

Writing Differently as A Contemporary Concept of Presenting Research Results in Management Sciences. Literature Review Announcement*

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Abstract

The article aims to present the conclusions from a review of the literature on *writing differently* in the area of management sciences. *Writing differently* is the concept of creating scientific texts in an academic environment contrary to the established academic tradition. Methodologists and researchers note that both the proposed structure and the dominant language used in scientific articles impose a specific way of thinking about research problems undertaken in business schools. Moreover, they point out that the norms of academic writing require researchers to become somewhat of a *blank slate*, soulless and emotionless. Meanwhile, they suggest that the originality and value of the research problems being solved can be improved by communicating scientific content within the full context of the research experiences of the text's author. This short article reflects on the analysis of texts in which researchers declared that they were moving towards the trend of *writing differently*. The objectives of the articles and research problems undertaken by selected representatives of this trend in management sciences are presented.

Keywords: writing differently, academic writing, management sciences, methodology, humanistic trend, critical trend, SCOPUS database analysis

Introduction

Writing differently is the novel concept of creating scientific texts in an academic environment contrary to the established academic tradition. This practice employs different linguistic means than those traditionally established in science [Tourish, 2016]. Methodologists and researchers note that both the proposed structure and the dominant language used in scientific articles impose a specific way of thinking about research problems undertaken in business schools [Pullen et al., 2020]. Moreover, they indicate that the norms of academic writing require researchers to become somewhat of a blank slate, soulless and emotionless [Weatherall, 2018]. Meanwhile, they suggest that the originality and value of the research problems being solved can be improved by communicating scientific content within the full context of the research experiences of the text's author. Interestingly, they also imply that academic writing is overly pompous in nature. There are demands in the literature to discourage writing, which seems to be primarily motivated by the desire to demonstrate academic cleverness or to obtain (check off) publications as an end in itself [Grey, Sinclair, 2006]. Sources of inspiration to alter this approach include texts published by artists using their specific means of creative expression [Borg, 2013], or those concerned with the topic of education written by educators who themselves have both a practical incentive and an ethical imperative to write differently about higher education, for example [Sword, 2009].

Researchers examine the language used in scientific texts within the context of masculinity and femininity. They observe that scientific texts all too often expose the effects of the male peculiarity, which suppresses hidden possibilities. These researchers demand space for affective feminist politics embedded in language [Vachhani, 2018].

One could agree with those who claim that histories/autoethnographies published as writing differently emphasize the ontological politics of engaging with and representing experiences that are relational, chaotic, spontaneous,

unpredictable, nonhuman, and corporeal. These stories exemplify the performative nature of writing and its integral role in knowledge production [Fisher et al., 2015].

The literature review aimed to investigate the types of research problems that are addressed by researchers who refer to writing differently.

This short article reflects on the analysis of the texts. The objectives of the articles and the research problems undertaken by selected representatives of this trend are presented.

Methods

A systematic review was used to analyze and interpret the literature. This non-reactive study aimed to find scientific texts that used *writing differently* and to present their context. 14 articles indexed in the SCOPUS database were selected for analysis, in which *writing differently* was among the keywords. The remaining criteria for selecting texts for analysis were their publication in management journals. Table 1 presents the texts selected for research.

