Journal of World Business 51 (2016) 487–498

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of World Business

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jwb

Revisiting the standing of international business journals in the competitive landscape

Heinz Tüselmann [a,1,*], Rudolf R. Sinkovics [b,c,2], Grigory Pishchulov [d,3]

[a] Centre for International Business and Innovation (CIBI), Manchester Metropolitan University Business School, All Saints Campus, Oxford Road, Manchester M15 6BH, UK
[b] Centre for Comparative & International Business Research (CIBER), The University of Manchester, Manchester Business School, Booth Street West, Manchester M15 6PB, UK
[c] Lappeenranta University of Technology, Skinnarilankatu 34, PL 20, Lappeenranta 53851, Finland
[d] Leverhulme Trust Overseas Visiting Fellow, Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences, TU Dortmund University, Martin-Schmeißer-Weg 12 Dortmund 44227, Germany

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 13 July 2015
Received in revised form 28 January 2016
Accepted 28 January 2016
Available online 12 February 2016

Keywords:
Journal lists
Journal ranking
Research evaluation
Data envelopment analysis

ABSTRACT

Journal rankings are contentious, proliferating and bring about a significant change to research productivity and quality assessment. In this paper, we assess the quality and impact of International Business (IB) journals in relation to each other and management and business journals more broadly. In so doing, we overcome methodological limitations of previous journal rankings by adopting a novel approach that incorporates a worldwide meta-ranking. Its key advantage is the ability to look at the standing of journals both within and between subject-areas. Comparisons between subject areas are important because centralization of resource allocation decisions within institutions has ramifications for disciplines and staff involved. Results indicate that within the IB domain, *JIBS* continues to top the list, *JWB* has solidified its position and joined the upper tier of IB journals, the space below *JIBS* and *JWB* is increasingly contested, pointing to the emergence of a multi-tier set of "core" IB journals. In the wider competitive landscape of management and business journals, IB journals perform well in the upper tier, but there is a long tail of IB journals at the lower end of our meta-ranking.

1. Introduction and objectives

Globalization challenges, marketization and massification of higher education, together with advancements of information technology are key external forces that are shaping the realities and the future of a thousand year old industry (De Zilwa, 2010). Universities and business schools face increased accountability to stakeholders, governments, professional associations, employers and students. As university education has become big business over the past decade with nearly a doubling of students in higher education (Ernst & Young, 2012), academics around the world are forced to legitimize their scholarly activities (Guthrie & Parker, 2014). The academic system that was originally built on the self-regulating principles of intrinsic motivation, scientific interest and novelty-seeking curiosity is gravitating towards one that requires external recognition and accreditation (Binswhanger, 2014). Governments, funding bodies and external stakeholders are cultivating systems of process monitoring and output control, and researchers are transparent units of analysis in the face of Google Scholar, H Index, and impact metrics and are competing for a share of investment resources. A dominant legitimation mechanism in this context is the number and reputational standing of academic journal articles, with academic outputs disseminated and traded as "currency" within a knowledge-production economy that entails progressively more market-like operations (Paasi, 2005). Academics' net worth is assessed by the quantity and quality of articles published in these journals and their scholarly reputation is derived from the work published, but increasingly and thus perhaps even more importantly from the journal in which it is published. Naturally, the ranking of academic journals is a highly contentious dimension of research assessment, and vigorously debated (Mingers & Willmott, 2013; Willmott, 2011). It promotes the standardization of publication practices around specific sets of journals that are considered to carry international reach and quality and these are largely connected

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +44 161 247 3908.
E-mail addresses: h.tuselman@mmu.ac.uk (H. Tüselmann), Rudolf.Sinkovics@manchester.ac.uk (R.R. Sinkovics), grigory.pishchulov@tu-dortmund.de (G. Pishchulov).
[1] www.business.mmu.ac.uk/cibi.
[2] www.manchester.ac.uk/research/rudolf.sinkovics, Tel.: +44 161 305 8980.
[3] www.wiso.tu-dortmund.de/scm/, Tel.: +49 231 755 3234.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2016.01.006

to the databases of the Institute of Scientific Information (ISI). It further triggers unintended consequences in the academic system (Adler & Harzing, 2009) and has significant ramifications not only for individual scholars, but for the subject areas and institutions as a whole. Institutional profiles and publication performance data are connected with the notion of 'academic gift economy' (Bollen, Van de Sompel, Hagberg, & Chute, 2009) and sold back to the institutions for strategic-planning purposes (Hazelkorn, 2011). With limited time and attention, senior management involved in resource allocation, relies on productivity and available publication information and thus reinforces a competition between subject-areas, that is akin to the "Matthew effect in science" (Merton, 1968) suggesting that a lot of attention (resources) are given to only a few (with high citations).

There are a plethora of journal rankings. For business and management, significant lists are offered by Harzing's Journal Quality List (JQL) (Harzing, 2015). In some disciplinary areas, there is an understanding that the dynamic nature of journal rankings requires these to be repeatedly updated, refined and published, e.g., in finance (Beattie & Goodacre, 2006; Chen & Huang, 2007; Currie & Pandher, 2011; Wu, Hao, & Yao, 2009), marketing (Hult, Neese, & Bashaw, 1997; Hult, Reimann, & Schilke, 2009; Mort, McColl-Kennedy, Kiel, & Soutar, 2004; Steward & Lewis, 2010; Theoharakis & Hirst, 2002; Theußl, Reutterer, & Hornik, 2014), and innovation and entrepreneurship (Franke & Schreier, 2008; Linton, 2006; Linton & Thongpapanl, 2004; Thongpapanl, 2012). However, in International Business (IB), the interest in updating the "pecking order" seems to have receded after the publication of DuBois and Reeb (2000), with most productivity and faculty performance studies assuming a relatively stable set of publication contenders, i.e., the *Journal of International Business Studies* (*JIBS*), *Journal of World Business* (*JWB*), *International Business Review* (*IBR*) and *Management International Review* (*MIR*) (Chan, Fung, & Leung, 2006; Kumar & Kundu, 2004; Treviño, Mixon, Funk, & Inkpen, 2010). This is quite surprising and potentially problematic for the discipline, as the domain of IB is multi-dimensional and complex (Inkpen, 2001) and cannot easily be confined to just four journals. Furthermore, journal rankings have arguably heightened the competition, not only between journals, but also between the disciplinary areas within which academics are publishing. Yet, there is a paucity of comparative studies that address the ranking performance and competitive position of the journals of one subject area, such as IB, vis-à-vis those of other relevant business and management subject areas.

The aim of this paper is not to enter the highly delicate and politically sensitive realm of research assessment, neither is it to revisit Taylorization discourses regarding journal ranking lists, such as the Association of Business Schools' Academic Journal Guide (ABS List), the Financial Times 45 ("FT45") List or the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) List (Mingers & Willmott, 2013; Rowlinson, Harvey, Kelly, & Morris, 2011). Instead, we accept that, irrespective of inherent problems, lists will persist as indicators of quality perceptions in their respective communities, and we respond to the increasing proliferation of journal ranking lists by offering a refreshed and methodologically advanced perspective. We consolidate existing reputable journal lists, complement these with citation data and use the results to shed light on a number of pertinent issues that provide a justification for the ambition to revisit the standing of IB journals in the competitive landscape. This is thus an attempt to offer more than yet another journal ranking. This exercise is of potential merit for the profession and those active within it, especially young and upcoming scholars who are facing an environment that puts frequently conflicting demands on them regarding publishing and the multiplicity of roles in terms of research, research funding, teaching and engagement (Bazeley, 2003; McKelvey, 2006). As highlighted by Frey (2009), it is unrealistic to assume (or simply impossible) that everybody can get published in the select few world-elite journals. Understanding the standing of specific journal outlets within the broader context of journals from neighbouring subject areas is thus of substantive importance. It may provide welcome guidance for the targeting and dissemination of research outputs in journals that offer both internal institutional-level legitimation as well as external recognition.

2. The value of journal rankings

First, academic institutions strive to enhance their research environment but also put forward specific sets of expectations and performance targets for arriving at desired reputational positions. Examples of ranking systems that frequently influence strategic resource decisions and operational priorities include the Academic Ranking of World Universities ("Shanghai Jiao Tong" ranking) on a global scale (Hazelkorn, 2011), and national perspectives such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the UK. Directly connected to institutional aspirations regarding the competitive positioning are individual publication targets for faculty members. These in turn are linked to quality and productivity measures that influence promotion decisions and thus make or break academic careers (Seggie & Griffith, 2009). In order to further their careers and to progress towards promotions, academics are required to publish in top-tier journals, but with an increasing number of scholars around the globe competing for similar publication outlets (see, e.g., Cheetham, 2015) and an increasingly stringent coverage of journals within Thomson Reuters' Journal Citation Reports (JCR), there is a noticeable reduction in journal space, and the publication race is becoming harder. Hence, there is a real demand for journal rankings that integrate JCR, but go beyond it, to cover multiple types of perceptual and objective information.

