Publish high quality journal: some strategies/tactics

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• Our goal as Academics is to do high quality research and publish it in the best possible place - Tom Smith
High quality journal publications


High quality journal publications (2)


High quality journal publications (3)

Why publish in top journals/conferences

• Contribute new body of knowledge
• Popular in particular areas
• General impact (H index)
• Get promotion in the University
  (Tsui, 2008)
Challenges and Concerns

• Limited chances to publish in top journals
  – Very limited spaces (i.e only two issues per volume);
  – Very high rejection rate (i.e 95% rejection rate);
  – Many excellent researchers are competing.
• Long process (2.5-5.5 years to get an article accepted)
  – Stage 1: Complete a research project (1-3 years)
  – Stage 2: Go through the whole process (1.5-2.5 years)
  – Stage 3: Formal publication (about 1 year)
• Very picky and demanding reviewers
• Researchers’ constraints: limited time, resources, knowledge & skills
• We need some strategies and tactics for publishing, which are also helpful for conducting high quality research.
What strategies? (1)

- Understand the “needs” of the leading journals; understand who the audiences are;
- What reviewers/editors like?
  - Strong literature review;
  - Strong background/rationale of the study;
  - Solid research design/methods
  - High quality data/strong result
  - Strong theoretical contribution
  - Strong practical contribution
  - Creative/interesting research idea
  - Advanced data analysis approach
  - Good presentation skill (logical, clear and concise)
What strategies? (2)

- The Major Reasons that Papers Got Rejected in top Journals
  - The research questions asked were neither interesting nor important.
  - Hypothesis without **theory** or insufficient theoretical justification for hypothesis.
  - Design flaw (Methods can not answer your research questions/research problems).
  - Weak empirical contribution (e.g., data with poor quality).
- Know the specific requirements of your target journal
Specific suggestions

• Don’t make too many unpublished references
• Cite all new publications on that area
• Cite the papers published in the journal you targeted
• Don’t be overly critical of past research
• Presentation:
  – Title of paper must be provocative (if you can)
  – Abstract must contain theoretical and practical contributions
  – Introduction – strong positioning of contribution (but don’t overstate your contribution)
• Now that I have written it ...
  – Edit, edit and edit! Sloppy writing signals sloppy research to reviewers.
  – “The best writers labour over each sentence”
Some useful references

Selection of Target Journals

1. Who is your readership? (make some notes and critically evaluate these)

2. You are aiming to get your readers to use the contents of the paper for decision making/design/citation in their own research
Outlines – examples of first level headers

• (check the journal guide)
• Abstract
• Introduction
• Literature review
• Method
• Results
• Discussion
• Conclusion
• Acknowledgements
• References
• Tables
• Figures
For consistency we write the Introduction and Conclusions together
Introduction

• The introduction should go straight to the issue in the first paragraph
• Then the necessary background
• Finish with a concise description of the contribution of this paper
• References should include your previous work in this area and the major work that launched your thinking for this paper
Conclusions

• The conclusions should briefly precis the context and purpose of the paper. It then should conclude (not summarise) each of the items in the results/discussion sections).

• eg “We embarked on a study to do ……..” “Important in this process was ……………”
Conclusion

The conclusion should be about serving the literature. It could briefly explain what the literature was saying before the research and what the contribution in that changes the literature.

It might end with suggestions for further research.
Title

• If you use a question in the title you must answer it. If you use a colon, beware because some people don’t like it.

• Beware of ambiguities in titles. Put your title in the search engine. Sediment transport can be either hydrology or dental hygiene.
Keywords

• Chose words in the title and keywords carefully as search engines use these in their indexing

• Do not waste keywords by having keywords that are in the title.
Abstract

• The abstract must “grab” the reader in the first sentence and give a concise summary

• The abstract is a summary of the entire paper. One sentence each on: context, need, method, outcome, conclusions, implications.

• An independent review of your abstract by a non-specialist may increase your citations
Authorship/Acknowledgement

• previously published work is acknowledged by references
• advice is acknowledged in the acknowledgements
• “fully supervised” technical work is normally acknowledged in the acknowledgements
• original thinking, design and/or writing is normally acknowledged in the authorship list
• first authorship is best to be pre-agreed
• order of authorship is best allocated by the first author on the basis of total effort in the conceptual and writing process
• be sure to acknowledge funding, unpublished data offered by third parties and reviewers
Manage the Review and Revision Process

• If you have any doubt about the suitability of a paper for a journal, write to the editor or associate editor.

• If the journal requires suggested reviewers, prewarn your nominations – you will suffer less delays as a result.

• In replying to reviewers comments follow the editors’ instructions and provide a response sheet so it is clear how you have responded to each item of feedback (made change/refute/clarification).
References

• Chen, G.Z.X - School of Management & Marketing, ANU
• Mark Morrison, Charles Sturt University, Australia
• Kevin A Parton, Charles Sturt University