Initial Findings from the Survey of UK Business Academics 2015

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Executive summary

Drawing on a large-scale survey of UK business and management academics, this report explores the way faculty view the Academic Journal Guide (formerly known as the ABS List) and the impact of the list on their working practices. It also examines the development of the Academic Journal Guide (AJG) and how it compares against other forms of assessing research quality.

The initial findings from the report are:

- The use of the AJG is common among UK academics working in management and business.
- The list shapes the way individual faculty publish, consider the work of their colleagues and represent their own accomplishments.
- Although the 2015 list is perceived to be an improvement over the 2010 version, the AJG remains unpopular, with the majority of business and management academics feeling that the list has a negative effect on their working practices.
- There are concerns about the way the Academic Journal Guide was developed. Specifically, concerns were voiced about the relative position of specific subject areas.
- The AJG is perceived as being significantly less fair than the REF or citation based metrics, although it is considered fairer than the FT list.

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Introduction

This report summarises the initial findings of a large-scale survey of business and management academics in the UK and their views of the Academic Journal Guide (formerly known as the ABS List). The survey was intended to better understand the impact of the Academic Journal Guide (AJG) on the working practices of business and management academics. The research seeks to enrich discussions about the impact and development of the AJG and other forms of assessing research quality.

The AJG does not exist in a vacuum. It is the most recent manifestation of a broader tendency to develop systems, tools and metrics to help gauge and assess research performance, or what might be called the 'ecosystem of assessment'. The AJG sits alongside a wide range of alternative lists of journals, such as the Financial Times 45. All of these lists of journals are attempts to gauge the research value of papers published in a specific journal by assessing the 'quality' of the journal. In addition, there are a wide range of bibliometric tools that are increasingly used to assess the impact of research published in specific journals by individuals and institutions. With the advent of Google Scholar, Scopus and increasing availability of Web of Science, there has been a surge of interest in bibliometrics. Analysing the research performance of a person, paper or journal has never been easier or quicker. In addition, the UK Government uses a peer review based system to assess research quality, called the Research Excellence Framework (REF), to allocate research funding between institutions. The AJG itself draws on information from other lists, bibliometrics and the results of the research assessment exercises, along with expert opinion. As such, the AJG is in part a reflection of the wider ecosystem of assessment.

Since it was launched in 2007, the ABS list has become a central tool for the UK business and management schools. Its speedy and widespread adoption as a managerial tool in UK business and management schools reflects both its perceived usefulness and authority. Its diffusion has also potentially benefitted from its strategic adoption of the same scoring system and language of the REF.

Although its spread has generated considerable debate and discussion among the academic community, there are as yet few large empirical studies that try to gauge academics views of the AJG and the impact it has on their working practices. The goal of our study is to provide evidence to inform these debates and to help better understand how the AJG is used, perceived and what impact it has on the way academics perform their job role. We also consider perceptions of the AJG against other parts of the ecosystem of assessment, such as the REF and Impact Factors.

Some initial findings

The survey suggests that the AJG is pervasively used across UK business and management schools in a wide range of decision-making processes that govern the working lives of academics. Individual faculty also admitted they turned to the list in variety of their own work activities, as it shaped the way they published, considered the work of their colleagues, in hiring and promotion decisions, and in representing their own accomplishments.

It is clear from the survey that the 2015 AJG remains unpopular, although the new list is perceived to be an improvement over the 2010 list. A significant majority of business and management academics feel that the list has had a negative effect on their working practices, and has led to a shift in the way research is understood and managed among UK business and management schools. There was also a significant level of dissatisfaction with the way the AJG was developed. There were concerns about the relative position of specific subject areas in the list. Many felt the AJG was significantly less fair than the REF or citation based metrics, although it was fairer than the FT list.

Overall, it appears among business and management academics the AJG was used as an instrument for organizations and individuals to target, reward and shape their research, but it is unpopular and typically perceived as an instrument of control. As such, the AJG is like a 'lightning rod' attracting a range of pressures faced by UK business and management academics in their working lives.

