but also look beyond these fields. We used data from the Web of Science, starting from 1995, the year after the journal was indexed in this database. Note that the journal is cross-listed in the disciplines of management and applied psychology (the latter is where industrial-organizational psychology journals are categorized).

The upward trends are evident in Fig. 1. Also encouraging is the impact of the journal in fields outside of management and applied psychology (see Fig. 2). There are interesting spillovers evident in neighboring disciplines such as social psychology.

To put the main trends, as shown in Fig. 1 into context, and to see how the journal fares relative to other journals, we include data from top management journals with a crossover listing in applied psychology. We chose only journals that were currently ranked higher than *The Leadership Quarterly* in terms of 2-year impact factor, and which publish empirical research. We thus excluded, two journals that have a higher impact factor ranking, namely *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, which publishes only reviews, and *Organizational Research Methods*, which publishes only methodological research (note, although the *Academy of Management Journal* is a top journal, we did not include it in the comparison list because it is not cross-indexed in applied psychology). The comparison journals are listed along with *The Leadership Quarterly* in Table 1, where we include various bibliometric indicators on the journals.

The journals we include are usually considered as part of the top journals in management and industrial-organizational psychology (e.g., Aguinis et al., 2017; Aguinis, Gottfredson, Culpepper, Dalton, & de Bruin, 2013; Cascio & Aguinis, 2008; Werner, 2002; Zickar & Highhouse, 2001). All the comparison journals are much older and more firmly established; they have also published substantially more articles than has *The Leadership Quarterly*. These journals provide a tough point of comparison particularly because they publish on a broad range of topics, including leadership. Thus, these journals should have a wide-ranging impact and provide robust benchmarks.

We modeled citations received in journal j and field f by estimating the following general quadratic equation for each journal:

$$citations_{jf} = \beta_{0jf} + \beta_1 time + \beta_2 time^2 + \beta_1 articles_j + e_{jf} \quad (1)$$

We set *time* to zero at year = 1995; *articles* refers to number of articles indexed in Web of Science for the particular year for the relevant journal. To compare trends, we undertook cross equation Wald tests by stacking the regressions using seemingly unrelated estimation (Weesie, 1999; Zellner, 1962)—akin to multiple group analysis in structural equation modeling. The data were analyzed using Stata (StataCorp, 2017). Refer to the regression estimates in Table 2.

The data used in the regression models are reported in the

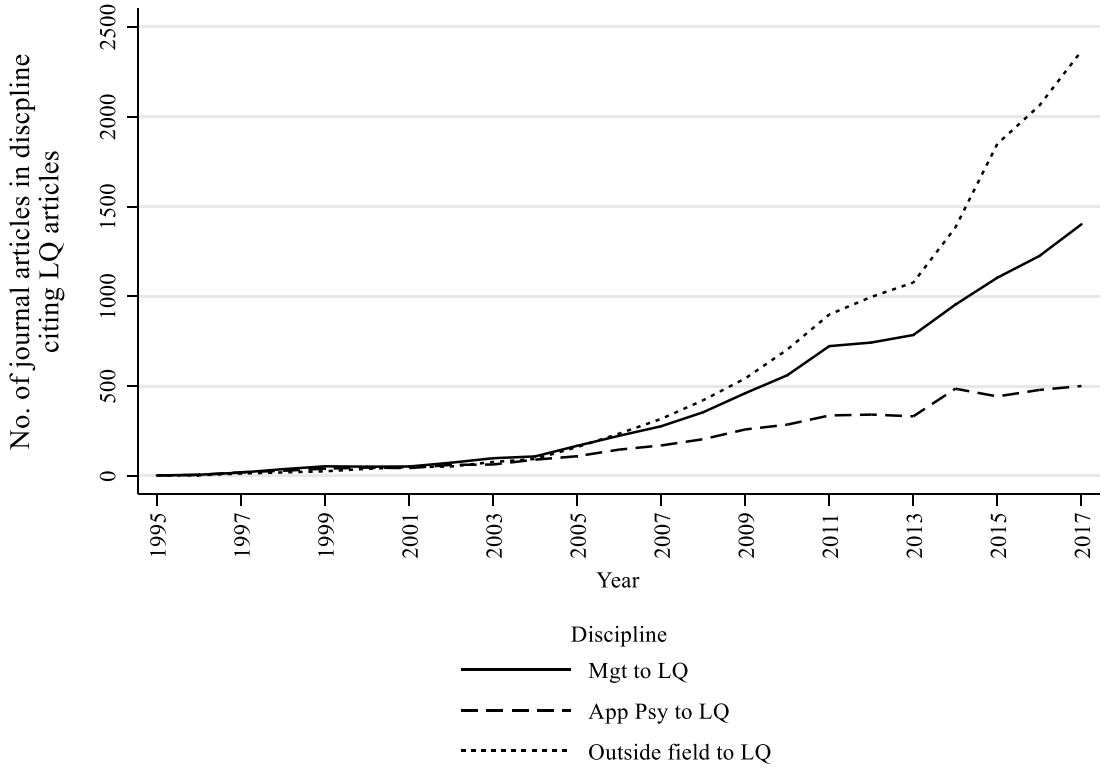


Fig. 1. Citations of journal articles from the management, applied psychology, and outside disciplines to articles in journal.
Note: Mgt = management, App Psy = applied psychology, Outside field = the top 100 fields citing the journal less the management and applied psychology disciplines, LQ = *The Leadership Quarterly*.

