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FROM THE EDITORS

HUH? IN PURSUIT OF ACADEMIC WRITING THAT FASCINATES AND ENTHRALLS AT AMD

A lot of academic writing stinks. Turgid language, tortured logic, and templated construction leave readers unable to interpret (never mind enjoy) far too much of the writing we produce as academics. Granted, this might just be *my opinion* (cue Jeffrey "The Dude" Lebowski[1]), but it is certainly not a lonely one. A quick online search will turn up no shortage of articles, threads, posts, blogs, and editorials on the ongoing scourge of academese. A decade ago, Steven Pinker, writing for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, laid out the consequences of our profession's affliction with stilted writing (after devoting over 5,000 words trying to make sense of it): "In writing badly, we are wasting each other's time, sowing confusion and error, and turning our profession into a laughingstock" (Pinker, 2014).

From its inception, *Academy of Management Discoveries* (AMD) has been focused on clearly communicating management research discoveries, through its exploratory, phenomenon-forward approach as well as its engagement-focused, multimedia dissemination strategies (Van de Ven et al., 2015). As part of these efforts, AMD embraces clear, engaging writing as a defining feature of the journal, with an emphasis on the incorporation of rich context, transparent communication of methods, and preservation of the authors' voice (see https://aom.org/research/journals/discoveries).

More recently, the journal has introduced a unique article format, Discoveries-through-Prose (DtP), that provides a forum for authors to present their articles in nontraditional ways that "break the mold of traditional academese in form and function" (Rockmann, 2023: 421). This format evolved in response to the observation that even we academics ourselves do not like reading academic articles. And this time, it was not just a subjective opinion; the data bore it out. Dane and Rockmann (2021) surveyed AMD editorial board members, who reported finding academic articles in management journals to be significantly less enjoyable to read than science-focused articles in mainstream outlets (e.g., *The Atlantic*, *New York Times*, or *Wall Street Journal*). Worse, the surveyed board members found these mainstream articles to be just as informative, if not more so, than the academic articles.

Ouch. That seems like a sad reality, and one for which we should not settle. After all, writing is not an ancillary aspect of our work, "it is the primary way by which we develop and disseminate knowledge" (Ragins, 2012: 493).

Dane and Rockmann (2021: 160) present an alternate reality, where "as academics, we should find *fascinating*—and, at times, even *enthralling*—the pages we turn in the journals we read." They outline several compelling reasons for *why* academics should aim for this more engaging, page-turning writing (i.e., boosting the impact of our work, expanding the audience it reaches, and supercharging our own thinking). I will not repeat their discussion here, instead trusting an interested reader to appreciate their editorial's wisdom first-hand. My goal rather is to elaborate briefly on the *what* and the *how*—offering at least a mildly useful orienting framework for enhancing both curiosity and excitement in our academic writing, and suggestions for doing so at AMD and specifically in DtP. These are not definitive guidelines, but hopefully provide food for thought in pursuit of writing that enthralls and fascinates: writing that makes a reader say, "huh⁉" and eagerly flip (or more accurately, scroll) the pages of the journal to find out more.

AN INTERROBANG (⁉) MODEL OF ACADEMIC WRITING

If you were wiping your screen or thinking "What's wrong with that question mark?" near the

[1] Jeff Bridges's character in the 1998 cult comedy classic *The Big Lebowski*, in addition to inspiring decades of Halloween costumes, the renaissance of the white Russian cocktail, and the spiritual movement of Dudeism, also spawned a popular internet meme from Lebowski's dismissive retort, "Yeah, well, you know, that's just like, uh, your opinion, man" (Coen & Coen, 1998).

This article is based, in part, on a session held at the last few annual meetings of the Academy of Management (AOM), titled "Academese Be Gone! Writing for AMD's Discoveries-through-Prose," that was created and initially led by Erik Dane and Kevin Rockmann, and which I have copresented in recent years with Chet Miller. I am grateful to each of them, as well as to Kira Schabram, for their input and feedback on earlier versions of this article. I am also grateful to past Discoveries-through-Prose authors, whose writing and comments on their experiences spawned many of the ideas and arguments presented in this piece.

