# Writing for Academic Journals in the Business Domain

Deirdre McQuillan (ed)
*Technological University Dublin*

Volume. 1

# Academic Writing for Business Researchers: A Peer-led Student Handbook Series

## Writing for Academic Journals in the Business Domain

Edited by Dr. Deirdre McQuillan,
College of Business, Technological University Dublin

OLLSCOIL TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA BHAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
TU DUBLIN
TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY DUBLIN

Academic writing for business researchers – peer-led student handbook series

Handbook 1

# Writing for academic journals in the business domain

Edited by: Dr Deirdre McQuillan, Head of Research, College of Business, Technological University Dublin

# Forward

Welcome to the first in a series of peer learning handbooks developed by PhD and MPhil research students to help assist their peers along the academic writing journey. Many students new to the PhD journey struggle with academic writing. Not feeling confident about their writing can cause some students to resist 'putting pen to paper' yet this is an essential part of mapping out their thoughts and ideas. It is also the way that students can show their supervisor how they are thinking about their work and where possible problems or roadblocks may exist on their PhD journey. Overall, students need to be able to write down their ideas, but they also need to be able to use writing as a way of communicating to an audience. This written communication may be their thesis document, or it may be a conference paper or an academic journal submission created parallel to their PhD work. The best written papers are those that are simple, clear and easy to read and this takes a lot of time and effort. It takes multiple drafts and redrafts to achieve writing excellence. To quote Zinsser (2006: 9):

> *"Writing is hard work. A clear sentence is no accident. Very few sentences come out right the first time, or even the third time."*

The first of this series of handbooks deals with academic writing for researchers within the business domain. Although approaches to clear writing such as scrutinizing every word and sentence for meaning and purpose and learning to listen to feedback are common features of excellent writing across all disciplines, there are also differences between writing within different domains. Even within the business domain there may be differences in writing approaches between economists for example or busines computing analysts and more qualitative behavioural approaches. It is important therefore that new researchers recognise that there are guidelines and norms in writing excellence that might in part be determined by the audience and the field that they are contributing to.

This guideline provides both general advice for new researchers and advice more reflective of the business domain. The work is divided into five main chapters, firstly recognising the value of the 'self' in great academic writing and the importance of academic voice. TU Dublin PhD students Akanksha Lohmore, Edi Oliveira, Duke Debrah Afrane and Thi Ngoc Dao reflect on this in Chapter 1. It then addresses challenges that new researchers might face in particular if they are writing in a non-native language in Chapter 2. Tara Holland and Rawayda Abdou share their insights on these challenges. Moving onto Chapter 3, Joanna Kossykowska, Elun Hack and Lindsay Harrison focus on the importance of theoretical positioning and framing academic writing towards theories in the business discipline. Chapter 4 considers what high impact in academic writing means in particular as a goal for new academics to aspire towards and recognising some idiosyncrasies across fields even within the business domain. The final Chapter 5 provides guidance to new academics for writing in target journals. Intesar Madi, Kevin Corbett, Clodagh O'Reilly and Christina Kenny share their learning on this aspect of academic writing.

I hope you find this work drawing on the experience of your peers valuable and insightful. It reflects the early learning along the PhD journey that should help you develop your own competency in academic writing.

Deirdre McQuillan
Editor

# Table of Contents

# Chapter 1. What makes great academic writing?

*By Akanksha Lohmore, Edi Oliveira, Duke Debrah Afrane and Thi Ngoc Dao*

This chapter takes a more general look at the researcher and their approach to academic writing. It recognises that every researcher has a voice and the potential that needs to be unlocked to write interesting work. The chapter identifies the ingredients needed for excellent writing and provides practical steps that new researchers can follow.

## 1.1 Unlocking your researcher potential (Akanksha Lohmore)

This article is going to focus on academic writing in the business domain. Firstly, I will focus on what I understand by academic writing. In the positivist paradigm, research is considered as object that is ‘out there’, as a basket full of knowledge to be carefully fished out of ‘non-knowledge’ content. This process involves designing a theoretical framework, research questions, related hypothesis, methodology to address these hypotheses, followed by academic writing to disseminate the knowledge and sharing it to the community for review. Interestingly, academic writing in general causes a kind of uneasiness for authors, readers and researchers alike. The academic community finds it to be taxing and perhaps the part they feel disconnected with the most. Suchan (2004) suggests that the following reasons could be pushing authors away from academic writing. Dysfunctional personal stories or narratives about being a “researcher” or “social scientist” that generate limiting, unhealthy metaphors about writing; difficulty connecting writing, learning, and teaching that is, writing is seen as an end in itself rather than integral to teaching and learning; and the lack of outlets to publish different, non-traditional types of writing. They suggest a few tips that ‘unlock’ a researcher’s potential to write and to write effectively. To think of academic writing as tool of communication to develop the academic discourse in one’s discipline is one of their suggestions. One can also weave this academic narratives in one’s teaching practice, not only enriching the teaching and its content but also providing a purpose more organic than a publication. An academic writer’s job is to create informed stories based in scientific process of research and responsibly disseminate it in the community.

That brings me to my last next section of the paper, the social construction of the academic voice and finding relevance for the management practice. Bedeian (2004) draws attention of the reader towards the power dynamics among the triad of peer review process. The interests of authors of the knowledge and that of editors and reviewers is at a cross. The negotiations that ensue inevitably involve tension as authors try to show that they "deserve credit for something new," while editors and referees try to access the acceptability of the authors' claims (Myers, 1990, 67-68). The author present recommendations that can address this power dynamic and enhance the scientific integrity that might be under threat due to this power imbalance.

To conclude, I find it appropriate to bring in the work of Cheung and colleagues (2018). Their work discusses the importance of developing the authorial identity in students. The model of authorial identity involves ‘authorial confidence’, ‘valuing writing’, and ‘identification with author’ as important elements to develop when grooming students to be academic authors (Cheung, Stupple, and Elander 2015). ‘Ownership and attachment’, ‘authorial thinking’, and ‘authorial goals’ are suggested as useful targets for pedagogic interventions. Future interventions to improve students’ authorial identity might therefore aim to improve their sense of ownership of written work, guide them toward authorial ways of thinking, and help them adopt more authorial writing goals.

**Reference**

Bedeian, A. G. (2004). Peer review and the social construction of knowledge in the management discipline. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *3*(2), 198-216.

Cheung, K. Y. F., Elander, J., Stupple, E. J. N., & Flay, M. (2018). Academics' understandings of the authorial academic writer: A qualitative analysis of authorial identity. *Studies in Higher Education*, *43*(8), 1468-1483.

Cheung, K. Y .F., E. J. N. Stupple, and J. Elander. 2015. "Development and Validation of the Student Attitudes and Beliefs about Authorship Scale (SABAS): A Psychometrically Robust Measure of Authorial Identity." *Studies in Higher Education,* Advance online publication.

Myers, G. 1990. Writing biology: Texts in the social construction of scientific knowledge. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Suchan, J. (2004). Writing, authenticity, and knowledge creation: Why I write and you should too. *The Journal of Business Communication (1973)*, *41*(3), 302-315.

## 1.2 Writing interesting academic articles in the business domain (Edi Oliveira)

I am sure all of us in the academic community had the experience to read a paper that gave us so much food for thought leaving us with the feeling of wanting more. What does make some papers different from others that so strongly sparks our immediate interest? Davis (1971) defines research as interesting when it challenges some parts of well-established truths, striking a delicate balance: if challenging all of it, it might be considered absurd; if it challenges none, it might be irrelevant. How is, then, the concept of interestingness defined within the academic business domain?

A research conducted by Bartunek et al. (2006) asked editorial board members of the Academy of Management Journal "what makes research interesting" (p.9). Findings suggested that, additionally to challenging current assumptions (Davis, 1971), other aspects of interestingness are: quality, good writing, newness, practical implications, and impact. Frank and Landström (2016) defined interesting research according to its practical application within society. It is about getting the balance between rigour and relevance right while bringing a novel contribution to science. Following the same logic, Wiklund et al. (2019) argued that business research is quite unintelligible for practitioners, policymakers, and lay audiences. Researchers are more focused on what they are interested about, rather than what other stakeholders outside the academic community care about. Therefore, research has very little relevance and impact in the real world. Finally, Barney (2020) proposed a conceptualization of interestingness based on the work of Kuhn (1962), who differentiated between normal and revolutionary science. The former applies existing theories to new phenomena, in novel ways, or to develop new research questions. The latter challenges existing theories offering an alternative based on different assumptions. While both are important to knowledge building and development, revolutionary science is relatively rare. That also means that within normal science, most knowledge is incrementally built with the objective to fill gaps within existing theory. However, the author warns that not all gaps deserve to be filled. Hence, interesting research is about "filling an important gap" (p.50), that inspire insightful debate and dialogue.