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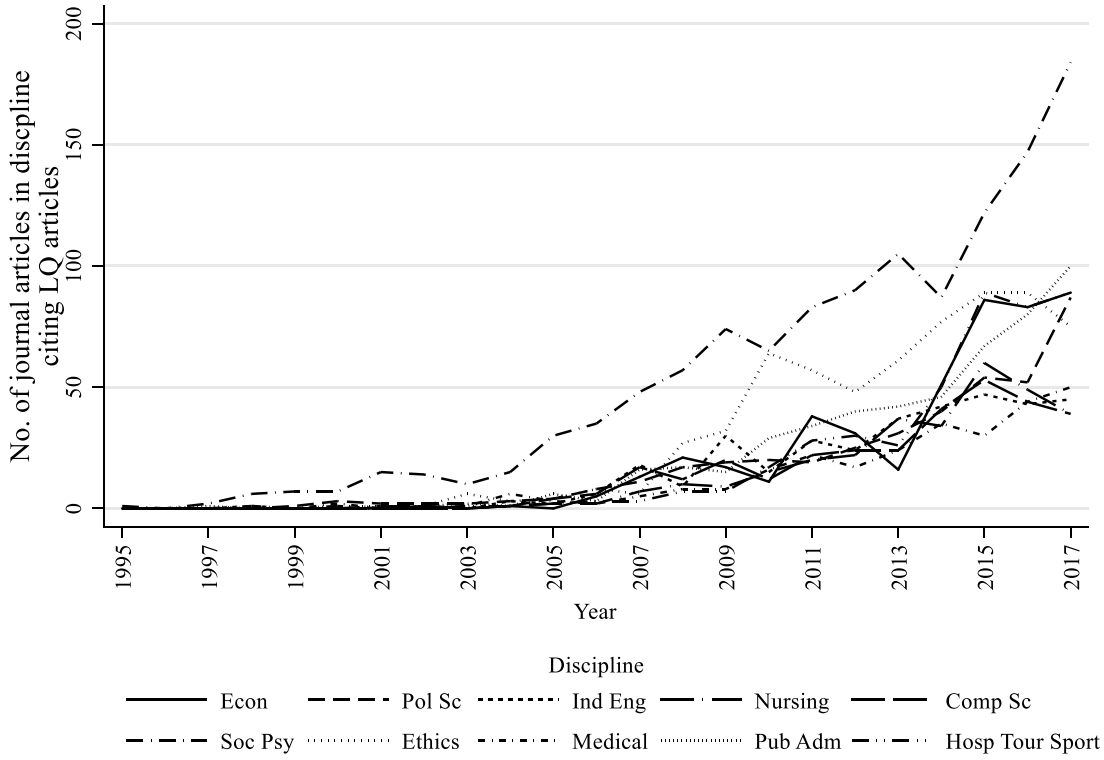


Fig. 2. Citations from various disciplines to articles in journal.
Note: Econ = economics, Pol Sc = political science, Ind Eng = industrial engineering, Nursing = nursing, Comp Sc = computer science, Soc Psy = social psychology, Ethics = ethics, Medical = various (i.e., Clinical neurology, geriatrics/gerontology, gerontology, medical informatics, medicine general internal, medicine research experimental, neurosciences, psychiatry, surgery), Pub Adm = Public Administration, Hosp Tour Sport = various (i.e., hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism, as well as sport sciences).

Table 1
Comparison of journals on bibliometric indicators

	LQ	*PPsych*	*JAP*	*JOM*	*JOB*
First year indexed in WOS	1994	1945	1917	1983	1988
2-year Impact factor	3.307	5.523	4.643	8.080	4.229
5-year Impact factor	5.358	7.353	7.121	12.043	5.887
Articles indexed in Web of Science	1235	6533	9707	1908	1926
Articles indexed in Web of Science (2 years)	102	77	197	232	164
Articles indexed in Web of Science (5 years)	316	223	516	454	388
Articles with term leader* (in topic field)	1164	453	623	278	319
Total citations received in management (A)	9,489	16,920	34,344	39,795	19,322
Total citations received in applied psychology (B)	4,505	12,289	22,437	12,639	12,166
Total citations received outside A and B	13,399	27,436	100,174	60,244	33,358

Note: *LQ = The Leadership Quarterly*; *PPsych = Personnel Psychology*; *JAP = Journal of Applied Psychology, JOM = Journal of Management, JOB = Journal of Organizational Behavior*; Citations Outside A and B = citations in journals from the top 100 fields citing the journal less the management and applied psychology disciplines. Data retrieved from the Web of Science on 5 January 2019 (credit: Clarivate Analytics).

