

FORUM

Invited Article

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IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON ORGANIZATIONS

The challenges for people, organizations and societies in the face of the impacts of COVID-19 and a global pandemic are numerous. How can we deal with such immediate changes in our daily routines? How can we stop and reflect on what we should do when faced with such urgent demands? How can we build a shared collective sense and make decisions at a time when the future is suspended and the past provides us with few answers? Since we are all faced with this same situation, we believe that the safest way out is to listen to what the science has to say to us.

It was in this spirit that we sought to mobilize researchers, reviewers and editors and charge them with the joint task of putting together a special issue of the journal that points to potential routes towards understanding the current scenario and the future of organizations. The task they faced was an arduous one: to produce and disseminate quality knowledge at the same time that the events described were occurring, and while working under the impact and constraints of social distancing. The response, however, has been very positive.

Some areas of knowledge require a little more time to build their robust models and/or the analytical schemes required for understanding the phenomena. Others are able to contribute more immediately to the advancement of knowledge by taking already ongoing research and adapting it to shed light on new phenomena. The significant number of articles submitted clearly shows the effort and engagement of researchers in the field of Administration in the face to the pandemic's challenges; challenges that are being faced by people, organizations and society.

In pursuit of academic output on these transformations, the call from RAE received 165 papers from the various areas of knowledge that go to make up the academic-scientific related to the field of Business Administration. A total of 101 manuscripts were submitted to the peer review process, and at the end of a careful review and editing process, five papers were approved for publication.

Making such choices was no easy task, and we are most grateful for the contributions of all the researchers, even those whose articles were not approved. We hope that the opinions they received will help them improve their articles and, once the weaknesses have been addressed and reformulated, that they may be published in the future. We also thank all the reviewers who worked quickly and tirelessly at a time of pandemic, which has affected the life of the entire scientific community.

In the area of Organizations and People Management, 33 manuscripts were evaluated, which resulted in the article by Eduardo Moura, Liliane Furtado and Filipe Sobral, "The burnout epidemic during the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of LMX in alleviating physician burnout" being approved. This article shows us the importance of leadership in extreme situations, and suggests that a high-quality relationship between supervisors and physicians can help reduce the burnout rate of frontline professionals dealing with COVID-19 and its consequences.

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In Marketing, 14 articles were submitted, most of them related to consumer behavior. Within this broad thematic area, the articles addressed topics such as sustainable consumption, food waste, purchase decisions in different marketing channels, consumer well-being, risk perception, purchase intention and a comparison of the purchasing behavior of consumers in different countries. A small number of articles were also submitted on other marketing sub-areas, such as brands, digital marketing, e-commerce, the spread of fake news and social media. None of the submitted papers addressed aspects related to the teaching of marketing.

The submissions on marketing topics were initially examined by the Guest Editors, and, after redirecting some articles to other thematic areas and some desk-rejections, which were motivated by poor contributions, seven papers addressing marketing topics underwent blind peer review. These seven papers were evaluated by 14 experienced reviewers and, subsequently, by the Guest Associate Editor, before being evaluated by the Editor-in-Chief. Based on the Editorial Board's judgment, none of the marketing articles was accepted for publication. In general, the two main reasons for rejection were the lack of theoretical contribution and weaknesses in methodological procedures.

The call for papers on the impacts of COVID-19 on organizations apparently led authors to submit papers that focused on purely descriptive aspects of these impacts. Since RAE is a traditional academic journal, the Editorial Board was expecting that the articles submitted would present new or innovative approaches with regard to how this pandemic may transform, modify or generate new theoretical approaches to marketing phenomena that are motivated by the atypical situation the world is experiencing. That did not happen. Almost all the submitted articles merely described the impacts of COVID-19, and there was no further discussion on the theoretical implications for Marketing. This was the most common justification for rejection by the reviewers. There were also other problems related to theoretical aspects, such as inconsistent hypotheses and framework proposals that were weakly supported in literature.

