How to Write an Academic Paper

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Aims of the course:

Developing strong and novel theoretical contributions is a critical requirement for publishing in top academic journals. This module reflects upon processes of theorizing and publishing research. Drawing on a series of exercises, practical assignments and readings, students will be trained in developing theory as well as develop skills in crafting papers for academic publications.

Learning outcomes and competences:
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
- To gain a basic understanding of what theory is, and what its core components are.
- To develop reflective skills on writing for publication.
- To gain first-hand experience of the editorial review process
- To 'theorize' and 'write-up' data collected for your doctoral research.

Assessment methods:
Select two published qualitative papers from your own research area and explain why you think they were both published, considering their writing, theory, data, and argument. What positive features stand out and what would you ask the author(s) to reconsider if you were the editor?
The assignment should not exceed 3,000 words in length (excluding references).

Course contents and Syllabus:

Session I 23/06/2025 09:00 -13:00	**Part I: Theorizing** ***Required Readings*** **Group 1** (2 readings): - Corley, K. J. and Gioia, D. A. (2011). Building theory about theory building: What constitutes a theoretical contribution? *Academy of Management Review*, 36, 12-3 2. - Whetten, A. (1989). What constitutes a theoretical contribution? *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 490-5. **Group 2** - Shepherd, D.A., and Suddaby, R. 2017. Theory Building: A Review and Integration. *Journal of Management*, 43: 59-86. **Group 3** - Astley, W. G. (1985). Administrative science as socially constructed truth. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 30(4), 497–513.

Further Readings

- Alvesson, M., & Karreman, D. 2007. Constructing mystery: Empirical matters in theory development. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4): 1265-1281.
- Bacharach, S. B. 1989. Organizational theories: Some criteria for evaluation. *Academy of Management Review*, 14: 496-515.
- Shepherd, D. A., & Sutcliffe, K. M. 2011. Inductive top-down theorizing: A source of new theories of organization. *Academy of Management Review*, 36: 361-380.
- Suddaby, R. 2010. Construct clarity in theories of management and organization. *Academy of Management Review*, 35 (3) 346-358.
- Weick, K. E. (1989). Theory construction as disciplined imagination. *Academy of Management Review*, 14: 516-531.
- Weick, K. E. (1995). What Theory is Not, Theorizing Is, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40: 385-390.

Part II: Writing for Publication

Despite the conventions about what constitutes a strong/original theoretical contribution, publishing academic research inevitably takes the shape of a craft that authors frequently (and quite often painfully) learn by doing. In this session we will look at some techniques that authors can use for developing effective arguments, leveraging academic conventions in a constructive fashion, and communicating clear contributions to their audiences (editors, reviewers, and academic readers).

Suggested Readings

- Bartunek, J., Rynes, S. and Ireland, R. D. (2006). What makes management research interesting, and why does it matter? *Academy of Management Journal*, 49, 9–15.
- Davis, M. S. 1971. That's interesting: Towards a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology. *Philosophy of Social Science*, 1: 309-344.
- Huff, A. S. 1999. *Writing for scholarly publication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Johanson, L. A. (2007). Sitting in your reader's chair. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 16, 290–4.
- Kilduff, M. (2006). Editor's comments: Publishing theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 31: 252–255. 2
- Patriotta, G. (2017). Crafting Papers for Publication: Novelty and Convention in Academic Writing. *Journal of Management Studies*, 54, 747–759.
- Pratt, M. G. (2009). For the lack of a boilerplate: Tips on writing up (and reviewing) qualitative research. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(5), 858-862.
- Ragins, B.R. (2012). Editor's comments: reflections on the craft of clear writing. *Academy of Management Review*, 37, 4: 493 – 501
- Rindova, V. (2008). Publishing theory when you are new to the game. *Academy of Management Review*, 33: 300-303.
- Smithey Fulmer, I. (2012) Editor's comments: the craft of writing theory articles— variety and similarity in AMR. *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 37, 3: 327– 331.