Appendix. The regression models accounted well for the data trends for all journals and across all fields (i.e., *r*-squares were close to unity). As the trends suggest, the impact of *The Leadership Quarterly* is increasing across all fields (i.e., the coefficient of the quadratic term is always positive). For the field of management, growth of citations in *The Leadership Quarterly* is similar to that of *Journal of Organizational Behavior* and higher than that of *Personnel Psychology*. For the field applied psychology, growth is similar to that of *Personnel Psychology*, *Journal of Applied Psychology,* and *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. For fields outside management and applied psychology, *The Leadership Quarterly* has similar trends to *Personnel Psychology*. Overall, the *Journal of Management* and the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, which are the most established and broad journals, have the strongest growth trends, especially in fields outside of management and applied psychology.

Although the benchmark journals have had a huge head start, the trends in our journal are encouraging. To examine the trends more closely, we compared average trends over the last 5 years to those of the last 2 years both within and between journals. At a particular time, t, using differential calculus the slope is $\beta_1 + 2 * \beta_2 time * t$; we calculated the average slopes across ranges of years (i.e., 5 and 2 years) and where required tested them using linear or nonlinear combinations of coefficients. The standard errors of the estimates were calculated using the delta method (see Oehlert, 1992). Refer to Table 3 for results.

The rate of growth for *The Leadership Quarterly* is currently increasing across all fields. The slopes over the last 2 years are significantly steeper than those over the last 5 years. This difference in growth has been the highest or joint highest in *The Leadership Quarterly* as compared to the other journals.

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Table 2
Time as a predictor of citations in various fields for *LQ* and comparison journals.

	LQ	*PPsych*	*JAP*	*JOM*	*JOB*
			Management journals		
Time	−26.79***	−15.98***	−35.08*	−24.56	−6.65
	(5.95)	(2.58)	(1.72)	(1.41)	(0.90)
Time^2	3.89$_c$***	3.20$_d$***	8.25$_b$***	10.37$_a$***	4.77$_c$***
	(23.38)	(14.01)	(10.02)	(9.80)	(15.66)
No. of articles	0.63	−2.58***	0.92	−3.66	2.09
	(0.82)	(3.07)	(0.46)	(0.98)	(1.34)
Constant	33.16	603.26***	428.42***	486.82***	−5.29
	(1.21)	(5.07)	(3.50)	(2.66)	(0.06)
R^2	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.99
			Applied psychology journals		
Time	−1.48	0.33	32.27**	11.31**	27.32***
	(0.73)	(0.07)	(2.43)	(2.33)	(4.22)
Time^2	1.02$_b$***	1.09$_{a,b}$***	1.48$_{a,b}$**	1.82$_a$***	0.92$_b$***
	(13.33)	(4.39)	(2.51)	(6.32)	(2.80)
No. of articles	1.53***	−2.31***	−1.50	−0.64	2.21
	(4.50)	(3.68)	(1.58)	(0.54)	(1.48)
Constant	−34.76***	547.58***	522.17***	159.92***	−63.14
	(3.77)	(6.40)	(8.86)	(2.91)	(0.70)
R^2	0.99	0.97	0.97	0.99	0.98
			Outside field journals		
Time	−65.45***	−54.19***	−269.28***	−160.59***	−74.22***
	(6.27)	(4.87)	(6.48)	(5.29)	(5.64)
Time^2	7.70$_d$***	8.53$_d$***	31.69$_a$***	22.96$_b$***	11.62$_c$***
	(20.24)	(21.73)	(16.19)	(10.84)	(19.29)
No. of articles	−4.00***	1.38	7.67*	−6.00	0.59
	(3.19)	(0.94)	(1.93)	(0.85)	(0.20)
Constant	236.94***	262.88	1344.65***	920.50***	312.75*
	(5.47)	(1.23)	(4.35)	(2.80)	(1.88)
R^2	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99

Note: *LQ = The Leadership Quarterly*; *PPsych = Personnel Psychology*; *JAP = Journal of Applied Psychology, JOM = Journal of Management, JOB = Journal of Organizational Behavior*; Management = Citations to management discipline; Applied Psychology = Citations to Applied Psychology discipline; Outside field = citations in journals from the top 100 fields citing the journal less the management and applied psychology disciplines. Heteroscedastic-robust *z*-statistics in parentheses; n = 23; for the quadratic effect of time and within rows, estimates that do not share subscripts are significantly different at $p < .05$ (Bonferroni adjusted for multiple testing).

*** $p < .01$.
** $p < .05$.
* $p < .10$.

Table 3
Slopes estimates and their differences in predicting citations received.