The next question I was interested about was whether a guideline on how to write interesting research is possible. Based on the above definitions, and in a creative dialogue (Montuori, 2005) with other authors, I compiled the following list. While not exhaustive, I hope it can help readers to find interestingness in their own research.

Quality: articles, either quantitative, qualitative or mixed methodology, that follows the rigour of academic research (Bartunek et al., 2006).

Clear writing: research which express ideas with "clarity, directness, and precision" (Ragins, 2012, p.494).

Novelty: research that challenges current assumptions in a positive dialogue with the scholarly community (Davis, 1971; Gartner, 2013), filling up an important research gap (Barney, 2020).

Criticality: research that challenges taken-for-granted assumptions (Fayolle et al., 2016); and embraces disciplinary concepts from different fields, opening up possibilities for new explorations and discoveries through the lens of "the other" (Gartner, 2013).

Relevance: action and community-oriented research, learning from practitioners' tacit knowledge (Frank & Landström, 2016; Wiklund et al., 2019).

Impact: research towards political and social change; dissemination within diverse audiences (Wiklund et al., 2019).

If all the previous arguments have not convinced the reader of the importance of writing interesting articles, LaPlaca et al. (2018) offered a practical reason: they are more likely to get published and get a higher number of citations. If nothing else, as proposed by Bartunek et al. (2006) interesting research produces positive affect. Consequently, we are more likely to learn more from them.

**References**


Barney, J. B. (2020). Contributing to theory: Opportunities and challenges. *AMS Review*, *10*(1–2), 49–55. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13162-020-00163-y

Bartunek, J. M., Rynes, S. L., & Ireland, D. R. (2006). What makes management research interesting, and why does it matter? *Academy of Management Journal*, *49*(1), 9–15.

Davis, M. S. (1971). That's interesting! Towards a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, *1*(2), 309–344.

Fayolle, A., Landström, H., Gartner, W. B., & Gerglund, K. (2016). The institutionalization of entrepreneurship: Questioning the status quo and re-gaining hope for entrepreneurship research. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, *28*(7–8), 477–486. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2016.1221227

Frank, H., & Landström, H. (2016). What makes entrepreneurship research interesting? Reflections on strategies to overcome the rigour–relevance gap. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, *28*(1–2), 51–75. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2015.1100687

Gartner, W. B. (2013). Creating a community of difference in entrepreneurship scholarship. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, *25*(1–2), 5–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2012.746874

Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (Third Ed.). The University of Chicago Press.

LaPlaca, P., Lindgreen, A., & Vanhamme, J. (2018). How to write really good articles for premier academic journals. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *68*, 202–209. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2017.11.014 Montuori, A. (2005). Literature Review As

Creative Inquiry: Reframing Scholarship As a Creative Process. *Journal of Transformative Education*, *3*(4), 374–393. https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344605279381

Ragins, B. R. (2012). Editor’s comments: Reflections on the craft of clear writing. *Academy of Management Review*, *37*(4), 493–501. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2012.0165

Wiklund, J., Wright, M., & Zahra, S. A. (2019). Conquering relevance: E ntrepreneurship research’s grand challenge. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *43*(3), 419–436. https://doi.org/10.1177/1042258718807478

## 1.3 Ingredients in the recipe of academic writing in business journals (Duke Debrah Afrane)

Writing in academic journals has become a necessity that enables career progression for researchers within the business profession (Bartunek, Rynes, & Ireland, 2006). However, such writing exercise has been identified as very complicated and challenging for many researchers (Clark, Floyd, & Wright, 2006). This complication results from the processes that a manuscript (the academic writings of the researcher) has to go through before it is accepted as a publishable document (Bakker, Crane, Henriques, & Husted, 2019; Grant & Pollock, 2011). Key among these processes is the review section, where the manuscript is sent to potential reviewers (individuals who have expertise in the area of study), for it to be examined. Ragins (2012) suggested that in examining the manuscripts, the reviewers' job is to ensure that ideas in the manuscripts make sense to a potential audience. According to Bartunek et al. (2006) the most effective way an author can make sense to reviewers is to ensure that the research idea is an interesting one. Counter intuitiveness, quality and good writing have been identified as the main ingredients or settings that make a research idea interesting (Bartunek et al., 2006).

As a result, the author must put him/herself in the shoes of these reviewers and ensure that their manuscript contains the ingredients that make a research idea interesting (Grant & Pollock, 2011; Johanson, 2007). An example of an interesting research idea is the one that challenges already existing assumptions of other authors. Clark et al. (2006) supported this counterintuitive nature of a research idea when they stated that, simply replicating an existing idea in a different context does not convey any form of contribution to literature (adding to existing knowledge). That is, committed employees in an organization have been shown to result in several positive outcomes (Meyer, 2018). Confirming such knowledge in another context does not contribute to the literature; rather, identifying/examining environmental factors than can enhance or thwart these benefits of commitment will be more interesting to a reviewer. Such an idea has to be clearly developed at the outset of the manuscript (Bakker et al., 2019) as the manuscript becomes boring to read when a reviewer has to navigate through several pages to get the idea behind a manuscript (Grant & Pollock, 2011; Johanson, 2007; Ragins, 2012). See Figure below for summary of ingredients.


**Figure 1: Main Academic Writing Ingredients/Settings**

Having stated this idea, the next is to provide a roadmap on how the idea will be addressed within the manuscript (Johanson, 2007). Such roadmap (Methods of addressing the problem) must be rigorous and effective enough to enable the research idea to be realized. In so doing, Clark et al. (2006) identified manuscripts that do not adopt rigorous designs in addressing a research idea as likely to be rejected by reviewers. This denotes quality of the research (Bartunek et al., 2006). Underlying these ingredients is how well the entire manuscripts has been written (Ragins, 2012) devoid of typographical errors (Clark et al., 2006). Ragins (2012) identified writing as a craft and requires time and effort for a successful accomplishment (Grant & Pollock, 2011). Due to this, an author must endeavour to allow enough time to spend in the preparation of their manuscripts so as to succeed in the craft of writing; Grant & Pollock (2011) suggested that rewriting the manuscript will not be a waste of time if the goal of writing is to be achieved. In essence, the manuscript is used to take a reviewer (audience) on a journey through the author's idea and clear writing will streamline the journeying process.

**References**

Bakker, F. d., Crane, A., Henriques, I., & Husted, B. W. (2019). Editor's Insight: Publishing Interdisciplinary Research in Business & Society *Business & Society, 58*(3), 443–452 doi:10.1177/0007650319826188

Bartunek, J. M., Rynes, S. L., & Ireland, R. D. (2006). What Makes Management Research Interesting, and Why Does It Matter? *Academy of Management journal, 49*(1), 9-15. doi:10.5465/AMJ.2006.20785494

Clark, T., Floyd, S. W., & Wright, M. (2006). On the Review Process and Journal Development. *Journal of management studies, 43*(3), 655-664. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.2006.00617.x

Grant, A. M., & Pollock, T. G. (2011). Publishing in AMJ —Part 3: Setting the Hook. *Academy of Management journal, 54*(5), 873-879. doi:10.5465/amj.2011.4000

Johanson, L. M. (2007). Sitting in Your Reader's Chair: Attending to Your Academic Sensemakers. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 16*(3), 290-294. doi:10.1177/1056492607307167
Meyer, J. P. (2018). *Handbook of employee commitment*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
Ragins, B. R. (2012). Editor's Comments: Reflections on the Craft of Clear Writing *Academy ol Management Review, 37*(4), 493-501. doi:dx.doi.org/10.M65/amr.2012.0165

## 1.4 Academic writing as a sequence of practical steps (Thi Ngoc Dao)

In recent years, researchers have shown an increased interest in writing for publication in academic journals (Heyman & Cronin, 2005; Patriotta, 2017). Patriotta (2017, p. 749) defines the academic writing for publication as "an act of communication, based on an established set of conventions, involving a plurality of actors (authors, editors, reviewers, and other scholars), and aimed at conveying a core message (contribution) to an audience of scholars and practitioners".
In order to publish in academic journal, especially in business domain, previous research has established a process or a model of effective writing. Unruh (2007) points out that the writing process should be organized as a series of sequential steps. To be more precise, the writing process starts with choosing a topic, considering whether co-authors are needed, then choosing the right journal. After having a target journal, the next steps are paying attention to guidelines for authors, and planning for a writing strategy which includes the steps of setting time to write, writing and rewriting, and determining when the paper is ready to submit. When receiving the reviewers' feedback, the writers should take a positive stand towards their comments, or deal with rejection of a paper by using the negative feedback to revise and resubmit to another journal. Along the same lines, Martín (2014) suggests that the authors firstly should choose the proper journal since the different journal will have the different geographical, the journal scope and the different target readers. Then, from the chosen journal, they could define the content to publish and the way they publish their research. A broadly similar point has also recently been made by Bach (2015), who proposes the framework, so-called the 4Cs model of scientific writing and publication, to facilitate the effective process of writing for publicaiton. The 4Cs framework includes four steps: (1) choosing a relevant topic (Competence); (2) targeting the right journal (Course); (3) planning of the composition of the paper (Composition); and (4) applying theory and methodology to write the paper (Content).

