

Editorial: A Fond Farewell to the Irish Journal of Management

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In preparing this final issue of the *Irish Journal of Management (IJM)*, emotions have been tinged with a mixture of pride and poignancy, reflecting on the remarkable journey of a journal that has, for more than four decades, served as a cornerstone of management scholarship in Ireland.

Since its founding, *IJM* has played a critical role in shaping and supporting the academic landscape of management research on the island. It has stood as more than just a venue for publication - it has been a scholarly home for generations of Irish academics, particularly those at the start of their careers. For many, their first encounter with the world of academic publishing began within the pages of *IJM*. It offered an invaluable training ground, fostering the development of research voices that would go on to contribute significantly to the global academic community of management scholars.

IJM began as a bold initiative of the Irish Academy of Management (IAM), itself established to give a voice and structure to a growing academic community within the business and management discipline in Ireland. It quickly became the primary outlet for Ireland-focused business and management research, nurturing early-career academics and showcasing the diversity of research emerging from Irish institutions.

To me, *IJM* will always be an artefact of its time. As a master's student in the late 1990s, I vividly remember seeing physical copies of the journal in university libraries and professors' offices - its printed volumes standing alongside other academic texts, quietly testifying to the existence of Irish scholarship in the field of management. In an era when academic publishing was still bound to the physical and the local, *IJM* held symbolic weight. It was evidence that rigorous, homegrown research was taking place - that Irish scholars were not only contributing to knowledge but also curating it in a space of our own. For many of us, seeing Irish names in print within those pages was both validating and inspiring.

Over the years, *IJM* has reflected the evolution of the academy. It transitioned from print to open-access digital publication, widened its thematic scope, and welcomed work from across the globe. The journal embraced change, seeking to remain accessible, relevant, and responsive to the needs of contemporary scholarship. Its pages have addressed critical issues in entrepreneurship, human resource management, public policy, corporate governance, and more. Importantly, the journal has never shied away from complexity or context - it has been a space where Irish research could engage with international standards without losing its local relevance.

However, like many national journals, *IJM* has faced growing challenges in an increasingly globalised and metrics-driven academic environment. The imperative to publish in high-ranking international journals, driven by institutional incentives and research assessment frameworks, has inevitably affected the volume and quality of submissions to lower ranked journals, including the *IJM*. Despite the journal's efforts to uphold scholarly rigor and adapt to these shifts, sustaining a pipeline of high-quality articles has become progressively more difficult.

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The 2024 Clarivate metrics, released just prior to this final issue, reflect the quiet impact the journal continued to make: an Impact Factor of 0.7 and a Journal Citation Indicator of 0.18. While modest by global metrics, these figures underscore the journal's enduring relevance and the commitment of the scholars, reviewers, and editors who have sustained it. *IJM* reached the heights of an ABS¹ rating, a marker of peer recognised scholarship in the business and management discipline.

The decision to discontinue *IJM* has not been taken lightly. It comes after careful reflection on the best ways to support Irish management research going forward, recognising that the landscape continues to evolve in ways that demand new forms of engagement, collaboration, and scholarly expression. The paradox, wherein Irish researchers find growing success abroad as smaller, local publishing platforms falter, is the bittersweet hallmark of the journal's closing.

Indeed, many of Ireland's management scholars have gone on to become some of the most cited and respected voices in the field. They have helped to put Irish scholarship on the world stage - publishing in top scientific journals, shaping international debates and discourse in HRM, organisational behaviour, and other management disciplines, and mentoring a generation of researchers. Their success is a testament to the scholarly foundation built by journals like *IJM* and by the Irish Academy of Management.

Yet, the closure of *IJM* leaves a conspicuous gap: where now is the dedicated space for sustained, rigorous, and critical engagement with *business and management issues specific to Ireland*? Where will emerging scholars turn to publish research grounded in Irish data, policy, institutions, and practice - especially when such work may not align with the priorities or datasets of international outlets? While the appetite for globally comparative studies remains strong, there is still deep value in research that is local, context-rich, and policy-relevant. It is a question worth asking: who will fill this space, and how?

There is an opportunity - indeed, a responsibility - for Irish academic institutions, IAM, and funding agencies to reflect on what is lost in the absence of such a journal, and whether new mechanisms might emerge to support and promote national scholarship. This might take the form of new digital platforms, special issues in partner journals, or collaborative networks that champion Ireland-focused management research. But it will require a commitment to valuing such work - not merely as a stepping-stone to international publication, but as essential in its own right.

