

How to publish in refereed journals

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Outline

- My background for the topic of this lecture
- What is a refereed journal?
- Preparing your paper
- How ambitious should you be?
- Handling the review process

My background

Experience:

- Author of more than 50 refereed journal articles in different fields
- Editor of *Business Ethics: A European Review* for ten years
- Member of more than 10 other editorial boards
- Referee for nearly 40 other journals

But I've still got plenty to learn!

What is a refereed journal?

Editor gets advice on whether to publish your paper by sending it out for “peer review” by specialists, usually at least two.

Critical question: does your paper make a worthwhile contribution? (Does it try? Does it succeed?)

The process is usually “double blind”:

- ❑ referees are not told author’s name (prepare paper accordingly);
- ❑ you aren’t told who the referees were.

Usually you will receive copies of the referees’ reports with the editor’s decision.

Preparing your paper 1

- Two assumptions:
 1. Your research is 'OK'
 2. Your research is empirical (adapt advice accordingly)
- Your **title** matters
 - Don't (usually) try to be too clever
 - Be informative; reflect what's in the paper
- Write an informative **abstract**
 - Not easy, but some journals have required format
 - Don't fill it with introductory background
 - Make sure contributions and implications are clear

Preparing your paper 2

- **Introduction** needs to be ‘motivating’
 - Not general background
 - Not establishing your credentials
 - Significant and interesting problem
 - ‘The aim of this paper is to...’
 - ‘The paper is structured as follows...’
- **Literature review** should have a purpose
 - Not a general survey or a list of mini-abstracts
 - Identify a gap to be filled, a problem to be solved
 - Hypotheses should be developed, not just appear
 - Even if no hypotheses, make it clear what you are trying to do, e.g. research question(s)

Preparing your paper 3

- Outline your **method**
 - What did you do and why? Explain and justify.
 - How did you overcome data challenges?
 - Submit research instruments (?)
- Set out your key **findings**
 - Focus on findings relevant to the aim of this paper
 - Include descriptive statistics so readers can get a feel for your dataset
 - Explain and justify your analysis. What have you done and why?

Preparing your paper 4

- Have an interesting and informative **discussion**
 - Return to your research questions and literature
 - How do your findings take things forward?
 - Not just: ‘same as them, different from others’
- Include a separate **conclusion**
 - Highlight contributions, limitations and suggestions for further research
- Make sure the **bibliography** is complete and accurate
 - All citations in text included?
 - All references cited in text?
 - All references follow journal style guide?

How ambitious should you be?

Should you aim for a 'top' or 'good' journal?

Temptation is to aim low if lack confidence.

Benefits of initially aiming for a 'top' journal:

If achieve it, great! (Didn't 'waste' it)

If don't, can revise for lower-rated journal with aid of expert reviews (free-ish advice from top academics)

Disadvantages:

Delay in getting accepted/published

Knocks to confidence (be resilient!)

How do you know which the good journals are?

The process

Do research

How good does it have to be?

Write paper

Focus on refereed journals. Others, incl. conference papers?

Brief comments on writing and language.

Submit to journal

Note verb. One at a time.

When to submit? Which journal? How?

Editor's (first) decision

How long will it take?⊕

Possible outcomes ...

Editor's decision: possible outcomes

Accepted

- Up-date CV & web page; celebrate; await publication.

Accepted subject to amendment

- Obey, promptly; celebrate once confirmed.

Revise and re-submit (R&R)

How major? Read “between the lines”.

- Don't mis-read R&R for rejection. Deal with emotion.
- Foot in door; even treat as tentative “commission”.
- Read comments carefully. Reflect, clarify, perhaps get advice (from Editor?) or help.
- Add covering explanation of your revisions.

Rejected⊕

- Appeal? Give up?⊕
- Revise for a different journal.

Summary

Keep thinking, flexibly, about publication.

Projects provide material, papers make contributions.

Craft your paper carefully. Test it out.

Papers don't publish themselves:

- ❑ Manage editors - help them to say yes!
- ❑ Manage yourself – be resilient; persevere!
- ❑ Manage the time – it just disappears!