The following report is structured as follows. First, we report our research method and approach. Second, we look at academic attitudes to the AJG and their perceptions of its impact on their working practices. In this analysis, we compare the views of individuals working at different types of institutions and in different fields within business and management. Third, we draw implications from these results for subsequent research, the management of business schools, and the design of the AJG itself.

Survey method

This research is based on data collected through a questionnaire administered to all academics working in business schools[1] that had participated in RAE 2008 with the addition of University College London. However, we excluded the Open University and Middlesex University, as it proved difficult to obtain a representative set of email addresses from their respective websites. We excluded a number of universities who were not previously in RAE 2008 but entered the REF 2014, and these institutions make up 5% of FTE Category A staff and 17% of eligible staff submitted to REF 2014.

The project had been envisioned for some years with one of the authors collating information on academic faculty at business schools in the UK at three points in time, capturing gender, rank, some key academic roles (such as Dean, and Head of Unit), and the department within each institution. The first collection was made prior to the 2014 REF census, the second round being conducted the following year where email addresses were also recorded with the data source being updated prior to the survey. This approach will enable us to situate our respondents within the population of business and management scholars in the UK, and we hope to obtain a broad and deeper understanding of the area.

Researchers' names and contact details were double checked on the web to ensure they were as accurate as possible. In order to ensure clean records for the survey, we attempted to clean the data by removing individuals who are not research active. Thus, Visiting, Honorary, Emeritus and Teaching Associates/ Teaching fellows were excluded from the survey participants' list.

The final population investigated is composed of 8,002 university faculty affiliated to 90 UK business and management schools. We received many 'return to senders' as the people had left academia, retired or were on leave. In future analysis, we are planning to exclude all these 'return to senders' in the calculation of our response rate, as we are able to differentiate them from non-responses.

The survey has two sections:[2]

■ PART I - Your experience and views of the Academic Journal Guide/ABS List

■ PART II - Personal and Career Background

Part I (Your experience and views of the Academic Journal Guide/ABS List) includes questions about the use of the Academic Journal Guide at the level of the business school and of the individual researchers. It also comprises questions regarding the views of the Academic Journal Guide and its fairness compared to other forms of evaluating research quality. Respondents were prompted to indicate their level of agreements on statements about the Academic Journal Guide, such as "[the guide] fosters a 'research monoculture'".

Much of the debate about academic journals lists in general, and the AJG in particular, has focused on the detail of their construction and development. Concerns have been raised about explicit and implicit biases against certain subject areas, most notably accounting (e.g. Hoepner and Unerman 2012, Hussain 2011, Morris et al. 2011, Hussain 2011). In our analysis, we have been careful to explore subject area differences.

[1] For the purpose of this survey, Business School refers to the Business School or Department.

[2] If you would like to request a copy of the survey then please contact j.t.walker@henley.ac.uk. Also note FAQs provided for the survey are found at www.henley.ac.uk/files/pdf/schools/ibs/Henley-FAQs-for-Business-School-Research.pdf.

The use of journal lists has also been critically scrutinized. As a consequence of their 'one size fits all' logic, it has been argued, journal lists condition the research activity of academics by suppressing diversity of topics, methods and constricting innovation. In addition, the use of journal rankings has been thought to create a sort of 'list fetishism' in which the journal assumes a greater importance than the content of the paper (e.g. Willmott 2011, Mingers and Willmott 2013).

Given the divergent views on the AJG, we sought to develop a neutral survey instrument, with questions that allowed respondents to express both positive and negative views about the list and its impact on their working practices. To this end, we were careful to review the prior literature on the negative effects of the AJG, as well as the wider context of the assessment of research quality. Thus, the statements were chosen and adapted from previous literature discussing the advantages and disadvantages of journal guides (e.g. Willmott 2011).

