

Succeeding in Academia – Submitting Academic Papers and Responding to Editorial Decisions

COLLEGE of
AGRICULTURE and
APPLIED SCIENCES
UtahStateUniversity



Today

- Peer review process
- Journal choice considerations
- Targeting a journal
- Differences in journal types
- When to submit a paper
- Submission process and suggestions
- Editorial decisions
 - Desk reject, reject, revise & resubmit, acceptance
- Examples

A person's hands are visible at the bottom of the frame, typing on a silver laptop keyboard. The background is a blurred image of a computer screen displaying a document editor with several lines of text. The text is mostly illegible but appears to be a standard document layout. The overall scene suggests a professional or academic setting where someone is working on a document or manuscript.

Peer Review Process

- Submission of academic papers to journals for publication
- All submissions if not rejected by the editor will be sent for review
- Reviews consist of 2-3 *blind reviews* by “experts” in the paper’s topics area
 - What is blind review?
 - An evaluation of a manuscript to assess its suitability for publication as performed by a person (expert) who does not know the identity of the author
- Publishing in economics
 - May take 3 to 5 years to publish a paper in economics
 - Acceptance for publication in less than a year unusual



Importance of Peer Review

- Credential
 - Employers, grantors, and colleagues look at publication records
 - Journal article publication is the measure of success in economics
 - Mix of quality and quantity
- Dissemination
 - Assists in disseminating research, advancing science
 - Academic and lay audiences have access
- Quality control
 - Allows for others to check findings, verify modeling, etc.
 - Ability to replicate results important

Peer review is the cornerstone of “good science”



Example – Replication Issue

Shock waves in the human sciences! Six more of Brian Wansink's published papers are being retracted, [Cornell University announced September 20](#), bringing the total to 13, and the professor has resigned in disgrace. It is not just scientific peers who are affected as Brian Wansink's flawed methodology is exposed and his papers are withdrawn from journals. Millions of ordinary people have also been influenced by his research on "mindless eating." Nutritionists and marketers alike have also based decisions on his findings. But – what do these retractions mean for the *methodology* of the sciences? And – why should we seize on this example in Theory of Knowledge?

What kind of “shared knowledge” matters in the sciences?

As head of Cornell's Food and Brand lab, Wansink appeared to combine *scientific study* of environmental factors that affect eating behaviour with *skill in communicating* with the public. His research attracted extensive popular attention as it seemed to illuminate everyday over-eating, with practical implications for controlling it. He has been an influential figure in *both* science and media: he has hundreds of scientific studies to his name and has held prestigious positions in US organizations for food and nutrition. He has also appeared in popular magazines, TED talks and the Oprah Winfrey show.



Journal Choice Considerations

- Aims and scope
 - Each journal describes the types of papers and topics they publish
 - Look at papers recently published to double check
- Research published in the last few years
 - Make sure to cite papers published in the journal from the last 2 years
 - Assists the editor in finding reviewers
- Departmental priority journals
 - Academic unit/department may have journals you must publish in for tenure
- Journal “turn-around” or time to decision
 - Agricultural and Resource Economics Review
 - 2-month (60 day) decisions





Journal of Economics and Business

Supports *open access*

5.8

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Aims and scope

The Journal of Economics and Business publishes high quality research papers in all areas of Finance and in closely related fields of economics. The Journal is interested in both theoretical and applied research with an emphasis on topics in corporate finance, financial markets and institutions, and investments. Research in real estate, insurance, and consumer finance is also welcome.

Editorial Policy:

All papers are double-blind refereed. Authors should expect to receive two referee reports and a letter of recommendation from one of the Journal's editors.

Special Issues:

The Journal publishes a special issue every year. This issue typically deals with an important research topic and is edited by a recognized expert in the field.

Benefits to authors

We also provide many author benefits, such as free PDFs, a liberal copyright policy, special discounts on Elsevier publications and much more. Please click here for more information on our [author services](#).

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Author Guidelines

Please consult the guidelines and policies below for preparing initial and revised submissions or accepted final submissions to the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*

Initial Submission

AJAE Author Guidelines: Manuscript Preparation for Submission

Submissions to *AJAE* can be made through our electronic editorial office, [found here](#).

Authors should read the Journal's policies below before submitting their manuscript.

For initial submission, the following guidelines must be followed or the manuscript will be withdrawn from consideration without review. A submission has **two** components:

- A submitted **manuscript** file (.pdf) that follows these guidelines:
 - The first page has only the title and abstract on it.
 - The manuscript must have no information anywhere that can identify the author (title page, headers, appendices, images of survey instruments, etc.)
 - The submitted manuscript must not include acknowledgments.
 - The main text of the manuscript is double spaced.
 - The manuscript uses 1-inch margins all around.
 - The main text of the manuscript uses 12-point Times Roman or font of a similar size.
 - The main text (including footnotes/endnotes, but excluding title page, abstract, references,

Targeting a Journal

- Journals cited in your paper's references (cited 3 or more times)
 - Search these journals for relevant papers (include these citations)
 - The authors will likely be reviewers
- Professional association journals
 - For example, the Applied and Agricultural Economics Association (AAEA) has five journals
 - If you are a member of the association the publication costs may be reduced
 - Publication page charges can be as high as \$75/page