Second, there is considerable competition between subject-specific journals such as those in IB and marketing, finance, or general management, for the top ranks. The competitive positions are determined by editorial policies, citations and the ability to attract leading scholars to publish their work in the journals. The competition between subject areas is further determined by business schools and their deans, who make funding decisions among specific subject areas by offsetting the demands of one with those of others. Journal rankings play an important role in this, serving as an "objective" measure of scholarly performance, and are used to justify resource investment. A substantial amount of IB research is published in other management and business journals (Chan et al., 2006; Treviño et al., 2010). Given the multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary and complex context within which IB research takes place (Inkpen, 2001), it seems appropriate not to recline into a mono-disciplinary space in which only IB journals are included in given rankings. In contrast to DuBois and Reeb (2000), who suggest that "including what are normally considered non-IB journals in the analysis would dilute and confuse..." (p. 691), we advocate conscious competition between IB journals and other management and business journals. Attracting high quality and knowledge-advancing submissions from general and specialist management and business scholars into IB journals, helps, not only to advance citation metrics and long-term journal ranking positions, but also the progression of the field by offering career opportunities for scholars within schools, and thus the sustainability and growth of IB as a subject area.

Third, the pressure around journal publication space has grabbed the attention of commercial publishing houses, which are monetizing the rapidly expanding and financially lucrative academic "gift economy" (Bollen et al., 2009). New journals are created frequently, and the issue cycle of established outlets is getting shorter to cope with increasing submission rates. A parallel development, the meteoric rise of open-access publishing models, combined with the requirements of grant-funding bodies and the

promise of increased impact, has led to a mushrooming of new journals, specifically from emerging and Asian markets. Against such forces, the established pecking order of journals in areas such as IB, and positional advantages that may have been simply a function of editorial legacy, cannot be taken for granted.

In terms of journal quality rankings, the conventional approaches are based on either citation data (*objective*) or perceptual (*subjective*) assessment, such as opinion surveys, conducted within institutions, learned societies or academic networks. In light of the well-known shortcomings and criticisms of these approaches (e.g., Baum, 2011; Fam et al., 2011; Frey & Rost, 2010; Halkos & Tzeremes, 2011; Morris, Harvey, & Kelly, 2009), *hybrid* journal rankings have gained attention. These are intended to deliver a more balanced view on journal quality by combining both subjective and objective data (for an overview of selected hybrid ranking studies, see Tüselmann, Sinkovics, and Pishchulov (2015)). However, they typically have a restricted coverage in terms of subject areas and ranking sources, and apply simple aggregation techniques (Fam et al., 2011; Mingers & Harzing, 2007). In recent years, *meta-ranking* approaches, intended to overcome the shortcomings of hybrid approaches, have attracted attention (Benati & Stefani, 2011; Cook, Raviv, & Richardson, 2010; Franke & Schreier, 2008; Halkos & Tzeremes, 2011; Mingers & Harzing, 2007; Rainer & Miller, 2005; Steward & Lewis, 2010; Theußl et al., 2014; Tüselmann et al., 2015). These involve a broader selection of journal rankings in the analysis, and they seek to deliver a reproducible outcome. Conspicuously, to date, there are only a few meta-ranking lists and they mostly exhibit several shortcomings, such as (a) arbitrary choice and datedness of underlying journal rankings; (b) overreliance on *objective* rankings; (c) restrictive coverage of the number of journals, subject areas and underlying rankings; (d) inadequate treatment of missing data; (e) questionable treatment of ordinal rank data; and (f) limitations in the aggregation methods used for the rating/ranking of journals (for an overview of meta-ranking studies and their shortcomings see Tüselmann et al. (2015)).

With this paper, we thus make a call for a meta-ranking that overcomes the limitations of existing meta-ranking studies, and that goes beyond the conventional grading of journals, to produce rankings across the wider business and management discipline. We adopt an approach that addresses these issues, by combining the strong features of previous approaches and introducing a number of methodological innovations. Specifically, we build on reputable sources of journal influence to compose an up-to-date data set that covers a comprehensive number of journals and a significant number of disciplines, thus addressing the above deficits (a)–(c). Further, we employ two state-of-the-art methods of classification and multi-criteria performance evaluation for conducting missing data imputation and aggregating ordinal rank data. With these methods we address deficits (d)–(f) and contribute to the practice of journal meta-ranking with a novel approach which has an advantage of being inherently non-parametric and involving features previously unused in journal ranking exercises, in particular fuzzy rank imputation to address imputation uncertainty, and aggregation of both crisp and fuzzy ordinal rank data to derive a journal rating on a ratio scale, in a way that largely removes subjective bias. Using this methodology (for details, see Section 3 as well as Tüselmann et al. (2015)), we offer a comprehensive analysis of IB journals, both within the IB journal context and in the wider competitive landscape of general and specialist business and management journals.

3. Methodology

In order to produce an aggregate rating and ranking of journals, we employ a novel meta-ranking approach that features a natural combination of two state-of-the-art methods of classification and multi-criteria performance evaluation (see the preceding paragraph for a brief description of its advantages and novel features). Fig. A1 illustrates the approach used. In what follows, we will explain the composition of our data set, outline our methodological approach and describe its application in a journal ranking setting. The method is based on Tüselmann et al. (2015) and is presented in a summative and non-technical format. For a comprehensive treatment, see Tüselmann et al. (2015); for full technical details, see Pishchulov, Tüselmann, and Sinkovics (2014).

3.1. Data set and subject area classification

The two main data sources for our data set are the 55th edition of the JQL repository (Harzing, 2015), which represents a broadly accepted compilation of academic journal ranking lists from a worldwide variety of academic and institutional sources, and the Thomson Reuters' JCR (Thomson Reuters, 2015). We compose our data set as follows. Firstly, we include in the data set all 905 journal titles contained in the JQL, in order to achieve the most comprehensive coverage of journals. In the next step, we choose the 10 most recent journal ranking lists from the 17 available in the JQL—as indicated in Table A1.[1] These 10 ranking lists cover a time span from 2008 to 2015 and represent a selection of sources with a broad geographical variety. We refer to these ranking lists as *target lists* and employ them as a primary data source for producing an up-to-date ranking of journals with an aggregate view on the journals' reputations from an international perspective. In addition to that, we include the journals' two-year impact factor scores from the most recent JCR (see Table A1) as an additional target list—in order to provide a balanced view on the journals' reputations based on subjective judgements as well as objective citation data.

As none of the target lists comprehensively covers the full range of journals on the JQL, we introduce a number of additional journal ranking lists from the JQL that fall outside our time range for the target lists (European Journal of Information Systems 2007, University of Queensland 2007) and additional JCR impact factors (2008–2013) into our data set, to support imputations regarding missing data.

A crucial issue in any journal ranking exercise is the definition of the subject areas and the allocation of journals into cognate disciplines, which can make a substantial difference for cross-subject-area comparisons of journals (see, e.g., Adler & Harzing, 2009). Although JQL has such a classification system, we adopt the subject area classification as per the target list ABS 2015 (see Table A2), for the following reason. First, their allocation of journals to subject areas is based on consultations with the subject experts on their advisory panel, and on these experts having consulted widely with their respective learned societies/scholarly associations and their peer communities. Second, the ABS 2015 approach offers a more fine-grained subject area categorization (22 categories) compared with JQL (16 categories). To the 22 ABS subject areas, we add *Communications*, as this area features in JQL but not in ABS 2015. Moreover, on ABS 2015, *IB* and *Area Studies* are combined[2], but for our analysis we separate them into two discrete subject areas.

3.2. Missing data imputation

The target lists only cover a select number of journals—ranging from 29% to 91% of the entire number. In order to deal with this

[1] Ranking lists WIE 2008, Den 2011, AERES 2012, and FNEG 2013 have been excluded for the same reasons as indicated in Tüselmann et al. (2015, footnote 3).

[2] ABS has allocated the Global Strategy Journal (GSJ) to the Strategy subject area. However, the journal straddles the IB and Strategy areas. On this basis, GSJ has been assigned dual membership in this paper, i.e. included in the meta-ranking as both IB and Strategy journal.

missing data issue, we complete the data set by generating missing values (for the further details on the approach to *completing the data set*, see Tüselmann et al. (2015), cf. Mingers and Harzing (2007), and Benati and Stefani (2011)).

In particular, we focus on the *classification and regression trees* and *random forests* methods because of the versatility and accuracy they offer (Biau, Devroye, & Lugosi, 2008; Hastie, Tibshirani, & Friedman, 2009; Strobl, Malley, & Tutz, 2009). We adopt these methods to impute missing data in the target lists, as explained below.

Classification and regression trees (CART) represent an established non-parametric predictive learning method that can compete with classical statistical methods in terms of predictive accuracy, while allowing any mixture of variables in the data set, being resistant to outliers and irrelevant variables, producing highly interpretable data models, having a strong emphasis on possible data missingness in the predictor variables, and being quick to train (Hastie et al., 2009; Lim, Loh, & Shih, 2000). CART delivers a data model in the form of a binary tree that captures the association between the response and the predictor variables in the data set.

Breiman (2001) has extended CART to a novel *random forests* (RF) method that improves the predictive accuracy remarkably. It is competitive in this regard with the best available methods (Biau et al., 2008; Hastie et al., 2009; Strobl et al., 2009). The RF method features ensembles of classification or regression trees, which deliver the prediction of the response variable as a committee, whereas the fitting of individual trees involves randomization—which ultimately yields excellent prediction accuracy from the ensemble. Other advantages of RF include ease of training and its ability to capture nonlinear associations and complex interactions between the variables in the data set (Strobl et al., 2009). This makes RF one of the state-of-the-art predictive learning methods.