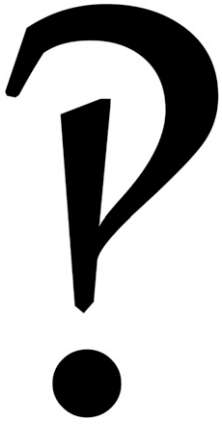
end of the last paragraph, rest easy. Your eyes (or your screen) are not deceiving you. That smudgy-looking punctuation is an *interrobang*—a nonstandard punctuation mark invented in the 1960s to express uncertainty and excitement by combining a question mark (sometimes called an interrogation point) and an exclamation mark (referred to in printer slang as a "bang") into a single mark indicating "excited disbelief" (Mulvaney, 2020; depicted in Figure 1).

Though the interrobang never fully caught on in mainstream writing, it does seem to act as something of a metaphor for high-quality academic writing. Great research papers are often ones that effectively balance a compelling question or curiosity that warrants interrogation with an exciting presentation of arguments and data that inspire us to read and remember. They do not focus so much on curiosity that they become an overwrought academic exercise in confusion (huh?), nor so much on excitement that they put form over function with obvious or inaccurate claims (huh!). These papers fascinate and enthrall in equal measure (huh‽).

Interrogation Room: Rigorous Exploration of Nonobvious Phenomena

So, what does this model look like in practice, and at AMD specifically? Let us first briefly consider the "interro" in interrobang-worthy research: the need for a well-executed investigation of an interesting research question. I will not belabor this aspect of the framework, as much ink has been spilled (and printed, photocopied, scanned, and scrolled) on what makes a particular research endeavor more, or less, interesting, including perennial doctoral seminar classics like Davis (1971) and Bartunek, Rynes, and Ireland (2006). The specific criteria that determine what is interesting vary across disciplines, domains, or journals (e.g., differing in the relative focus on theoretical contribution vs. practical application as determinants of interestingness). But, the value of interestingness as a central criterion for high-quality research is unquestioned. No amount of clever writing or rhetorical embellishment can compensate for research that is, at its core, uninteresting (academics are not spared from aphorisms about rebottled wine or lipsticked pigs).

FIGURE 1
Interrobang



At AMD, given the journal's position in the "generation" phase of the Academy's system of knowledge production (Cronin et al., 2024), we are interested in exploratory empirical research that addresses un- or underexplored phenomena and promotes future theorizing in the management field. High-quality AMD papers engage with a problem or observation in the world that has clear room for interrogation—phenomena that cannot be explained adequately by existing theory, and thus warrant exploration to develop plausible explanations and set empirical foundations for future research (Miller, 2024).

To be clear, compelling explorations at AMD need not be "counterintuitive" (an increasingly loaded term that has sometimes led our field astray; see Pillutla & Thau, 2013; Tihanyi, 2020) to be fascinating. But, they should be nonobvious in light of existing literature—and not just on the basis of one particular subdomain of the literature. Sometimes phenomena appear "unexplained" only when viewed through the lens of one narrow paradigm, but could be clearly predicted from another theoretical perspective. We do not expect every discovery to overturn all prior theory or supposition about a topic, but discoveries should be unintuitive enough to not follow obviously from past work. There should exist some level of doubt and uncertainty about what would be found, so as to motivate the exploration and demonstrate room for the interrogation of relevant data.

Great AMD papers identify a puzzling observation or empirical curiosity and then engage in a *rigorous investigation* to offer tentative explanations and implications. I emphasize "rigorous investigation" because AMD is an empirical journal; identification of an unexplored phenomenon is necessary but insufficient to satiate the curiosity of our readers. Well-designed, thorough examination of that phenomenon, using state-of-the-field methods, is what turns an interesting observation into a fascinating discovery.