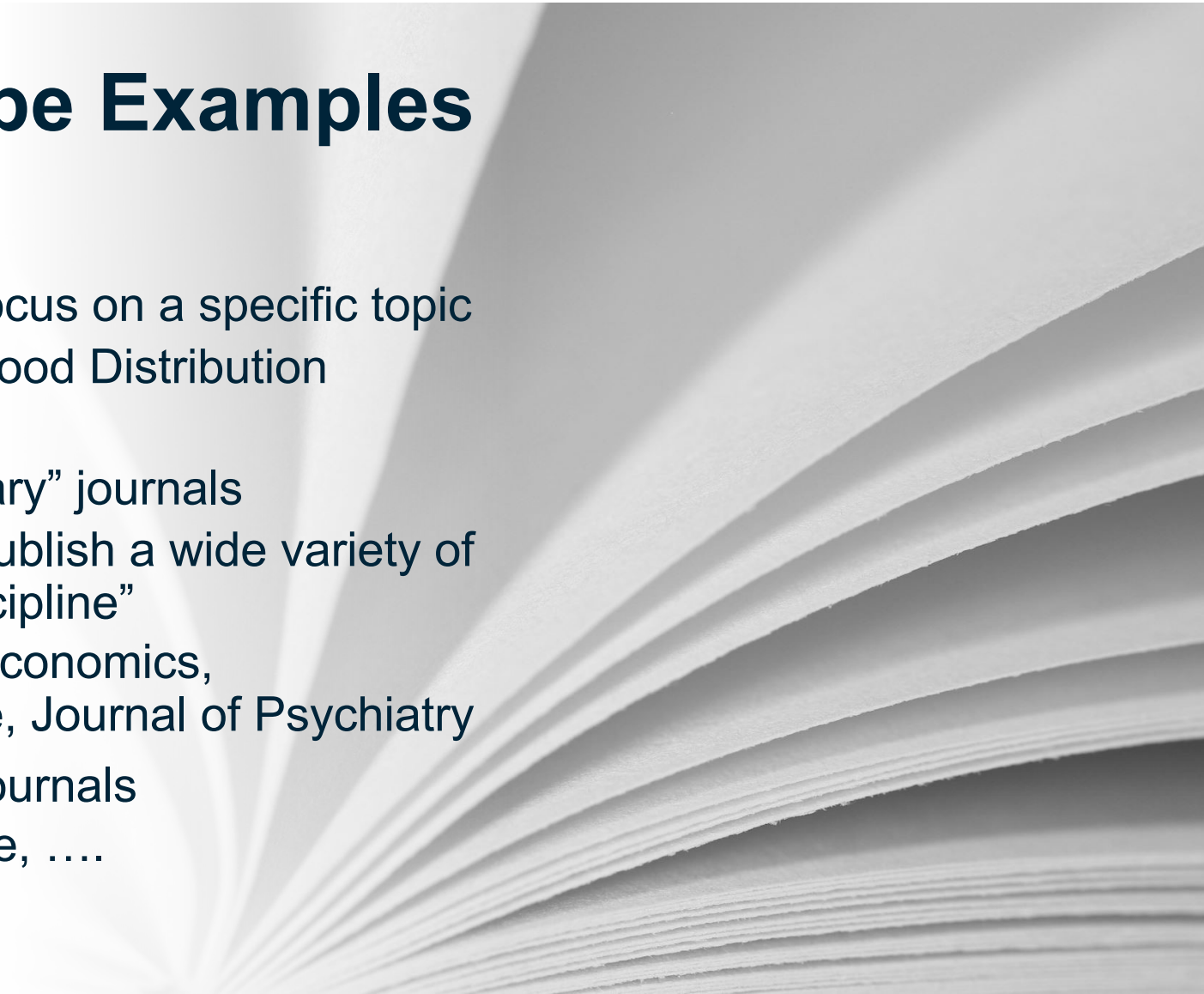
Targeting a Journal

- Journals with appropriate target market - readership
 - Who is interested – Discipline, multi disciplinary, other
 - How original is the work?
 - How rigorous or important are the findings
- Upcoming special issues that fit your topic area
 - Special issues are present in many journals
 - Guest editor will ask for submission and conduct review process
 - Faster publication process



Journal Type Examples

- Field journals
 - Journals that focus on a specific topic
 - Journal of Food Distribution Research
- General “disciplinary” journals
 - Journals that publish a wide variety of topics in a “discipline”
 - Journal of Economics, HortScience, Journal of Psychiatry
- General science journals
 - Nature, Science,



Differences in Journal Types

- Field journals
 - Cite (recent) articles from that journal in your paper
 - Must be a good fit (scope, topics currently publishing, etc.)
- General “disciplinary” journals
 - Minimize citations of field journals
 - Paper must improve on current science and be generalizable
 - Competition is fierce
- General science journals
 - Findings and implications most important
 - Written for all researchers, not just plant scientists or economists
 - Follow a different structure than typical disciplinary journals