Finally, we asked the respondents to choose between publication outcomes, varying based on their citations, the journal rating and potential impact as defined by the REF. The aim was to get a sense of individual preferences between the options offered and insights into the trade-offs individuals are facing when planning their publication strategy.

Part II (Personal and Career Background) explores the impact of the work context on researchers' attitudes towards research assessment. The first question considers the overlap between the identity of the individual scholars' and of their Business School (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000). The second question targets the most important activities for promotion in the respondent's work context. We also added a question on job satisfaction, drawing from the scale developed by Thompson and Phua (2012). This section also investigates how individual academics allocate their time among their different activities (e.g. teaching delivery). We also collected demographic information such as year of the PhD and institution where it was received, to analyse possible cohort and training effects. Finally, to better understand how parenthood might shape attitudes to research assessment, we gathered information about the respondents' number of children and their age.

The development of the survey itself commenced on 31st June 2014. The initial survey was piloted on two occasions with more than 20 scholars in the pre-test phase. There was a preference to include scholars who had knowledge of the business and management labour market and metrics used in the UK, but who were not currently working in UK business schools, typically those who had worked in the UK Higher Education and who had experience in survey based research. No major inconsistencies emerged in the pilot phase.

The survey was administered exclusively online and was designed using an online tool. The online questionnaire was launched on 5th May 2015. Recipients were sent an email signed by Professor Geoffrey Wood, who is the Editor of the AJG, explaining the purpose of the study, inviting researchers to participate and including a link to the survey. We were careful to ensure that it was explained that the research project was independent of the ABS and all external parties in this original email. Two sets of reminders, issued in the names of the research team leaders, were sent to participants on the 19th May and the 1st June with the survey being concluded on 7th June 2015. The survey was sent out in batches in order to facilitate complete an accurate data capture. We received a response from 1,945 participants. Given that the total population for the survey was 8,002, the response rate was over 24%.

In order to check the reliability of our response pool, we undertook some tests of the response population, looking for sources of bias in our sample. In particular, we analysed if there was any difference in the typology of university of affiliation of the respondents compared to the rest of the sample: we performed a non-parametric test and found no significant difference.

The survey included both scholars who were focused on teaching[3] as well as those who were research active. However, not surprisingly, given the subject of the survey, the majority of participants were research active,

[3] The survey included senior teaching fellows but excluded teaching associates and teaching fellows

and more than 90% had a PhD. Table 1 summarise the ranks of those completing the survey against those who were included in the overall sample, distinguishing between institutions ranking in REF 2014 using overall GPA. Table 1 illustrates that the sample included a higher proportion of professors and a higher percentage of staff from the top twenty ranked institutions. For example, in the 'Top 20' ranked institutions, 30.7% of the sample were professors while 38.0% of the 573 staff who completed the survey were also professors. It is also the case that the proportion of survey participant falls marginally from 23% (in the Top 20) to 19% (in the universities ranking 21 to 50). However, this proportion substantially drops to 13% in the sample of universities who are greater than 50 in the rank.

This reflects that it is likely that, on average, the institutions in the '21 to 50' and 'Greater than 50' clusters are relatively more teaching focused than the top twenty ranked institutions.

Table 1. Rank of those completing the survey and the sample drawn from (in brackets)

Institutional Rank	Professor / Chair	Reader / Associate Prof. / Senior Lecturer	Lecturer / Assistant Professor	Other	Survey (Sample) N
Top 20	38.0 (30.7)	29.0 (24.8)	35.0 (29.0)	3.1 (9.4)	573 (2,429)
21 to 50	24.4 (20.6)	37.3 (30.1)	29.2 (37.8)	1.8 (9.1)	442 (2,266)
Greater than 50	26.0 (26.4)	40.7 (38.9)	27.5 (34.4)	3.1 (12.6)	425 (3,307)