The Big Bang: Clear and Engaging Storytelling

So, rigorous exploration of novel phenomena makes a paper *fascinating*, but what makes it *enthralling*? One could point to a host of factors that might make a paper more engaging to read (e.g., compelling data, clever study designs, etc.), but crafting truly engrossing writing is where deft storytelling comes in.

Well, more accurately, this is where deft storytelling *could* come in (but often does not). To quote Jean Bartunek, quoting Blake Ashforth,[2] "Sometimes academics take very exciting, engaging, and important work and present it in such a way that it looks like a butterfly squashed between two pieces of glass" (Bartunek, 2003: 203). To avoid that unhappy outcome, Bartunek (2003: 203) argues that we think more carefully about how our work (and our writing) can be presented in ways that are life-giving, using "methods for describing the life of butterflies that preserve their grace and action across time, perhaps through a story that captures their beauty and the grace of their flight."

Treating academic writing as a dynamic, life-giving act of storytelling offers an escape path out of the morass of academese. Academic writing would be far better if we embraced elements of good storytelling in our work: crafting a clear narrative structure (following a recognizable arc with a beginning, middle, and end, or with multiple connected "acts"), writing from more of a personal, first-person perspective (that acknowledges our own impact on the research process), and preserving the richness of the context (and the corresponding nuance and complexity in our findings).

The words of The Dude rise again in your mind. This is my opinion, to be sure, and I am not an unbiased observer here. In my own research, I have examined the impact that storytelling has on our ability to share vivid lessons from our past experiences and learn vicariously from others at work, as well as the impact of these stories on our own motivation and performance in organizations (e.g., Myers, 2022; Nurmohamed, Kundro & Myers, 2021; Quinn, Myers, Kopelman & Simmons, 2021). So, I have a horse in this race.

But, as before, this opinion is neither "hot take" nor lonely pulpit. Indeed, when Bartunek et al. (2006) surveyed *Academy of Management Journal* board members about why they find articles particularly interesting, almost half of respondents indicated that having a clear, compelling story and good writing was key (placing storytelling third behind counterintuitiveness and empirical quality, each noted by 57% of respondents).

Despite this widespread acknowledgment, Tim Pollock, one of the field's most ardent proponents of engaging storytelling (see Pollock 2021), has observed that scholars often give significantly less attention to how they tell the story of their work, relative to the attention given to identifying research questions (Pollock & Bono, 2013). Worse, it is not just that we ignore opportunities to improve our storytelling; we actively avoid them. Instead, we advance what Van Maanen (1995: 134) called "a writing style of nonstyle" in fear that more "artful delights and forms" interfere with the goal of dispassionate scientific reporting (as cited in Dane & Rockmann, 2021). Almost 20 years on from Van Maanen's observation, Pollock and Bono (2013) noted that academics continue to avoid key elements of good storytelling (e.g., humanization and direct, active wording) in order to sound more "scholarly" or demonstrate intellectual credibility, perhaps hoping that conforming to the jargon-laden template of academese might bolster the impact of their work.

However, this apparent lay theory is not supported by the data. In avoiding storytelling, authors actually rob their writing of the very impact they seek. Multiple investigations of what makes for an impactful paper in our field have observed that such papers feature a narrative arc or clear through-line (Ragins, 2012); active, first-person narration and rich context (Dane & Rockmann, 2021); and even a bit of intrigue, controversy, or sex appeal (Ashford, 2013)—all hallmarks of the best stories. To wit, one of the very first DtP articles to appear in AMD, Bill Kahn's (2022) qualitative exploration of how a child welfare agency absorbed detrimental features of its client families, makes extensive use of storytelling techniques (for a description, see Pollock, 2022) and was recognized as the "Best Article" of 2022 in AMD. Good storytelling and scholarly impact go hand in hand, not head to head.