Several types of methodological problem were, perhaps, more frequent than problems relating to the theoretical contribution of the papers. The most frequent methodological problem was the use of small, unrepresentative samples composed of respondents whose criterion for inclusion was based on convenience. Even in articles that provided a more relevant theoretical contribution, methodological aspects such as scales with validity and reliability problems, poorly defined constructs, and samples with insufficient statistical power to

test the hypotheses meant that their authors were unable to reach consistent conclusions. No paper presented an innovative methodological approach that might overcome its theoretical weaknesses and, thus, be reason for accepting it for publication. The final decision, therefore, was to not publish any articles in the Marketing area.

It is known that extreme changes in Operations Management resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have heavily impacted organizations in different industries and multiple supply chains, which have required prompt innovation in products and processes. Based on this rich context of often unprecedented experiences, 23 articles were submitted that addressed different topics, such as technological innovation, the resilience of supply chains and adaptations in service operations.

The two articles selected for this special issue discuss how organizations responded to the needs brought by the pandemic, based on innovation and adaptations in their processes. The first article, "Effects of information on job insecurity and work engagement in times of pandemic", by Anderson Frare and Ilse Maria Beuren, is a survey with a sample composed of employees from a large Brazilian startup in the financial area. The authors used structural equation modeling for analyzing the data. The results suggest that during the pandemic period, sharing vertical information has mitigated job insecurity issues and exerted a positive effect on employee engagement. The second article, "An engaged university: rescuing SMEs during the COVID-19 Crisis" was written by a group of researchers: Daniela Brauner, Fernanda Reichert, Raquel Janissek-Muniz, Aurora Zen, Daniela Callegaro-De-Menezes, Lisiane Closs, Wendy Carraro, Carla Ruppenthal, Fernanda Maria Müller, Marcelo Lubaszewski and Marisa Rhoden. The article analyzes how a regional, socially engaged university has provided support for SMEs during the pandemic crisis. As a result, the central elements for the promotion of social engagement were identified as: teamwork, multidisciplinary, project management, agility, alliances, communication strategy, institutional support and reputation.

In the Organizations, Sustainability and Inequalities area, we received 31 manuscripts addressing issues related to the environment, the different impacts on inequality and minorities, and teaching issues in Administration for responding to the need for content adaptation, disciplines and programs in the online environment. Considering the speed with which the pandemic has changed our routines in different dimensions of the academic life, including impacts on research and work overload, receiving so many manuscripts for this special call was a very positive outcome.

Considering this scenario, 13 manuscripts were selected for review. There was a variety of papers representing the diversity of

the area itself. Most of them discussed the impact of the pandemic on many aspects of vulnerability, including gender and race issues, but we also received studies addressing the use of personal data during the pandemic, feelings in social media and the challenge of the pandemic being faced by civil society organizations. In general, all manuscripts had a tendency to be strongly descriptive of the impacts of the pandemic, this being the main reason for not submitting them for publication.

Two manuscripts were accepted. however, In the first, “Business action on sustainability and resilience in the context of COVID-19”, Mariana Nicolletti, Gabriela Appugliese, Marta Blazek, Paola Fillippi and Luis Bismarchi present a systemic look at sustainability-oriented business performance. The study presents an analysis from the point of view of resilience as a way of analyzing and understanding company realignment and value creation for society. In “Women in Telework during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Work-family Conflict Configurations”, Ana

Heloísa Lemos, Alane Barbosa and Priscila Monzato examine how the pandemic had an impact on work-family conflict in the light of the adoption of teleworking. They found that despite work overload, teleworking did not increase the work-family conflict for the interviewees. In fact, the authors point out that teleworking has allowed the interviewees to be closer to their families, in addition to providing them with more time for physical and leisure activities

We are still suffering the effects of the pandemic, and its consequences will continue to be analyzed and discussed from business, social and environmental perspectives. We will certainly find many articles in *RAE* and other journals that will analyze, reflect on and theorize about the changes the pandemic has brought to our societies. We hope that the knowledge produced and disseminated by academia can help bring about positive changes in our societies, allowing us to face up to the social inequalities and environmental impacts that lie ahead.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors collaborated in the writing and final revision of the text.