	LQ	*PPsych*	*JAP*	*JOM*	*JOB*
			Management journals		
Last 5 yrs.$^{\Omega}$	128.75$_d$***	112.10$_d$***	295.04$_b$***	390.15$_a$***	184.06$_c$***
	(37.92)	(17.67)	(21.25)	(14.99)	(32.64)
Last 2 yrs.$^{\Xi}$	140.42$_d$***	121.70$_d$***	319.80$_b$***	421.26$_a$***	198.36$_c$***
	(36.95)	(17.73)	(19.70)	(14.45)	(30.59)
% incr. ($^{\Omega}$ to $^{\Xi}$)	9.06$_a$%	8.57$_{a,b}$%	8.39$_{a,b}$%	7.97$_b$%	7.77$_b$%*
$\chi^2(1)$	546.51***	196.32***	100.45***	96.09***	245.23***
			Applied psychology journals		
Last 5 yrs.$^{\Omega}$	39.37$_c$***	44.03$_c$***	91.36$_a$***	84.02$_{a,b}$***	64.22$_b$***
	(31.90)	(6.08)	(8.54)	(11.96)	(8.73)
Last 2 yrs.$^{\Xi}$	42.43$_c$***	47.30$_c$***	95.80$_a$***	89.47$_{a,b}$***	66.99$_b$***
	(29.38)	(5.97)	(7.71)	(11.37)	(8.06)
% incr. ($^{\Omega}$ to $^{\Xi}$)	7.78$_a$%	7.44$_a$%	4.85$_{a,b,c}$%	6.49$_{a,b}$%	4.31$_c$%
$\chi^2(1)$	177.61***	19.24***	6.31**	39.89***	7.85***
			Outside field journals		
Last 5 yrs.$^{\Omega}$	242.59$_e$***	287.10$_d$***	998.45$_a$***	757.90$_b$***	390.50$_c$***
	(36.59)	(24.36)	(25.64)	(13.16)	(30.70)
Last 2 yrs.$^{\Xi}$	265.69$_e$***	312.70$_d$***	1093.53$_a$***	826.78$_b$***	425.36$_c$***
	(34.96)	(24.73)	(24.48)	(12.95)	(29.51)
% incr. ($^{\Omega}$ to $^{\Xi}$)	9.52$_a$%	8.92$_{a,b}$%	9.52$_a$%	9.09$_{a,b}$%	8.93$_b$%
$\chi^2(1)$	409.69***	472.10***	262.13***	117.51***	372.05***

Note: *LQ = The Leadership Quarterly*; *PPsych = Personnel Psychology*; *JAP = Journal of Applied Psychology, JOM = Journal of Management, JOB = Journal of Organizational Behavior;* Outside field includes citations in journals from the top 100 fields citing the journal less the management and applied psychology disciplines. Heteroscedastic-robust *z*-statistics in parentheses; n = 23; within rows, estimates that have different subscripts are significantly different at $p < .05$ (Bonferroni adjusted for multiple testing).

*** $p < .01$.
** $p < .05$.
* $p < .10$.

On publishing quality leadership science

The broadening of interest in leadership research into other areas invariably drives attention to the main hub of leadership knowledge creation—*The Leadership Quarterly*. The journal's impact factor is on the rise, and the results of our editorial policy will be evident this year. The impact factor is expected to jump by about 50%, from a current 3.307 to about 5 (based on calculations extrapolated by the editorial team from current citation rates). Although impact factor as a metric has its flaws, it is used extensively by the market to judge journal quality (cf. Bornmann & Pudovkin, 2017; Callaway, 2016; Garfield, 2006; Hoeffel, 1998). Thus, we cannot ignore it; but this type of success is not what this editorial team chases (Antonakis, 2017b). What we care most about is to ensure that we report on how leadership works by publishing quality science; science that is robust, creative, and will make a difference. We want the journal to be known as the one that publishes the highest-quality research on leadership. In publishing this quality scientific work, we believe that success, however measured, will find its way to us.

In other words, in following our ultimate journey to publishing robustly-executed research, we are quite certain the scientific market will reward the journal; we reemphasize, the *journey is key* and *not the measured success*. That said, we are aware that citations to articles follow a power law distribution; that is, many articles are not that well cited, and only a few articles that are highly cited usually drive the impact factor. We hope to influence this distribution through our editorial decisions by reducing the ratio of inconsequential papers to quality papers. Still, the fact is that regardless of the power-law distribution, a journal's impact factor is relatively strongly related to citations that specific articles receive (Larivière & Gingras, 2010); obviously too, better quality papers contribute to a higher impact factor. As concerns lifetime citation data in *The Leadership Quarterly*, data show that articles that have stronger designs and analysis methods (i.e., that have taken threats to internal validity and sources of potential endogeneity seriously) are cited significantly more than articles having weaker designs (Antonakis, Bastardoz, Liu, & Schriesheim, 2014).