In our specific case, RF imputes the probability with which a specific journal, missing an entry in the given list, would have been assigned to a specific rank category in that list—for each category, from highest to lowest. The respective probability can be interpreted as the imputed *degree of membership* of this journal to the given rank in that ranking list. Notably, the RF method has a built-in mechanism for estimating these probabilities—which we further refine by means of a *calibration* procedure (see Boström, 2008; Pishchulov et al., 2014). As a result, the individual entries in the target lists from 1 to 10 of our data set now represent either a *crisp ranking* (in the case of an existing entry), or a *fuzzy ranking* (in the case of a missing entry with imputed rank probabilities) (see also Zhou, Ma, & Turban, 2001).[3]

With respect to target list no. 11 (Thomson Reuters, 2015), journals with an impact factor are ranked and divided into quintiles, with 1 denoting the top quintile, and 5 the lowest quintile. Journals that do not carry an impact factor in the most recent Thomson Reuters' JCR are assigned a value of 6, i.e., the lowest rank gradation.[4] This finally completes the data in all target lists from 1 to 11—which are then subjected to the aggregation procedure for the purpose of obtaining a journal meta-rating and -ranking, as explained next.

3.3. Aggregation of target lists to a meta-rating and -ranking

Given that the target lists represent 11 different indicators of journals' performance, their aggregation can be regarded as a problem of multi-attribute performance evaluation. *Data envelopment analysis* (DEA) (Charnes, Cooper, & Rhodes, 1978) is a state-of-the-art approach to solving such problems, with numerous applications to date in various areas (Liu, Lu, Lu, & Lin, 2013). In a typical DEA setup, a number of peer entities (e.g. universities) consume a number of common inputs (e.g., budgets) to produce a number of common outputs (e.g., research, teaching, and public service) (Thanassoulis, Kortelainen, Johnes, & Johnes, 2011). When evaluating their relative efficiency, DEA in particular is intended to remove the subjective bias that any pre-specified weights for the aggregation of inputs and outputs might carry, by allowing each peer entity to choose these weights endogenously and thus evaluate its efficiency against that of its peers (cf. Cook, Tone, & Zhu, 2014; Cooper, Seiford, & Tone, 2007). Further, DEA represents a non-parametric method as it avoids making *a priori* assumptions about the association between the variables in the data set (Cooper et al., 2007). Due to the above advantages, we adopt DEA as the method for evaluating the aggregate performance of journals in our data set.

Building on the related research (Llamazares & Peña, 2009), we employ the following DEA approach. The individual journals in our data set act as peer entities, while each rank gradation in each of the 11 target lists represents a specific output; the amount of that output delivered by a specific journal is represented by that journal's degree of membership to the respective rank in the given ranking list (cf. Cook, Doyle, Green, & Kress, 1997).[5] A specific choice of weights attached to the individual rank gradations in each ranking list allows us to rate the given journal in terms of its weighted average output. In the DEA spirit, for each journal, these rank weights are chosen in such a way that maximizes that journal's own rating against those of its peers. We control the choice of rank weights for the journals so as to respect the ordinal nature of rank gradations in each ranking list (Cook & Kress, 1990; Noguchi, Ogawa, & Ishii, 2002) and ensure a convex sequence of weights (Hashimoto, 1997). We then employ the cross-evaluation approach of Green, Doyle, and Cook (1996) to derive each journal's overall rating score by aggregating its ratings as determined by itself and its peers. A well-known problem in such a treatment of ordinal rank gradations lies in setting the discrimination intensity between any two consecutive rank gradations in terms of their weights (Cook & Kress, 2002; Green et al., 1996; Wang, Chin, & Yang, 2007). We resolve this problem by letting the journals determine the discrimination intensity endogenously via Nash bargaining (Pishchulov et al., 2014).

Before applying the above DEA approach, we exclude from the data set those journals that appear in less than 25% of the 11 target lists, to ensure that the imputations of missing values are based on a minimal representative number of original rankings. The choice of this threshold is in line with other, related work (Cook et al., 2010; Theußl et al., 2014). Our robustness checks also showed that the results appear to be insensitive to increasing the threshold. This leaves 819 journals on the list, representing ca. 90% of the initial number. Using the above-described DEA approach, we then obtain aggregate ratings of all 819 journals, with their rating scores ranging from 0.52587 to 1. Listing the rating scores in decreasing order determines a ranking of these journals, with 767 unique ranking positions. Table A2 displays a selection of the results.

To summarize, we have presented a novel method for consolidating journal rankings, which represents a natural combination of two state-of-the-art non-parametric approaches to classification and multi-attribute performance evaluation. By the nature of these approaches, our method does not require assumptions on the associations and interactions between the

[3] A crisp ranking is a special case of a fuzzy ranking: it attaches the full probability (100%) to one specific rank, and zero probability to the others.

[4] This approach avoids problems with the normalization of the impact factor data (Morris et al., 2009) and leads to crisp rankings of all journals in target list no. 11. For a full treatment of problems connected with the various normalization methods for impact factor data, see Mingers and Leydesdorff (2015).

[5] There is a fictitious single input whose amount is equal to unity for all journals (cf. Lovell & Pastor, 1999).

variables in the data set, and offers several additional features, such as fuzzy rank imputation and rank discrimination via Nash bargaining. The application of the method to the data from reputable sources of journal influence (i.e., the JQL, which collates multiple journal ranking lists, and Thomson Reuters' JCR) has allowed us to obtain an up-to-date rating and ranking of a comprehensive number of journals and a significant number of disciplines, thus overcoming a number of problems previously existing in meta-ranking studies (see Section 2 above). Our extensive cross-validation procedures and robustness checks ensure the reliability of the results obtained. Section 4 offers a discussion of these results.

4. Results and discussion

Building on the methodological advancements outlined above, Table A2 exhibits a selection from the resulting aggregate meta-ranking of 819 journals. It shows the top 5% of the journals in the meta-ranking and their respective rank-order, as well as the highest ranked journal in those subject areas that do not have a journal in the top 5%. Normalized by the size of the subject area (i.e., the number of journals in our list), general psychology and general management journals are over-performing in terms of featuring in the top 5%, having respectively nearly four times and over twice as many journals in this category as would have been expected given the size of those subject areas. At the other end of the spectrum, 8 of the 24 subject areas do not feature among the top 5%, including HRM, and management development and education. IB occupies rank 6 among the 24 subject areas in the top 5%. *JIBS* occupies rank 28 among the 40 journals within this category.

We deliberately refrain from the conventional definition or attachment of particular journal quality grade categories such as A*, A, B, C (Australian Business Deans Council Journal Quality List 'ABDC 2013') or 4*, 4, 3, 2, 1 (ABS 2015 List). This removes the subjective and political dimension and allows for an appropriate application of quality categories at the local institutional level, with due consideration of the context of institutional aspirations regarding research performance and vis-à-vis various other subject-specific journal quality lists.

At the level of specific subject areas, the results of our meta-ranking shed light on the competitive position of the subject-area in terms of the rankings of its journals vis-à-vis those of other management and business areas. Furthermore, the meta-ranking can serve as a reference point for reviewing the grades of other journal lists (e.g., ABS 2015, ABDC 2013, German Academic Association for Business Research (VHB) 2015; see Table A1). Plotting the results of this meta-ranking against such journal grades helps us to pinpoint discrepancies. Gross discrepancies are useful prompts for revisions and reconciliations of the grades in future editions of these lists. Relatedly, this meta-ranking may be useful for further substantiation of quality differences of prestige journals, which are frequently listed as elite journal lists, such as in the FT45 journals. A rank-ordering of the FT45 list (and other elite journal lists, such as the UTD list), as well as the identification of differences between such journals and other highly ranked non-FT45 journals, will benefit the understanding and acceptance of such lists.

4.1. Towards a multi-tier IB journal ranking

Table A3 presents the ranking order of journals in the IB domain. The results raise some questions on the perceived pecking order of IB journals and on conventional lists of "top", or "core" IB journals included in IB productivity ranking studies (Chan et al., 2006; Lahiri & Kumar, 2012; Treviño et al., 2010), with *JIBS*, *JWB*, *IBR* and *MIR* being regularly included. Interestingly, when we map ABS 2015 grades onto our ranking results, apart from the case of the *European Journal of International Management* (*EJIM*), our rankings are in line with the ABS 2015 grades.

As expected, *JIBS* tops the list, and this meta-ranking exercise also highlights that, amongst the FT45 elite journal list, *JIBS* occupies a middling position, with a rank of 22. *JWB* is the second-highest-ranked IB journal in this meta-ranking. Although not included in the FT45 list, it ranks higher than five of the FT45 journals and would, based on our ranking exercise, occupy rank 40 among the FT45 journals. Indeed, the solidification of *JWB*'s position as one of the top two IB journals is reflected in recent upgrades in a number of major lists, such as ABS 2015 and the ESSEC Business School Paris journal ranking.