Notes: Institutional ranks reflect the overall GPA in REF 2014. Of the 101 institutions included those that were not present in RAE 2008 were excluded from the analysis with the exception of UCL. The Open University and Middlesex University are excluded as it proved impossible to obtain a representative set of email addresses. Finally a number of institutions entered the REF that did not participate in the RAE 2008.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the primary expertise of survey participants as means to suggest a broad correspondence between participants and those who were submitted to REF 2014. To do so the proportion of REF outputs are compared to the expertise of participants who completed the survey using the subject classifications used in the AJG 2015. In the four largest areas excluding General Management, namely 'Economics, Econometrics and Statistics', 'Human Resource Management and Employment Studies', 'Accounting' and 'Organisation Behaviour' the proportions of those surveyed (based on the indicated Primary Expertise) is relative similar to the proportion of REF outputs.

While the sample appears broadly coherent the table can be seen only as a guide for a number of reasons. First, the AJG encompasses about 92% of journals submitted to the REF 2014 and so a proportion of journal outputs are excluded. Second, it is clear that the proportion of publications in 'General Management' (which in the Guide includes 'Ethics and Social Responsibility' outlets) is far lower for those that are classified as by the AJG REF classification. There is some distortion for areas such as 'Strategy' which has a low number of journal outlets in the AJG, but a high proportion of publications in general management outlets. Third, it is possible that participants are not in the AJG either because they are new to the UK or if institutions where an institution does not use the Guide. As Table 1 indicates, the participation of top 20 institutes is high and the rate for the top five is also high, with the exception of a single institution where the completion rate was very low.

Table 2: Subject area breakdowns for Primary and Secondary Expertise, the proportions of outputs submitted to REF 2014

	Primary Expertise (%)	Proportion of REF Outputs (%)
Accounting	6.9	7.4
Business History and Economic History	1.2	1.8
Economics, Econometrics and Statistics	11.0	10.7
Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management	3.7	3.3
Finance	8.3	8.6
General Management, Ethics and Social Responsibility	2.8	10.5
Human Resource Management and Employment Studies	9.4	8.1
Information Management	3.5	2.4
Innovation	2.7	3.1
International Business and Area Studies	3.1	2.6
Management Development and Education	1.0	1.6
Marketing	10.5	7.8
Operations and Technology	4.1	5.2
Operations Research and Management Science	3.9	5.1
Organisation Studies	7.0	6.4
Psychology (General)	1.3	0.9
Psychology (Organisational)	3.5	2.0
Public Sector and Health Care	1.7	2.2
Regional Studies, Planning, Environment	0.8	2.3
Sector Studies (includes Leisure and Tourism)	1.9	2.8
Social Sciences (e.g. sociology, political science, etc.)	3.6	4.0
Strategy	3.6	1.1
N	1,430	10,753

Notes: REF outputs refer to the proportions of 11,665 journal outputs in REF 2014 that are captured by the Academic Journal Guide. The 10,753 capture by the Guide equates to 92% of journal submission. Expertise that is reported by survey participants with the classifications is being drawn from those used for the Academic Journal Guide/ABS list 2015. Note that some individuals did not provide their subject area hence there is a differential in the sample of 10 observations.

Use of the AJG

As Table 3 shows, the use of the AJG is widespread across the population of UK business and management schools, with almost 90% using the list as a tool to determine which individuals to submit for the REF. It is also widely used in appraisal, promotion and hiring/recruitment. Interestingly, the list appears to be more aggressively used at business and management schools with lower REF scores (i.e. universities who are greater than 50 in the rank). This suggests that the list impact is liable to be greatest on those individuals and institutions with limited levels of research activity. In over half of those institutions that received a REF score outside the top 50, the list is used for determining workloads and accessing internal funding. In contrast, the list is only used in a quarter of cases of leading research institutions (Top 20) for determining workloads and access to funding.

