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Research Article Abstracts in Management Sciences Written by Thai EFL Scholars: An Analysis of Rhetorical Moves, Verb Tenses and Voices

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ABSTRACT

Research article (RA) abstracts play a critical role in disseminating research findings, particularly challenging for non-native English speakers. While prior studies have explored the move analysis of RA abstracts across various subjects, the management sciences—a globally prominent field—have received less attention. This study addresses this gap by examining the rhetorical move patterns, verb tense usage, and voice constructions in 200 RA abstracts from Thai tier 1 management journals written by Thai scholars. The results showed that: 1) the Purpose-Method-Product structure was the most commonly employed move pattern; 2) present simple tense was mostly found in the Introduction, Purpose, and Conclusion sections, while past simple tense was preferred in the Method and Result sections; and 3) active voice was frequently used in the Introduction, Purpose, Product, and Conclusion sections, with a mix of active and passive voice mainly appearing in the Method section. The findings of the present study offer valuable insights for academic writing course developers, material designers, lecturers, and novice researchers, enhancing their understanding of RA abstract writing and supporting their integration into scientific communities.

Keywords: RA Abstracts; Management Sciences; Move Analysis; Verb Tenses; Voices

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Significance of RA Abstracts

Defined as a clear summary of a research paper or entire thesis, the abstract is the initial section of an article and provides a synopsis and preview of an academic work [1] such as research grant, research proposal, research article, book proposal, conference paper, or conference proceeding.

Abstracts are used academically in various contexts. Firstly, readers use them to decide whether an article is related to their works or not^[2]. Secondly, in academic conferences, the presenter is required to submit the abstract before the conference accepts the research paper for presentation^[3]. Finally, authors can receive benefit from readers who are interested in their works. It means that if the reader is interested in some relevant points when reading the abstract, they may read the whole article. And, then the work might be cited. These are the reasons why abstract is important and needed.

In addition, when the research paper is submitted for publishing, the English abstract is usually required by all academic journals. This is why researchers, especially those whose English is not their mother language face the issue of producing a RA abstract in English. That is because writing a good RA abstract is not an easy task for them. This is confirmed by Runkati [4] who investigated the organizational patterns and common mistakes in English research articles and found that the EFL learners still need knowledge about abstract organization.

Therefore, there are studies exploring the pattern or structure of RA abstract writing through the move analysis in various disciplines, such as accounting ^[5], applied linguistics ^[6], agriculture ^[7], nanoscience and nanotechnology ^[8], literature ^[9], English language teaching ^[10], humanities and science ^[11], political science ^[12], nursing ^[13], and architecture ^[14]. A large number of research on RA abstracts from many disciplines using move analysis is crucial in academic writing, demonstrating that the study of rhetorical moves plays an important role in RA abstract writing.

1.2. Move Analysis

A move is typically defined as a change in the flow of information, indicating a shift in the topic or scope of mate-

rial being discussed. Swales [15] defined move analysis as a methodological instrument for determining the structural organization of information within a specific genre. The utility of move analysis lies in clarifying the communicative framework inherent in a particular literary genre [16]. As a result, the study of rhetorical move pattern identifies the classification of information present within a text and explains how they are structured in writing [17]. Therefore, some scholars have addressed or discussed the structure of move analysis. Firstly, Swales^[15] suggested a three-move pattern, namely. establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche. Secondly, Bhatia [18] provided a four-move pattern, namely, introduction the purpose, describing the methodology, concluding the findings, and presenting the conclusions. Moreover, Santos [19] suggested a five-move pattern, namely, situating the research, presenting the research, describing the method, summarizing the results, and discussing the result. Later, Hyland^[20] suggested a five-move pattern to analyze academic abstracts namely, introduction, purpose, method, product, and conclusion. Lastly, Swales and Feak^[21] proposed five structural elements including background, purpose, method, results, and conclusion. From these structures, it indicated that by realizing the structure of writing abstract via the study of move pattern, it is useful for EFL scholars to summarize effectively their works through abstract writing. In addition, by developing a good knowledge of abstract writing, not only the study of move analysis is helpful, but also exploring the characteristics of linguistic features that lead to more specific information is also considered for the present study.