In summary, it has been shown from this review that writing in academic journals in general, or in the business domain in specific is the sequential process, including the four mains steps, starting with choosing a topic, then targeting a journal, after that planning a writing strategy, and finally dealing with reviewers' feedback.

**References**

Bach, M. P. (2015). How to write and publish a scientific paper: A closer look to eastern European economics, business and management journals. Business Systems Research Journal, 6(1), 93-103.

Heyman, B., & Cronin, P. (2005). Writing for publication: adapting academic work into articles. British Journal of Nursing, 14(7), 400-403. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.12968/bjon.2005.14.7.17947

Martín, E. (2014). How to write a good article. Current Sociology, 62(7), 949-955. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392114556034

Patriotta, G. (2017). Crafting Papers for Publication: Novelty and Convention in Academic Writing. Journal of Management Studies, 54(5), 747-759. https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12280

Unruh, A. M. (2007). Reflections on. . .Writing for successful publication. The Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 74(1), 61-68.

# Chapter 2. Academic writing challenges

*By Tara Holland and Rawayda Abdou*

This chapter identifies the bad habits that are commonly found in academic writing.  It also identifies particular challenges that researchers might face such as writing as a non-native speaker.

## 2.1 Bad writing habits (Tara Holland)

This work takes a brief look at the most prevalent challenges of academic journal writing in the business domain, from the perspective of the author and the reviewer. The top three bad habits of authors are explored as well as corresponding solutions.

The exponential growth of academic literature has been well documented (LaPlaca et al., 2018; Wagner & Kim, 2014). Technology has played a fundamental role with the introduction of 'open access'. 'Open access' refers to the provision of free, online, permanent and unrestricted access to research (Stacey, 2020). Furthermore, the global collaboration and communication among researchers has increased, thanks to academic social networking sites (Ovadia, 2014).
This growth presents a corresponding challenge to publication editors. As the number of manuscripts sent for publication increases, rejection rates are now running at between 80% to 95% depending on the publication (LaPlaca et al., 2018).

After a brief review of the literature, it appears that there are two over-arching solutions to the challenges of writing in academic journals. The first solution addresses the art of writing itself. It is often cited in the literature that doctoral programmes spend a lot of time and effort in teaching future scholars how to master the art of researching, but little or no time is spent on ensuring that these scholars are equipped to be good peer reviewers (Hall et al., 2019; LaPlaca et al., 2018). Fulmer (2012) points out that writing is not just a support activity, it is the primary way in which researchers develop and disseminate knowledge. Furthermore, the process of clear writing helps authors sharpen their ideas. It can also illuminate flaws in their logic or approach. In her article, Ragins (2012), the associate editor of the Academy of Management Review, conducted a poll of reviewers for the journal, and summarised the top three 'bad habits' of authors, as well as solutions for overcoming these bad habits (Ragins, 2012). See Table 1 below.

Table 1: Top Three Bad Habits from AMR Reviewers Poll

| Habit | Bad Habit Description | Reviewers Suggested Solution to Bad Habit |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Vague Writing** – use of needlessly complex language that obscures meaning | Get to the core quickly – justify the need for every paragraph |
| 2 | **Undefined concepts and terminology** – the reader is presented with concepts and jargon that are not explained | Authors needs to put themselves in the shoes of the reader. Authors should also keep the attention of the reader by summarising the knowledge contribution upfront. The first five paragraphs (FFP) should explain the problem being solved, how the solution was reached and how the solution differs from other approaches |
| 3 | **Lack of cohesive story** – manuscripts often lack a clear direct and compelling story | Create coherence and cohesion – each paragraph should be driving the reader towards an unavoidable conclusion |

*Source: Derived from Ragins (2012) Reflections on the Craft of Clear Writing, Academy of Management Review, 37(4), 493-501.*

The second solution addresses the peer review process itself, and the education of both authors and reviewers.

The concept of developmental peer review is a relatively new topic in the literature (Hall et al., 2019; Ragins, 2018; Ragins, 2015). It involves developing the author to ensure they are able to move not just their paper forward, but ultimately their field. The reviewer moves from 'pointing out all the flaws in the manuscript', to 'helping authors address the flaws and uncover the gems in their work' (Ragins, 2015, p.4). Table 2 offers a summary of what developmental review is and what it is not.

Table 2: What Developmental Review Is and Is Not

| What Developmental Review Is | What Developmental Review Is Not |
|---|---|
| Developmental reviewers take a more collegial role and help authors develop their work | Not a list of positives with a long list of criticisms and limitations sandwiched in between |
| Instead of focusing on what is wrong with the paper, the focus shifts to what can be done to make the paper publishable | Not ghost writing – where the reviewer tells the author what to write |
| Developmental reviews focus on the author – what do they need? What information are they missing? | Not a hierarchical apprenticeship – where the author is treated as a junior apprentice to the reviewer |
| Developmental reviews create knowledge and support inclusion and diverse voices | Not lowering standards |

Source: Derived from Ragins (2015) Developing Our Authors, *Academy of Management Review, 40*(1), 1-8.

The process that academic authors follow to get an article published is arduous and has inherent flaws (Barroga, 2020; Ragins, 2015). However, there is hope and support in the form of writing modules and the developmental peer review process. Academic writing modules are now a common module on offer for doctoral students, as writing is the primary way in which researchers develop and disseminate knowledge (Fulmer, 2012). Developing core competencies among reviewers, continuing to educate researchers on writing techniques, and professional engagement of the academic community, appear to be the best approaches to bridging gaps in the imperfect but necessary peer review system (Barroga, 2020).

**References**


Barroga, E. (2020). Innovative strategies for peer review. *Journal of Korean Medical Science, 35*(20), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.3346/JKMS.2020.35.E138

Fulmer, I. S. (2012). Editor's comments: The craft of writing theory articles - Variety and similarity in AMR. *Academy of Management Review, 37*, 327–331.

Hall, J.L., Hatcher, W., McDonald, B. D., Shields, P., & Sowa, J. E. (2019). The art of peer reviewing: Towards an effective developmental process. *Journal of Public Affairs Education, 25*(3), 296–313.

LaPlaca, P., Lindgreen, A., & Vanhamme, J. (2018). How to write really good articles for premier academic journals. *Industrial Marketing Management, 68*, 202–209. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2017.11.014

Ovadia, S. (2014). ResearchGate and Academia.edu: Academic Social Networks. *Behavioral and Social Sciences Librarian, 33*(3), 165–169.

Ragins, B.R. (2012). Editor's comments: Reflections on the craft of clear writing. *Academy of Management Review, 37*(4), 493–501.

Ragins, B.R. (2015). Developing our authors. *Academy of Management Review, 40*, 1–8.

Ragins, B.R. (2018). From Boxing to Dancing: Creating a Developmental Editorial Culture. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 27*(2), 158–163.

Stacey, A. (2020). Reimagining Academic Writing in Academia 4 . 0 to De-incentivise. *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods, 18*, 27–38.

Wagner, C. S., & Kim, D. J. (2014). The Price of Big Science: Saturation or Abundance in Scientific Publication? *Journal on Policy and Complex Systems, 1*(1), 109–127.