Ranks 3 and 4 are occupied by *Global Strategy Journal* (*GSJ*) and *Management and Organization Review* (*MOR*), i.e., newer and/or Asia focused journals rather than then traditional "core" IB journals, such as *International Business Review* (*IBR*) or *Management International Review* (*MIR*), which are placed at rank 5 and 6, respectively, followed by *Journal of International Management* (*JIM*) and *Asia Pacific Journal of Management* (*APJM*) ranked as 7th and 8th, respectively. Yet, there is a clear positional difference between IB journals in ranks 5 and 8 compared to both ranks 3 and 4, as well as to IB journals ranked in the lower half of Table A3 (see rating differentials Table A3). Additionally, there seems to be a rather crowded space of ranks 5–8 (see rating differentials Table A3). In fact, the traditional view of what constitutes "core" IB journals (Chan et al., 2006; Lahiri & Kumar, 2012; Treviño et al., 2010), does not seem to hold anymore in the dynamic journal landscape. We may witness a shift towards a multi-tier "core" IB journal landscape, with *JIBS* and *JWB* in the first tier and the space below these two journals becoming increasingly contested.

Relatedly, another aspect of this meta-ranking is that it supports a more fine-grained analysis of a journal's standing among its peers within the broader journal grade category than other major journal lists. Specifically, it can be used to ascertain the pecking order of journals within a particular grade category of other major journal ranking lists, such as ABS 2015, ABDC 2013, and VHB 2015. Although *GSJ*, *MOR*, *IBR*, *MIR*, *JIM* and *APJM* are all rated as grade 3 journals in ABS 2015 (see Table A2 for ABS grade definitions), the meta-ranking we propose reveals a new pecking order amongst these journals within this broad ABS grade category. Arguably, this gradation runs somewhat against the perceived "wisdom". Yet, it is conceivably a development in the academic journal landscape that is catching up with the reality of the economic center of gravity shifting eastwards (Quah, 2011), as well as "steep learning curves" and "born global" phenomena of new journals. Since the last major, explicit IB journal ranking studies produced over 15 years ago (DuBois & Reeb, 2000; Inkpen, 2001), Asian journals and some newer IB journals have been rising in prominence, have made major inroads and in individual cases have even moved beyond some of those journals that were traditionally considered "core" IB journals. This meta-ranking thus captures some of these dynamics in the IB journal landscape and the current competitive positions of journals in the IB domain.

One important implication of our findings is that future studies on the productivity of publications in IB journals and subsequent rankings of individual scholars and business schools would benefit from moving beyond the traditional set of "core" IB journals included in previous studies (Chan et al., 2006; Lahiri & Kumar, 2012). It appears appropriate to pursue a more differentiated and multi-tier approach to IB journals, whereby the dynamics in the discipline are captured and the number of core IB journals adequately reflects the ascent of IB journals with a regional focus and/or those that are relatively "young". Clearly, this would have implications regarding the productivity ranking of individual

scholars and business schools, with ramifications regarding the institutional support, both material and immaterial, provided to them, and thus the well-being of IB as a subject area in those institutions.

4.2. The regional focus of IB journal rankings and the infant-journal argument

A frequently voiced critique against journal rankings is that they discriminate against non-US journals, specifically against those journal with geographical focus, such as European and Asian perspectives, as well as against newer journals (Adler & Harzing, 2009; Tourish & Willmott, 2015). While the simplistic and universalizing application of journal rankings certainly has the potential to unleash negative effects for academics and subject areas, our results suggest a less problematic and more differentiated picture. This meta-ranking reveals two favorably ranked IB journals with an Asian perspective, namely *MOR* and *APJM*, which share certain commonalities. The publishing houses for both journals are/have been US-based (see Table A3) and they work with US-based editors. Interestingly, their senior/deputy editors are affiliated with both highly ranked US and Asian universities, and their editorial boards include a considerable number of high-profile scholars from Asian institutions. Further, the scope of these journals explicitly focuses on Asia/Asia Pacific Rim. Moreover, both journals are aligned with major regional scholarly associations (*APJM* with the Asian Academy of Management, and *MOR* with the International Association for Chinese Management Research).

This constellation and editorial setup may explain, at least amongst IB journals, why Asia-focused journals are becoming increasingly competitive and even potentially out-performing several of the "traditional" IB journals. Yet, despite these commonalities, *MOR* has made significantly more progress than *APJM*, by overtaking several traditional IB journals. Notwithstanding this, the rating differential between *APJM* and some of the traditional IB journals is relatively small (see Table A3), perhaps indicating an upward trajectory. Interestingly, however, *MOR* is a younger journal than *APJM* (see Table A3). Relatedly, it is notable that *EJIM*, although the second youngest IB journal in Table A3 with a strong regional focus on Eastern and Central Europe, already occupies a middling position among IB journals.

The infant-journal argument, which is frequently cited as a problematic issue related to journal rankings, suggests that new journals do not have the traction and reputation that older journal competitors enjoy and thus will find it difficult to compete for paper submissions and citations. This undoubtedly opens up challenges for the dissemination of new scholarly thinking and debates that do not sit well in the molds of preconceived disciplinary boundaries. Indeed, although the two top-ranked IB journals, *JIBS* and *JWB*, are long-established journals and the average age of journals amongst the top eight is 30 years, compared to 20 years amongst the bottom eight (see Table A3), the picture is not as clear cut as these figures suggest. There are a number of journals in the bottom eight that have existed for over 20 years but have failed to gain traction. Conversely, *GSJ* and *MOR* who are ranked 3rd and 4th, respectively amongst IB journals are aged 10 years or younger, with *GSJ* being the youngest journal in Table A3.

Similar to *MOR* and *APJM*, *GSJ* has a focused scope, but unlike *MOR* and *APJM* the journal does not have a regional but a particular subject focus, i.e., international strategy. Yet this focus allows it to straddle both the IB and strategy fields. Like *MOR* and *APJM* it is aligned to a major scholarly association (Strategic Management Society) and is a sister journal of *Strategic Management Journal* (*SMJ*). Moreover, a common feature of these favorably ranked new journals (*GSJ*, *MOR*) and/or favorably ranked regionally focused journals (*MOR*, *APJM*) seems that their editorial set-ups in terms of size of senior/associate/area/subject/consulting editors, editorial review boards and overall editorial boards are more in concordance with the top rated IB journals compared to traditional "core" IB journals below the top in Table A3. Nevertheless, journals in the lower half of the IB journal rankings operate generally with less extensive editorial boards compared to those in the upper half (but with notable exceptions) (see Table A3).

Taken together, the competitive landscape amongst IB journals has changed considerably over the last few decades. Conventional perceptions regarding the influence of geographical focus and journal age on the standing of journals seem to have blurred, at least amongst IB journals. *JIBS* continues to be firmly established as the top IB journal. *JWB* has solidified its position as the second-highest-ranked IB journal and is competitive with several other elite-list journals, such as those in FT45. Arguably, *JWB* exhibits an "upwardly mobile" trajectory. However, other traditional "core" IB journals, such as *IBR* and *MIR*, have lost some ground and have even been overtaken and/or are challenged by certain Asia-focused journals and newer journals. The space below *JIBS* and *JWB* seems to be becoming increasingly contested.

4.3. Competitive performance of IB journals vis-à-vis other management and business subject areas

We concentrate our comparative analysis on those subject areas that are generally included in other studies that deal with the dissemination of IB research (e.g., Chan et al., 2006; Treviño et al., 2010). These include mainstream and generalist areas, as well as larger functional subject areas, and smaller and specialist subject areas, as listed in Table A4.

Based on ranking position amongst the 819 journals included in our final ranking list, we ascertain as a first step the number of journals in each subject area that fall into the top 5%, top 15%, top third and bottom third of our meta-ranking. Table A4 shows the raw data on the total number of journals in each subject area and the number of journals from each subject area in each category.

Table A5 presents the distribution of the subject areas' journals within these categories. The comparative performance of a subject area's journals is ascertained by the share of journals *within* the given subject area that fall into the ranking category in question, based on the ranking of all 819 journals in our meta-ranking. If these were uniformly distributed we would expect that 5% of a subject area's journals would be in the top 5%, 15% in the top 15%, etc., of that subject area's journals. Deviations from these distributions would suggest over- or under-performance of a subject area's journals. However, the percentage figures in Table A5 have to be interpreted with caution and read in conjunction with the raw data in Table A4, particularly for smaller subject areas such as IB, Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Strategy, which have less than 20 journals on our list, i.e., 16 and 12, respectively (see Table A4). The same numerator with a slight difference in the denominator between two roughly similar sized subject areas will produce different percentage figures but this difference may have little interpretative power. For example, IB and Strategy have both 1 journal in the Top 5% category, but with IB having 16 journals on our List and Strategy 12 (see Table A4), this would translate into 6.25% of all IB journals falling into the Top 5% based on our meta-ranking of 819 journals, compared to 8.33% of Strategy journals (see Table A5). Because the small absolute numbers involved, it is not credible to interpret these percentage figures to the point. Thus, the subsequent analysis will focus on substantial deviations from the uniform distribution, and substantial differences between subject areas.