Session 2 30/06/2025 09:00 -13:00	**Writing a literature review** ***Required Readings*** **Group 1** - Locke, K., and Golden-Biddle, K. (1997). Constructing opportunities for contribution: Structuring intertextual coherence and "problematizing" in organizational studies. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40, 1023-1062. **Group 2** - Patriotta, G. (2020). Writing impactful review articles. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57. - Elsbach, K. and van Knippenberg, D. (2020). 'Creating high-impact literature reviews: An argument for integrative reviews'. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57. - Alvesson, M. and Sandberg, J. (2020). 'The problematizing review: A counterpoint to Elsbach and van Knippenberg's argument for integrative reviews'. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57. **Group 3** - Post, C., Sarala, R., Gatrell, C. and Prescott, J. E. (2020). 'Advancing theory with review articles'. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57, 351–76 **Further Readings** - Alvesson, M. and Sandberg, J. (2011). 'Generating research questions through problemization'. Academy of Management Review, 36, 247–71. - Baumeister, R. F. and Leary, M. R. (1997). 'Writing narrative literature reviews'. Review of General Psychology, 1, 311–20. - Bem, D. J. (1995). 'Writing a review article for Psychological Bulletin'. Psychological Bulletin, 118, 172–77. - Callahan, J. L. (2010). 'Constructing a manuscript: Distinguishing integrative literature reviews and conceptual and theory articles'. Human Resource Development Review, 9, 300–04. - Callahan, J. L. (2014). 'Writing literature reviews: A reprise and update'. Human Resource Development Review, 13, 271–75. - Denyer, D., & Tranfield, D. (2009). Producing a systematic review. In D. Buchanan & A. Bryman (Eds.), The Sage Handbook of Organizational Research Methods (pp. 671-689). London, UK: Sage. - Short, J. (2009). The art of writing a review article. Journal of Management, 35(6), 1312-1317. - Torraco, R. J. (2005). 'Writing integrative literature reviews: Guidelines and examples'. Human Resource Development Review, 4, 356–67 - Torraco, R. J. (2016). 'Writing integrative literature reviews: Using the past to explore the future'. Human Resource Development Review, 15, 404–28. - Webster, J., & Watson, R. T. (2002). Analyzing the past to prepare for the future: Writing a literature review. MIS Quarterly, 26(2), xiii-xxiii.

Session 3 9/07/2025 09:00 -13:00	**The review process** Publishing in academic journals requires an understanding of the complex interaction between authors, editors and reviewers. This session follows the journey of a manuscript from submission to acceptance. It uses an actual manuscript submitted to a journal (and eventually published) to appreciate the challenges related to the review process. Students will assess the sample paper at several stages taking the role of both reviewers and editors. This will allow students to reflect on the ongoing process of framing and refining the manuscript, with a view to achieving the manuscript's acceptance and publication. **Suggested readings (AMJ seven-part series)** **Group 1** - Colquitt, J. A. and George, G. (2011). From the editors: publishing in *AMJ*—part 1: Topic choice. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54, 432 - 435. - Bono, J. E. and McNamara, G. (2011). From the editors: publishing in *AMJ*—part 2: Research design. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54, 432 - 435. **Group 2** - Grant, A. M. and Pollock, T. G. (2011). Publishing in *AMJ* – Part 3: Setting the hook. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54, 873–9. - Sparrowe, R. T. and Mayer, K. J. (2011). Publishing in *AMJ* – Part 4: Grounding hypotheses. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54, 1098 – 1102. **Group 3** - Zhang, Y., and Show, J. D. (2012). Publishing in *AMJ* – Part 5: Crafting the methods and results. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55, 8–12. - Geletkanycz, M., and Tepper, B. J. (2012). Publishing in *AMJ* – Part 6: Discussing the implications. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55, 256–260. **Further Readings:** - Bedeian, A. G. 2004. Peer review and the social construction of knowledge in the management discipline. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 3: 198–216. - Bergh, D. D. 2002. From the editors: Deriving greater benefit from the reviewing process. *Academy of Management Journal,* 45: 633–636. - Clark, T., Floyd, S. W. and Wright, M. (2006). On the review process and journal development. *Journal of Management Studies*, 43, 655–64. - Day, N. E. 2011. The silent majority: Manuscript rejection and its impact on scholars. *Academy of Management Learning & Education,* 10: 704–718. - Feldman, D. C. 2004. Being a developmental reviewer: Easier said than done. *Journal of Management,* 30: 161–164. - Lepak, D. 2009. Editor's comments: What is good reviewing? *Academy of Management Review,* 34: 375–381.

	- Harrison, D. 2002. From the editors: Obligations and obfuscations in the review process. *Academy of Management Journal,* 45: 1079–1084. - Sanders, W. G. 2009. What it means to be a developmental action editor. *Academy of Management Journal,* 52: 640 – 642. - Starbuck, W. H. 2003. Turning lemons into lemonade: Where is the value in peer reviews? *Journal of Management Inquiry,* 12: 344–351.