

publishing your research

– learning from what journals expect –

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agenda

- good research
- publishing your research
 - the reviewing process
- lessons

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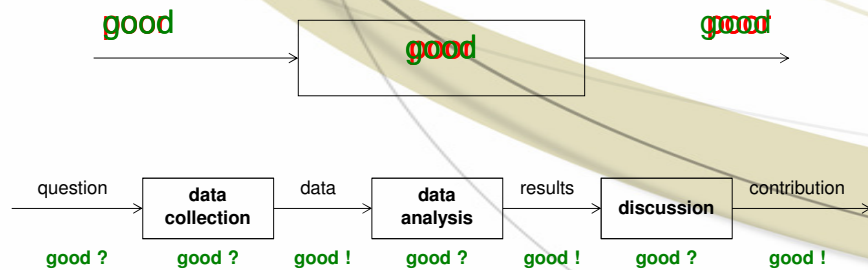


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the basis: total (research) quality management



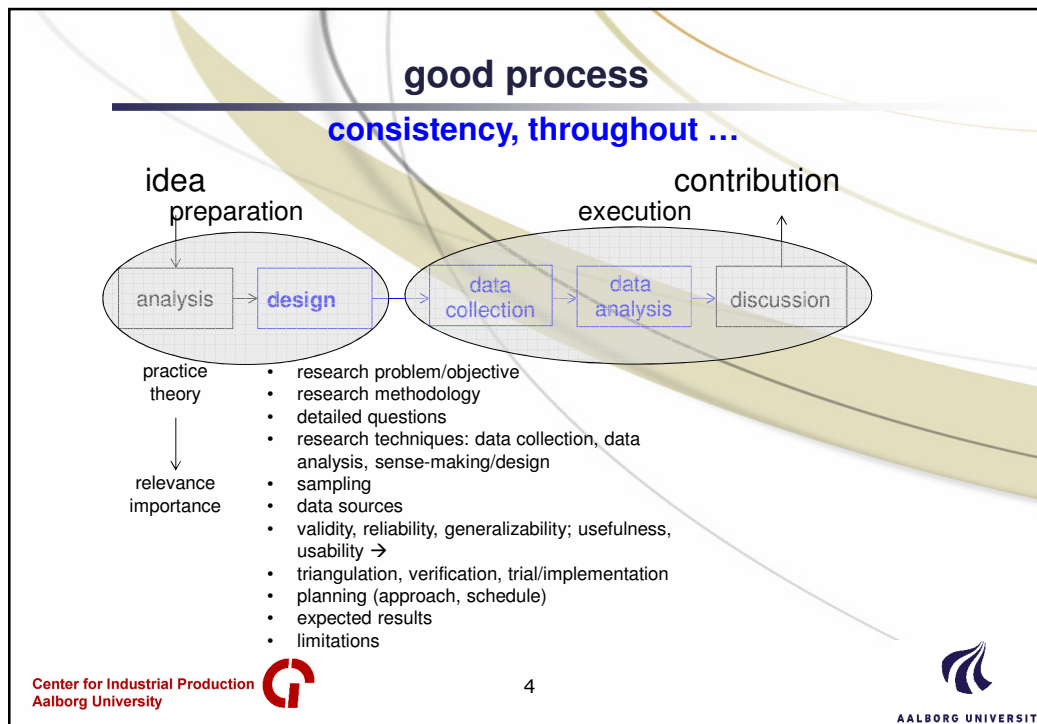
thus: good research requires total quality management



good question

- is it **new**? all hypotheses have been tested previously, perhaps not together?
- is it **large** (enough)? just another moderator of the relationship between variables X and Y?
- is it surprising, **non-obvious**?
- is it **theory-based**? previous empirical research does not constitute theory!
- is it **important**? will it change the way researchers and/or managers think about the area?





good contribution

“nothing is so practical as a good theory”
(Lewin, 1945; see also Simon, 1967; Van De Ven, 1989)

“there is nothing so good as a practical theory”
(Boer, 2001)

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good contribution – to theory

Dubin (1969) – a theory must:

- ... include the interrelationships between its variables and/or attributes (**what, how**)
- ... include criteria that define its boundaries (**who, where, when**)
- ... improve our understanding of the non-unique phenomenon or help us make predictions about it (**why**)
- ... be interesting, i.e. non-trivial

see also Whetten (1989)



good contribution – to practice

De-Margerie and Jiang (2011, referring to various authors) – a theory must be:

- **descriptively relevant**, i.e. accurately describe phenomena that practitioners actually experience
- **goal relevant**, i.e. address something practitioners care about and want to influence
- **operationally valid**, i.e. specify levers that practitioners can actually manipulate
- **non-obvious** and **interesting**
- **timely**, i.e. help practitioners deal with their current problems



good contribution – to practice

De-Margerie and Jiang (2011, continued) – a theory must be:

- **readable** and **understandable**, i.e. implications are prescribed in a manner that could be put to use in practice to exploit an opportunity or to resolve a problem
- **synthesizing**, i.e. cover or refer to the “state of knowledge” regarding a specific domain or topic
- **stimulating** critical thinking, i.e. challenge the practitioners’ causal assumptions, identify emerging trends, structural changes or paradigms, or have the potential to enhance or restructure the mental models managers apply in their practice



what are good journals looking for?

- the list most journals use includes:
 - theoretical / empirical background → relevant and big enough **question** (focus, purpose)
 - **process**: methodological rigor
 - need / success: *do* the findings make a *significant* theoretical and empirical **contribution**?
 - **clarity**: conceptual (definition of, and clear statement of relationships between, constructs), communication (writing, flow, illustrations, ...)
- see research design slides for:
 - a good **question**
 - a good **process**
 - a good **contribution**



so, what is the secret?

- journals are in the business of publishing research, not rejecting it
- it is publish or perish: if you *and* they do not publish, you *and* they perish!
- therefore, at the outset of the process, the journal's goals and yours are completely in synch:
 - you want to be published – they want to publish your article ...
 - ... provided your focus and quality meets their focus and quality standards



how does the review process work?

- write a good paper (topic, background, relevance, method, data, analysis, discussion, conclusions, flow, language, length, references, ...)
- submit it
- the editor may or may not check it out
- the reviewers usually receive it without any notice
- one reviewer returns it quickly, the other may be late ...
- anyway, you finally get the reviewers' comments
- what do you do?



revision required ...

- be professional
- realize trying to get your work published involves a dialogue, between you and (anonymous but usually well-reputed representatives of) the academic community
- start to write a response to the editor (actually, the reviewers)
- commit to dealing with comments quickly
- do the easy work first: language, references, ... (helps you getting back into the article)



revision required ...

- can you address all the issues (did they ask for more data?)
- did they suggest you include other literature?
- do they want further analysis and additional statistical tests?
- are there problems you do not know how to solve? (call a friend)
- are there issues you do not want to address? NB: it is *your* article!!
- are there issues that you cannot address?
- do the job you need/want to do ...



your final review

- read the paper again – word by word, sentence by sentence, ...
- get someone else to read it – content
- have a native speaker / someone fluent in English check the English
- check your response to the editor (reviewers)
- send it off
- hope it's finally finished ...



it comes back – request for further revision ...

- you are still in the game!!
- decide now if you want this published in this journal
- if the answer is yes, play the game again
- send it off again



it comes back – rejected ...

- you are still in the game!!
- develop an understanding as to why it is rejected
- decide now if you want this published in another journal
- if the answer is yes, play the game again
- send it off again



lessons

- ensure you satisfy your customers – the journal, your readers
 - topic/contribution – journal mission
 - theoretical and managerial relevance
 - good data, good measures, ...
 - well-written, flow, length, *accounting* for what you did ...
 - every word, sentence, paragraph, section has a message that contributes to the message of the article – leave out words, sentences, paragraphs, sections that do not matter
 - use references as references, not to suggest you've read a lot



lessons

- ensure you satisfy your customers – the reviewers
 - realize good reviewers are scarce, in demand, good but busy academics, willing to engage in a dialogue with you, not paid for this service, *and* people like you and me, ...
 - they do a first scan – and only continue if they like what they see
 - **bad English**? not a serious author – I send back straightaway
 - uninteresting **topic**? why should I be interested?
 - sloppy **argumentation**? why should I be precise in my feedback?
 - no research **question/objective**? hm, this author is lost before s/he has even started ...
 - local **references** only in an international journal? wrong forum ...
 - no references to the key sources? poor **background** ...
- NB: reviewers see some of these things within five minutes → you risk losing weeks of valuable time, within five minutes ...



lessons

- practice, practice, practice – and be prepared to ‘waste’ blood, sweat and tears ...
- writing is planning and developing
 - research note
 - working paper
 - conference paper
 - journal article



good luck and, eh, enjoy !!!



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