

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.

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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.

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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:

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- 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).

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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.

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

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