Getting Your Research Published in Peer Reviewed Journals

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Starting with Three Simple Facts
Fact 1

- Most people, if they can help it, would rather not experience rejection
Fact 2

- If you don’t submit your research to a peer-reviewed journal for consideration of publication, it can’t be rejected
Fact 3

- There is a statistically significant causal relationship between submitting your research to peer-reviewed journals and getting it published.
How to Publish

• Overview of Presentation
  – Why publish
  – What to publish
  – When to publish
  – Where to publish
  – Things that prepare you for publishing
Why Publish

- Passion for conducting research and sharing knowledge
- Disseminate important research findings
- Disseminate not so important research findings* 
- Feedback in shaping ideas 
- Achieve status and recognition 
- Career advancement 
- Promotion and tenure 

*Not recommended
What to Publish

• Original empirical research (qualitative or quantitative)
• Replication/extension of previous studies
• Theoretical/conceptual pieces
• Literature reviews
• Meta analysis
• Case studies
• Book reviews
When to Publish

- While an undergraduate
- 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year graduate school
- Post doc
- Academic appointments
- Clinical practice
- Community agency
- When you have an idea/data/case
Where to Publish

- Top tier journals (prestige vs. visibility)
- Second tier journals
- Third tier journals
- Edited books/chapters
- Professional newsletters
- Professional reports
- Popular magazines
- Op ed
Things that Prepare you for Publishing

- Read lots of journal articles
- Take extra statistics/research methods courses
- Discuss research design/issues with colleagues
- Review manuscripts for colleagues
- Serve as ad hoc reviewer for journals
- Submit manuscripts for publication
- Resubmit manuscripts when invited
- Write, write, and write some more
How to Publish

- Start with a good idea
- Plan a good study
- Conduct a good study
- Use appropriate statistical procedures for your analysis
- Write a good manuscript
- Select a journal with the best fit
- Know the players
- Understand the politics
- Be persistent
Selecting a Topic

• Topics should be:
  – Relevant and timely
  – Practical and doable
  – Builds on previous research/expands knowledge
  – Groundbreaking and cutting edge

• How to select the right topic
  – Review relevant literature
  – Brainstorm
  – Define topic as a focused research question
  – Formulate thesis statement
Planning

- Background and literature review
- Type of study to be conducted (cross sectional, experimental, observational, case study, qualitative, etc.)
- Objectives
- Methods and procedures
- Statistical design
- Logistics
- Budget
- IRB
Ethical considerations

- Protecting human subjects from physical and psychological harm
- Protecting vulnerable populations
- Informed consent and full disclosure
- Confidentiality and anonymity (privacy)
- Deception (minimal risks and no alternatives)
- IRB
  - Exempt
  - Expedited
  - Full review
Conducting a Good Study

- Thorough review of the literature
- Strong theoretical/conceptual framework
- Provable hypotheses
- Measurement - reliable and valid measures
- Sampling (probability vs non-probability)
- Sound procedures
- Statistical analysis
Selecting the Appropriate Statistics

- Descriptive statistics
- Testing assumptions
- Primary analysis
  - Group/mean differences
  - Correlation/regression
  - Structural equation modeling
    - Causal modeling
    - Factor analysis
Writing a Good Manuscript

- Abstract
  - Concise
  - Mentions all variables in study
  - Appropriate length
- Introduction and Literature Review
  - Concise
  - Thorough
  - Theoretical/conceptual framework
  - Current literature
Writing a Good Manuscript (cont.)

• Methods
  – Adequate detail
  – Road map for replication

• Results
  – Clear and detailed description
  – Analyses appropriate for question
  – Necessary tables and graphs are provided

• Discussion
  – Doesn’t go beyond findings
  – Provides alternate hypotheses to explain findings
  – Implications, limitations, and future research
Selecting a Journal with a Good Fit

- Read sample articles in journals related to your topic
- Observe trends in published articles (oversaturation of some topics)
- Contact the editor to see if there is interest
- Factors to consider:
  - Impact factor, acceptance-rejection rate, etc.
  - Turn-around-time
  - Page limit
  - Types of articles (empirical, theoretical, applied, etc.)
What Happens Once You Submit the Manuscript

- Editor-in-Chief determines suitability of manuscript
- Editor-in-Chief assigns to action editor
- Action editor assigns to 3-5 reviewers for blind review
- Reviewers take between four and six weeks to review
- Action editor reviews reviewer comments and makes a recommendation to the Editor-in-Chief
  - Accept
  - Accept with revisions
  - Reject with invitation to revise and resubmit
  - Reject
Know the Players

• It may be a good idea to anticipate who might review your manuscript
  – Be familiar with the most recent scholarship on the topic related to your manuscript
  – Cite all relevant work of primary scholars in the area
  – Avoid being overly critical of any scholar’s work
  – Consider using positive language to critique/review the work of others
  – Be humble
Understanding Human Behavior

• First impressions are lasting
  – Neatness counts
  – Professionalism counts

• Looking for a reason
  – Proof read (seek professional help if necessary)
  – Avoid simple mistakes (they have a cumulative effect)
  – Check your math (participants, tables, graphs, etc.)
Understanding Human Behavior (cont.)

• In case of a “revise and resubmit”
  – Revise and resubmit within 2-3 weeks
  – Be sure to read reviewer comments very carefully
  – Be sure to address each of the reviewers’ concerns
  – Include a detailed description of how you addressed each reviewers’ concern.
  – Don’t argue with reviewers or dismiss their feedback
  – Be humble

• In case of rejection
  – Refer to 1-3 of revise and resubmit
To Summarize

• Start with a good idea, a good plan, and a good study
• Write a good manuscript and submit it to the right journal
• Reduce reviewers’ opportunities to find reasons to reject your manuscript
• Know the players
  – “By the time a fool learns the rules, the players have dispersed”
• Understand human behavior – read the intro to psych text you never opened
• Be persistent