Interestingly, our aversion to storytelling appears to be a learned behavior focused on the context of academic articles. The same management scholars who pen dense, inaccessible research papers also write lively columns for the *Harvard Business Review* and other practice-focused outlets, and deliver captivating talks based on the same research that bores us in its written form. Indeed, as someone who enjoys listening to colleagues present papers more than reading them, I felt vindicated when shown the following quote from a science writer at the *New York Times*:

> One lesson I've learned is that it can take work to piece together the story underlying a paper. If I call scientists and simply ask them to tell me about what they've done, they can offer me a riveting narrative of intellectual exploration. But on the page, we readers have to assemble the story for ourselves. (Zimmer, 2020)

So, we do know how to do it! We are perfectly capable of presenting a compelling story of our research process, narrating the unique steps we took to generate a new discovery in a particular context. Yet, too often, we turn from the opportunity to weave (in our writing) an impactful story from the unique fibers of

[2] Bartunek is quoting a personal communication by Blake Ashforth.

our research endeavors, preferring instead the illusory security of feeding a formulaic rayon blend through a preprogrammed digital loom.

To combat these tendencies, a key element of AMD's publishing approach is preserving the authors' first-person voice in the research process and encouraging authors to present the journey of their research in open, inquisitive ways, rather than rigid templates. Rich storytelling is a core aspect of the journal (Miller, 2024), not an incidental occurrence. This storytelling occurs not only through the primary manuscript text, but also through multimedia opportunities to narrate the "behind-the-scenes" process of conducting the research or describe how the research applies in work settings.

Moreover, the emphasis at AMD on exploratory research questions, abductive reasoning, and plausible interpretation acts as a forcing function to break authors of standard academic writing tropes, allowing them to more naturally and openly communicate the story of their research, rather than fit it, *post hoc*, into the language of an existing theory or paradigm. The journal is "comfortable playing hunches and embracing doubt" (Miller, 2024: 1), encouraging active, human cognitions (hunches and doubt) that lend themselves particularly well to more natural, agentic stories of research.

WRITING FOR DISCOVERIES-THROUGH-PROSE

It is hopefully clear at this point that embracing the interrobang can offer a path to improving academic writing, not only at AMD but across our research endeavors. Indeed, the twin aims of curiosity (interesting questions) and excitement (compelling stories) are each discussed in greater depth by my betters across other outlets in the management field in the references above. A cynic might (convincingly) argue there is nothing new here—save perhaps a silly, punctuation-based framing device. After all, answering interesting research questions and telling compelling stories were recognized more than a decade ago as the two jobs of any scholar (Pollock & Bono, 2013).

So why devote an editorial to (re)stating these aims? First, although these aims are common in editorial guidance across the field, they are somehow still not common in the published papers that appear in our field's journals; so, the message seems to bear repeating. Second, AMD has taken a bold and unique step to address these aims with the development of the DtP article format. DtP is an avenue for publishing management research that overtly requires (rather than simply allows) authors to present their work in ways that simultaneously fascinate and enthrall.

As this is a fairly new addition to a relatively young journal, below I describe the key features of DtP articles, and offer a few suggestions for authors wishing to publish their work in this format of AMD. In doing so, I draw on the set of DtP articles that have been published in the journal thus far (with more in the pipeline and forthcoming) to motivate these suggestions and provide examples of authors who have used this format to present their research in ways that both cultivate curiosity and engender excitement.

Firm Guardrails, Open Roads

One reason for the lack of change or improvement observed in our published literature, despite the many editorials calling for pursuit of better questions and more compelling stories, is that it is hard to change behavior in the absence of changes in structure or incentive. Offering the same set of traditional publishing outlets and rigid evaluation mechanisms, but expecting more fascinating and enthralling papers, seems like wishful thinking (insanity even, if the popular adage misattributed to Einstein is to be believed).

Therefore, the goal of offering DtP as a format at AMD is to provide an outlet with a fundamentally different structure to traditional academic articles. Specifically, DtP articles must be under 20 pages of text (not including references and appendices), with fewer than 20 references, and without traditional paper headings (e.g., introduction, methods, results, and discussion—aka IMRAD; Sollaci & Pereira, 2004). However, these are the only "musts" for DtP articles; within these parameters, authors are free to write their paper in whatever way best communicates their discovery, through both the structure and composition of their writing (as highlighted further below).