As mentioned earlier, although numerous research has been conducted to explore the rhetorical move patterns on RA abstracts in other disciplines, only a few studies in management sciences have been considered. The idea of management sciences is to address the decision-making challenges managers face in both the public and private sectors. Various researchers have contributed to defining management sciences [22–25]. In this study, management science is the application of scientific methods and processes to comprehend business and management problems and to determine appropriate solutions in various fields such as management, marketing, accounting, finance, hotel and tourism, international business, and logistics management. The current study then investigates the occurrence of rhetorical move structures

in abstracts authored by Thai native speakers specialized in management sciences and published in Thai scientific journals, as well as the employment of verb tenses and voices in each move.

1.3. Research Objectives

- To explore the use of rhetorical move patterns in RA abstracts for management sciences that are published in Thai journals and authored by Thai academics.
- To explore how tenses and voices are used in each movement of RA abstracts in management sciences that are produced by Thai academics and published in Thai journals.

2. Literature Review

This section introduces the review of previous studies related to move analysis and linguistics features. This review covered significant studies that have contributed to our understanding of move analysis and linguistic features. It will highlight key findings, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks that have shaped the current state of knowledge in this field. By synthesizing these studies, this section offers a thorough review of the current literature for future study.

2.1. Previous Studies Related to Move Analysis

This section summarized previous studies on move analysis in RA Abstracts.

Firstly, Amnuai^[5] worked on the rhetorical moves of research abstracts in the branch of accounting. The data revealed that rhetorical movements and linguistic realizations were both comparable and distinct. Also, tenses and voices were used very differently from the earlier studies. Secondly, Can et al.^[6] explored the RA abstracts' move structures in the field of applied linguistics. The data revealed that the greater part of abstracts included information on the purpose, methods, and findings, while almost half ignored portions of the introduction and discussion. Then, Chanrit and Tonthong^[7] investigated the use of rhetorical move structures in agricultural science abstracts. The findings revealed that there appeared to be 13 steps in creating abstracts in this discipline. Furthermore, the analysis of move patterns of RA abstracts in the field of nanoscience

and nanotechnology were assessed by Hwang et al. [8]. The results appeared that the most common move structures in abstracts in these domains are purpose-methodology-results. And some differences in writing styles may be rooted in the cultural context of the authors. Next, Tampanich [9] investigated move structures in RA abstracts in the literature field. The findings showed that there were eight steps in creating abstracts in this discipline. Furthermore, Kaya and Yagiz^[10] explored the move patterns of RA abstracts in English language instruction. The findings revealed that Turkish writers preferred the purpose-method-product move pattern, but foreign writers used the purpose-method-productconclusion move pattern. The other two fields investigated were humanities and science. Viera [11] examined and contrasted the rhetorical diversity in the RA abstracts across disciplines published in native and non-native English-speaking countries. This implies that writers' chosen language and composition patterns are influenced by various discursive conventions, discourse community activities, and academic writing. Another area of focus is political science^[12]. The data revealed a paucity of required moves, with introductionpurpose-method-result-discussion being the highest found move pattern, followed by introduction-purpose-methodresult and introduction-purpose-result-discussion. Additionally, Noorizadeh-Honami and Chalak^[14] worked in architecture. The majority of English and Persian writers, according to the statistics, employed the introduction-methodresult-discussion move, with method-result-discussion and introduction-method-result being the most popular patterns.

2.2. Previous Studies Related to Linguistics Features (Verb Tenses and Voices)

This section discussed previous research on the usage of verb tenses and voices in RA abstracts. Firstly, language studies journal article abstracts' use of tense was examined by Tu and Wang [26]. The results showed that the quantitative analysis reveals the tense trend displayed in the reporting verbs that are frequently used. In contrast, the qualitative study demonstrates that three-, four-, and five- move theories are often used in relation to the IPMPrC structure, the IMRD structure, and CARS model. Secondly, Hanidar [27] explored the use of verb tenses from RA abstracts in transdisciplinary contexts. The results showed the different use of tenses in both active and passive voices. Moreover, this