The survey suggests that the list is used for a wide range of core decision-making functions in business schools, indicating the tendency of many institutions to rely on the list as a key mechanism to allocate resources, hire, promote and reward. In future research, we will seek to explore these institutional differences

in more detail. However, it is clear that many business schools have embedded the list in a significant number of managerial processes.

Table 3. Does your Business School use the Academic Journal Guide (formerly known as the ABS list) for any of the following activities?
Please note that for the purpose of this survey, Business School refers to the Business School or Department

	Top 20 (%)	21 to 50 (%)	Greater than 50 (%)	All institutions (%)
* To decide which individuals to submit to the Research Excellence Framework (REF)	86.6	88.5	93.4	89.2
* To hire and recruit	87.0	87.9	90.0	88.1
* In its appraisal system	81.7	82.5	75.2	80.0
* In deciding on a case for promotion	86.3	86.7	82.6	85.3
* To determine access to internal funding	24.5	32.2	54.3	63.9
* To provide financial rewards for individual	45.3	39.7	31.2	39.5
* To determine workloads	23.2	36.8	57.9	38.4

In Table 4, we explore the use of the list by individual academics. Here, we are interested in how individuals use the list in their research activities or in recording their accomplishments. Of course, an individual's use of the list is shaped by their institutional context. However, we were keen to try to see how working practices of academics in their day-to-day research activities are also shaped by the list. What is clear is that the list clearly shapes publications strategies, and how people frame their contributions and promotion cases. It also appears to be used by a significant share of academics to help to judge the work of other academics. A sizable minority also indicated they use the list when discussing their research with colleagues and shaping the scholarship of their doctoral students. In general, the pattern of reliance on the AJG for individual scholars was higher in the less research active institutions than the highly research active ones.

Table 4. How frequently do you use the Academic Journal Guide/ABS List for the following activities? (mean responses to a 5 point scale)

	Top 20	21 to 50	Greater than 50	All
* Deciding where to submit	3.71	3.90	3.83	3.80
* Highlighting your accomplishments in an appraisal	3.67	3.84	3.69	3.73
* Framing or assessing a promotion case	3.58	3.68	3.44	3.56
* To judge the research outputs of other academics	3.26	3.37	3.31	3.31
* In CV	2.77	3.13	3.10	2.98
* When discussing your research with your colleague	2.64	2.91	2.93	2.81
* When encouraging doctoral students or colleagues to read a specific paper	2.57	2.80	2.80	2.71

Table 5 explores responses to a range of positive and negative statements about the AJG. These statements were drawn from the literature on the list (see above). The positive statements highlight the role of the list in targeting research in specific journals and for ensuring that research is rewarded. A majority of respondents also indicated that the list was useful in helping them judge the work of others, especially outside their own field. This suggests that the list has a degree of utility to a broad range of academics. On the negative side, the list is clearly seen to be associated with a more 'US' model of research or research 'monoculture'. It is also seen to encourage researchers to engage in more narrow topics and shift their research away from topics they themselves find interesting. The high averages for negative statements suggest a high degree of concern about the impact of the list on academics research efforts and environment.

Table 6 examines the attitudes of academics to a series of statements about the consistency, breadth, consultation, and accuracy of the AJG. These different dimensions are part of the larger concept of procedural and distributive justice. Overall, the results suggest, as might be expected given the findings reported above, the respondents felt that list lacked consistency across fields and that did not provide an

accurate judgement of the value of specific journal. There was greater appreciation for the breadth of the list and its coverage of specific fields, but even here negative views predominate.

There were important differences between fields in their views of the list's consistency both across and within a field. The most disputed aspect of the list was its (in)consistency between fields, which was strongly felt by scholars working in a range of fields. Although no clear pattern emerges, the results suggest that fields outside the core domains of management perceived the list as least consistent across the fields. This may reflect that specific journals in non-core management areas were omitted from the list or were given rankings in the list that were below the expectations of those working in the field. In terms of the consistency and coverage in specific fields, we found that Strategy and International Business had the highest levels of agreement for the coverage of key journals in their field, while Psychology and Sector Studies had the lowest levels of agreement of coverage.

