


# South African Journal of Business Management: Annual editorial overview 2021

**Author:**Jeremias J. de Klerk<sup>1</sup> **Affiliation:**

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of Stellenbosch Business School, Bellville, South Africa

**Corresponding author:**

Mias de Klerk,  
mias.deklerk@usb.ac.za

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## Introduction

It is with great pride that I welcome you to the 2021 volume of the South African Journal of Business Management (*SAJBM*). As I will describe later on, the *SAJBM* is proud that the bibliometric elements of the journal are continuing to improve. This is a clear indication of the growth and success of the *SAJBM*. Like last year, the theme of this annual review is the celebration of the success of the *SAJBM* over the past few years.

## Special collection

The first development that I want to highlight and celebrate is the first Special Collection of the *SAJBM* in its 52-year history. It is not by accident, but on purpose that the topic of this Special Collection was 'Women in Business in Africa'. The often underestimated, but important role and contribution of women to business is not only an economic and business imperative, but also a matter of social justice. Whereas we often use the term 'gatekeepers' to talk about those who can provide people with access to something, it was a privilege for the *SAJBM* to play a small part in being a 'gate-opener' for women to take up their righteous place in business, especially in Africa.

The Special Collection consists of four excellent articles and an accomplished and informative editorial by the two guest editors, Prof Anita Bosch and Prof Lize Booysen. In the editorial, they explain the need for this Special Collection as follows:

This limited count and the diffuse topics relating to women at work and in business in the *SAJBM* and in scholarly research on women at work in Africa signalled a need for a special issue focusing on women in business in Africa. This issue aims to extend knowledge on how, in the formal economy, the entry of large numbers of women into paid work, business management, leadership, business ownership, and female entrepreneurship in Africa has been marked by changes in legislation, economic, and behavioural and relational patterns, as well as mind-shift *changes* regarding gender stereotypes, gendered work, and workplaces. (pp. 1–2)

I want to congratulate all the authors whose articles have been published in the Special Collection, and extend a huge word of thanks to both Prof Anita and Prof Lize for the hard and excellent work that they have put in to administer the process and give guidance to the authors as and when required.

## Journal quality

Since its inception, the *SAJBM* continues to be recognised internationally as a leading-edge accredited journal for publishing quality research in the field of business science. The *SAJBM* provides cutting-edge, peer-reviewed research in all fields related to the vast complement of business science. The *SAJBM* is accredited and listed on all the major indexing services (see, [https://sajbm.org/index.php/sajbm/pages/view/journal-information#part\\_2](https://sajbm.org/index.php/sajbm/pages/view/journal-information#part_2)), confirming the international profile of the journal. However, just being listed by these agencies is not sufficient. The outputs of a journal are measured by several metrics to provide a comprehensive perspective on the quality of the journal and to continue to be listed by accreditation agencies. It thus gives me great pleasure to report that the *SAJBM* has improved significantly on the important bibliometrics:

- The Web of Science h-index (Journal Impact Factor) increased further to 0.55 in 2021. This represents a 20% year-on-year improvement, and a 96% improvement since 2017.
- The CiteScore improved further to 1.3 in 2021, representing a 44% year-on-year improvement and a 97% improvement since 2017.

These achievements do not come easy, and would not have been possible without the contributions of dedicated authors and reviewers. I would like to thank all the researchers who selected the *SAJBM* as their journal of choice to publish their articles. We appreciate the confidence that they have put in the *SAJBM* and will endeavour to remain worthy of their support.

Keeping the journal's quality at a high standard means that many manuscripts submitted to the *SAJBM* for consideration do not make it to the publication phases. Although the submissions in 2021 were down to  $n = 385$  compared to  $n = 465$  in 2020, which was a bumper year, of the submissions in 2021 were still higher than the preceding 2 years. Unfortunately, 91% (347) of these manuscripts were desk rejected during this period. In other words, the manuscripts were declined by the editor-in-chief, *without* sending it for peer review. Eventually, 30 high-quality articles were accepted and published.

These rejection rates may appear to be quite high and may be experienced as harsh. Being an author myself, I am truly aware of the disappointment and emotional turmoil one goes through when one's manuscript is declined, especially when this is done without peer review. However, there are good reasons to be judicious when considering new submissions. Firstly, we have to honour the effort of our team of reviewers who selflessly dedicate their time to do the reviews as a free service to the scientific community. The Editor has to ensure that the reviewers' time is not wasted unnecessarily by manuscripts that are from the beginning unlikely to obtain a favourable review. Furthermore, to keep our international rankings and standings, we have no choice but to only accept the very best of the submissions for publication.