different finding is also found among disciplines. Moreover, Rustipa et al. [28] explored at rhetorical patterns and tense shifts in research article openings written by non-native English speaker professors. According to genre-based approach theory, the research findings show that most professors do not reach complete rhetorical phases. The most difficult argumentation phase is that of 'finding a gap'. They also struggle with tense choice and shift in clause complexes. Furthermore, Lubis et al. [13] conducted an analysis of the rhetorical strategies employed in nursing abstracts. Their findings revealed that the expressions of methodology and results undergo a shift corresponding with their linguistic comprehension, predominantly employing the past simple tense in either active or passive form. In addition, Kholili^[29] analyzed the features found in the abstracts of ELT journals. The data revealed variances in the tenses used in the abstracts, with the introduction and study outcomes using present tense, whereas aims, methods, and results typically utilized past tense. Finally, Nurhayati [30] investigated the appearance of verb tense in RA abstracts from Asian EFL journals. The study found that the simple present tense frequently appeared in the introduction, purpose, results, and conclusion sections, while the past tense was predominantly employed in the method section.

3. Methodology

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the instruments utilized in the current study, detailing the methodologies employed for data collection and outlining the procedures followed in the data analysis. Each instrument is described in terms of its relevance and application within the research context, ensuring a clear understanding of how data were systematically gathered and analyzed to address the research objectives. The section also discusses the rationale behind the selection of these instruments and the analytical techniques, emphasizing their appropriateness for achieving the study's aims and contributing to the overall validity and reliability of the findings.

3.1. Instrument

The current study investigated rhetorical move structures using Hyland's move structure model^[20], which included introduction (I), purpose (P), method (M), product

or result (Pr), and conclusion (C). The reason for employing this model is that the model supplied a similar pattern to the pre-analysis results, and it has been extensively employed for RA abstracts analysis in various disciplines [5, 6, 10, 13, 31]. **Table 1** presents the move structure model of Hyland [20].

3.2. Data Collection

The corpus for the present study comprises 200 research article abstracts in various fields of management sciences, including management, marketing, accounting, finance, hospitality and tourism, international business, and logistics management. The inclusion of various sub-fields within management sciences also provides a diverse dataset that can reveal potential differences in abstract writing conventions across different disciplines. Written by Thai scholars, all abstracts were randomly selected from 10 Thai tier 1 journals (TCI1) related to management sciences. The selection of TCI1 journals ensures that the abstracts analyzed are from high-impact, reputable sources, reflecting high-quality research outputs. The Thai-Journal Citation Index (TCI) Centre^[32] was found in 2001 following the fulfillment of a research project entitled "Assessment of Citation Impact Factor Indexes for Thai Academic Journals". The TCI Centre categorizes journals into three tiers based on quality, with TCI1 representing the highest impact factor. Journals in tier 1 are eligible for future inclusion in the ASEAN Citation Index. The primary objective of TCI1 is to generate the Thai Journal Impact Factor, Journal Immediacy Index, and Cited Half-Life of Thai journals by utilizing the same calculation methodologies established by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI). The selected ten management journals include the ABAC Journal, Asian Administration and Management Review, BU Academic Review, Creative Business and Sustainability Journal, RMUTT Global Business and Economics Review, Modern Management Journal, Journal of Accountancy and Management, Business Review, Journal of Business, Economics, and Communication, and MUT Journal of Business Administration. The abstracts from these journals, published between 2020 and 2023, were exclusively empirical research article abstracts [10]. The data (corpus) were gathered by a) researching ten indexed TCI1 journals in the field of management sciences, and b) randomly selecting 200 research article abstracts (20 abstracts from each journal), resulting in 37,585 tokens. **Table 2** lists

Table 1. Move structure model ^[20].

Move	Function
Introduction (I)	to establish context of the paper and to motivate the research or discussion.
Purpose (P)	to indicate the purpose, thesis or hypothesis, outlines the intention behind the paper.
Method (M)	to provide information on the design, procedures, assumptions, approach, data, and other relevant aspects.
Product (Pr)	to state the main results, present the argument, or describe what was accomplished.
Conclusion (C)	to interpret or extend the results beyond scope of paper, draw inferences, and highlight potential applications or broader implications.

the sub-fields of management sciences, along with the number of abstracts for each type.

Table 2. Distribution of Abstracts in Sub-fields of Management Sciences.