We must thus remain conscious of the fact that however we cut and slice it, and whether we like it or not, journals are judged by simple metrics like Impact Factor or CiteScore; it is these metrics that get journals on lists that universities use to give faculty members tenure and promotions. And, it is these metrics that in the long run determine the reputation of journals. The *Journal of Management*, for example, has consistently performed well on citation metrics and was recently included on the *Financial Times* journal list used for ranking the research of business schools. Thus, we need to be pragmatic in how we run the journal, but we will be especially mindful that publishing quality leadership science is our ultimate goal.

Leadership must be studied from various disciplinary perspectives

To understand the puzzle called leadership, multifaceted and multidisciplinary insights are needed. We know that other disciplines increasingly show interest and hence create demand for what the journal produces; however, we also are increasing the supply of this knowledge by publishing research that will appeal beyond the traditional leadership domains. Our objective here is not just a practical one, that is, to

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disseminate the journal's research more widely. We also appreciate that understanding the leadership phenomena requires views from multiple angles. Our mission is a noble one too: We know that to solve the world's problems, better leadership is required in all spheres of social interaction.

The multidisciplinary view of leadership was a key objective in setting up the journal. Bernard M. Bass, Robert J. House, and Henry L. Tosi, our founding editors, were essentially concerned with creating the journal as a "unifying scholarly outlet for leadership work, regardless of discipline" (Atwater et al., 2014, p. 3). Bass left many such traces in the most comprehensive handbook of leadership ever put together (Bass & Bass, 2008). Given the complexity of leadership, each discipline brings with it a piece of the puzzle, whether from psychology, broadly defined (social, industrial, cognitive, biological, etc.), political science, sociology, finance, economics, biology, evolution, anthropology, computational methods, or the humanities.

This diversity in discipline is evident in the editorial board, which has been expanded significantly during our term to about 160 members. Of course, we still stick to our knitting, whereby most board members will continue to come from the traditional disciplines that study leadership: Management, organizational behavior, and applied psychology. But, embracing the opportunities presented by burgeoning leadership research across disciplines, we have added a substantial number of scholars from many other fields that study leadership scientifically and consequentially; this diversity has also been evident in special issues calls covering evolution, economics, power, and strategy. The diversity is mirrored too in the editorial team, which is composed of 20 editors representing many disciplines (i.e., management, organizational behavior, industrial-organizational psychology, social psychology, organizational theory, evolutionary psychology, economics, methodology). Despite our focus on one topic, the breadth of our board and editorial team is unrivalled.

The path to success is paved with robust and honest science

Our job as scientists is to disseminate knowledge of how the world works. We must thus never forget to be "honest brokers" and not push ideology into our research agenda (Eagly, 2016, 2018). The recent "grievance study" hoax shows how sloppy, often nonsensical, but ideologically-oriented critical research—in this case on gender, racial, and identity studies—can get into reasonably serious journals (Engber, 2018); we are mindful that the way in which these studies were conducted was ethically questionable but also note that these studies exposed serious weaknesses in the publication process of some disciplines. Research must be properly done, using appropriate methods; as such we are very careful to assess the methodological soundness of articles, knowing that author and reviewer resources and time are scarce.

Change in one's discipline is always difficult for researchers, and most research areas in psychology and related disciplines have increased the standards expected of submitted manuscripts. Experienced scholars can easily compare what it took to get an average article into *The Academy of Management Journal* or *The Journal of Applied Psychology* in the 1960s versus today. Of course, as innovations become accepted by those who are on the cutting edge of change and those who are keeping up with the changes, others may find their manuscripts in the desk-reject bin. The sorts of papers that were welcome earlier may no longer be acceptable. This process is a normal one, not at all limited to *The Leadership Quarterly*. Good case comparisons are the *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of Operations Management,* and *The Journal of International Business Studies*, which have recently altered their editorial policies regarding several matters, including the "endogeneity" problem (Bettis, Gambardella, Helfat, & Mitchell, 2014; Guide & Ketokivi, 2015; Reeb, Sakakibara, & Mahmood, 2012). The composition of our editorial team, which has several individuals at the cutting edge in methodology (e.g., in meta-analysis, experimental research, psychometrics, econometrics, behavioral economics), has brought some changes to *The Leadership Quarterly* too in a relatively speedy manner and across several areas.

We place into the review process only manuscripts that meet the rigorous requirements outline in our editorial policy and have a decent chance to emerge successfully from the review process. Given the sheer number of submissions that we currently receive—822 in 2018,[2] we simply cannot put everything into review. We are competing with other top journals for limited reviewer resources. The opportunity costs are very high for all individuals concerned, including authors. Although we have a large editorial team, and a relatively large editorial board, we have chosen to invest our resources to constructively develop those manuscripts that have a chance to make a major contribution. We know too that often authors send manuscripts to journals just to get feedback and to strengthen them for another journal. We also know just how easy it is nowadays to submit manuscripts electronically; we thus urge potential authors to carefully think where their work will have the best chance and then submit to that journal. In this way, the market adapts in automatically filtering submissions efficiently, consistent with the way that models of costly signaling work (Spence, 2002; Zahavi, 1977). This responsibility rests as squarely with submitting authors as it does with the journal.