As we bring this chapter to a close, we extend our deepest thanks to all who have contributed to the success of the *Irish Journal of Management* over the years. To the editors - past and present - who have led the journal with dedication, vision and quiet labour; to the authors who entrusted *IJM* with their work and enriched its pages with diverse and insightful contributions; and to the reviewers whose thoughtful critiques ensured the maintenance of scholarly standards - we are sincerely grateful. Your collective efforts have shaped not just a journal, but a community. Special acknowledgement must also go to the IAM Chairs, whose stewardship of the Academy and support for the journal has been unwavering. Institutional support - particularly from universities across the island of Ireland - has also been crucial.

Looking ahead, the IAM <https://iamireland.ie> will continue to serve as the central forum for Irish management scholars. Its focus on community-building, research collaboration, and international engagement remains as vital as ever. The Academy will redouble its efforts to support Irish scholarship, not only through its annual conference, doctoral colloquium, and special interest groups, but also by exploring new publication pathways and partnerships.

We must also reflect on what the end of *IJM* tells us about the future of academic publishing. The rising professionalisation of journal editing, the concentration of publishing power among a few large firms, the unpaid (and often unrecognised) labour of peer reviewers and editors, and the structural inequalities in access to resources and opportunities - these are not challenges unique to *IJM*. They speak to broader issues in the academic publishing ecosystem. As we close this journal, we must commit to building more inclusive, transparent, and supportive systems of knowledge production.

The archive of the *Irish Journal of Management*, available through the Irish Academy of Management website (<https://iamireland.ie/>), remains a living testament to the richness of Irish management thought. It contains decades

¹ Developed by the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS), ABS rating (also known as AJG (Academic Journal Guide) ranking) is a tiered ranking of academic journals in the fields of business, management, and related disciplines. It is widely used by researchers, institutions, and business schools to assess journal quality for publication, promotion, and research assessment purposes. Journals are ranked from 1 to 4* (world elite). ABS1 signifies a recognised quality journal (peer reviewed, with international reach).

of ideas, debates, and evidence - available to readers now and into the future. We encourage continued engagement with these works and hope they inspire future research grounded in context, community, and curiosity.

This final issue comprises of papers reflecting on the journal over the years, and on the future of management scholarship and academic publications. Following a foreword from the current Irish Academy of Management chairperson, Dr. Margaret Heffernan and this editorial, the first paper by Professor William (Bill) Roche and Professor Aidan Kelly (both University College Dublin) takes a look back at the origins of the journal (from the origins as the *Journal of Irish Business and Administrative Research (IBAR)* 1979-2000), and the development of the business and management discipline, and of management scholarship, in Ireland. They also comment on the gap that is left behind with the closure of *IJM*.

The second paper, by Professor Felicity Kelliher (Southeast Technological University, Ireland; and past Chair of the Irish Academy of Management), Professor Patrick (Paddy) Gunnigle (University of Limerick; and inaugural IAM Council member), Professor Kathy Monks (Dublin City University; and past Editor, *IJM*, and Dr. Jim Walsh (former Lecturer, University College Cork; and inaugural chair of the IAM) reflects on the Irish Academy of Management and its connection to the *IJM* over the years. This paper also explores today's publishing landscape, offering alternatives to the for-profit model.

The third paper brings past editors of *IJM* together to share their insights and learning from their respective periods as editors of the *IJM*. This includes input from (in alphabetical order) Professor David Collings, Professor Edel Conway, Professor Marian Crowley-Henry, Professor James Cunningham, Dr. Jonathan Lavelle, Professor Kathy Monks and Dr. Michelle O'Sullivan.

Finally, the fourth paper by Professors David Collings and Anthony McDonnell sets out the current publishing landscape and some key trends they see regarding the future of management scholarship, and of academic publications in relation to management in the Ireland context.

Combined, this final issue provides a look back and a look forward at management scholarship from both Irish scholars and those researching on management in the Ireland context.

In closing, we say goodbye to the *Irish Journal of Management*, not with finality, but with gratitude. We celebrate its legacy which will live on in the scholarship it published, the researchers it supported, and the conversations it helped to begin. Though the journal now concludes its formal publication, I remain hopeful that the spirit of inquiry and collegiality it fostered will endure within Irish academia and beyond. The wings of Irish management research have spread far beyond the bounds of any single publication. That, perhaps, is *IJM*'s final and most enduring success.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Professor Marian Crowley-Henry, Editor-In-Chief, the Irish Journal of Management, 2021-2025

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<https://sciendo.com/journal/IJM>

<https://iamireland.ie>