

**Survival Tips: Research and  
Publication Experience**



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Poon Wai Ching,  
Monash University Malaysia**

- Editor for Cogent Economics and Finance;
- Editorial boards for Corporate Governance:  
An International Review

**Date: 26 November 2020 (Thursday)**

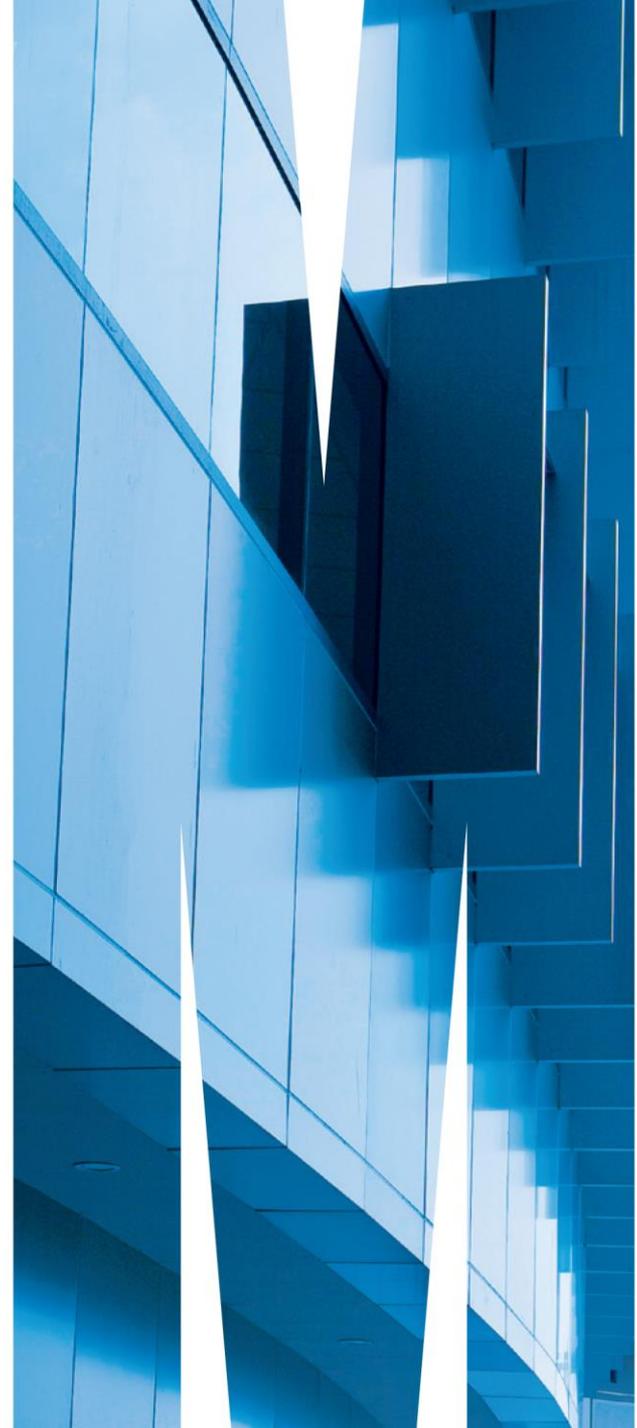
**Topic: Survival tips: Research and publication  
experience**

**Speaker: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Poon Wai Ching  
Monash University Malaysia**

**Time: 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM**

# Survival tips: Research & Publication Experiences

**Poon Wai Ching**  
Associate Professor, School of Business  
Director, Graduate Research Programs  
Deputy Chair, Campus Graduate Research Committee



## Why articles get rejected?

### 1. Contribution

- No sufficiently large contribution to the body of knowledge

### 2. Framework

- No well-developed conceptual framework (or lack compelling theoretical motivation for the hypotheses)

### 3. Methodology

- Seriously flawed approach

### 4. Writing style

- Improper structure or disorganized

## A secret formula:

Identify a unique problem +

Review literature +

Identify a gap in the literature +

Fill that gap +

What's new? Explain the question you are trying to answer

- Traditional approach may give flawed perspective, using new technique we find....
- Are issues different from the past?