The level of consultation in the development of the list was also a major issue for respondents, as a significant share of respondents indicated disagreement with the statement: 'is based on clear consultation with the wider academic community'. There is no subject area where a majority of respondents would have agreed with this statement, although some fields appear more positive than others.

Table 5. Perceptions of the Guide (%)

		Disagree/Strongly Disagree	Sometimes	Agree/Strongly Agree
Neutral	Encourages academics to be more targeted in where they publish their research	5.6	11.4	83.0
Positive	Helps researchers to make judgments about the quality of research being undertaken by a researcher in their field	10.9	20.7	68.4
	Helps researchers to make judgments about the quality of research being undertaken by a researcher outside their field	29.8	19.7	50.5
	Helps research efforts to get recognized	31.1	25.6	43.3
	Motivates academics to try to achieve higher research quality	35.1	23.5	41.4
Negative	Rewards journals that strive to 'imitate a US-oriented model of scholarship'	10.1	17.9	72.0
	Shifts research efforts away from debates that researchers would like to contribute to	10.8	20.8	68.5
	Fosters a 'research monoculture'	10.9	20.7	68.4
	Encourages researchers to focus on issues that are only of interest to other academics rather than practitioners/policy-makers	15.8	24.8	59.4
	Promotes 'low risk' research	18.4	23.6	58.0
	Leads to 'technically well-executed but boring research	20.7	32.6	46.6

Table 6. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about the Academic Journal Guide/ABS List. To what extent the Academic Journal Guide/ABS List... (mean responses to a 5 point scale)

	has a sufficiently broad coverage of business and management journals	has sufficiently accurate coverage of the key journals within my field	is consistent across all fields	is based on clear consultation from the wider academic community	reflects a journal's contribution	provides definitive, fine grained judgments about the relative worth of a particular journal
Sample Average	3.02	2.74	2.18	2.32	2.51	2.13
Accounting	2.92	2.72	2.11	2.13	2.34	2.05
Business History and Economic History	3.17	2.78	2.50	2.33	2.67	1.89
Economics, Econometrics and Statistics	3.16	2.60	2.11	2.43	2.49	2.08
Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management	3.39	3.09	2.35	2.52	2.83	2.52
Finance	3.45	3.15	2.24	2.47	2.81	2.43
General Management, Ethics and Social Responsibility	3.05	2.95	2.26	2.55	2.85	2.18
Human Resource Management and Employment Studies	3.04	2.89	2.24	2.39	2.53	2.21
Information Management	2.88	2.67	2.08	2.29	2.39	1.98
Innovation	2.79	2.46	2.28	2.18	2.31	2.15
International Business and Area Studies	3.43	3.28	2.74	2.83	2.96	2.59
Management Development and Education	2.47	2.40	2.20	1.93	2.13	2.07
Marketing	2.88	2.74	2.18	2.15	2.44	2.15
Operations and Technology	3.14	2.57	2.02	2.37	2.52	2.13
Operations Research and Management Science	2.78	2.59	2.05	2.38	2.43	1.90
Organisation Studies	2.96	2.88	2.19	2.12	2.22	1.78
Psychology (General)	2.95	1.89	1.95	2.11	2.32	1.79
Psychology (Organisational)	2.84	2.69	2.10	2.22	2.48	1.92
Public Sector and Health Care	2.56	2.68	2.16	2.44	2.56	2.08
Regional Studies, Planning, Environment	2.58	2.17	1.75	2.00	1.92	1.50
Sector Studies (includes Leisure and Tourism)	2.50	1.89	2.00	2.07	2.39	2.21
Social Sciences (e.g. sociology, political science, etc.)	3.04	2.08	1.91	2.17	2.19	1.88
Strategy	3.36	3.23	2.42	2.62	2.98	2.54
Other	2.41	1.90	1.64	1.95	2.23	1.73