Table A5 shows that IB performs very well in the top 5% of journals category, with *JIBS* in this category, and performs near to

average in the top 15% category, where the IB subject area is presented by *JIBS* and *JWB*. However, IB underperforms in the top third category, with only *JIBS*, *JWB*, *GSJ* and *MOR* featuring in that category. Underperformance is particularly pronounced in the bottom third category, into which half of all IB journals fall.

However, a somewhat mixed picture emerges in the comparative performance of IB journals vis-à-vis those from related subject areas. IB performs well in the top 5% category. The only subject area that clearly out-performs IB is General Management. However, it also out-competes all other subject areas in Table A5. IB performance in the top 15% category is around average, above Finance, HRM, and Strategy and not dissimilar to Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Although IB underperforms in the top third category, it is still somewhat better than HRM and similar with Innovation, Marketing, and Organization Studies. Although the underperformance of IB journals is particularly pronounced in the bottom third category, other subject areas, namely General Management, HRM, Marketing, and Strategy, also have 50% or more of their journals in this category. Indeed, HRM and Marketing are in an even more unfavorable position in the bottom third journal category than IB.

In terms of the comparative performance of IB journals relative to other subject areas, it is difficult to reach definitive conclusions. Although IB is doing very well in the top 5% journal category (i.e., through *JIBS*) and is reasonably competitive in the top 15% journal category (i.e., through *JIBS* and *JWB*), its performance does worsen as we move down the rank categories. A long tail of IB journals falls into the bottom end category, but such a profile also exists for several other subject areas. A focused look at the columns and rows in Table A5, specifically the top two categories and the bottom category, reveals that IB performs reasonably well or at least not substantially differently than some larger and/or smaller functional subject areas, e.g. HRM, Marketing and Strategy. However, this diagnosis is certainly not a clean bill of health for the discipline and there may be other influential factors at play that may shed more light on this analysis.

Indeed, some subject areas are more mature than others. Economics, for example, may have more established journals with more clout and reputation compared to relatively new subject areas with a greater share of younger journals. This may imply that the maturity of subject areas, as measured by the age of their journals, may at least partly explain the comparative performance of a subject area's journals in our meta-ranking. Although the above intra-IB journal analysis suggests that the relationship between journal age and journal ranking may not be linear, this also has been looked at in the context of journal age across subject areas. In comparison with the other comparative subject areas, IB journals exhibit the lowest median age (see Table A6a), perhaps not surprising as half of the IB journals are 20 years or younger (see Table A3). In light of the somewhat mixed picture of journal age and journal ranking within the IB area, a Spearman rank correlation was run to determine the relationship between journal age and journal rating for all journals in the subject areas in Table A6a. There is a weak, positive correlation between journal age and journal rating (rho = 0.2281, $p < 0.0001$). This would suggest that despite the significant positive relationship, other subject areas also exhibit newer journals that have made major in-roads, as well as older journals that remain stuck at the bottom end of the scale.

Table A6b sheds further light on this. In all subject areas in Table A6a, over three quarters of all journals in the Top 5% are mature journals, and younger journals do not feature at the very top of the journal meta-ranking. This situation somewhat softens in the top 15% and top third categories. However and unexpected, the majority of journals in the bottom third are not younger journals but middle-aged journals between 21 and 40 years and nearly one quarter of journals in this category are older journals over 40 years old. In short, when looking across all subject areas, a considerable number of journals failed to get traction in terms of journal ranking, despite having been in existence for considerable time. The situation amongst IB journals is somewhat different when looking at the bottom end (leaving aside the first three categories in Table A6b due to low absolute numbers). Within IB the percentage of older journals at the bottom end of the ranking is lower compared to all subject areas together, and a large majority of IB journals in this category are younger journals. This implies that older IB journals fare better in terms of ranking compared to the average of all subject areas and there are quite a few younger IB journals which have not yet managed to establish themselves competitively. In terms of prospects of journals and their ranking mobility this implies that there is more scope in IB to improve at the bottom end of the ranking scale compared to some other subject areas which have comparatively more established and mature journals in the bottom category.

Notwithstanding, as far as the long-term well-being and growth of IB as a subject area is concerned, further progress is to be made. Currently IB is overly reliant on *JIBS* and *JWB* in the upper echelons of journal rankings. IB is doing quite well in the top 5% category and is reasonably competitive in the top 15% category. However, IB requires two more journals in the top third category and a shift of nearly 40% of the journals out of the bottom third category in order to support the assessment of average performance and reflect the share of IB journals among the wider management and business-related areas. In order for IB to out-perform all related subject areas listed in Tables A4 and A5, it would be necessary for *JWB* to join *JIBS* in the top 5%, two more journals to progress towards the top 15% of the meta-ranking, three more journals to move to the top third and to reduce the number journals in the bottom third from currently eight to three. Such upward moves would improve the overall 'health' of the discipline as viewed from a journal ranking perspective. Viewed in this way, the meta-ranking serves as a platform for ascertaining the magnitude of the ranking task from a disciplinary perspective, as well as pinpointing likely candidates among the IB journals, based on the pecking order in Table A3, for required upward moves.

5. Conclusion

Journal lists are frequently criticized as "mindless" and an "inappropriate surrogate for assessing the quality of published work without it having to be read" (Tourish & Willmott, 2015). Yet, within this paper we adopt the perspective that it is unlikely that journal rankings will become obsolete, given the increasing focus on productivity, specialization, and managerialism (Bennich-Björkman, 2013; Mingers & Willmott, 2013). Overcoming the methodological limitations of previous journal rankings by combining RF and DEA thus enhances discussions around the productivity and performance of scholarly outputs.

We illustrate the resultant meta-ranking list with specific reference to the standing of IB journals. Previous work on IB journal rankings is now somewhat outdated and does not fully capture the dynamism in the domain of IB as well as the relation to the wider competitive landscape of management and business journals. This paper reveals a number of important findings:

(a) Considerable changes in the competitive milieu of IB journals have emerged over the last decade, questioning the previously conceived wisdom of what constitutes "core IB" journals. This meta-ranking points to the emergence of an expanded and multi-tier core IB journal context, reflecting *inter alia* the ascent of Asia-focused journals. Furthermore, the domain of work that relates to IB is much more permeable and is also published in

other management and business journals. Thus, it cannot (and should not) be confined to only a few journals carrying the label of IB in their title (see Inkpen, 2001). To this end, this meta-ranking provides guidance for scholars and informs publication strategies and target journals, which may be particularly useful for early-career researchers in widening their target journal choices.

(b) Unsurprisingly, *JIBS* continues to top the list of firmly established IB journals. However, *JWB* has joined the upper tier of IB journals, and has solidified its position as the second-highest-ranked IB journal as epitomized by its rating score in this analysis. The *JWB* position is also reflected in other recent upgrades of major journal ranking lists, and demonstrates competitiveness with several elite-list journals, such as those in FT45.

(c) The space below *JIBS* and *JWB* has become increasingly contested, with major inroads made by Asia-focused journals and some new journals. The editorial set-ups, a focused scope (regional or subject-wise) and affiliation to major scholarly associations are common features underpinning the progress of certain Asia focused and/or newer journals in IB. This may hold important lessons for other IB journals to improve and/or to safeguard their positions in the journal ranking competition, particularly in light of steep learning curves and the "born global" phenomena of certain newer players in the IB journal landscape. This development not only shakes up traditional perceptions of what constitutes core IB journals, but also calls for an expansion of the list of core IB journals, and possibly further gradations amongst these.

(d) Relatedly, the regional and infant-journal arguments and the discriminatory effects of the age of journals vis-à-vis newer entrants do not hold in a categorical fashion, at least for IB journals. This ranking study paints a far more nuanced and differentiated picture.

(e) A mixed picture emerged regarding the performance and competitive positions of IB journals vis-à-vis those from related subject areas. Although IB journals perform very well in the top category (represented by *JIBS*) and reasonably well in the upper tier (represented by *JIBS* and *JWB*), their comparative performance and competitive positions slide significantly when we move down the ranking scales. This is particularly true at the lower end, where there is a long tail of IB journals. Yet, with the majority of such journals being relatively young, there seems more scope in IB to improve at the bottom end of the ranking scale compared to some other subject areas which have comparatively more established and mature journals in the bottom category.

(f) Finally, the results of this meta-ranking suggest that there is an opportunity for IB journals that are currently in the middle of the scale, to improve their competitiveness and thus contribute to the well-being and growth of IB as a subject area. This requires the cultivation of healthy and impactful general issues for these journals, which continue to impress the readership in terms of the quality of their papers and the novelty and relevance of their ideas. Furthermore, these journals will benefit from a deliberate search for good papers (Laband & Piette, 1994), carefully selected special issues that are orchestrated around themes that make contributions to real-world debates and are both rigorous and relevant without fostering parochialism (Daft & Lewin, 2008).