## 2.2 Academic writing for non-native English speakers (Rawayda Abdou)

Previous research suggests that mastering academic writing is a challenging task for native English academics (Ragins, 2012). But what about the challenges faced by English as a Second language (ESL) authors? Previous work shows that academic writing is particularly challenging for ESL academic writers. This problem is remarkably pronounced in the business domain, given that this domain distinct from many others academic disciplines attracts ESL students in English speaking countries internationally (Davis, 1996), and in Ireland specifically. According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO), social Sciences, business and law are the main fields of study for 29.2% of non-Irish nationals with notable participation rates from Arabic countries (Kuwait, Oman, and Saudi Arabia) (the Central Statistics Office, 2016). This provides a rationale for the present assignment to focus on the academic writing problems facing  ESL students in the business domain, with a particular focus on the case of the Arab students. I will conclude by previous research suggestions on how to overcome these problems.

Non-native English Speaker (NNES) authors feel disadvantaged compared to their native English speakers (NES) counterparts. Huang (2010) shows that this feeling is to some extent inculcated by peer-reviewing feedbacks criticizing the English language of their manuscripts, to such a point that their manuscripts could be rejected due to the poor language of the manuscript. A number of studies have investigated the challenges facing Arab students in academic writing in the business domain when writing in English (Alkhasawneh, 2010; Fadda, 2012). The findings of these studies revealed that grammar, spelling, lack of vocabulary, organization of ideas, and referencing are among the main problems that encounter Arab students. Alkhasawneh (2010) emphasizes the problem of lack of vocabulary, given that it is a problem that might hinder Arab students ability to express their ideas clearly and accurately. To the extent that clear writing could stand between important ideas and publication success (Saunders, 2005), lack of vocabulary could ultimately constitute a barrier to Arabs' academic achievement and international acknowledgement. It worth noting that language professional editorial services and peer corrections by NES play  significant roles in shaping ESL authors' manuscripts for publication (Li & Flowerdew, 2007)

Previous research investigating the reasons behind the problems facing Arab students chimes with studies conducted on non-Arab ESL students. Both strands of literature attributed the aforementioned problems to environmental reasons. On the one hand, culture isolation and lacking opportunities to speak English (Alkhasawneh, 2010; Huang, 2010), on the other hand, the wrong practices inherent in the educational institutions, such as the low proficiency of the English teachers themselves

(Alkhasawneh, 2010). Additionally, Fadda (2012) sheds light on substantial differences between the English and the Arabic languages themselves. While Arabic tends to use more metaphoric phrases and lengthier sentences, conciseness and eliminating wordiness are key considerations in effective academic writing in English.

With that in mind, an important question then arises: How third level institutions could contribute to developing academic writing in the business domain for ESL students? Intuitively, academic writing in the business domain could be unpacked into two folds, general English academic writing skills and skills related to academic writing in the business discipline. Zhu (2004) suggests that the basic/general academic writing skills could be effectively addressed by English language courses, while developing aspects related to writing in the business domain could be achieved by courses tailored specifically to developing academic writing in the business domain.

**References:**

Alkhasawneh, F. (2010). Writing for Academic Purposes: Problems Faced By Arab Postgraduate Students of the College of Business, Uum. EESP World, 9(2), 1–23.

Central Statistics Office, 2016. Census of Population 2016 – Profile 7 Migration and Diversity. https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp7md/p7md/p7se/.

Davis, T. M. (1996). Open Doors 1996-1997: Report on International Educational Exchange. Open Doors Report on International Educational. New York: Institute on International Education. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED417651.pdf

Fadda, H. Al. (2012). Difficulties in academic writing: From the perspective of King Saud University postgraduate students. English Language Teaching, 5(3), 123–130. http://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n3p123

Huang, J. C. (2010). Publishing and learning writing for publication in English: Perspectives of NNES PhD students in science. Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 9(1), 33–44. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2009.10.001

Li, Y., & Flowerdew, J. (2007). Shaping Chinese novice scientists' manuscripts for publication. Journal of Second Language Writing, 16(2), 100–117. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2007.05.001

Ragins, B. R. (2012). Editor's comments: Reflections on the craft of clear writing. Academy of Management Review, 37(4), 493–501. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2012.0165

Saunders, C. (2005). Editor's comments: from the trenches: thoughts on developmental reviewing. MIS Quarterly, iii-xii.

Zhu, W. (2004). Faculty views on the importance of writing, the nature of academic writing, and teaching and responding to writing in the disciplines. Journal of Second Language Writing, 13(1), 29–48. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2004.04.004

# Chapter 3. Positioning your writing

*By  Joanna Kossykowska, Elun Hack and Lindsay Harrison*

This chapter highlights the importance of theory and theoretical positioning to academic writing.  It identifies the overarching issues and also provides example by way of comparison of pedagogical approaches.

## 3.1 Conveying a central message to an audience in a management studies journal (Joanna Kossykowska)

For academics, writing is an integral part of the 'journey of writing'. Identities and reputations of scholars are primarily established by the proof of the quality of their publications (Cloutier, 2016). Writing and publishing high-quality academic articles is a demanding task. Authors who wish to increase their chances of publication in business and allied social science journals must ensure that their manuscripts are well-designed and evaluated, as well as being properly formatted following the target journal's requirements (Ahlstrom, 2017). This article will discuss how to improve the author's success rate when submitting a manuscript to leading journals.

A prospective author should first read the journal's aims and scope, and several articles from the targeting journal to help the author better understand the types of articles publishing in that journal (Ahlstrom, 2015). The author should carefully select the keywords, as they are used in a database search, and their good choice increase the probability that other authors will read the paper (Bach, 2015). A vital element of a successful paper is a research question, which should be transparent and answerable, and will catch the reader's attention (Grant & Pollock, 2011). The first impression matter and the introduction in management and business manuscripts often determine whether the readers will continue to read (Ahlstrom, 2017). Following an introduction, the paper should contain a summary that situates the writing in past literature and shows the need for the current study.

Further, a well-written methodology section of a research manuscript demonstrates that the author followed acceptable scientific standards in conducting research and to enable another researcher to replicate the study for comparison of the results (LaPlaca et al., 2018). The findings section in the manuscript should be separate from the discussion section and should not have any interpretations or conclusions. The conclusions section is the last impression left with the reader, and the author should present global and specific findings concerning the objectives of their research. It is the final place where authors can demonstrate that the manuscript deserves to be accepted and published.
Some authors, (Bartunek et al., 2006; Sansone & Thoman, 2005) believe that the article for the business journal should be interesting, as combined with asking important research questions and continuing to maintain methodological rigour, will increase the popularity and impact of management research, partly by enabling readers to become more interested in the content.

Another importance in writing for a business audience is to think deeper about the practical relevance of the article, to help decision maker implement a better decision. Many articles discuss what managers should do, but do not outline the mechanism that explains how to achieve or implement the findings. Therefore, to make the publication relevant for practice, the author should explain how to think about the problem differently, how to include other factors that have not been discussed before. Moreover, for example, given the cross-country nature of JIBS, the scholar needs to explain how to implement the recommendations in countries that have different regulatory and social and economic systems (Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2013).

Patriotta (2017), an experienced reviewer of JMS, suggested that "academic writing is an act of communication involving a diversity of actors (authors, editors, reviewers and other scholars), and its aim at conveying a central message (contribution) to an audience of (management) scholars and practitioners". Persuasive writing requires an understanding of how the plurality actors make sense of what people write.

**References**

Ahlstrom, D. (2015). From the editors: Publishing in the journal of world business. *Journal of World Business*, *2*(50), 251-255.

Ahlstrom, D. (2017). How to publish in academic journals: Writing a strong and organized introduction section. *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research*, *4*(2), 1-9.

Bach, M. P. (2015). How to write and publish a scientific paper: A closer look to eastern European economics, business and management journals. *Business Systems Research Journal*, *6*(1), 93-103.

Bartunek, J. M., & Rynes, S. L. (2010). The construction and contributions of “implications for practice”: What's in them and what might they offer? *Academy of management Learning & education*, *9*(1), 100-117.

Cloutier, C. (2016). How I write: An inquiry into the writing practices of academics. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, *25*(1), 69-84.

Cuervo-Cazurra, A., Caligiuri, P., Andersson, U., & Brannen, M. Y. (2013). From the editors: How to write articles that are relevant to practice.

Grant, A. M., & Pollock, T. G. (2011). Publishing in AMJ—Part 3: Setting the hook.

LaPlaca, P., Lindgreen, A., & Vanhamme, J. (2018). How to write really good articles for premier academic journals. *Industrial marketing management*, *68*, 202-209.