It is therefore incumbent on authors to accurately assess and credibly signal the value of their work, and then target an appropriate journal. We have been clear on the editorial policy (Antonakis, 2017a, 2017b), and we are thus simply enforcing what we have said; we provide further details below about the policy. Therefore, our desk rejection rate has risen as the number of submissions has risen too. The desk rejection rate with the previous editorial team increased over time to around 50%; it has increased again to about 70% during our term (data from 2018). In doing so, and because of the increase in submissions, we are putting about the same number of manuscripts into review as did the previous team. However, we are being more selective about what is published. The acceptance rate over the last year was about 7%, which is somewhat lower than that of the previous team (i.e., 10%). Such an acceptance rate is normal for top journals.

Although we have a higher desk reject rate than in the past, we think it is best to not hold manuscripts in the review process that will very likely be rejected after review. Authors whose manuscripts go into review and are revised over a relatively long period of time (e.g., 1–2 years) and then are rejected are not well served. Not only does it cost authors—many of whom are under tight tenure clocks—precious months revising the article and waiting for editorial decisions, but it costs the editors and reviewers time as well to read and comment on the manuscripts. Everyone would be better off if authors crafted their manuscript appropriately for a particular journal. Thus, we urge potential authors of the journal to review our editorial policy carefully. In this way, we hope too that our desk reject rate will, with time, drop as authors are better calibrated in what they send to *The Leadership Quarterly*.

Finally, we want to ensure that empirical manuscripts that get accepted are squeaky clean. Thus, in the second round of the review process or prior to getting conditionally or finally accepted these manuscripts will be evaluated by the Methods Advisor Associate Editor. This check is independent from that of the action editor and the reviewers to ensure that reporting guidelines are followed, that there are no flaws in reporting and analysis, and that limitations are transparently reported.

How to pass the desk rejection stage

There are four major types of manuscripts that are often desk rejected. First, quantitative manuscripts solely employing correlational designs are prime candidates (as are meta-analytic syntheses of such manuscripts that do not appropriately consider the quality of the data, cf. Banks et al., 2017). Oftentimes authors measure some construct (e.g., a dimension of leader's style) and correlate this either cross-sectionally or over time with other outcomes. Such designs cannot offer much in terms

[2] To put this number into context we had the following submissions numbers over the recent years: 2014 (425 submissions); 2015 (677 submissions); 2016 (543 submissions), and 2017 (634 submissions).

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of policy implications because the correlations observed might be explained by omitted variables, even if the outcome variable is objective (i.e., mere knowledge of performance outcomes affects ratings in a cognitively consistent manner, Lord, Binning, Rush, & Thomas, 1978). Measuring a mediator or outcome after the putative independent variable does not help because temporal ordering cannot eliminate endogeneity threats. The "post hoc, ergo propter hoc" fallacy has been long known (Kerlinger, 1986, p. 347), as is the leitmotif "correlation does not imply causation" (Kenny, 1979, p. 1). Corrective procedures are required to eliminate possible endogeneity threats by experimental control (Podsakoff & Podsakoff, 2019), instrumental-variable estimation (Gennetian, Magnuson, & Morris, 2008; Larcker & Rusticus, 2010), or other means (Duncan, Magnusson, & Ludwig, 2004; Roberts & Whited, 2013). Issues concerning endogeneity are now taken seriously in top journals, which tend to desk reject papers with problematic methodologies (Bettis et al., 2014; Guide & Ketokivi, 2015; Reeb et al., 2012). Therefore, we are merely doing what many top journals currently do, and authors must consider these issues in design and estimation.

We do realize that endogeneity threat is a matter of degree (see Ketokivi & McIntosh, 2017); thus, this editorial team still considers manuscripts that may have endogeneity bias. To increase the likelihood of success, the authors should make an effort to limit the bias and to explain (a) why the reported correlation is novel, (b) why it is important to know about this correlation, (c) how future research can study the phenomenon in a more causally defensible way, (d) what the implications may be for policy in the future, and (e) the limitations of the study, which must be clearly fleshed out, and that the reported correlation is not passed-off as causal evidence. Also, given that at times it is not clear to what extent estimates may or may not be trustworthy—and because nobody is a perfect prognosticator—for manuscripts that are borderline, the editor-in-chief will ask an associate editor for a second opinion regarding whether the manuscript should go out for review.

Second, theoretical manuscripts should also be properly crafted with respect to the causal implications they make. As Kerlinger (1986) notes a theory describes "a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among the variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena" (p. 9). Explanation implies understanding causality and in doing so one must go beyond discussing how variables are merely associated or correlated (see Shmueli, 2010). Prime candidates for desk rejection are manuscripts that contain fuzzy prose, do not clearly define variables, fail to explain putative causal mechanisms, or fail to consider counterfactual conditions. Typically, they also fail to identify "upstream" causes, how mechanisms are channeled, and how the propositions identify something counterintuitive. There are some useful guides on what constitutes good theory that authors should consider (Bacharach, 1989; Cornelissen & Durand, 2014; Dubin, 1976; Durand & Vaara, 2009; Edwards & Berry, 2010; Menzies, 2008; Suddaby, 2010; Tetlock & Belkin, 1996; Whetten, 1989; Wicklund, 1990).