This study is certainly not a panacea and neither directly addresses the conceptual problems of metrification inherent in ranking studies nor their inappropriate use and/or misuse. However, it provides a considerable methodological advancement compared to existing journal ranking studies and thus lifts the prevailing discussions to a more rigorous and informed level. Furthermore, it sheds new light on the standing of IB journals, both within the IB domain and in relation to the wider competitive landscape of management and business journals. Journals are platforms for the dissemination of scholarly work and the competitive position that these enjoy vis-à-vis other journals (either in the same subject-area or above and beyond) demarcates the success of editorial set-ups and editorial boards, the strategic positioning of the journal and their reputation-enhancing relationship to major scholarly associations. However, by way of proxy, journal rankings also highlight the health of a particular subject-area, the vibrancy of scholarly discussions in these areas and the diffusion of these discussions through relevant communication channels. This is because resource allocation at university and school level is increasingly driven by key performance indicators and metrics such as Google Scholar, H-Index and impact metrics that are themselves connected to the ranking of journals. Given this context, this meta-ranking is not yet another ranking, but a solid basis upon which inter- and intra-subject discussions regarding outputs can be built.

Given the reproducible nature of our approach, future studies may track and update these findings in line with new or updated journal ranking lists and citation data. This will help to nurture an understanding of the dynamics amongst journals in the IB area, as well as in the wider business and management journal landscape.

Acknowledgment

The authors gratefully acknowledge the constructive feedback of two anonymous reviewers and the editorial guidance of JWB editor-in-chief Jonathan Doh. We also appreciate financial support from the Leverhulme Trust who funded the work of Grigory Pishchulov on this paper during his Leverhulme Overseas Fellowship at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Appendix A

Fig. A1
Tables A1–A5
Tables A6a and A6b

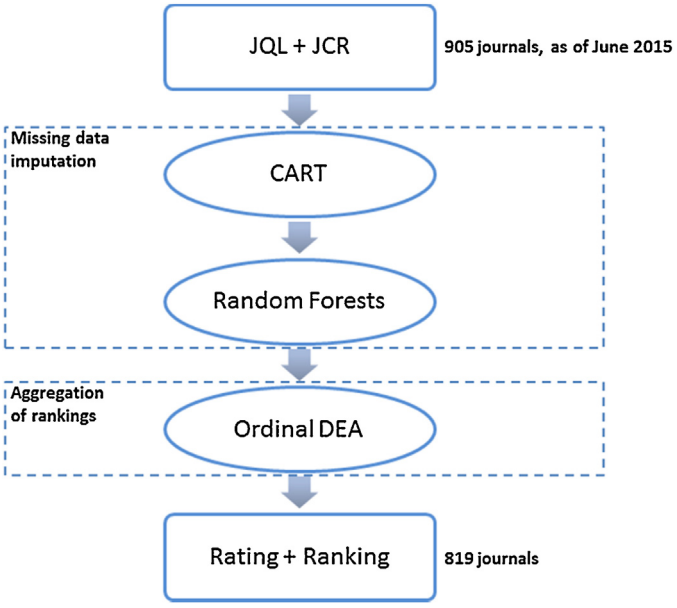

Fig. A1. Overview of the methodological approach.

Table A1
Target lists.

No.	*Title*	*Year*	*Abbreviation*	
1	Aston	2008	Ast 2008	←JQL
2	Hautes Études Commerciales de Paris Ranking List	2011	HEC 2011	
3	University of Queensland Adjusted ERA Ranking List	2011	UQ 2011	
4	Cranfield University School of Management	2012	Cra 2012	
5	ERASMUS Research Institute of Management Journal Listing	2012	EJL 2012	
6	Australian Business Deans Council Journal Ranking List	2013	ABDC 2013	
7	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique	2014	CNRS 2014	
8	Association of Business Schools Academic Journal Guide	2015	ABS 2015	
9	ESSEC Business School Paris	2015	ESS 2015	
10	Association of Professors of Business in German-speaking Countries	2015	VHB 2015	
11	Impact Factor from the Thomson Reuters' Journal Citation Reports	2014	Thomson Reuters 2015	←JCR

Table A2
Top 5% journals of business, management and related areas.

Journal	Field[a]	Rating	Rank	Tied Rank
Academy of Management Review	General Mgmt, Ethics & CSR	1	1	1
Administrative Science Quarterly	General Mgmt, Ethics & CSR	1	1	1
Journal of Finance	Finance	1	1	1
Journal of Marketing	Marketing	1	1	1
Management Science	OR & Management Science	1	1	1
MIS Quarterly	Information Management	1	1	1
Journal of Political Economy	Economics, Econometr, Stats	0.99918	2	7
Econometrica	Economics, Econometr, Stats	0.99873	3	8
Quarterly Journal of Economics	Economics, Econometr, Stats	0.99771	4	9
American Economic Review (The)	Economics, Econometr, Stats	0.99659	5	10
Psychological Review	Psychology (General)	0.98529	6	11
Strategic Management Journal	Strategy	0.98276	7	12
Academy of Management Journal	General Mgmt, Ethics & CSR	0.98194	8	13
Information Systems Research	Information Management	0.98194	8	13
Journal of Accounting & Economics	Accounting	0.98194	8	13
Journal of Accounting Research	Accounting	0.98194	8	13
Journal of Consumer Research	Marketing	0.98194	8	13
Journal of Financial Economics	Finance	0.98194	8	13
Organization Science	Organization Studies	0.98194	8	13
Review of Financial Studies	Finance	0.98194	8	13
Journal of Personality & Social Psychology	Psychology (General)	0.98081	9	21
American Journal of Sociology	Social Sciences	0.98041	10	22
Journal of Economic Literature	Economics, Econometr, Stats	0.97949	11	23
Journal of Applied Psychology	Psychology (Organizational)	0.97589	12	24
American Sociological Review	Social Sciences	0.96009	13	25
Psychological Bulletin	Psychology (General)	0.95324	14	26
Journal of International Business Studies	International Business	0.95319	15	27
Journal of Operations Management	Operations & Tech Mgmt	0.95319	15	27
Annual Review of Psychology	Psychology (General)	0.95296	16	29
Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin	Psychology (General)	0.95283	17	30
American Political Science Review	Public Sector & Health Care	0.94452	18	31
Journal of Experimental Psychology: General	Psychology (General)	0.94285	19	32
Accounting Review (The)	Accounting	0.94191	20	33
Journal of Economic Perspectives	Economics, Econometr, Stats	0.94061	21	34
Review of Economic Studies	Economics, Econometr, Stats	0.94011	22	35
Economic Journal	Economics, Econometr, Stats	0.9362	23	36
Research Policy	Innovation	0.93097	24	37
Journal of Management Studies	General Mgmt, Ethics & CSR	0.92451	25	38
Marketing Science	Marketing	0.92385	26	39
Annual Review of Sociology	Social Sciences	0.91934	27	40
Organization Studies	Organization Studies	0.91471	28	41
First-ranked journals within subject areas outside the top 5%				
Journal of Common Market Studies	Area Studies	0.63511	372	410
Journal of Economic History	Business & Economic History	0.77793	99	113
Journal of Communication	Communications	0.7268	162	178
Journal of Business Venturing	Entrepreneurship & SBM	0.87859	46	60
Human Resource Management (US)	HRM & Employment Studies	0.78587	90	104
Academy of Management Learning & Education	Mgmt Dev & Education	0.74734	130	145
Environment & Planning A	Region, Plan & Environment	0.7601	117	132
Transportation Research Part B: Methodological	Sector Studies	0.83843	62	76

[a] *Abbreviations*: Economics, Econometr, Stats—Economics, Econometrics, Statistics; Entrepreneurship & SBM—Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management; General Mgmt, Ethics & CSR—General Management, Ethics and Social Responsibility; HRM & Employment Studies—Human Resource Management and Employment Studies; Mgmt Dev & Education—Management Development and Education; Operations & Tech Mgmt—Operations and Technology Management; OR & Management Science—Operations Research and Management Science; Region, Plan & Environment—Regional Studies, Planning and Environment.

Table A3
Ranking of IB journals within IB subject area.

Rank	Journal	Rating differential to JIBS	ABS 2015 Rank[1]	Publisher	Age (yrs)	Editor(s)/ Editor-in-chief (Deputy editor(s))	Senior/ Assoc. editors (Area/ Regional editors) [Consulting editors]	Advisory board (Reviewing board)	Book reviewing editors (Media/ Outreach editors)	Total # editorial[3]
1	Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS)	–	4*	Palgrave	45	1 (1)	0 (11) [30]	0 (159)	1 (0)	203
2	Journal of World Business (JWB)	0.18353	4	Elsevier	49	1 (0)	14 (0) [1]	0 (171)	0 (0)	187
3	Global Strategy Journal (GSJ)	0.20868	3	Wiley	4	2 (0)	6 (0) [0]	19 (82)	0 (2)	111
4	Management and Organization Review (MOR)	0.25059	3	Cambridge Journals[2]	10	1 (2)	32 (0) [0]	40 (138)	0 (3)	216
5	International Business Review (IBR)	0.30489	3	Elsevier	23	1 (0)	3 (0) [0]	56 (0)	2 (0)	62
6	Management International Review (MIR)	0.30858	3	Springer	54	2 (0)	0 (0) [0]	62 (60)	0 (0)	124
7	Journal of International Management (JIM)	0.31764	3	Elsevier	20	1 (0)	0 (0) [0]	0 (74)	1 (0)	76
8	Asia Pacific Journal of Management (APJM)	0.32489	3	Springer	31	1 (0)	20 (0) [2]	21 (109)	0 (0)	153
9	European Journal of International Management (EJIM)	0.37445	1	InderScience	8	1 (0)	3 (4) [2]	0 (50)	0 (0)	60
10	Asia Pacific Business Review (APBR)	0.37602	2	Taylor & Francis	20	2 (0)	0 (0) [0]	0 (51)	2 (0)	55
11	Thunderbird IB Review (TIBR)	0.37618	2	Wiley	56	1 (0)	0 (0) [0]	18 (70)	0 (0)	89
12	Critical Perspectives on International Business (CPoIB)	0.38016	2	Emerald	10	1 (0)	6 (0) [0]	0 (40)	1 (0)	48
13	Transnational Corporations	0.38366	2	UNCTAD	23	1 (1)	0 (0) [0]	15 (0)	0 (0)	17
14	Multinational Business Review (MBR)	0.39841	2	Emerald	22	1 (0)	2 (0) [1]	0 (27)	0 (0)	31
15	Journal of Asia Pacific Business (JAPB)	0.40592	1	Taylor & Francis	15	1 (0)	2 (0) [0]	0 (28)	1 (0)	32
16	Journal of East West Business	0.41272	1	Taylor & Francis	20	1 (0)	3 (0) [0]	0 (42)	1 (0)	47

