

Publishing Without Perishing: How to Publish in English-Speaking Journals with High Impact Rates

Workshop

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Outline

- 1) Publishing in International (English speaking) journals is a must
- 2) The issue of citation rate of journals
- 3) Why do you personally want to publish there?
- 4) Basic issues of publishing in international journals
- 5) How to increase your personal citation rate
- 6) Do research with publishing in mind
- 7) Common mistakes of non-English speaking authors
- 8) Reviewing

Publishing in International Journals is a Must

- Most psychologists speak English – very few speak your language – lingua franca
- Particular problem of larger language areas (e.g., Spanish, German), less of a problem for smaller language areas (Holland, Sweden)
- What does publishing mean – to make something public – publishing in your language area is hiding a result, not publishing it

The Issue of Citation Rate of Journals

- Rejection Rate: For example, JAP: 90% overall, for foreign authors 95%; most journals have rejection rates between 66% to 90%

Citation Calculation: Example Impact Factor for International Journal of Selection and Assessment

Cites in 2003 to articles

published in: 2002 = 34
 2001 = 55
 Sum: 89

Number of articles

published in: 2002 = 27
 2001 = 26
 Sum: 53

Calculation: Cites to recent articles 89

 Number of recent articles 53

Impact Factor $89/53 = 1.679$

Basic Issues of Publishing

- Journal citation rate is just a vehicle
- Real issue is to have a personal impact
- How can you increase citation rate?
- Choose the right journal or outlet
- Publishing is “market behavior” (market for information)
- Publishing is culture based communication

How to Increase Citation Rate

- Try to publish the very best paper
- This implies often multiple studies; do not go for MANY papers
- The more basic for a field, the better
- The more surprising, the better
- The more you publish in an underdeveloped field of importance, the better

How to Increase Citation Rate

- Don't believe that everyone will automatically cite your paper
- Give talks about the paper and continue to publish in this area
- Make a comprehensive theoretical and/or methodological statement
- Do not be conservative (don't assume that you have to do it the same way as other authors)
- Send paper to all people you cite (plus others)

Do Research with a Publication in Mind

- Do not do pure cross-sectional questionnaire studies with one source (percept-percept problem)
- Have different sources of information for your data (e.g. questionnaire, observations, other informants, aggregation of data, etc.)
- Try to avoid foolish methodological mistakes (e.g. not having enough power, forgetting a manipulation check, not enough reliability, forget to include necessary controls, forget to ask for a good description of the sample, using an out-of-date scale instead of the newest and best one, or go against the “clinical lore” in an area naively)

Do Research with Publishing in Mind

- Think of the journal in which you want to publish the research and go through some checks whether the research is appropriate for this journal
- What is the story that you will tell, why is it important and what will be new about it (add-on)?
- Do not use NEW methodology (statistics, operationalization), NEW theory, and NEW design, ALL within one paper (but ONE aspect of paper should be NEW)

What is interesting?

- Novel, thought provoking, controversial
- Hole in literature
- Read outside area
- Deny certain assumptions; attack “taken for granted” ideas
- Unstructured is really structured and vice versa
- Heterogeneous is really composed of a single element or vice versa
- What is seen as good is really bad

Common Mistakes in Writing

- No add-on value – just another study
- Not enough justification why study was done (has not been done before, is not a good justification), present theoretical and practical reasons
- Implausible arguments, hypotheses, or conclusions
- Conclusions do not follow from data
- Rules by Sternberg on common mistakes

Major Mistakes of Foreign Authors

1. Unfocused introduction and discussion: Every sentence needs to be carefully tested whether its really related to your man topic.
2. Do not produce wrong expectation in the readers by discussing things that you will not test in your article.
3. Start out with the general issue, overview, or your expectation/hypothesis. Every paragraph has to be introduced so that the expectations of the reader are produced correctly: therefore this first sentence explains what the reader can expect to read in the paragraph and/or the most important point.
4. Transitions: Unclear transitions.

Major Mistakes of Foreign Authors -2-

5. No abbreviations anywhere in the text (maybe except one, that needs to be explained in the abstract).
6. Make sure that all variable names are exactly alike throughout the text and in the tables and figures. Do not introduce variations of variable names at all.
7. If your English is not perfect, have a copy editor correct it before you submit. Make sure that you plan to get money for copy editing into a research project.
8. Do not use fancy and big words
9. Do not use colloquialism

Introduction

For example, I think you could do a bit more to bring readers up to speed on the potential contribution of your study. For example, in about two pages, you should: (a) specify the domain of interest; (b) indicate to what particular aspect of the domain you intend to contribute; and (c) spell out why your study will add value to the existing literature (primarily by pointing out a few shortcomings or omissions in the literature to date).

(From a letter of an editor)

Discussion

I like your brief summary of research findings. In that same paragraph, I would expect a section that begins, “Our findings *extend* previous research in this area in the following ways. First, ...Second, ...Finally, ...” This section would parallel what I asked you to write in your Introduction. Including this section will allow readers to see whether or not your intended contributions discussed in the introduction were fulfilled by your actual findings.

(From a letter of an editor)

Revise/Resubmit (R&R)

- take time and care to address reviewers' and Action Editor's comments
- Action Editor's letter should contain guidance concerning most important points to be addressed; read and re-read this very carefully
- if in doubt about how to deal with a particular point, consult colleagues (or Action Editor)

Revision

- Write the letter to the editor in which you explain in detail how you have dealt with each issue raised by the reviewers, while you revise the paper.
- If you think that a reviewer's comments are wrong or unfair, be prepared to point this out (but do so politely)
- In principle: Three points to keep in mind:
The reviewer is right, The reviewer is right,
The reviewer is right

Rejection

- don't despair!
- using your own knowledge of field and advice from others, send paper to a less demanding journal
- be prepared to repeat this process if the paper is once again rejected
- Work on the paper immediately

The Psychology of the Reviewer

- Does this on his own time – no money, little reward
- Emotions in reviewing – getting angry or trying to be helpful
- Feeling of being led astray – high promises, no delivery, e.g. when high promises in the beginning of paper that cannot be delivered
- Getting angry: when strong criticism of something that is seen as worthwhile, when strong persuasion instead of soft persuasion
- The Abstract and the first pages are most important
- Problem for foreign writers: Reviewer demands that the culture is taken seriously (e.g. arguments are taken seriously that are taken seriously in the majority culture)

Some Useful References

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