In this way, length is a key characteristic, but not the defining feature of DtP articles (i.e., they are not simply "short reports" or abridged versions of a standard paper). Likewise, the heading structure is not defining—we do *not* want authors to use the traditional headings of a standard academic article template (i.e., IMRAD) but we do not mandate what headings the authors should use instead. The overall goal is to provide a forum with few (but firm) guardrails that bound a wide-open road for exploration. This structure, by necessity, pushes authors to write innovative papers that read differently from regular academic articles—more in the style of a feature-length, science-based article in a popular press outlet or magazine (e.g., *The New Yorker*).

Brevity as the Soul of Impact

Why focus on length and reference limits as key considerations? At some level, constraining length

represents the most dramatic impediment to traditional academic writing (and thus could inspire the most change in writing behavior). Academic writing has certainly earned its bad reputation for stating something simple in the most complex, lengthy way possible. The clutter that litters our writing would impress the producers of the *Hoarders* documentary series (LeMarco et al., 2009).

So serious is our issue of clutter that multiple editorials in AOM journals quote the same passage from Zinsser (2006) on simplifying and streamlining our writing down to just the essentials (see Pollock & Bono, 2013; Ragins, 2012). Ironically, the quote is fairly long, so I'll summarize it in the words of *The Office* character Kevin Malone: "Why waste time say lot word when few word do trick?" (McDougall, Daniels, Lieberstein & Gervais, 2011, 1:03).

A tight page limit forces DtP authors to think clearly and be disciplined about how to communicate their findings in the most clear, direct, and concise way. Piazza, Reese, and Chung (2023), for instance, needed only about one full journal page to introduce their research into the impact of founders' expertise signaling before turning to methods, using clear arguments constructed from real-world examples to demonstrate their phenomenon and motivate their research question. Fisher, Pillemer, and Amabile (2024) are similarly expedient in their writing, using an opening example to motivate their research into the dynamics of unhelpful help, stating the focus of their qualitative exploration in the second paragraph of the paper.

As these examples indicate, DtP authors are encouraged to engage directly with their phenomenon and "trim the fat" of traditional academic writing. Prospective authors should carefully review their papers to determine the essential components of their argument and writing. What is absolutely necessary for a reader to understand your discovery and its implications? Accuracy is still of paramount importance, so essential details that do not fit the primary narrative of the paper (e.g., detailed methodologies) can be included in an appendix, but the goal is for a reader to be able to walk away from the main paper with all the necessary information to understand the empirical exploration and its resulting discovery.

"Wait," you say. "Doesn't this push for clear, direct communication contradict everything written above about the value of rich storytelling and 'artful delights' in academic writing?"

Nope. At least not when the storytelling is done well. To be sure, "tacking on" story and dramatic writing flourishes can add length to a paper, while not necessarily adding value to the quality of the paper. But carefully crafted prose can often convey meaning better and more efficiently, substituting for long passages of dense academese.

Consider the power of a well-placed metaphor. For instance, Johnson, Awtrey, and Ong (2023) review the history of group decision research from economic and psychological perspectives. Pages of an article could be (and often are) devoted to describing the various discoveries and observations made in these different traditions, documenting specific findings and general tendencies across disciplines. Johnson et al. (2023: 430), however, use a short but powerful metaphor to cleverly summarize the focus of group decision research in psychology: "The groups were murmurations of birds, and the psychologists could predict which way the flocks would turn." This one sentence (described by the lead author in a panel session on DtP as his "favorite sentence" in any paper he had written) provides a vivid image of the focus and findings of a vast array of research, conveying in just a few judiciously selected words the key message of their review.