Patriotta, G. (2017). Crafting papers for publication: Novelty and convention in academic writing. *Journal of Management Studies*, *54*(5), 747-759.

Sansone, C., & Thoman, D. B. (2005). Interest as the missing motivator in self-regulation. *European Psychologist*, *10*(3), 175-186.

## 3.2 The importance of theoretical positioning (Elun Hack)

Writing, and publishing in academic journals is by no means a simple feat and requires the author to overcome several key challenges. Due to the importance of the article being grounded theoretically, as well as the application of suitable methodological and design approaches, authors often neglect the organising and framing of their work (Ahlstrom, 2017). The importance of framing the work is further evidenced by the numbers of papers rejected as a result of fundamental shortfalls of the writing and organisation, making the paper difficult to read (Ahlstrom 2010; Konrad, 2008). Grant and Pollard (2011) similarly advocate for the importance of framing and organisation of papers by suggesting that inadequacies in these areas often lead to submissions being rejected. After a review of the relevant literature, some key themes emerge when attempting to overcome the challenges presented to authors, these are discussed under the following headings: Introduction Focus, Research Question, and Clarity of the research question.

Grant and Pollock (2011) contend the significance of the introduction by suggesting that it will in most cases determine if / if not the reader will continue to read the article further. Ahlstrom (2017) suggests two key considerations for an impactful and enticing introduction, *Positioning or Situating* and *Motivation.* Early on within the introduction it is important to position or situate the article and its contents within the past literature, providing the reader a focus point as to how your research relates too, or is connected too similar fields of research. Moreover, the introduction is required to offer fundamental motivation for the research, explaining to the reader why it is required, and what contributions it makes. These two focus points of the introduction are important for the organisation of the paper and are underpinned by the research question.

In order to avoid a lack of focus and to facilitate the positioning / situating of the article, and detailing the motivation for the research, the researcher should seek to clearly state an answerable research question early on (Belostecinic, 2017). A clear answerable research question leaves little uncertainty as to what the subject matter of the following text will cover. Furthermore, it should be interesting, and address an area of interest that was not fully answered by the previous research (Kondrad, 2008).

Ahlstrom (2017) offers “overly broad” as one of the biggest challenges to deciding on and discussing an articles research question. Without specificity a research question and the subsequent research will end up being broadly “about” a topic, citing various other pieces of work, and therefore not failing to make a new and meaningful contribution to the area of research. A clear and instructive research question is essential for retaining the reader’s attention, due to the specific focus and contribution of the article being clearly presented. A clear research question leaves little uncertainty as to what the paper will discuss and utilise (Ahlstrom, 2015).

The preceding headings serve to assist and guide authors as to some of the challenges they will encounter when writing their articles. Some guidelines are offered to help overcome these challenges and allow the articles to capture the reader's attention through clear, instructive research questions and well-structured introductions.

## References


Ahlstrom, D. (2010). Publishing in the Asia Pacific Journal of Management. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 27(1): 1–8.

Ahlstrom, D. (2017). How to publish in academic journals: writing a strong and organised introduction section. *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research.* 4(2): 1-9.

Ahlstrom, D. (2015). From the Editors: Publishing in the Journal of World Business. *Journal of World Business*, 50(2), 251-255.

Belostecinic, F. (2017). Do countries import corruption? A micro analysis of Russia's trade partners in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research*, 4(1): 1-13.

Grant, A. M., and Pollock, T. G. (2011). Publishing in AMJ – Part 3: Setting the hook. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(5): 873-879.

Konrad, A. M. (2008). 'Knowledge creation and the journal editor's role', In Y. Baruch, A. M.Konrad, H. Aguinis, and W. H. Starbuck (Eds.). *Opening the black box of editorship*: 3-15. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

## 3.3 Comparing pedagogical approaches – a three paper comparative review (Lindsay Harrison)

Researchers claim that to enter the international business domain as an academic scholar it is necessary to publish (Guthrie & Parker, 2014), and preferably in a high-ranking journal (Tusselman, Sinkovics & Pishchulov, 2016). Yet, students commonly experience anxiety at the prospect of writing in scholarly journals (Lassig, Dillon & Diezman 2013). Students' concerns are understandable given that the editors of business journals have raised issues about the writing, framing and organisation of papers that are submitted (Ragins, 2012; Ahlstrom, 2017). To address these issues, various pedagogical approaches are emerging to target student' academic writing development (Coterall, 2012). However, mixed results are frequently reported. For example, while the peer review process can lead students to progress their writing skills, it can also cause novice authors to relinquish their efforts (Gravett et al. 2010; Hyland 2012). Due to a scarcity of explanatory research to investigate inconsistent learning amongst students, it is unclear why particular pedagogies in academic writing are effective for some students and not others. This gap in knowledge may constrain educators from developing and delivering education in academic writing that is effective for all students.

This paper analyses the student perspective to explore this gap in knowledge. It asks, 'what educational and individual student factors influence students' academic writing development in the business domain?'

This paper utilised a comparative review methodology and selected three papers for qualitative synthesis. Qualitative papers reporting on students' evaluations of their education in academic writing were chosen due to their ability to answer the research question. Due to time constraints and the exploratory nature of the brief, additional paper selection criteria were not specified. The findings of papers were thematically synthesised at a semantic level under the lens of social cognitive theory (SCT) which asserts that human behaviours are influenced by an amalgamation of interacting personal and environmental factors (Torre & Durning, 2015). This enabled the identification of individual and educational factors which influenced students' writing progression in the business domain.

Three papers were identified for comparative review. These papers and their core elements are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 -** *Studies included*

| | **Educational Pedagogy evaluated** | **Methods** | **Participants** | **Results format** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gravett et al. (2020) | Peer-review feedback process | Concept map-mediated interviewing | Researchers, n = 6 | Researcher reflections and concept maps |
| Woodhouse & Wood (2020) | Peer-review and assessment process | Semi-structured interviews | Doctoral students, n = 7 | A summary matrix of key-themes |
| O'Mahony | Specialist academic writing support | Group interviews | Doctoral business students, n = 4 | Summary of common themes |

Thematic synthesis of the papers' findings under the lens of SCT revealed four core themes. These were constraining individual factors; enabling individual factors, constraining educational factors and enabling educational factors. These themes and their contents are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 -** *Thematic synthesis*

| **Constraining Individual factors** | **Enabling Individual factors** | **Constraining educational factors** | **Enabling educational factors** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Individual traits<br>• *Lack of confidence*<br>• *Emotionally driven*<br>• *Emotionally guarded*<br>• *Foreign language speaker* | Individual traits<br>• *Determined and hard-working*<br>• *Confident*<br>• *Pro-active*<br>• *Resourceful and adaptable*<br>• *Self-regulating*<br>• *Emotionally open*<br>• *Resilient*<br>• *Self-aware* | Unequal power relations | Supervisor/peer support<br>• *Co-authoring*<br>• *Experience sharing* |
| Individual experiences<br>• *Lack of experience* | Individual experiences | Nature of feedback<br>• *Unconstructive* | Nature of feedback<br>• *Transparent* |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | • *Experience with academic process* | • *Unclear*<br>• *Slow* | • *Kind*<br>• *Genuine*<br>• *Constructive* |
| | | | Educator/reviewer traits<br>• *Experience in business domain*<br>• *Inexperience with domain*<br>• *Approachable, friendly and caring*<br>• *Available*<br>• *Holds a PhD* |

Despite an increasing range of academic writing interventions to prepare students to write in scholarly journals (Cotterall, 2020), research has struggled to account for the success or failure of individual pedagogies. By examining students' perceptions of their education in academic writing, this paper identified that both individual and educational factors influence students' perceived writing development. As a result, I contend that due to individual student differences, a singular pedagogy is unlikely to lead to academic writing success for all. Rather, educational initiatives in academic writing should respond to individual student needs and experiences. The findings of this paper have implications for educators and researchers alike, and further research is required to determine how they can tailor academic writing supports for individual students to enable their scholarly success.

**References**

Ahlstrom, D. (2017). How to publish in academic journals: Writing a strong and organized introduction section. *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research*, *4*(2), 1-9.

Cotterall, S. (2011). Doctoral students writing: where's the pedagogy?. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *16*(4), 413-425.

Gravett, K., Kinchin, I. M., Winstone, N. E., Balloo, K., Heron, M., Hosein, A., ... & Medland, E. (2020). The development of academics' feedback literacy: experiences of learning from critical feedback via scholarly peer review. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, *45*(5), 651-665.