Table1. Scientific articles selected for analysis

References in APA style:	The aim of the article:
Boncori, I., & Smith, C. (2019). I lost my baby today: Embodied writing and learning in organizations. <i>Management Learning</i> , 50(1), 74-86.	This article focuses on miscarriage and the sharing of intimate experiences as an example of alternative writing that can be used to challenge and resist dominant masculine discourse in academia.
Bozalek, V. G. (2021). Doing Academia Differently: Creative Reading/Writing-With Posthuman Philosophers. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> , 10778004211064939.	This article considers how academic practices such as reading and writing might be reconfigured as creative processes through thinking with posthuman philosophies and theorists, particularly, but not confined to the works of Karen Barad and Erin Manning.
Kendall, A., Gibson, M., Himsworth, C., Palmer, K., & Perkins, H. (2016). Listening to old wives' tales: small stories and the (re) making and (re) telling of research in HE/FE practitioner education. <i>Research in Post-Compulsory Education</i> , 21(1-2), 116-136.	The authors explore the value of auto-ethnographic storytelling, Lyotard's 'petit récit', to the processes of doing and learning about research in the context of practitioner education.
O'Shea, S. C. (2019). My dysphoria blues: Or why I cannot write an autoethnography. <i>Management Learning</i> , 50(1), 38-49.	In this essay, the author wishes to consider her somatic experience of managing dysphoria and reflect a little on writing autoethnographically.
Plotnikof, M., & Utoft, E. H. (2021). The "new normal" of academia in pandemic times: Resisting toxicity through care. <i>Gender, Work & Organization</i> .	They recast toxicity as – not a characteristic of the university but – a fundamentally relational issue that works through and exacerbates individualization and isolation in the context of the pandemic, thus requiring relational forms of feminist resistance in response
Plotnikof, M., Bramming, P., Branicki, L., Christiansen, L. H., Henley, K., Kivinen, N., ... & van Amsterdam, N. (2020). Catching a glimpse: Corona-life and its micro-politics in academia. <i>Gender, Work & Organization</i> , 27(5), 804-826.	Through a collage of stories, snapshots, vignettes, photos, and other reflections of everyday life, this collective contribution is catching a glimpse of corona-life and its micro-politics of multiple, often contradicting claims on practices as many of us live, work, and care at home. It embodies concerns, dreams, anger, hope, numbness, passion and much more emerging amongst academics from across the world in response to the crisis.
Kivinen, N. (2021). Writing grief, breathing hope. <i>Gender, Work & Organization</i> , 28(2), 497-505.	This is an essay in three parts on writing differently, on grief and breathing.
Beavan, K. (2021). Becoming visible: Uncovering hidden entanglements of power, performativity and becoming subjectivities in	This paper explores entanglements and flows of power, performativity and related becoming subjectivities, in a rich thicket of lived experience in a global bank. The inquiry

<p>a global bank. <i>Organization Studies</i>, 42(12), 1839-1862.</p>	<p>focuses on an affective auto/ethnographic field text of a mundane, cross-continent, telephone meeting between a senior executive colleague and myself.</p>
<p>Jammaers, E. (2021). Embodied reflections of an able-bodied disability scholar. <i>Gender, Work & Organization</i>, 28(5), 1885-1892.</p>	<p>This piece is written in liaison with the "writing differently" movement aimed to counter common academic writing through a non-abstract, biographic, embodied account of 10 years as a female, able-bodied disability, and gender researcher. The tone of the article is intentionally kept simple, while its form resembles a memoir.</p>
<p>Mandalaki, E., & Daou, E. (2021). Writing memory work through artistic intersections. <i>Unplugged. Gender, Work & Organization</i>, 28(5), 1912-1925.</p>	<p>In the current text, They present archives of our embodied memories from childhood to make sense of how, despite our different backgrounds and life paths, these shape our collective sense-making processes of who we are and become as well as how we connect and interact with others in the social world.</p>
<p>van Eck, D., van Amsterdam, N., & van den Brink, M. (2021). Unsanitized writing practices: Attending to affect and embodiment throughout the research process. <i>Gender, Work & Organization</i>, 28(3), 1098-1114.</p>	<p>Using examples from an ethnographic study of aircraft cleaning, we discuss and illustrate how "writing differently" can be performed throughout the research process—in the literature review, data collection, data analysis, and writing up. We argue that writing differently is an ongoing methodological tool in order to rethink/refeel research practices in ways that generate affective, embodied, and caring accounts of empirical organizational contexts, particularly when marginalization is key such as in cleaning work.</p>
<p>Mandalaki, E. (2021). Authorize me to write: going back to writing with our fingers. <i>Gender, Work & Organization</i>, 28(3), 1008-1022.</p>	<p>The purpose of the article was not clearly indicated. The author writes that "to the female/male author, to write is to feel, to think, to touch, to sense, to learn, to experience, to relate, and to perform the body in the text with the fingers."</p>
<p>Sayers, J. G., & Martin, L. A. (2021). "The King was pregnant": Organizational studies and speculative fiction with Ursula K. Le Guin. <i>Gender, Work & Organization</i>, 28(2), 626-640.</p>	<p>Continuing the work of feminist organizational studies scholars who have urged researchers to find ways of presenting knowledge and writing "differently," we discuss the contributions of Ursula Le Guin whose fiction and nonfiction have had a profound influence on feminist theory development.</p>
<p>Kinnunen, V. E., Wallenius-Korkalo, S. S., & Rantala, P. M. (2021). Transformative events: Feminist experiments in writing differently. <i>Gender, Work & Organization</i>, 28(2), 656-671.</p>	<p>This article is a reflexive methodological opening into changing writing by transforming the event of writing. Drawing from feminist theorization and the recent calls for writing differently, the eventness of academic writing was attested.</p>

