

## **How do writers establish research niches? A genre-based investigation into management researchers' rhetorical steps and linguistic mechanisms**

### **Abstract**

'Establishing a niche' often constitutes a crucial rhetorical move in research proposals and journal papers in various academic disciplines. Research proposals and reports submitted by novice writers may at times be rejected on grounds of their inability to demonstrate a need to carry out research in a suggested area. This genre-based investigation looked into how experienced writers use rhetorical steps and linguistic choices to establish research niches in the introductory sections of high impact management research papers. Apart from revealing how 'indicating a gap' and 'adding to what is known' are strategically deployed by writers using a wide spectrum of persuasive communicative resources and linguistic mechanisms aimed at downplaying the significance of past research and foregrounding the 'newness' of their studies, this paper discusses ways of minimizing the difficulty involved in drawing a distinct line of demarcation between these different and yet inter-related rhetorical steps under specific circumstances. I have also demonstrated the extent to which my findings have pertinent theoretical and practical implications concerning the need to distinguish and present research niches using the contextual information derived from research-based discourse.