Guthrie, J. and D. Parker, L. (2014), "The global accounting academic: what counts!", *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal, 27* (1), 2-14. https://doi.org/10.1108/AAAJ-10-2013-1504.

Hyland, K. 2012. "Welcome to the Machine: Thoughts on Writing for Scholarly Publication." *Journal of Second Language Teaching and Research 01*(01): 58–68. doi:10.5420/jsltr.01.01.3319.

Lassig, C., L. Dillon, and C. Diezman. 2013. “Student or Scholar? Transforming Identities Through a Research Writing Group.” *Studies in Continuing Education 35* (3), 299–314. doi:10.080/0158037X.2012.746226.

O’Mahony, B., Verezub, E., Dalrymple, J., & Bertone, S. (2013). An evaluation of research students’ writing support intervention. *Journal of International Education in Business*, *6*(1), 22-34.

Ragins, B. R. (Ed.). (2012). Editor's comments: Reflections on the craft of clear writing. *Academy of Management Review,* 37 (4), 490-501.

Torre, D., & Durning, S. J. (2015). Social cognitive theory: thinking and learning in social settings. In J. Cleland & S.J. Durning (Eds.), *Researching medical education* (pp. 105 - 116). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Tüselmann, H., Sinkovics, R. R., & Pishchulov, G. (2016). Revisiting the standing of international business journals in the competitive landscape. *Journal of World Business*, *51*(4), 487-498.

Woodhouse, J., & Wood, P. (2020). Creating dialogic spaces: developing doctoral students’ critical writing skills through peer assessment and review. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1-13. doi: 10.1080/03075079.2020.1779686.

# Chapter 4. A lifetime journey towards profound academic impact

*By Saba Shahzadi and Talal Sorour*

This chapter highlights how  writing is a continuous journey towards achieving profound academic impact.  Focusing on what high impact within the finance domain looks like, the chapter also explicates how high impact academic writing has some idiosyncrasies when spanning across the different fields of business.

## 4.1 Academic writing as a journey of continuous development (Saba Shahzadi)

Writing for academic journals does not possess an independent set of skills or a strategy adopted once and for all. Driven by a motive, it is sorted and accomplished through continuous development. Russell (2007) suggests that formal schooling for imparting writing skills to people can bring about a lifetime of contribution in professional as well as intellectual aspects of modern culture. In the business realm of the academic journals, the end product of a piece of writing should be able to have a profound academic impact. Academic impact of a business article constitutes a contribution which is verifiable and recognizable to society as well as economy.

As per Broby (2018), the fast paced innovations happening in the business world and financial markets sometimes outpace apparently the novel ideas of research when it comes to writing in business academia. The thoroughness and diligence exhibited by peer review in academia is overrun by considering the enormity of the practical finance. As for academic impact, it should not be restricted to the prediction of an outcome but it also encompasses a much clearer impact on the policy making. Froot et al. (1993) assert that the quantifiable societal impact covered by finance research includes better risk management in the business world. According to Jensen and Meckling (1976), finance research helps to alleviate the agency problems arising between a manager and the shareholders of his business.

Writing business articles entails the traditional approach of following the set of rules including format and pattern provided by academic journals (Jalalian & Aslam, 2012). Boaz and Ashby (2003) suggest that the type and quality of a research article stem from the research design, objectives, framework, methodology, and consistency of results. These along-with data analysis techniques like correlation and regression work as a hallmark for arriving at a quantifiable result in financial research.

Where quality research warrants publishing in an impact factor/top research journal, it is hard to say what defines quality in research (Smith et al., 2004). A study encompassing a very well explored literature section and a meticulous peer review may have all the standards of a quality research and yet, it may carry very little relevance.  A quality business study however mostly requires secondary data as well as a blend of methodologies and latest statistical analyses robust enough to strengthen the results. The secondary data include financial and economic numbers which are available to download from online sources or organization/company portals. Spectral GMM estimation and Stochastic frontier approach are among famous techniques of data analysis in secondary data collection (Chacko & Viceira, 2003).

Top journal editors from various domains were asked to provide guidelines for getting published in an academic journal few of which are laid down below:

1. Proceed with the logical order of events
2. Your work should be an embodiment of the main argument
3. Get your work checked by a native English speaker
4. Do not restrict your work to your region. Think about the international context
5. Match the scope of your work with that of the target journal
6. Follow the submission procedures of a journal
7. Take your time before drafting your response to a reviewer
8. As challenging as getting your work published is, the finished article will be what your viewers see.

**References**


Boaz, A., & Ashby, D. (2003). Fit for purpose?:assessing research quality for evidence based policy and practice (pp. 1-55). London: ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice.

Broby, D. (2018). The Impact of Academic Research in Finance (Impact Ratio)'. Global Tensions in Financial Markets (Research in Finance, Volume 34). Emerald Publishing Limited, 217-228.

Chacko, G., & Viceira, L. M. (2003). Spectral GMM estimation of continuous-time processes. Journal of Econometrics, 116(1-2), 259-292.

Dixon-Woods, M., Shaw, R. L., Agarwal, S., & Smith, J. A. (2004). The problem of appraising qualitative research. BMJ Quality & Safety, 13(3), 223-225.

Froot, K. A., Scharfstein, D. S., & Stein, J. C. (1993). Risk management: Coordinating corporate investment and financing policies. The Journal of Finance, 48(5), 1629-1658.

Jalalian, M., & Danial, A. H. (2012). Writing for academic journals: A general approach. Electronic physician, 4(2), 474-476.

Jensen, M. C., & Meckling, W. H. (1976). Theory of the firm: Managerial behavior, agency costs and ownership structure. Journal of financial economics, 3(4), 305-360.

Russell, D. R. (2007). Rethinking the articulation between business and technical communication and writing in the disciplines: Useful avenues for teaching and research. Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 21(3), 248-277.

The Guardian 2020, How to get published in an academic journal: top tips from editors, International Edition, accessed 17 November 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jan/03/how-to-get-published-in-an-academic-journal-top-tips-from-editors>.

## 4.2 High impact for academic writing in Finance (Talal Sorour)

Writing in academic journals in the business domain might be a challenging job for some researchers and academics, as there are couple of issue that the researchers might face, such as not finding interesting question to work with. Although, the most common challenge the faces researcher is publishing their journals as many journals end up being rejected. Hence, in this paper I will discuss why Writing in academic journals in the business domain might be challenging? In addition, I will pin point the issues through the finance field.

The aiming to Writing in academic journals may have couple of issues as Bradbury, M. 2012 tried to answer what are the issues in writing and publishing in the finance field as he explores through a content analysis and opinion survey. As he analyzed 66 reviews of 33 manuscript submitted to the top accounting and finance journals and concluded that many papers were rashly submitted to the wrong journals and other were lack of proper contribution and lack of proper follow ideas. Hence, publishing in finance journals was challenging to some researchers. Moreover, researcher publishing in financial journals may face a couple of issues regarding difficulties of publishing in quality journals. Hence, Macdonald and Kam (2007) have argued in their article that the priority aims and the focus of publishing have changed from what to publish concerning academics knowledge to where to publish concerning journals ranking. As it is obvious, that researchers prefer high quality journals. Hence, Baden 2000 pointed a complex issue as how to define quality journal. As it is well know that top university are concerned in publishing in top journals as the classifications of top universities usually relay on where they publish their work. Moreover, Jhonson 1994 argues that it is a fact that high quality papers are published in a high quality journals. In fact, they are considered high quality papers because they were published in a high quality journals. Moreover, in the same arguments Armstrong and Sperry 1994 found a strong link between the ranking of business schools and their publication in high journals concerning the quality of their financial research in term of citations. Although, publishing in a high quality journals has many benefits as Flagg et al. (2011) found out that PhD candidates who are not in the top universities ranking can improve their academic futures research productivity by publishing in a high journals.