Source: Own study based on searches in the Scopus database

In the first step of the analysis, the titles of the publications, the names of the journals in which they were published, and the scientific goals of the selected texts were identified. Next, the frequency of words used in the abstracts of the selected texts was analyzed, as shown in Figure 1.

research project



Fig.1 A cloud of words used in the abstracts of the articles selected for the database

Source: Own work in the WordCloud Generator application.

The analysis of the content of abstracts for the selected articles showed that *writing differently* applies to texts published in the humanities, where research projects concern social issues inspired by the experiences of individuals. In the conducted research, the so-called social actors are allowed to speak and recreate important stories from their lives that consolidate their way of thinking about organizations and management concepts. Therefore, researchers point out that “we advocate the need to *write differently* in and of organizations on three levels: in terms of *method, content, and style*, to explore alternative, qualitative and personal methods of learning that are often rejected in mainstream platforms [Boncori, Smith, 2018].”

What is worth emphasizing is that *writing differently* provides ideas and paths for further development for writers attempting to deterritorialize research and experiment with new forms of representation [Honan, Bright, 2016]. This criterion was met by the analyzed texts, which can certainly be called experimental. The texts experimented with the structure of the article, form, language, and the perspective of the researcher—who is often at the center of the problem under study. In this sense, they could even be considered emotional autoethnographies, referred to in the methodological literature as evocative and suggestive, heading towards new artistic, impressionistic, performative, humanistic, and literary forms of ethnography in which a living story stands clearly above scientific analysis [Kacperczyk, 2017].

A common feature of the analyzed texts is that they do not end with a traditional summary with a set of recommendations for the future of management practitioners. Instead, they end with a coda, which simultaneously opens a new discourse about the subject of research. These texts add new ontological and epistemological assumptions to the current discussion in science. As the authors using this method themselves point out, reading texts written against the grain is a repeated practice [Handforth, Taylor, 2016].

Summary

As reported by the researchers “Good writing is suggestive and pungent, it evokes feelings—relief, recognition, drama, disdain, horror—and bodily responses—the flush of recognition and the sharp intake of breath, the tingle as we feel that this might be showing us something we hadn’t thought or experienced before. (...) Our concern is that very little writing in our field has these qualities [Grey, Sinclair, 2006].”

The conducted literature review adequately reflects the theses communicated by researchers who postulate writing differently. It has been noted that this concept is used to address difficult, sensitive, and personal topics when the traditional writing style does not reflect the personal experiences of the writers.

This short article is an invitation for researchers to engage in a discussion about new ways of interpreting social reality and alternative methods of presenting scientific content.

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