Link theory to empirical work

**= Paper acceptance! (Not for sure)**

# Why do journals accept papers?

(MIS Quarterly, Vol.33, No.3/September 2009)

## Required elements

- Basic idea is exciting
- Non trivial research questions
- Hits popular themes
- Sufficiently uses or develops theory

## Enhancing elements

- Follows a recognizable formula
- Sufficiently covers the key literature
- Clean (grammatically, typographically, appearance)
- Effectively uses new methods
- Not contradict the work of major movers
- Respectably large field sample

# Hot Tips From An Editor

- Always cite at least one paper from the journal to which you are submitting and show awareness of the key debates
- Know the ethos of the journal before you submit and cite the work of members of the editorial board
- Don't get upset with a desk rejection. It likely just saved you several months of waiting time.
- You don't need to do everything that the reviewers suggest, but you do need to **address all of their suggestions**
- When you received a rejection letter, you are allowed to grieve, but not any longer than 24 hours.
- If you expect to spend  $X$  hours working on a paper for a top journal, the actual number of hours is  $X*3$ .

# Inside the mind of the editor

- Your paper is competing with others for a very scarce resource –TIME

# How to avoid rejection?

- Avoiding rejections is hard
- Across disciplines, acceptance rates of 25% are the norm
- So, if you want a paper a year... 4-5 in the pipeline

# How to avoid (desk) rejection?

- Be **aimed** – If the editor you think will handle the paper has written relevant material on the issue to hand, then include them. Do NOT start citing everything they have ever written.
- Be **a contribution** – Each paper is a separate communication
- Be **coherent** – (of an argument, theory, policy etc.) follow a similar structure, logical and consistent.
- Be **clear** – one idea, one paper. Don't crowd the paper with too many tails and trails.
- Be **fit** – Read the aims and scope. If in doubt, email the editor.
  - *I recently working on a work on....., I am not sure if this paper fits into the journal. The title of the paper is ....and the abstract is attached. Thank you very much.*

# How to avoid (desk) rejection? (cont')

- Be **legible** – good English. Read aloud, listen to the cadence (proofread).
- Be **ethical** – do not double dip and submit to two journals at once
- Be **distinctive** – when you recycle from existing own work, make sure to rewrite. All publishers use crosschecking similarity thresholds.
- Be **relevant** – why international reader should care about a local context. Be generalize, make it clear why the local matters.
- Be **complete** – included required elements and enhancing elements

# Things to consider in responding to reviewers' / editor's comments

- Appraise each comment of the review panel with open mind
  - Avoid expressing emotional reaction (especially negatives ones) to editors and reviewers who are critical of your manuscript.
  - Do not be offended.
  - Misconstrue content, or unconcise info.
    - Serving as preliminary readers.
    - Assessing your work from their own standpoint.
  - Readership, theme, fit.

# Things to consider in responding to reviewers' / editor's comments

- Have a strategy before revising (discuss feedback)
- Evaluate each comment of the review panel
- All comments from the reviewers feedback should be addressed.
  - Explicitly indicate every change
- Crafting the response
  - Core mission is to enhance the quality of your manuscript (reputation)
  - Step back and reflect

# Things to consider in responding to reviewers' / editor's comments

## DO NOT resist making modifications

- Respond with compelling evidence or convincing explanation to feedback where you agree /disagree with the reviewers.
  - Literature review/ theoretical framework/ English checking (within control)
  - Decide how to respond in a thoughtful manner to any call for additional data collection
    - Plan ahead, do the most difficult task first
    - Analysis may require input from other experts
    - **Do it if it can be done!**

# Things to consider in responding to reviewers' / editor's comments

- How to address contradictory comments of review panel on the same issue?
  - Not uncommon for contradictory comments from the reviewers
  - Explain to reviewers the direction you have chosen will benefit the readers, and how.
  - When the reviewers continue to express concern about the direction you are taking with regards to contradictory feedback, consult the handling editor of your manuscript.

# Writing response letter

- Articulate how each comment was addressed leading to modifications in the revised manuscript
- Clarify why certain comments did not necessitate modification
- Provide convincing explanation for any comment left unaddressed
- Comments should be answered in sequence and numbered in the order they were presented in the review report

# Writing response letter (Cont')

- Responses should be **highlighted, italicized or indented** or **showed track changes** to differentiate them from the comments of the review panel
- Responses should be **polite and respectful**, rather than defensive and confrontational.
- Admit deficiencies of the first submission, and thank the reviewers for their comments

# Letter to the Editor

- **Express gratitude** to the editor for the peer review of the manuscript
- **Emphasizing the impact** of your revised paper for theory and practice
- Explicate how you **respond to disagreements** with comments from the reviewers to the editor

# A summary

- Accept the blame
  - Apologize for not making it clear for content that reviewers pointed.
- Be polite and respectful of all reviewers
  - Representative of the journal readership
  - Your goal is to make the work accessible to all readers
  - Remember: miscommunications are possible and a rude critic does not justify an equal response from you

# Questions and Close



# THANK YOU