This judicious selection extends to DtP papers' references as well, which must be fewer than 20 (including any references in appendices). This limit is intended to guide authors to clearly engage with a ongoing conversation or domain of scholarship, without feeling compelled to cite tangentially related literature or inundate readers with extensive reviews of past work. Particularly given the focus of AMD on phenomenon-forward research, limiting references is also meant to help authors position their papers in a real-world phenomenon or open question, rather than situating them within a gap in a lengthily reviewed literature. Most papers in our field seek to join particular conversations or topics in the literature, often directly engaging with (i.e., building on, challenging, or drawing arguments from) no more than a handful of papers. But we then bury these core citations amid a litany of more peripheral ones, erring for comprehensiveness rather than clarity. Prospective DtP authors should carefully consider who their key interlocutors are in advancing a particular domain of study. What papers, for instance, mark the edge of a domain of inquiry and thus the jumping-off point for studying a new phenomenon or underexplored question in that domain? Which literatures, findings, or theories most directly act as a foil or benchmark against which the new discovery should be considered?

Sometimes, a paper may be positioned as a direct extension or challenge to a domain of research, as in Fisher and colleagues' (2024) positioning of their DtP on *unhelpful* help as explicitly studying the previously overlooked residual of their own past research on helping behaviors. In other cases, the foil may be a commonly held belief or lay perception that warrants exploration and revising in light of changes in the world of work. Such is Miron-Spektor, Bear, and

Eliav's (2023) exploration of women's use of humor in TED Talks, which offers a challenge and new perspective to not only the academic discourse but also popular portrayals of gender and humor (and cites popular press and academic research in almost equal measure).

Achieving this type of focus and concision in our writing and citing is hard work (as another popular adage, often attributed to Mark Twain, reminds us about needing more time to write a short letter than a long one). Yet, simplicity and easy communication are hallmarks of impactful management research ideas (Ashford, 2013)—they are easier to remember and convey to others. Engaging in the hard work to trim down the "long letter" version of a paper, position it in within a core body of prior work, and use well-crafted language and story to memorably communicate its discovery is no doubt a challenge (and one that may not be possible for all papers), but when done well it creates an opportunity to have broad reach and deep impact.

Story before Structure

While the guidelines on length are intended to help authors focus their discovery and contribution, the invitation (and overt encouragement) for DtP articles to deviate from traditional academic templates aims to free authors to communicate their discoveries in the way that makes them shine. In other words, the goal for DtP articles is to present the research and its ensuing discovery in whatever structure best serves the story, rather than force-fitting every research process into a particular format (i.e., beginning with the literature, then the specifics of the research and the findings, and concluding with implications).

What about papers that *do* fit that more traditional structure? Are those allowed in DtP? Absolutely—if a more traditional flow allows the story of your paper to shine best, then that is how it should be written for DtP. All that we *require* is that you avoid generic, nondescriptive academic headings (i.e., IMRAD). More specific, bespoke headings are powerful tools to help move the story of the paper forward, as shown in Miron-Spektor and colleagues' (2023) frequent use of questions as headings to help move the reader from the background through their study's methods, results, and implications for future work.

However, if the traditional flow of an academic paper feels like a bad fit for capturing the nuances, insights, and experiences of your research process, then feel free to crumple up the template and work from a clean sheet. Perhaps the story of your research is best told over time, as it unfolded. Holm, Fong, and Anteby (2024) take this approach in their recent study of "voice veneer" during the unionization process of Disney puppeteers. Specifically, the paper is organized temporally in its writing and presentation (including multiple timeline-style figures and frequent mentions of dates to orient the reader to the unfolding timeline), following the story of the puppeteers' unionization efforts before concluding with a discussion of their newly introduced concept of voice veneer. Indeed, other than a one-sentence overview of the concept in the front end of the paper, the full discussion of this new concept is reserved for the ending of the article, after the reader has appreciated how the unionization unfolded over time.

Newark (2024) takes temporal ordering even further, providing a striking example of presenting research in a completely nontraditional way. His autoethnographic exploration of binge eating in the context of work unfolds as a series of "moments"—descriptions, quotes, photos, screenshots, and diary excerpts, concluding with a set of observations and implications drawn from integrating the stream of data presented within a broader literature on masculinity, body image, and stigma. Readers would be forgiven for forgetting they are reading an academic article (which does not even follow the typical AOM two-column format until the references and appendix) while walking away with memorable insights for how we understand the human experience of work.