In the third major category, we often get manuscripts using a qualitative mode of inquiry that do not fully describe their methods regarding data gathering and coding. These must be clearly articulated with respect to the reliability of the coding protocols and analyses (Patton, 2002; Wright, 2017). A question we often ask is how can we be sure that independent parties exposed to these data would come up with similar conclusions? It is very important to first establish some sort of externally-verifiable construct validity to ensure reproducibility and replicability, both with respect to using the submitted data, or analysis of data from similar settings. Moreover, it is also important to consider qualitative counterfactuals within some temporal and spatial dimension; even hypothetical counterfactuals can be useful (see Gerring, 2007; Gerring & McDermott, 2007). One should also justify the sampling strategy (Denrell, 2003, 2005) and avoid sampling on the dependent variable; that is, ideally there should be variation in performance outcomes of the cases studied (see Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). We realize that there are divergent opinions concerning how qualitative research should be done (e.g., see Cornelissen, 2017); however, we have stated our preferences in this regard. Thus, authors may wish to consider other journals that might be more suitable to modes of qualitative inquiry that do not meet the above standards, such as those reflecting a more critical, interpretivist, of discursive point of view. Of course, such approaches allow the researcher more flexibility but at the same time make it harder to ascertain the veracity and reproducibility of the findings.

Finally, we receive many submissions that are reviews. Such manuscripts are very important to the journal and can help reorient what research is being conducted. There are some helpful guides to what constitutes as a good review article (e.g., see Garg, Hackam, & Tonelli, 2008; Horvath & Pewsner, 2004; Needleman, 2002; Short, 2009; Wright, Brand, Dunn, & Spindler, 2007); thus, authors must ensure that reviews are done in a systematic way that covers and discusses the state of the literature in a transparent, reproducible, and representative manner. Authors should also reflect on the quality of the articles and data that feed the review and provide appropriate pointers to study the phenomenon in a more robust manner (cf. Hughes, Lee, Tian, Newman, & Legood, 2018).

Conclusion

All the numbers suggest that the journal continues to strengthen. Although *The Leadership Quarterly* is known to be a top field journal, we hope that—given the breadth and quality of what we publish—with time, it will be compared to top management journals. We are convinced that the talent pool that publishes in the journal is as good as that publishing in the top journals. We will do our role as gatekeepers to ensure that we publish only the very best work and our role as editors to help shape the promising work we receive into their best possible versions. We would like to reiterate too that we very much value many different types of articles, using a wide array of methods, as explained in the Guide for Authors.[3] However, we must also note that those articles that tend to have the biggest impact tend to report quantitative research (including meta-analyses), reviews, or theory. It is these articles that constitute the top-40 of the most highly cited *Leadership Quarterly* articles, and it is these articles that usually shake the field.

There is still so much to discover about how leadership works at the individual, team, and institutional level. For example, we need to better understand and model factors that drive leader emergence, including its evolutionary and biological bases, and what skills and abilities are required to be effective. We need to identify nuances in contextual constraints that determine leadership. We do not know enough about how leadership can be developed and disseminated, especially in complex systems, or how individuals legitimize leaders and why they follow them. A propos, we do not know enough about followership per se. We also lack understanding of how incentives as well as private versus pubic tradeoffs matter both for leaders and followers and how leaders best solve coordination problems in such contexts, among many other important topics.

This journal will publish research that makes a robust scientific contribution regardless of disciplinary underpinning or the leadership entity studied, whether collective or individual, contemporary or historical, human or nonhuman. The contribution must also be meaningful, and given that knowledge is cumulative, help construct a sound edifice of leadership knowledge. Send us your best work.

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[3] https://www.elsevier.com/journals/the-leadership-quarterly/10489843/guide-for-authors

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Appendix: Data used for regression models