To avoid desk rejection, my best advice to prospective authors is to study the submission guidelines carefully, make sure that professional editing of their manuscript is done, ensure clarity of writing throughout, be certain that their literature study is scientifically sound and comprehensive, and rigour is applied in the scientific method and its description. Lastly, remember that the concluding section of the research is very important, and should be much more than a summary of the study. For instance, the authors have to highlight the practical impact of the research on business. Also, as all research studies have limitations, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of the research and suggest recommendations for future research – beyond the obvious.

## International footprint

After reporting about the increasing international footprint of the *SAJBM* in the 2019 editorial, it is encouraging that the journal continues to develop into a truly international journal. The international footprint of the *SAJBM* remains bigger than the South African footprint. The portion of new submissions from authors based outside South Africa has hovered around 87% of all submissions for the past 3 years. Page views from people outside South Africa remain around 85%. The strongest international interest in the *SAJBM* came from Africa and Asia (both around 35% of visitors), followed by the USA (14%) and Europe (13%).

These statistics confirm the expanding international footprint of the *SAJBM*. Clearly, the 'South African' notation in the name of the *SAJBM* now only refers to the country where the journal is housed, and cannot and should not be understood as a journal that is only focused on Southern Africa. It is with this

background that we are increasingly looking for submissions that have international application and that are likely to be of interest to the wider and global reading audience of the *SAJBM*. Submissions that are overly focused on what is happening within only an overly narrow geographical context, at the cost of losing focus of the more general scientific problem, are viewed with caution in the editorial reviewing process.

## Our review process

We understand that all authors would like to get feedback on their submissions as soon as possible and expect a limited period until publication if the manuscript was accepted. The most critical challenge is probably to find suitably qualified and willing referees, as the volume of papers submitted tend to increase from year to year. The availability of competent reviewers has a notable impact on the turnaround time of submissions to the *SAJBM*. To relieve the workload of our reviewers, another 66 additional reviewers were registered during 2021. Nevertheless, as we all know, 2020 was a difficult year for most of us, because of the challenges presented by COVID-19 pandemic and its ripple effects.

We continually strive to reduce the time from submission to publication. Without the double-blind peer review process, we will not be able to maintain our international accreditations. New contributors of articles to the *SAJBM* have proven to be a trustworthy source of new referees in certain subject areas where critical shortages are developing. I would, therefore, like to encourage our authors and readers to make themselves available for review if approached for this task. As scientists and authors, we are all dependent on getting our work published and therefore to be reviewed by other scientists. It is, therefore, every scholar's duty to return this favour and act as a peer reviewer for others.

## Overview of article topics: *South African Journal of Business Management*, volume 52 (2021)

It remains an explicit aim of the *SAJBM* to promote and publish research with impact. The range of articles published in the 52nd volume of the *SAJBM* does not only demonstrate the growing international stature of the journal, but also its coverage of the broad field of business science. The articles explore a large variety of interesting topics from quite diverse fields, which are relevant to the world of business today. For instance, the articles range from leadership to marketing, governance to coaching, entrepreneurship to tax and finance, economics to organisational behaviour, and operations to innovation and technology.

The *SAJBM* provides the opportunity to showcase your research and contributes to the growing body of scientific knowledge about the science and art of business management. I trust that you will find the articles in this volume to be insightful and useful as with previous volumes. In our continuous strive to improve our offering to you, we really would appreciate any feedback that you may have.

## In conclusion

The successful annual publication of the *SAJBM* volume is not because of the Editor-in-Chief. Rather, it is a collaborative team effort. I would like to express my gratitude to the scholarly and scientist-practitioner community who make use of our articles, either in practice or by incorporating them into their scholarly endeavours. I also would like to extend a heartfelt word of thanks to all the authors for their respective contributions to ensure that the *SAJBM* remains representative of the developments in business and management science. But the biggest 'thank you' must go to the reputable and committed team of scholarly peer reviewers. Our reviewers selflessly give their time and energy to review the submissions and to ensure the publication of high-quality articles, and they

do so often after-hours and without reward. Thank you so much, you are stars and the cornerstone of the success of the *SAJBM*. Last, but not least, I would like to thank Dr Lara Skelly, the Managing Editor, and the commitment and support from an amazingly accomplished AOSIS staff. A huge word of thanks to everyone for your cooperation and hard work to ensure the success of *SAJBM* management and administration.

I am excited about the future of *SAJBM* and believe that the significant collaboration efforts we annually experience with our community of scientists, practitioners and supporting staff will help to further advance the field of business and management science to the benefit of individuals, organisations and society as a whole.