There is no concept on how to measure quality journal other than the number of citation and the quality of the insights. Although, Oltheten E., Theoharakis V., Travlos N.G. 2005 Analyzed 862 surveys answered by finance academic in the world and found out that there is no major differences regarding insights concerning the top four-finance journal. Hence, using probit model specification these authors find that journal quality insights for journals other than the top four journals significant differences across the geographical regions, journal affiliation, level of seniority, research interest. His findings illustrates that it is not an easy task to select research output outside of the top journals. On the other hand, in the finance field there are several concentration such as corporate governance, international capital markets financial economics etc. hence, in terms of publishing in a quality journals does the concentration matter? Are there specific areas or topics in the financial field preferred more than others? Borokhovich et al. (1998) answered those questions as he found in his article that the high quality finance journals prefer certain topics or areas, and the young researcher's awareness of that fact influenced their future concentration carriers in the academic emptions. In the same context, the authors found a fact that papers based on corporate finance concentration are more likely to be published in a high quality journals than papers that concentrate on financial institutions. Furthermore, Borokhovich et al. (2000) had the same conclusion when they used social science citation index SSCI to rank the quality of papers. Paper that had citing's of other papers outside the financial field displayed a higher effective factor than those which did not.

There are different types of academics researchers with different categories as Faria 2003 hypothesized a process to categorize economists into two groups, a group that seeks quality or influence which is measure by the number of citation and the other group seek quantity or profusion, which is measured by the number of publication. Faria 2005 article focused on the same issue was discussed, but this time the economists are deciding whether to publish in international or national journals. Faria 2003 and Faira 2005 recommended in the theoretical model in both papers that the best strategy is to find a balance between quality and quantity and national and international journals.

Writing in academic journals in the business domain might be a challenging job for some researchers and academics depending on the aim of the quality of the journal, although, finding the right journal for the right concentration field is one of the solutions. Hence, as the higher the journal quality the more chances it get rejected researchers are encouraged to diversify between journals and find a balance between high quality journals and standard journals and national journals and international journals.

**References**

Armstrong, J., & Sperry, T. (1994). The Ombudsman: Business School Prestige—Research versus Teaching. Interfaces, 24(2), 13-43. doi: 10.1287/inte.24.2.13

Borokhovich K., Bricker R., Brunarski K., Simkins B. Finance research productivity and influence by topic area. J. Financ. Educ. 1998:8–20.

Borokhovich K., Bricker R., Simkins B. Analysis of finance journals impact factors. J. Finance. 2000

Bradbury, M. (2012, March 12). Why you don't get published: An editor's view. Retrieved November 18, 2020, from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-629X.2012.00473.x
Faria J.R. What type of economist are you: r-strategist or K-strategist? J. Econ. Stud. 2003
Faria J.R. Is there a trade-off between domestic and international publications? J. Soc. Econ. 2005
Macdonald S., Kam J. Ring a ring o'roses: quality journals and gamesmanship in management studies. J. Manag. Stud. 2007;44(4):640–655.
Johnson J.L., Podsakoff P.M. Journal influence in the field of management: an analysis using Salancik's index in a dependency network. Acad. Manag. J. 1994;37(5):1392–1407.
Oltheten E., Theoharakis V., Travlos N.G. Faculty perceptions and readership patterns of finance journals: a global view. J. Financ. Quant. Anal. 2005;40(1):223–239.

# Chapter 5. Getting published in business journals

*By Intesar Madi, Kevin Corbett, Clodagh O'Reilly and Christina Kenny*

This chapter focuses specifically on getting published in academic journals and the important elements that new researchers must familiarise themselves with in this process such as reading the Style Guide and aiming to get manuscripts past the desk rejection stage.

## 5.1 Following the Style Guide (Intesar Madi)

Writing for academic journals is a difficult intellectual challenge for new scholars because publishing a research paper in good journals requires good writing skills. According to Somashekhar (2020), publishing in a good scholarly journal requires a combination of a strong understanding of the field and good writing skills. In addition to this, Ahlstrom (2017) mentioned that authors who want to publish in the business and allied social sciences journals are facing some challenges such as the availability of the right data and analysing them correctly to present the paper clearly and showing its contributions in its area. However, a well-written paper for academic journals requires you to understand that the writing approach varies widely within the disciplines; it differs in terms of the content, research methods, and citation styles as flagged by Friedrich (Friedrich, 2008). The academic writing style is different in business from other disciplines; thus, the authors need to follow the style and the rules of writing for their aimed journal. Although the majority of academic journals provide a style guide for authors on their publishing style ''whatever the case, reading a style guide is worth it'' (Alaric Hall, 2007). Jalalian and Aslam (2012), suggest that it is very important in preparing to publish an academic is to follow the format and the instructions that are provided by the target journal paper (Jalalian and Aslam, 2012). Following the outlines that provide by the target journal when writing the paper will inculcate the needed skills to help writing the paper proficiency to avoid any rejections. Addition to this, there are another variable needs to be considered when you writing for a scholarly journal in the Business domain is the rank and impact factor of your aimed journal. Paltridge (2020), suggested that, with your academic journal you need to check several things, check if it is peer reviewed, if it has a reputable editorial board, if it is an open access, and if it has an impact factor. All these variables has an impact on the writing your academic paper.

**Reference List:**


Ahlstrom, D. (2017). How to publish in academic Journals: Writing a strong and organized introduction section. *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research*, *4*(2). https://doi.org/10.15549/jeecar.v4i2.180

Caldwell, C., & Al-Ajmi, N. J. H. (2018). Improving Business Student Writing – A Ten-Step Model. *Business and Management Research*, *7*(1), 35. https://doi.org/10.5430/bmr.v7n1p35

Friedrich, P. (2008). (Ed.) Teaching Academic Writing: *Continuum International Publishing*. https://doi:10.1016/j.system.2009.02.006

Hall, A. (2007). Writing for Scholarly Journals Publishing in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Cambridge.

Jalalian, M., Aslam, H. D., In-chief, E., & Journal, E. P. (2012). Writing for academic journals: A general approach. Electronic physician. *Electronic Physician*, *4*(2), 474–476. https://doi.org/10.14661/2014.474-476

JournalPrep. (2011). How to Write and Publish an Academic Research Paper, 8.

Molen, H. V. A. N. D. E. R., & Osseweijer, E. (n.d.). Academic Writing Skills for Economics and Business.

Murphy, A. (2010). Academic Writing and Publishing Matters. *Survival*.

Paltridge, B. (2020). Writing for Academic Journals in the Digital Era. RELC Journal, 51(1), 147–157. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688219890359

Somashekhar, S. P. (2020). Art of Scientific Writing. *Indian Journal of Gynecologic Oncology*, *18*(2), 1–3. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40944-020-00382-y

## 5.2 The academic peer review process (Kevin Paul Corbett)

Ahlstrom (2017) sets the scene of this discussion by declaring that authors who want to improve their chances of publishing in management and allied business and social science journals need to ensure their manuscripts are consistent with the journal's aims and scope and what the field requires in terms of addressing unanswered research questions or improvements to current theory and evidence. He adds that it is well-understood if a manuscript lacks theoretical grounding or makes significant methodological or research design mistakes, it will likely be rejected. In this review the researcher reports on how to improve the quality of submissions, the move away from critical reviewers to a focus on developmental feedback, the important role of peer reviewing and writing with resonance.
Khatri, Varma, & Budhwar (2017) list a number of pitfalls when submitting papers: poor writing and presentation, lack of integration, lack of significance, poor research design, and scanty description of methods, untidy presentation of results, and inadequate and sloppy discussion and implication sections. They advise the following structure for each section: topic choice, abstract, introduction, theory and grounding of hypotheses, research design, methods and results, discussion and implications, and references. It takes time to build their three core skills: theory building, research writing, and research designing. Ahlstrom (2017) clarifies that many scholars have little training in this area, particularly in writing the all-important research question and introduction of the paper.

Ragins (2015) brings a new subject to the debate of how to encourage new aspiring academic writers – there is a move away from a thick-skinned warrior mentality on the part of reviewers and editors towards a more developmental and constructive approach. Discussants at Academy of Management (AOM) meetings are now asked to facilitate discussions in which the presenters and audience work together to create new agendas for research. Ragins (2015) continues that he would like to broaden the definition of development to include the author. Developing our authors involves building their capacity to contribute to the field. Ragins (2018) advocates a clear meaning of cascading development, with reviewers also learning from other reviewers and editors. The peer reviewing process — both writing reviews for academic journals and responding to reviews of one's own work — is, according to Bagchi, Block, Hamilton & Ozanne (2016), fundamental to building scientific knowledge. Worrell (2016) also advocates for peer reviewing, this time in a conference setting, and continues that if ones paper then generates good debate from a well-informed audience, you have a very good chance of getting it published in a highly rated journal. He strongly recommends that one should be thinking tactically about how you can turn parts of your thesis into conference papers and, ultimately, into peer reviewed journal articles, prior to graduation. Finally, Meier & Wegener (2017) explore what organisation and management scholars can do to write with resonance. They cite Wikan (2012) who defines resonance as a process that involves both writer/narrator and reader/listener. In research, this link may merge experiences and activities that the researcher has in the *creation* of knowledge with the *representation* of knowledge and thus facilitate a better and more nuanced understanding in the reader/listener.