Though not all DtPs pursue the same level or type of creativity in their expression, the range of approaches taken provides an indication for prospective authors of the vastness of options available and highlights the value of taking a nontraditional approach to presenting academic work. For instance, several DtP articles use the freedom of this format to begin their articles directly in the context they study, opening with a compelling example or hypothetical drawn from real-world engagement with their phenomenon. Harrison, Hua, and Deasy (2024) ground their study, at the outset, in a puzzling observation they had while teaching creativity; namely that many of their executive participants were "scarred" from creativity-related events that occurred much earlier in their lives. Consider also Kahn's (2022) DtP (described earlier), which opens by immediately placing the reader in the paper's context, sharing his first-hand account of a day in the child welfare agency to "show" the phenomenon *in situ* for the reader, before stepping back to "tell" about his interpretation of the experience and theorize the impact of the phenomenon he observed (see Pollock, 2022).

In addition to highlighting the freedom to structure a DtP in ways that advance the story, many of these examples highlight how successful DtPs incorporate the authors' role and experience in conducting the research as a central feature of the paper. In other words, authors are invited to consider how to not only make the conceptual story of the paper

shine but also clearly convey the empirical story—namely, the idiosyncratic, personal journey of conducting the research. Far from the dispassionate, clinical depictions of the research process that abound in academic writing, imbuing papers with a "human face" (Pollock & Bono, 2013: 629), where actors (as well as their thoughts and emotions) are clearly incorporated, can raise the value and impact of our work.

We all play a role in our research, from how we conduct our studies to the very topics we find interesting and worthy of exploration. Rather than hide from this reality, embracing it can craft more compelling research. Ashford (2013), in documenting key features of "home run" articles, notes personal relevance as a common theme across high-impact articles:

> It is an attribute that often gives research articles the punch or "zing" that we associate with home runs. I don't know if it is that authors put more energy and passion into articles on issues that are personal for them or if those issues are more real and intriguing to the authors, and therefore, they "see more" about their topic, but it is certainly a trend that shows up in … home runs. (Ashford, 2013: 628)

Inclusion of self in the research process may feel more natural for certain methods (e.g., the qualitative methods used in several of the exemplar DtPs highlighted above), but recognizing our own role and conveying it as a key part of the research process is valuable across all methods (as evident in recent discourse on the need for greater reflexivity in quantitative research; Luoma & Hietanen, 2024)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As seen in the examples above, the DtP format at AMD offers an outlet for work that can truly embrace the interrobang spirit and present interesting discoveries in engaging ways. In essence, DtP is a reversal of the script of academic journals: instead of a firm template or structure and freedom to stretch that structure to great lengths (and weigh it down with as many references as possible), DtP authors face a firm limit on length and references, but complete freedom to structure and present their work in the way that best serves the story. This is something truly different within the AOM, and if the first DtPs are any indication of what is to come, the format seems primed to have a major impact.

In closing, it is perhaps helpful to clearly state what *is not* different about DtPs, relative to regular AMD articles. Like all articles in AMD, DtPs report empirical research (using any qualitative or quantitative methods). They are not essays, comments, or editorials, nor are they creative writing contest entries—DtPs invite authors to be creative in how they present their paper, but always in service of bringing the paper's story and discoveries into focus and making them shine (not creativity for creativity's sake). Finally, DtP format should not be seen as an easier way into the pages of AMD—DtP submissions are expected, like those of any AMD article, to present a compelling discovery regarding an underexplored phenomenon or question that cannot be explained by extant theory and that carries implications for future research. The best DtP submissions have something interesting to say and a compelling way to say it. They cannot have just one or the other.

In this way, DtP articles retain the aim to be *fascinating* and satiate academic curiosity about underexplored phenomena in management, and they amplify the opportunity to be *enthralling* and spark engagement through the presentation of their discovery. They are the ones you cannot put down. They are the ones that you forward to your colleagues and friends outside of academia. They are the ones that you teach to your students and share with executives. They are the ones that make you go "huh⁉"

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