Notes: Editorial information taken from publishers journal websites, January 25, 2016
ABS 2015 journal quality rating definitions: 4* = journals of distinction that are recognized as world-wide exemplars of excellence; 4 = journals publishing the most original and best-executed research; 3 = journals publishing original and well-executed papers and that are highly regarded; 2 = journals publishing original research at an acceptable standard; 1 = journals publishing research of a recognized, but more modest standard in their field.
Published until 2015 by Wiley and since 2015 by Cambridge Journals.
There is considerable heterogeneity regarding the titles associated with editorial and reviewing roles. To the best of our knowledge, all academic roles have been accounted for and allocated to the four columns above. Corporate roles were not accounted for.

Table A4
Number of journals in the top 5%, top 15%, top third, and bottom third categories, per subject area.

	IB journals in category[a]	IB	Economics, Econometrics, Statistics	Entrepreneurship & Small Business Management	General Mgmt, Ethics & CSR[b]	Finance	HRM & Employment Studies[c]	Innovation	Marketing	Organization Studies	Strategy
Total no. of journals & % of all journals[c]		**16** (1.95%)	**166** (20.27%)	**12** (1.47%)	**36** (4.40%)	**58** (7.08%)	**32** (3.91%)	**16** (1.95%)	**55** (6.72%)	**20** (2.44%)	**12** (1.47%)
Top 5%	JIBS	1	8	0	4	3	0	1	3	1	1
Top 15%	JIBS, JWB	2	35	2	6	6	2	2	8	5	1
Top ⅓	JIBS, JWB, GSJ, MOR	4	61	5	15	17	6	4	14	6	5
Bottom ⅓	8 Journals	8	42	3	18	15	18	6	35	8	6

[a] *Abbreviations*: JIBS—Journal of International Business Studies; JWB—Journal of World Business; GSJ—Global Strategy Journal; MOR—Management and Organization Review.
[b] See *Abbreviations* in Table A2 for full description of the subject area.
[c] An entry "**nn** (*xx*%)" in the 1st row means that the respective subject area contains *nn* journals, which comprise *xx*% of all journals on the list.

Table A5
Distribution of journals within each subject area across ranking categories on basis of meta-ranking of all 819 journals (in %)[a].

	IB	Economics, Econometrics, Statistics	Entrepreneurship & Small Business Management	General Mgmt, Ethics & CSR[b]	Finance	HRM & Employment Studies[b]	Innovation	Marketing	Organization Studies	Strategy
Top 5%	6.25	4.82	0.00	11.11	5.17	0.00	6.25	5.45	5.00	8.33
Top 15%	12.50	21.10	16.67	16.67	10.34	6.25	12.50	14.55	25.00	8.33
Top ⅓	25.00	36.75	41.67	41.67	29.31	18.75	25.00	25.45	30.00	41.46
Bottom ⅓	50.00	25.30	25.00	50.00	25.86	56.25	37.50	63.36	40.00	50.00

[a] If these were uniformly distributed we would expect that 5% of a subject area's journals fall into the Top 5%, 15% in the Top 15%, etc. Deviations from these distributions would suggest over- or underperformance of a subject area's journals.
[b] See *Abbreviations* in Table A2 for full description of the subject area.

Table A6a
Median journal age.

	Median age (years)
International Business	22.0
Economics, Econometrics & Statistics	38.5
Entrepreneurship & Small Business Management	26.5
General Management, Ethics & CSR	33.0
Finance	24.0
HRM & Employment Studies	35.0
Innovation	33.0
Marketing	29.0
Organization Studies	28.0
Strategy	24.0

Table A6b
Age distribution of journals within ranking categories.

	Top 5%	Top 15%	Top 1/3	Bottom 1/3
All 10 subject areas in Tables A4 and A5				
≤20 years	0.0	11.9	15.7	11.4
21–40 years	22.7	26.7	38.1	60.3
>40 years	77.3	61.2	46.3	24.5
International Business				
≤20 years	0.0	0.0	50.0[b]	62.5
21–40 years	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0
>40 years	100.0[a]	100.0[b]	50.0[b]	12.5

[a] 1 Journal in category.
[b] 2 Journals in category.

References

Adler, N. J., & Harzing, A.-W. (2009). When knowledge wins: Transcending the sense and nonsense of academic rankings. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 8*(1): 72–95.

Baum, J. A. C. (2011). Free-riding on power laws: Questioning the validity of the impact factor as a measure of research quality in organization studies. *Organization, 18*(4): 449–466.

Bazeley, P. (2003). Defining 'early career' in research. *Higher Education, 45*(3): 257–279.

Beattie, V., & Goodacre, A. (2006). A new method for ranking academic journals in accounting and finance. *Accounting & Business Research, 36*(2): 65–91.

Benati, S., & Stefani, S. (2011). The academic journal ranking problem: A fuzzy-clustering approach. *Journal of Classification, 28*(1): 7–20.

Bennich-Björkman, L. (2013). Down the slippery slope: The perils of the academic research industry. In S. Rider, Y. Hasselberg, & A. Waluszewski (Eds.), *Transformations in research, higher education and the academic market: The breakdown of scientific thought* (pp. 125–136). Dordrecht: Springer Verlag.

Biau, G., Devroye, L., & Lugosi, G. (2008). Consistency of random forests and other averaging classifiers. *Journal of Machine Learning Research, 9*(6/1): 2015–2033.

Binswhanger, M. (2014). How nonsense became excellence: Forcing professors to publish. In I. Welpe, J. Wollersheim, S. Ringelhan, & M. Osterloh (Eds.), *Incentives and performance: Governance of research organizations*. Cham: Springer.

Bollen, J., Van de Sompel, H., Hagberg, A., & Chute, R. (2009). A principal component analysis of 39 scientific impact measures. *PLoS One, 4*(6): e6022.

Boström, H. (2008). Calibrating random forests, Proceedings of the 2008 seventh international conference on machine learning and applications, IEEE (pp. 121–126).

Breiman, L. (2001). Random forests. *Machine Learning, 45*(1): 5–32.

Chan, K. C., Fung, H.-G., & Leung, W. K. (2006). International business research: Trends and school rankings. *International Business Review, 15*(4): 317–338.

Charnes, A., Cooper, W. W., & Rhodes, E. (1978). Measuring the efficiency of decision making units. *European Journal of Operational Research, 2*(6): 429–444.

Cheetham, A. (2015). Q&A: China still rising. *Nature, 520*(7549): S34–S35.

Chen, C. R., & Huang, Y. (2007). Author affiliation index, finance journal ranking, and the pattern of authorship. *Journal of Corporate Finance, 13*(5): 1008–1026.

Cook, W. D., Doyle, J., Green, R., & Kress, M. (1997). Multiple criteria modelling and ordinal data: Evaluation in terms of subsets of criteria. *European Journal of Operational Research, 98*(3): 602–609.

Cook, W. D., & Kress, M. (1990). A data envelopment model for aggregating preference rankings. *Management Science, 36*(11): 1302–1310.

Cook, W. D., & Kress, M. (2002). A linear value function in mixed mcdm problems with incomplete preference data: An extreme point approach. *INFOR, 40*(4): 331–346.

Cook, W. D., Raviv, T. A. L., & Richardson, A. J. (2010). Aggregating incomplete lists of journal rankings: An application to academic accounting journals. *Accounting Perspectives, 9*(3): 217–235.

Cook, W. D., Tone, K., & Zhu, J. (2014). Data envelopment analysis: Prior to choosing a model. *Omega, 44*(0): 1–4.

Cooper, W. W., Seiford, L. M., & Tone, K. (2007). *Data envelopment analysis* (2nd ed.). New York: Springer.

Currie, R. R., & Pandher, G. S. (2011). Finance journal rankings and tiers: An active scholar assessment methodology. *Journal of Banking & Finance, 35*(1): 7–20.