Sub-Field of Management Sciences	Number of Abstracts
Management	49
Marketing	46
Accounting	21
Finance	25
Hotel and Tourism	36
International business	3
Logistics management	20

3.3. Data Analysis

In this section, content analysis, manual assessment, and corpus software were conducted and employed together with the review of experts in the field who rechecked the data for reliability and validity. Firstly, content analysis was employed to manually examine the rhetorical move structure of each abstract. This process involved systematically categorizing the components of the abstracts according to Hyland's model^[20], which identifies five key moves: introduction (I), purpose (P), method (M), product or result (Pr), and conclusion (C). Each abstract was carefully examined to determine the presence and frequency of these rhetorical moves. This manual examination allowed for a detailed comprehension of how Thai scholars structure their abstracts in the field of management sciences. Secondly, the data were manually assessed for the use of verb tenses and voices in each move pattern appearing in each research article abstract. This step involved a comprehensive examination of the language used, focusing on how verb tenses (present, past, and future) and voices (active and passive) were employed to convey different aspects of the research. This linguistic analysis was essential to understand how Thai scholars use grammatical

structures to present their research findings effectively. To provide support to the manual analysis, the results of this linguistics analysis were then validated using AntConc [33], a free software corpus analysis toolbox for concordance and text analysis. AntConc enabled the researchers to perform a more extensive and systematic analysis of the text, ensuring that the manual findings were accurate and reliable. This software provided additional data points and patterns that might have been overlooked in the manual analysis. In addition, to certify the credibility of the move analysis, ten Thai academics in applied linguistics were involved in reexamining the results. These experts reviewed the initial findings to verify the conclusions drawn from the data. The involvement of these academics was crucial in validating the manual classifications and interpretations. Therefore, if disagreements arose regarding the classification or interpretation of the data, these were subjected to further discussion. This collaborative process is expected to enhance the reliability and validity of the study's conclusions.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The Rhetorical Move Structure

Table 3 illustrates that the four most frequently identified move structures were PMPr (purpose-method-product) 50.5%, PMPrC (purpose-method-product-conclusion) 29%, IPMPrC (introduction-purpose-method-product-conclusion) 8.5%, and IPMPr (introduction-purpose-method-product) 5%. The finding that PMPr (purpose-method-product) is the most frequently observed move is consistent with earlier research [5, 10, 34–36]. The findings suggest that researchers acknowledge the significance of the purpose-method-product framework in their studies, placing emphasis on the research objectives, method employed, and the results achieved. Fur-

thermore, according to Hyland's five-move model ^[20], 8.5% of the sample abstracts utilized the model comprising introduction, purpose, method, product, and conclusion. In addition, the present study identified 15 distinct rhetorical move patterns. The diversity in these patterns may be attributed to several factors. Firstly, writers may possess different communicative purposes or stylistic preferences for expressing their ideas. Secondly, the variety of sub-fields represented in the collected abstracts could influence the structure and organization of the abstracts. Additionally, varying levels of proficiency in English among the writers may contribute to these differences, as limitations in language skills might lead to the omission of certain elements and a non-linear presentation of content.

4.2. The Frequency Used of Verb Tenses

Table 4 indicates that the present simple tense was mostly used in the introduction move, followed by the combination of present perfect and present simple tenses, and the past simple tense. See the examples from M1a–M1e as following:

M1a. Electronic word-of-mouth is a new form of informal communication where messages are disseminated to others (RA2)

M1b. As frontline employees who interact directly with customers, flight attendants are expected to display proper emotional expression,............ (RA9)

M1c. A competitive advantage emerges when change occurs within an organization or industry environment. Generating superior business returns above competitors is the means to (RA13)

M1d. As second-hand clothes are one of the most popular items, (RA26)

M1e. Fast-food brands in Thailand operate an online brand community, especially on Facebook, to build customer-brand relationships (RA61)

In the purpose moves, the present simple tense was most mostly employed, followed by the past simple tense and the combination of present simple and past simple tense. See the examples from M2a–M2e as following:

M2a. The study aims to measure tourists' responsible behavior, and to develop a structural equation model of (RA1)

M2b. This research investigates eWOM to determine its impact on (RA2)

