Publishing in academic journals

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My experience of publishing

- First – no claims for any particular expertise
- I have had a number of rejections
- Editorial experience - Reviewer in three journals (*R&D Management; Journal of Business Research; International Journal for Innovation and Regional Development*)
- Experience of the publishing process and some publications

Contents

- ✓The Role of Academic Publishing
- ✓Selecting an Academic work
- ✓Selecting an Academic Journal
- ✓Submitting a scientific contribution
- ✓Conclusions and discussion

✓The Role of Academic Publishing

Why publish?

‘Personal’ and ‘Institutional’ reasons

‘Personal’ reasons to publish

‘Personal’ reasons

- Obviously improves job and promotion prospects
- Opportunity to put your efforts into public domain
- Opportunity to develop collaborative projects
- Better chances of funding
- Invitations to do interesting things

This is simply because people get to know who you are, and what you do, by reading your work:

publications define your academic identity

‘Institutional’ reasons to publish

- Your institution’s reputation is enhanced
  - Attracts better students
  - Improves standing in academic community
  - Impact outside academia
- Enhances teaching
- Funding can be attracted

Why some people don't publish

- It isn't easy and takes a lot of effort and time
- Sometimes, even with effort and time, it doesn't work
- Many people are frightened of "failure" and don't understand that a rejection is only part of the process
  - I will have much more to say about this point!

- ✓Selecting an Academic work

What makes for a good paper

Clear conceptual/selling uniqueness

- Is it a new and original contribution in that it defines and resolves a clear gap in academic published research?

- Some common gaps:
  - Pure theory gap and theory development
  - New empirical methodology gap
  - Research setting gap
  - Review articles

What makes for a good paper

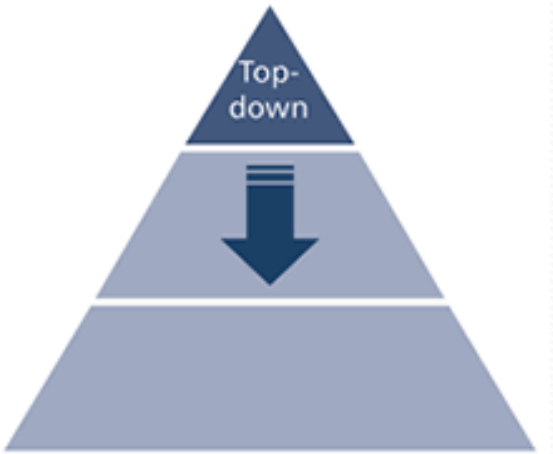
Clear conceptual/selling uniqueness

- It is a necessary skill of a good academic to be able to define new gaps.
- Where can I get ideas about possible gaps:
  - http://www.ssrn.com/en/
  - Good conference proceedings (e.g. EGOS, Academy of Management, or, the best conference in your field)
  - Working paper series of reputable research establishments in your field
  - Talk to your colleagues about research

The structure of a good paper

A top-down approach

- A scientific paper tells a story
- Develop a strong outline with headings and subheadings
- Divide the work to co-authors (if you have co-authors)
- Start filling the outline !



The structure of a good paper

Title

- Can determine whether the paper is read or not
- Must be interesting and not very long
- Avoid abbreviations

Abstract

- State the gap and how it fills it in a unique way
- Summarises most important results
- State main conclusions

Keywords

The structure of a good paper

Introduction

- Provide a brief background
- Formulate the main question/dilemma
- Emphasize the uniqueness of your approach
- Briefly summarise the findings

Theory and hypothesis development:

- Stick to existing literature in quality journals
- Use logic!!!

Methodology

- Push for the state-of-the-art
- Define your research setting

The structure of a good paper

Results

- Do not speculate over the results. Be factual.
- Figures must be accurate
- The findings must refer to the figures

Conclusions

- Reinforce the uniqueness of your paper
- Discuss implications for theory and practice
- Identify limitations of your paper
- Propose avenues for further research

Contents

- ✓Selecting an Academic Journal

Targeting a Journal

Is the subject of the article within the scope of the Journal?