Year	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8	V9	V10	V11	V12	V13	V14	V15	V16	V17	V18	V19	V20	V21	V22
2017	1401	501	2366	1653	894	3215	3575	1638	11210	4450	1144	8112	2239	1046	4338	22	484	51	39	110	103	71
2016	1225	479	2062	1605	940	3117	3507	1677	11068	4397	1122	7701	2119	1033	4114	21	441	60	49	108	73	75
2015	1104	443	1849	1496	909	2726	3221	1608	9926	4056	1081	6829	1979	1042	3738	20	400	74	47	122	77	71
2014	954	486	1383	1293	898	2289	2732	1569	7984	3297	1056	5056	1683	969	2928	19	361	80	50	89	72	78
2013	785	332	1077	1143	799	2015	2348	1447	7128	2828	891	4440	1419	911	2554	18	324	65	50	71	71	74
2012	743	342	997	1090	748	1745	2334	1335	6412	2770	858	3942	1412	833	2274	17	289	82	44	92	63	69
2011	723	337	899	1169	796	1636	2473	1450	6129	2814	828	3893	1511	873	2212	16	256	85	52	96	68	66
2010	561	286	704	1008	710	1519	1982	1309	5392	2454	746	3498	1202	792	1931	15	225	76	51	92	61	68
2009	461	259	543	923	685	1342	1752	1176	4804	2114	695	2894	1070	717	1647	14	196	70	48	117	58	64
2008	355	205	422	778	573	1117	1516	1091	3999	1851	568	2560	854	605	1354	13	169	53	52	110	42	67
2007	277	170	318	658	509	917	1269	934	3386	1585	494	2125	688	484	1066	12	144	38	73	138	37	64
2006	224	147	236	540	442	733	966	825	2772	1144	473	1646	554	450	845	11	121	45	76	113	38	60
2005	168	110	161	470	408	672	873	781	2460	1005	381	1327	468	405	708	10	100	49	101	104	49	54
2004	109	91	95	371	348	542	718	665	2188	755	335	972	342	321	565	9	81	41	114	86	48	48
2003	99	64	78	397	334	547	702	596	2048	705	286	902	313	275	539	8	64	46	111	92	47	53
2002	74	62	53	359	340	482	631	624	1795	586	255	742	257	250	464	7	49	39	117	111	40	53
2001	53	44	50	356	349	429	633	614	1776	576	281	693	257	243	419	6	36	31	113	115	42	58
2000	52	47	40	320	313	470	579	565	1738	555	248	680	211	192	393	5	25	32	120	87	51	66
1999	54	41	26	317	294	433	588	546	1684	474	224	559	194	190	317	4	16	37	129	81	37	78
1998	38	29	20	266	272	378	516	537	1662	419	222	482	176	174	292	3	9	32	134	82	33	56
1997	19	21	14	248	262	363	471	500	1516	353	171	442	138	149	236	2	4	30	133	81	34	54
1996	7	6	4	242	242	393	487	473	1615	311	148	384	130	117	250	1	1	31	125	71	38	48
1995	3	3	2	218	224	356	471	477	1482	296	132	365	106	95	174	0	0	33	136	61	57	58

Note: V1. Mgt: LQ; V2 = App Psy: LQ; V3 = Outside: LQ; V4 = Mgt: PPsych; V5 = App Psy: PPsych; V6 = Outside: PPsych; V7 = Mgt: JAP; V8 = App Psy: JAP; V9 = Outside: JAP; V10 = Mgt: JOM; V11 = App Psy: JOM; V12 = Outside: JOM; V13 = Mgt: JOB; V14 = App Psy: JOB; V15 = Outside: JOB; V16 = Time; V17 = Time^2; V18 = Articles: LQ; V19 = Articles: PPsych; V20 = Articles: JAP; V21 = Articles: JOM; V22 = Articles: JOB; where, *LQ = The Leadership Quarterly*; *PPsych = Personnel Psychology*; *JAP = Journal of Applied Psychology, JOM = Journal of Management, JOB = Journal of Organizational Behavior*; Mgt = Management; App Psy = Applied Psychology; Outside field includes citations in journals from the top 100 fields citing the journal less the management and applied psychology disciplines. Note, data retrieved from Web of Science on 2 January 2019 (credit: Clarivate Analytics).

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John Antonakis[a,*], George C. Banks[b], Nicolas Bastardoz[c], Michael S. Cole[d], David V. Day[e], Alice H. Eagly[f], Olga Epitropaki[g], Roseanne R. Foti[h], William L. Gardner[i], S. Alexander Haslam[j], Michael A. Hogg[k], Ronit Kark[l], Kevin B. Lowe[m], Philip M. Podsakoff[n], Seth M. Spain[o], Janka I. Stoker[p], Niels Van Quaquebeke[q], Mark van Vugt[r], Dusya Vera[s], Roberto Weber[c]
[a] *Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Lausanne, Switzerland*
[b] *University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC, USA*
[c] *University of Zurich, Zürich, Switzerland*
[d] *Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX, USA*
[e] *Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, CA, USA*
[f] *Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, USA*
[g] *Durham University, Durham, England, UK*
[h] *Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, USA*
[i] *Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX, USA*
[j] *University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia*
[k] *Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA, USA*
[l] *Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel*
[m] *The University of Sydney, Darlington, New South Wales, Australia*
[n] *University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA*
[o] *Concordia University, Montréal, Quebec, Canada*
[p] *University of Groningen, Groningen, Netherlands*
[q] *Kühne Logistics University, Hamburg, Germany*
[r] *Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands*
[s] *University of Houston, Houston, TX, USA*
E-mail address: john.antonakis@unil.ch (J. Antonakis).
[*] Corresponding author.