M2c. The core ideas of this paper are to empirically explore several service marketing factors influencing (RA5)

M2d. The objective of this research is to study the opinions of experts on the tourism development of (RA11)

M2e. This study aims to investigate the role of dividends in (RA12)

For the method move, the past simple was the most common tense, followed by present simple tense and the combination of present simple and past simple tenses. See the examples from M3a–M3e as following:

M3b. Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) formulated by Ajzen (Ajzen, 1985), the study utilized quantitative research methods to (RA4)

M3c. A total of 1,049 respondents were surveyed using a quantitative survey and qualitative approach sampling 30 respondents via interview for confirmation of the results. Statistical analysis of all collected data via (RA5)

M3d. Contingency theory was used as the lens to explore the relationships. An online survey was sent to(RA6)

Furthermore, in the product (results) move, past simple was the most frequently used tense, followed by the combination of present simple and past simple tenses, and the present simple tense. See the examples from M4a–M4e as following:

M4a. Moreover, the findings indicated that organizational resilience had

Table 3. The rhetorical move structure.

J. No.	PMPr	PMPrC	IPMPrC	IPMPr	IMPrC	IC	IPPrC	MPr	IMPr	PPrC	MPPrC	IPC	IPPr	IPPrM	PPr
1	4	11	4	1											
2	9	7	2		1	1									
3	12	5					1	1	1						
4	1	7	6	2			2			1	1				
5	16	3	1												
6	11	3	1	2						1		1	1		
7	13	6	1												
8	13	5		1										1	
9	8	6	1	4											1
10	14	5	1												
Total	101	58	17	10	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1

Remark: I = introduction; P = purpose; M = method; Pr = product; C = conclusion.

positive direct and indirect effects on (RA8)

M4b. The results of the research revealed that 23 guidelines for tourism development of (RA11)

M4c. The findings revealed that the confirmatory factor analysis (RA15)

M4d. It was found that tourism carrying capacity regarding (RA16)

M4e. The results indicated that the tourists' need of the interpretive tools was at the "moderate" level which (RA18)

Finally, in the conclusion section, the present simple tense was mostly used, followed by the past simple tense and the combination of present simple and past simple tenses. See the examples from M5a–M5e as following:

M5a. Important implications for Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) are suggested. (RA1)

M5b. Thus, the entrepreneurs need to develop service strategies in these areas, for example, (RA26)

M5c. Thus, these research findings can be of value for teachers aiming to develop lessons for (RA27)

M5d. In summary, the effect of brand loyalty in an online brand community demonstrated that brand awareness, brand image, and brand trust can be used as mediators in (RA29)

M5e. The practical implications of the current results contribute greatly to FDIs' strategic planning in the region, especially the (RA30)

In the discussion, the present simple tense was mostly used in the introduction, purpose, and conclusion moves. In contrast, the past simple tense was most commonly employed in the method and product (results) moves. In other words, the present simple tense was most frequently used, followed by the past simple tense. Each move was discussed as follows: the use of the present tense in introduction move aligns

with the findings reported by Kholili^[29]. Using the present tense in the introduction move, the authors introduced the significance of the achievement of the studied topics in the current trends, defined the studied issues, and showed the popularity of the subject that should be addressed. However, the use of present simple tense in purpose move is hardly found in previous studies. Then, the use of the past tense in the method move is consistent with the results found by Kholili^[29], Wahyu^[37], and Chalak and Norouzi^[38]. Using the past simple tense in this move, the authors introduced the subjects, theory used, framework, validity and reliability, statistics, questionnaire, sampling selection, etc.

Additionally, the use of the past tense in the product move corresponds with the findings of Kholili^[29]. The use of the present tense in the conclusion move is consistent with the findings of Kholili^[29]. In this section, the authors highlighted the value, benefits, significance, implications, and recommendations derived from their studies.

Overall, the results of this section's results align with those of Tseng^[39], who examined RA abstracts in the field of applied linguistics. Tseng^[39] found that the the present tense was typically used in the first (introduction), second (purpose), and fifth (conclusion) moves, whereas the past tense was frequently employed in the third (method) and fourth (results) moves. The findings of the present study indicate that the rhetorical moves used in the research article abstracts written by EFL writers exhibit different tense usage compared to those previous studies.