Table 7 explores the relative perceived fairness of the list against other forms of research assessment. Fairness was defined as "marked by impartiality and honesty, free from self-interest, prejudice, or favouritism; conforming with established rules; consonant with merit or importance" on the survey. Overall, the 2015 list was considered somewhat fairer than the 2010 list, with almost a third of respondents suggesting it was 'More fair/Much more fair'. The respondents felt that the list was less fair than the REF, individual paper citations and Impact Factor journals. Individual paper citations were perceived to be the most fair compared to the AJG. There also appears to be strong support for the REF as means of research assessment. Perhaps surprisingly, there was also considerable support for the idea that Impact Factors of journals was fairer than the list. Impact Factors themselves have been subject of significant criticism (Baum, 2011) and the AJG itself is partly constructed through the use of Impact Factors. In comparison to the Financial Times 45 List, the AJG was considered by over half the respondents to be fairer, suggesting the AJG's breadth and scope makes it more attractive than a narrow list.

These results suggest that the ABS list is perceived as significantly less fair than bibliometric measures, such as citations and Impact Factors. However, the percentage of respondents who rated the AJG as equally fair or more fair than these other forms of research assessment was similar. This suggests that the AJG has strong supporters among the population of academics who perceive other parts of the assessment ecosystems as 'less fair' than the journal list. In future research, we will seek to try to better understand these differences in perceptions of different assessment tools.

Table 7: Assessment of the fairness of the Academic Journal Guide 2015 against other forms of evaluating research quality?

%	Less Fair/ Much less Fair	Equally Fair	More Fair/ Much more Fair
vs. the 2010 ABS list	20.5	47.3	32.2
vs. the Research Excellence Framework (REF)	47.8	33.1	19.2
vs. individual paper citations	56.7	24.4	18.9
vs. Impact factor of journals	47.7	32.1	20.2
vs. the Financial Times 45 List	18.5	34.7	46.8

Implication

At this early stage of the analysis, it is difficult to draw strong implications about the results of the survey. It is, however, clear that the AJG is widely used among UK business and management schools and that its use has a major impact on the working practices of researchers in these institutions. Overall, there is a strong pattern of negative attitudes to the list, although a significant share of the population finds the list a useful tool for their own research.

The factors driving these negative attitudes are liable to be diverse. Greater research is required in order to fully understand these attitudes and experiences. However, several tentative implications can be drawn at this stage:

- AJG is often treated as the *key* reference point for academic decision-making in a wide range of UK business schools. It is not clear that any list of journals - AJG or otherwise - can provide a comprehensive, balanced and fair mechanism for allocating resources and rewards between individuals working on a broad range of subjects. Assessing research remains a difficult and imperfect activity, requiring time and effort on the part of the assessor. As such, a considerable share of negative views of the AJG may be tied to frustrations and concerns about nature of research management and assessment across UK business schools, of which the AJG is simply the most direct manifestation.

- The survey suggests that more participants considered that the AJG was fairer than the 2010 ABS List. However,
    - There is a wide perception that the consultation process associated with the development of the AJG was too narrow. Providing a robust and consistent consultation mechanism would potentially enhance the AJG's legitimacy.
    - Despite the inclusion of journals more than doubling between AJG and the 2010 ABS List less than half of survey participants considered that the AJG had sufficient coverage. Any future consultation process would benefit from further guidance as to which journals to include in a List that defines itself on its being focused on Business and Management.
    - There is strong perception that the AJG is inconsistent across areas. Attempting to provide mechanisms to compare across subject would be helpful, although this is appreciably a difficult task.

In future research, we will explore in greater detail:

- The factors that shape perceptions of the list, including the status of the institution and individual, as well as their personal background,
- The willingness of academics to trade social and economic impact for research outputs,
- The perceptions of the value of papers in 4* journals versus papers in top field journals.

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