Daft, R. L., & Lewin, A. Y. (2008). Rigor and relevance in organization studies: Idea migration and academic journal evolution. *Organization Science, 19*(1): 177–183.

De Zilwa, D. (2010). *Academic units in a complex, changing world adaptation and resistance*. Dordrecht: Springer.

DuBois, F. L., & Reeb, D. (2000). Ranking the international business journals. *Journal of International Business Studies, 31*(4): 689–704.

Ernst, & Young (2012). *University of the future: A thousand year old industry on the cusp of profound change*. Sydney: Ernst & Young.

Fam, K.-S., Shukla, P., Sinha, A., Luk, C.-L., Parackal, M., & Chai, J. C. Y. (2011). Rankings in the eyes of the beholder: A vox populi approach to academic journal ranking. *Asian Journal of Business Research, 1*(1): 1–17.

Franke, N., & Schreier, M. (2008). A meta-ranking of technology and innovation management/entrepreneurship journals. *Die Betriebswirtschaft, 2008*(2): 185–216.

Frey, B. S. (2009). Economists in the pits? *International Review of Economics, 56*(4): 335–346.

Frey, B. S., & Rost, K. (2010). Do rankings reflect research quality? *Journal of Applied Economics, 13*(1): 1–38.

Green, R. H., Doyle, J. R., & Cook, W. D. (1996). Preference voting and project ranking using DEA and cross-evaluation. *European Journal of Operational Research, 90*(3): 461–472.

Guthrie, J., & Parker, L. D. (2014). The global accounting academic: What counts! *Accounting Auditing & Accountability Journal, 27*(1): 2–14.

Halkos, G. E., & Tzeremes, N. G. (2011). Measuring economic journals' citation efficiency: A data envelopment analysis approach. *Scientometrics, 88*(3): 979–1001.

Harzing, A.-W. (2015, May 23). *Journal quality list*. Available from ⟨http://www.harzing.com/jql.htm⟩ (accessed 04.06.15).

Hashimoto, A. (1997). A ranked voting system using a DEA/AR exclusion model: A note. *European Journal of Operational Research, 97*(3): 600–604.

Hastie, T., Tibshirani, R., & Friedman, J. (2009). *The elements of statistical learning* (2nd ed.). New York: Springer.

Hazelkorn, E. (2011). *Rankings and the reshaping of higher education: The battle for world-class excellence*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hult, G. T. M., Neese, W. T., & Bashaw, R. E. (1997). Faculty perceptions of marketing journals. *Journal of Marketing Education, 19*(1): 37–52.

Hult, G. T. M., Reimann, M., & Schilke, O. (2009). Worldwide faculty perceptions of marketing journals: Rankings, trends, comparisons, and segmentations. *globalEDGE Business review, 3*(3): 1–23.

Inkpen, A. C. (2001). A note on ranking the international business journals. *Journal of International Business Studies, 32*(1): 193–196.

Kumar, V., & Kundu, S. K. (2004). Ranking the international business schools: Faculty publication as the measure. *Management International Review, 44*(2): 213–228.

Laband, D. N., & Piette, M. J. (1994). Favoritism versus search for good papers: Empirical evidence regarding the behavior of journal. *Journal of Political Economy, 102*(1): 194–203.

Lahiri, S., & Kumar, V. (2012). Ranking international business institutions and faculty members using research publication as the measure. *Management International Review, 52*(3): 317–340.

Lim, T.-S., Loh, W.-Y., & Shih, Y.-S. (2000). A comparison of prediction accuracy, complexity, and training time of thirty-three old and new classification algorithms. *Machine Learning, 40*(3): 203–229.

Linton, J. (2006). Ranking of technology and innovation management journals. *Technovation, 26*(3): 285–287.

Linton, J. D., & Thongpapanl, N. (2004). Ranking the technology innovation management journals. *Journal of Product Innovation Management, 21*(2): 123–139.

Liu, J. S., Lu, L. Y. Y., Lu, W.-M., & Lin, B. J. Y. (2013). A survey of DEA applications. *Omega, 41*(5): 893–902.

Llamazares, B., & Peña, T. (2009). Preference aggregation and DEA: An analysis of the methods proposed to discriminate efficient candidates. *European Journal of Operational Research, 197*(2): 714–721.

Lovell, C. A. K., & Pastor, J. T. (1999). Radial DEA models without inputs or without outputs. *European Journal of Operational Research, 118*(1): 46–51.

McKelvey, B. (2006). Response: Van de ven and johnson's "engaged scholarship": Nice try, but…. *The Academy of Management Review, 31*(4): 822–829.

Merton, R. K. (1968). The matthew effect in science. *Science, 159*(3810): 56–63.

Mingers, J., & Harzing, A.-W. (2007). Ranking journals in business and management: A statistical analysis of the Harzing data set. *European Journal of Information Systems, 16*(4): 303–316.

Mingers, J., & Leydesdorff, L. (2015). A review of theory and practice in scientometrics. *European Journal of Operational Research, 246*(1): 1–19.

Mingers, J., & Willmott, H. (2013). Taylorizing business school research: On the 'one best way' performative effects of journal ranking lists. *Human Relations, 66*(8): 1051–1073.

Morris, H., Harvey, C., & Kelly, A. (2009). Journal rankings and the ABS journal quality guide. *Management Decision, 47*(9): 1441–1451.

Mort, G. S., McColl-Kennedy, J. R., Kiel, G., & Soutar, G. N. (2004). Perceptions of marketing journals by senior academics in Australia and new zealand. *Australasian Marketing Journal, 12*(2): 51–61.
Noguchi, H., Ogawa, M., & Ishii, H. (2002). The appropriate total ranking method using DEA for multiple categorized purposes. *Journal of Computational and Applied Mathematics, 146*(1): 155–166.
Paasi, A. (2005). Globalisation, academic capitalism, and the uneven geographies of international journal publishing spaces. *Environment and Planning A, 37*(5): 769–789.
Pishchulov, G., Tüselmann, H., & Sinkovics, R. R. (2014). *Towards a consolidation of worldwide journal rankings–a classification using random forests and aggregate rating via data envelopment analysis* http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2492472 SSRN paper 2492472.
Quah, D. (2011). The global economy's shifting centre of gravity. *Global Policy, 2*(1): 3–9.
Rainer, R. K., & Miller, M. D. (2005). Examining differences across journal rankings. *Communications of the ACM, 48*(2): 91–94.
Rowlinson, M., Harvey, C., Kelly, A., & Morris, H. (2011). The use and abuse of journal quality lists. *Organization, 18*(4): 443–446.
Seggie, S. H., & Griffith, D. A. (2009). What does it take to get promoted in marketing academia? Understanding exceptional publication productivity in the leading marketing journals. *Journal of Marketing, 73*(1): 122–132.
Steward, M. D., & Lewis, B. R. (2010). A comprehensive analysis of marketing journal rankings. *Journal of Marketing Education, 32*(1): 75–92.
Strobl, C., Malley, J., & Tutz, G. (2009). An introduction to recursive partitioning: Rationale, application and characteristics of classification and regression trees, bagging and random forests. *Psychological Methods, 14*(4): 323–348.
Thanassoulis, E., Kortelainen, M., Johnes, G., & Johnes, J. (2011). Costs and efficiency of higher education institutions in england: A DEA analysis[star]. *Journal of the Operational Research Society, 62*(7): 1282–1297.
Theoharakis, V., & Hirst, A. (2002). Perceptual differences of marketing journals: A worldwide perspective. *Marketing Letters, 13*(4): 389–402.
Theußl, S., Reutterer, T., & Hornik, K. (2014). How to derive consensus among various marketing journal rankings? *Journal of Business Research, 67*(5): 998–1006.
Thomson Reuters (2015). *2014 Journal citation reports*. Philadelphia: Thomson Reuters.
Thongpapanl, N. (2012). The changing landscape of technology and innovation management: An updated ranking of journals in the field. *Technovation, 32*(5): 257–271.
Tourish, D., & Willmott, H. (2015). In defiance of folly: Journal rankings, mindless measures and the abs guide. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting, 26*(0): 37–46.
Treviño, L. J., Mixon, F. G., Jr., Funk, C. A., & Inkpen, A. C. (2010). A perspective on the state of the field: International business publications in the elite journals as a measure of institutional and faculty productivity. *International Business Review, 19*(4): 378–387.
Tüselmann, H., Sinkovics, R. R., & Pishchulov, G. (2015). Towards a consolidation of worldwide journal rankings–a classification using random forests and aggregate rating via data envelopment analysis. *Omega, 51*(0): 11–23.
Wang, Y.-M., Chin, K.-S., & Yang, J. B. (2007). Three new models for preference voting and aggregation. *Journal of the Operational Research Society, 58*(10): 1389–1393.
Willmott, H. (2011). Journal list fetishism and the perversion of scholarship: Reactivity and the ABS list. *Organization, 18*(4): 429–442.
Wu, J., Hao, Q., & Yao, M. Y. M. (2009). Rankings of academic journals in accounting, finance, and information system: Perception from the college chairpersons. *International Journal of Accounting and Information Management, 17*(1): 66–105.
Zhou, D., Ma, J., & Turban, E. (2001). Journal quality assessment: An integrated subjective and objective approach. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management, 48*(4): 479–490.