This summary paper reflects the continuing development of new ideas in postgraduate research.

**References:**


Ahlstrom, D.2017. How to publish in academic journals: writing a strong and organised introduction section,, *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research*, Vol.4 No.2, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.15549/jeecar.v4i2.180

Bagchi, R., Block, L., Hamilton, R.W.& Ozanne, J.L.2016.A Field Guide for the Review Process: Writing and Responding to Peer Reviews, *Journal of Consumer Research, Inc*, Vol. 43, pp.860-872

Khatri, N., Varma P., & Budhwar, P. 2017. Commonly observed shortcomings in manuscripts submitted to management journals, *Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) Management Review* Vol. 29, pp.203–209

Meier, N. & Wegener, C. 2017. Writing with resonance, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, Vol. 26(2) 193 –201, DOI: 10.1177/1056492616673911

Ragins, B.R. 2018. From boxing to dancing: creating a developmental editorial culture, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, Vol. 27(2) 158 –163 DOI:10.1177/1056492617726273

Ragins, B.R.,2015. Editor's comments: developing our authors, *Academy of Management Review* 2015, Vol. 40, No. 1, 1–8. http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/amr.2014.0477

Wikan, U. (2012). *Resonance. Beyond the words*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Worrall, L. 2016. From conference paper to journal article: the long and winding road, *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods,* Volume 14 Issue 1 pp3-7, available online at www.ejbrm.com

## 5.3 Aiming to get past desk rejection in an international business journal (Clodagh O'Reilly)

An initial 'desk-reject rate' of up to 50% on some journals, means your article may not even make it to the review stage. If publishing success is to be achieved, it is imperative that guidelines are strictly followed. (Anderson and Gerbing 1988).

Top business journal - 'Journal of World Business' has published a comprehensive 'Author Information Pack' (https://www.elsevier.com/journals/journal-of-world-business/1090-9516/guide-for-authors) which outlines their submission and acceptance process. Vital guidance for a prospective author can be gained by reviewing past journals to determine if their own work is suitable for a particular journal (Colquitt and George, 2011).

The challenge for many authors can be creating original and innovative work within the structure of a journals' writing guidelines. Whilst novel and innovative research is welcomed and encouraged by many journals, it must:

- 
- Be embedded within an existing context. Articles generally follow a formula
- Pose a question followed by a process of investigation
- Conclude with a proposed solution

This proposed solution is the articles contribution. (Patriotta, 2017). How well these segments of the article are developed will dictate the comprehensiveness of the article.

It is important that the author reflects on the reader and their journey. What is their understanding of the topic and how might they interpret the article? The author must take into consideration how their research will be perceived by the reader (Johanson, 2007). Relaying research in an easily digestible narrative is one of the most challenging tasks of an author.  This is of particular importance when writing in a business journal where the reader may not be familiar with prior research or more technical terminology. If the topic is newer and cutting edge, the author will need to spend more time familiarising the reader with the concept, clarifying terminology and providing context. A more familiar and well debated topic will not require the same detailed context. and background as this article is simply 'joining the conversation' (Huff, 1998). An author must remember they have full visibility of the story from the opening line. They know where the reader will end up. The reader does not have access to the background knowledge or same insights. They are interpreting the text in real time (Patriotta, 2017). Bringing the reader on a cohesive, insightful and engaging journey from what is known, - to what is not yet known, -will result in a successful outcome.

This can be summarized as the need for 'Clear writing' – a technique first outlined in Robert Gunning's classic 1952 text – The technique of clear writing. Ensuring the author has absolute clarity on their ideas, their research and on what they want the reader to learn will result in an easy to read journal. (Ragins, 2012). Writing for the business, scientific or academic domain all require the same basic ground rules, keep your language simple, avoid jargon and keep to the concept of clear writing. This will allow the reader of even the most complex concepts to easily understand the author's research. It is becoming increasingly difficult to successfully publish in top business academic journals (Ahlstrom, 2015).

**References:**


Ahlstrom, D. (2015). From the Editors: Publishing in the Journal of World Business. *Journal of World Business*, 50(2), 251-255.

Anderson, J., and Gerbing, D. (1988). Structural Equation Modeling in Practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin* 103(3): 411-23.

Colquitt, J.A. & George, G. (2011). Publishing in AMJ- Part 1: topic choice. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(3): 432-435

Huff, A.S. (1988). Writing for scholarly publications. London: Sage

Johanson, L.A. (2007) Sitting in your reader's chair'. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 16, 290-4.

Ragins, B.R. (2012) *The Academy of Management Review* Vol. 37, No. 4 (October 2012), pp. 493-501 (9 pages)

## 5.4 Why manuscripts get rejected (Christina Kenny)

Competition for publication in not only the academic business domain has increased in recent years. There is so much competition that some journals acceptance rate over a 5-year period is less than 6% (Crane et al, 2017). Many PhD level researchers attempt to get published to further and advance their future academic careers but increasing competition has made this more of a challenge than ever before. It has been said that academics are expected to write and produce quality academic literature, but it is not a skill explicitly taught in graduate school (Rowena, 2009) and often lack the skills to properly organise and produce a quality paper (Ahlstrom, 2017). As such PhD students are often intimidated by the entire process of getting published.

The overall aim of this paper is to examine why literature is often rejected from academic journals and what the key steps and skills needed to get published are.

Crane et al (2017) discuss the complex and often overlooked reasons manuscripts are rejected. One of the main reasons for rejection is the fact that the manuscript it not a fit for the journal it has applied to. This could be due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the journal does not publish in the particular subject area the manuscript has researched. Some manuscripts involve inter-disciplinary work and as such the manuscript might not be the right fit (Van Teijlingen et al, 2002). Or, more simply, the manuscript has not followed the basic submission guidelines laid out by the journal for new submissions (Crane et al, 2017). Similarly, many papers lack a theoretical contribution in their submission or their geographic context (Crane et al, 2016). Another key reason for rejection was manuscripts that were clear submitted before they were ready and hence were underdeveloped both theoretically and practically.

Numerous papers have been written on how to get published in academic journals (Crane et al, 2016; Crane et al, 2017; Rowena, 2009; Van Teijlingen et al, 2002; Ahlstrom, 2017). The main feedback published include becoming more actively involved with your research in order to better understand it in greater depth. This includes networking, joining different societies and groups and staying active in conversation groups online. Further to this, many papers advise interacting with your reviewers to better learn from your mistakes and improve upon them and also, getting to know reviewers and editors within your research domain (Crane et al, 2017). Newell (2000) argues that papers that do go on to get published aren't from writers with exceptional ability but rather writers that are more familiar with the journal they are publishing in and also more familiar with the current market their research falls into. This knowledge of their audience and writing style shows and their pieces are often a better fit for the paper.

Academic writing ability and all of the skills necessary to get a paper published are not always explicitly taught in universities. There is a wide array of necessary aptitudes and nuances that go into published work and the ability to write well is just one of them.

**References**


Ahlstrom, D. (2017). How to publish in academic journals: writing a strong and organised introduction section. Journal of eastern European and central Asian research. 4(2).

Crane, A., Henriques, I., Husted, B. W., & Matten, D. (2017). Twelve Tips for Getting Published in Business & Society. *Business & Society*, *56*(1), 3–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650316682560

Crane, A., Henriques, I., Husted, B. W., & Matten, D. (2016). What Constitutes a Theoretical Contribution in the Business and Society Field? *Business & Society*, *55*(6), 783–791. https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650316651343

Rowena. (2009) *Writing for academic journals, 2nd edition.* Open UP study skills . McGraw-Hill/Open University Press, Maidenhead, Berkshire. ISBN 9780335234585

Van Teijlingen, E., & Hundley, V. (2002). *Getting your paper to the right journal: a case study of an academic paper. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 37(6), 506–511.*doi:10.1046/j.1365-2648.2002.02135.x

"Clear writing is based on clear thinking" (Gunning, 1968: 11)

**References (including Preface)**

Gunning, R. 1968. The technique of clear writing (rev. ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
Zinsser, W. 2006. On writing well: The classic guide to writing nonfiction (7th ed.). New York: HarperCollins.