- Search the Journals where key authors in your field and colleagues publish in
- Search for similar papers in the Journal you are interested in (which you can quote in your paper)
- Search for Special Issues

Targeting a Journal

Is it a quality journal ?

- Community of reviewers (Editorial Board)
- Rigor (past authors)
- Find past accepted papers and try to see the requirements
- Impact factor

Targeting a Journal

Impact factor

- It is a measure of the frequency with which the "average article" in a journal has been cited in a given period of time.
- For example, the impact factor 2014 for a journal would be calculated as follows:

A = the number of times articles published in 2012-2013 were cited in indexed journals during 2014

B = the number of articles, reviews, proceedings or notes published in 2012-2013

Impact factor 2014 = A/B

Types of Journals: Classical

- The short answer is read the “ABS list”

  http://www.associationofbusinessschools.org/content/abs-academic-journal-quality-guide

- The list will be reviewed by the end of 2014

Types of Journals: Open Access

- What is Open Access Journals?
  - Open Access (OA) is free, online access to peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers and research reports.
  - OA material should also be freely available for any users to download, copy, print or link to the full text without restriction, as long as the authors are properly acknowledged and cited.
  - http://doaj.org/

Benefits of OA journals

- Many funding bodies now also require that research outputs produced as a result of their funding are made available open access. These include all the UK Research Councils, EU, NIH, and the Wellcome Trust.

- Increase author's profile and citations and publicise the research of the University.

- After April 2016 articles will only be eligible for submission to the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework if authors have deposited their final peer-reviewed manuscripts in an institutional or subject repository within three months of acceptance of publication *(something called Green OA).*

3 variants of OA journals

GREEN OA (self-archiving) – authors publish in any journal and then self-archive a version of their article in their institutional repository such as White Rose Research Online (WRRO) or a central repository such as Europe PubMedCentral, ArXiv etc. The publisher's revenue still comes from journal subscriptions, but everyone has free access to the full-text of the repository version, either immediately on publication or after an embargo period imposed by the publisher.

3 variants of OA journals

GOLD OA publishing - authors publish in an OA journal that provides immediate free access to all of its articles from the journal website. This usually requires the payment of an Article Processing Charge (APC) to the publisher.

(NB: This is not the same as vanity publishing – articles are only accepted for publication in scholarly OA journals after the usual peer review and editing processes have taken place).

3 variants of OA journals

HYBRID journals provide Gold OA only for individual articles where the author has paid an Article Processing Charge. Most of the big publishers now offer the option to pay an APC for the majority of their traditional journal titles, and they continue to generate revenue from subscriptions for the rest of the content in their journals.

Time

- Time considerations – choose the most efficient journal
  - A not so uncommon example: Submission 2011, Revision 2013, second revision 2014...

- Bottom-line:

PICKING THE RIGHT JOURNAL INCREASES THE CHANCES OF BEING PUBLISHED

Contents

- ✓ Submitting a scientific contribution

First thoughts

We look at a paper in a journal and think:

- *Wow that's good, it's a polished, thoughtful and well presented piece of work* or
- *Gosh how did that get in there?* It's poorly written and seems trivial and doesn't seem to say very much that's significant!

So thinking about the process may help to understand why some good stuff doesn't get published and some poor stuff does

The publishing process

1. First write an INTERESTING paper with a unique selling point (!!)
2. Send it to a journal editor
3. S/he looks at it and decides if it's worth reviewing (sometimes Desk Reject)
4. One, two or three reviewers read and comment and propose
   - *Reject*
   - *Revise and resubmit*
   - *Accept*

The publishing process

4. The editor collects and “collates” the reviews

5. Decides on next stage and advises authors

6. You, as author, then decide what to do next:

- Stage 2

Editor's decision – Reject paper

Most journals have a high rejection rate:

- e.g.Organizational Studies received over 390 submissions in a recent year and rejected 94%
- It is common for good journals to have a 90% reject rate, with about 55% desk rejected
- However, less prestigious journals can accept some 45%

Rejection is part of the process

Remember that editors have a difficult job. Conflicting requirements:

- All want high quality publications but
- All have to fill the journal
- They may need to try to keep both authors and reviewers sweet!
- They may have a lot, or few, publications in the pipeline

So its the paper, and in this specific context, that has been rejected- not you, your methods or even your topic

Rejection in context

On the basis of a 90+ % rejection rate

Crudely put, you need to submit 10 paper to get one accepted!

And have 9 rejected!!!

So- reject is the norm, acceptance is the exception

Rejection is part of the process

- All authors, no matter how famous, have rejections!
- Even if you get a straight reject, the editor should tell you why
  - Not suited for journal – (style or topic area)
  - TARGET TARGET TARGET
  - Insufficiently theoretical/practical
  - Brief outline of major “faults” of paper

Remember it is the article that is rejected, not YOU

Rejection is part of the process

- Often you get a rejection after review
- So you now have at least two reviews and the editor's comments
- The reviewers will (usually) explain, in detail, why they rejected the paper

So you have now the basis for improving or changing the paper and submitting elsewhere

Actions - do not take it personally!

It is the article that has been rejected not you

- So need to change target journal and improve/alter paper. I know of one paper rejected but accepted with *no changes* for another ranked journal (so editor's tastes and requirements vary!)

or

- Aim for less prestigious publication?
- Don't just forget about it - think through the options

Editor's decision – Revise and resubmit

- This is good news, but it does not imply any obligation by the Journal to publish the paper
- You will have been given a chance to rework the paper along guidelines to improve the chance of publication
- Some editors will advise you about chances of publication
- I'd guess that about 30% are accepted for highly ranked journals and
- About 70% for less well known journals

Revise and resubmit

- Read the editor's and reviewers' comments briefly
- Put the paper aside for a week. You may feel that you hate them for "not understanding your work"; "not reading it properly" or simply being "ignorant"
- But think that they are the gatekeepers and ***should*** know the job!
- Some journals, e.g.JMS, **never** accept outright!
- So ***now*** read what they have said very carefully!

Revise and resubmit

- The editor should have “reviewed” the reviews and provided you with a synopsis of what needs to be done
- The referees should have explained what they liked, what they didn’t like and explained why
- A good review will also make some clear suggestions about how the paper can be improved

Revise and resubmit

However, sometimes they don't do their job very well (but the very best journals always do)

- If the editor doesn't give you "a steer"
  - Use the referee's comments as a guide
- If the referees give conflicting opinions
  - Select the points you like and work on these BUT prepare a convincing explanation of why and why not
- Get to work! (some journal have a tight time limit)

Some journals may have several cycles of R & R

So be prepared for that

Revise and resubmit

When you are satisfied that you have managed to address most points raised

- Write a careful cover letter explaining in details what you have done, what you have changed and how you have responded to the various comments
- You can challenge points raised, but **avoid** emotive responses, keep them reasoned

Revise and resubmit

Before you send it off, (again)

Get some other opinions on:

1. The paper itself
    - does it still read well, is it consistent, logical and clearly presented
2. The revisions
    - ideally someone familiar with your first version and the journal, get them to read the paper **and** your cover letter

INVITE CRITICISMS, BUT USE THEM REFLECTIVELY

Editor’s decision – Accept without changes

- You are either very lucky or very good

so congratulations!

- This does happen but not very often !

- ✓ Conclusions and discussion

Finally

- When ***you*** come to referee submissions
  - Think of the author
  - Think of the audience
  - Try to be “constructively critical”

There is only ONE solution.

IN SUM….

- You do not get published in good journals unless you send them a paper.

- It is amazing but true that at the end of the day, this is the MAJOR reason why people do not get published in these journals.