4.3. The Frequency Occurred of Voices

According to **Table 5**, the most common introduction move was active voice, followed by active + passive voice, passive voice, and no verb tense. Secondly, in the purpose move, the active form was predominantly used, followed by

Table 4. The frequency used of verb tenses in each move.

Move and Tense	Frequency	Percentage
1. Introduction (N = 37)		
Present simple	20	54.05%
Present perfect + Present simple	5	13.51%
Past simple	2	5.40%
Others	10	27.02%
2. Purpose (N = 195)		
Present simple	96	49.23%
Past simple	92	47.17%
Present simple + Past simple	4	2.05%
Others	3	1.53%
3. Method (N = 190)		
Past simple	135	71.05%
Present simple	28	14.73%
Present simple + Past simple	14	7.36%
Others	13	6.84%
4. Product (N = 198)		
Past simple	117	59.09%
Present simple + Past simple	39	19.69%
Present simple	31	15.65%
Others	11	5.5%
5. Conclusion (N = 90)		
Present simple	42	46.66%
Past simple	28	31.11%
Present simple + Past simple	16	17.77%
Others	4	4.44%

the passive form, instances where no verb tense was applied, and combination of active and passive forms. In method move, the most commonly used voice was the combination of active and passive voices, followed by the passive voice, active voice, and instances where no verb tense was applied. In the product (results) move, the active form was the most frequently used, with the combination of active and passive forms, and the passive form used less often. Finally, in the conclusion move, the active voice was the predominantly choice, followed by the combination of active and passive voices, and the passive voice.

In the discussion, the active voice was extensively employed in the introduction, purpose, product (results), and conclusion moves. These findings are consistent with those of Kholili^[29], who analyzed the rhetorical moves of ELT research abstracts and found that the active voice was predominantly used in the introduction, purpose, results, and conclusion. Similarly, Nurhayat^[30] reported that that the active voice was the most frequently used in all moves. However,

in the method move of the present study, the mixed voice (active + passive voice) was most prevalent which is quite different from the previous studies. In summary, the prevalent use of active voice across management research articles suggests that the authors prioritize clarity in their abstracts, aiming to avoid unnecessary verbosity that might distract readers. However, in the methodology sections, some authors blend active and passive voice, emphasizing the actions while deliberately minimizing the role of the agent.

5. Conclusions

The objective of this study was to investigate the rhetorical moves, tenses, and voices employed in research article abstracts within the field of management sciences. The results presented a diverse application of these elements, revealing that the Purpose-Method-Product move was the most frequently employed structure. Only 8.5% of the abstracts conformed to Hyland's five-move model [20]. The analysis

Table 5. 7	The free	uency used	l of voic	es in	each move.
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Mono	Voice							
Move	Active	Passive	Active + Passive	No Verb Tense				
Introduction (N = 37)	24(64.86%)	4(10.81%)	8(21.62%)	1(2.70%)				
Purpose $(N = 195)$	180(92.30%)	9(4.61%)	2(1.02%)	4(2.05%)				
Method ($N = 190$)	41(21.57%)	45(23.68%)	96(50.52%)	8(4.21%)				
Product $(N = 198)$	115(58.08%)	5(2.52%)	78(39.39%)	-				
Conclusion $(N = 90)$	70(77.77%)	9(10%)	11(12.22%)	-				

showed that the present simple tense was predominantly used in the introduction, purpose, and conclusion moves, while the past simple tense was primarily employed in the method and product moves. Regarding voice, the active voice was commonly used in the introduction, purpose, product, and conclusion moves, whereas a combination of active and passive voices was mostly found in the method move. However, further research could expand upon the current study by examining abstracts from various disciplines. Also, comparative analyses across different languages and cultures in the field of management sciences have the potential to yield more comprehensive and insightful results. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) academics, particularly in the context of crafting research article abstracts in the field of management sciences. These insights can aid in the development of more effective writing strategies and enhance the clarity and impact of academic communication within this discipline. The study highlights the importance of understanding and applying appropriate rhetorical moves, tenses, and voices to meet the conventions and expectations of academic writing in management sciences.

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Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

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The data is available upon request.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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