When to Submit an Academic Paper

- When the paper is ready!
 - Has been presented a few times/read by colleagues
 - When the marginal cost of editing exceeds the marginal benefit
 - No paper is ever perfect
 - A submitted paper is better than a sitting paper
 - Reviewers can assist in making the paper better
- Publishing “timeline” in discipline
 - May take 3-5 years to publish a paper in economics
 - Lucky if accepted for publication in less than a year



When to Submit an Academic Paper

- Consider your situation
 - If in a tenure-track position, submit as soon as its ready....submit, submit, submit
 - Don't wait for full professor advisors to review if they are slow, they are busy and less motivated (already tenured)
 - Consider journal “turn-around” times
 - Some provide a decision quickly for graduate students/early career folks



Submission Process

- Follow all journal submission guidelines/guide for authors
 - Length, equation style or location, font and size, citation structure, etc.
- Add a short cover letter
 - Explain why you submitted to that journal
 - Attest the paper is not under review elsewhere
 - Clearly note conflicts of interest, restrictions on data availability, etc.



Submission Suggestions

- Keep paper as short as possible to clearly convey the contribution
 - Journal space is precious
- Sell it! Make sure the abstract and introduction are clear, and the contribution is obvious on the first page
- Use appendices liberally to provide all details essential to replicate/assess
 - Include all appendices with submission
- Don't worry about formatting according to the journal's style sheet until asked to revise the paper
- Copy edit meticulously before submitting
 - Sloppy spelling, tables, figures, references, etc. suggest sloppy research



Submission Process

- Once submitted a journal editor will be assigned
 - He/she will either send the paper for review or desk reject
- Review consists of 2-3 blind reviews
 - If the paper is reviewed, you will receive copies of these reviews
- Editor will make one of four possible decisions



Once submitted....

- Did you get an email confirming receipt of submission?
 - If not, follow up with editorial office
- Desk rejections almost always come in 1st month, often in 1st week
 - If you are in month 2 or beyond, congrats!
- Journals vary a lot in decision times
 - Anything within 4 months is well within normal range
- At 6-month mark, you can gently, briefly ping (email) the editor to check on status
- After 12 months, it's fine to give a deadline at which time you withdraw the paper and submit elsewhere



Possible Editorial Decisions

- Reject (most common)
 - Desk rejection
 - Rejection post review
- Revise and resubmit – R&R (second most common)
 - Strong R&R – minor revisions
 - Weak R&R – major revisions
- Conditional acceptance
 - Minor revisions - cosmetic or stylistic
- Acceptance (never happens at first submission)
 - Paper is forthcoming in the journal



Reasons for Rejection

- Desk reject
 - Poor fit for the journal
 - Doesn't follow journal aims and scope
 - Quality is below the journal's threshold
 - Title and abstract contain obvious typos
 - Limited interest such a specific small geographic area
 - Contribution/importance of the paper isn't clear
- Post review reject
 - Fatal flaws in the research design, data collection, etc.
 - Contribution of the paper doesn't exist or isn't clear
 - One review is very negative



Reject Decision

- Read decision letter carefully
- Most common decision is Reject
 - Not to worry, most good papers get rejected at least once
- Desk rejections can be positive
 - Saves time and conserves appropriate reviewers (for later)
- Carefully read the editor's letter and/or review
 - Use the feedback to improve the paper
 - Did they misunderstand? – Rewrite for clarity
 - Analytical or econometric issues – Fix
- If the reviewers made errors that matter
 - Write a short, clear, respectful appeal letter to editor
 - Again, lack of clarity is more likely, need to edit
- Submit to the next journal on the list
 - After revising to address issues/concerns of reviewers/editor



Reality of Rejection

- If you submit research regularly you will get rejected **a lot**
 - Develop a thick skin and don't take it personally
- Rejection says nothing about you nor your overall ability to conduct good research
- You may feel your work has been rejected unfairly, the reviewers have no idea what they are talking about, or their issues/concerns are unfounded, etc.
 - Set the reviews aside for a few days and then revisit
 - Comments will very likely seem less “impossible” a few days later
- Revising the paper and submitting to another (perhaps better suited) journal is often the best course of action



When Not to Submit to Another Journal

- Reviewers identify fatal error(s) – real errors, not perceived errors
- Someone else has published the same paper (more or less)
- Opportunity cost of time to revise well is too high
- Co-authors can't agree on a new direction

Rarely is a paper not worthy of editing and resubmission



Revise and Resubmit Decision

- Celebrate!!
- Carefully read letter and reviews
- Email the editor for clarification if anything is unclear
- If you decide not to resubmit, write (email) the editor to withdraw the paper
- Respond to reviewer/editor comments and suggestions in the time given (60 days, 3 months, etc.) - you can ask for more time
 - Always be respectful and appreciative
- Once resubmitted, the response to review and updated manuscript will likely go back to the reviewers for comment
- You may be asked to revise and resubmit again



Revise and Resubmit Process

- Create a response to review document – detailed point by point response
 - Place each reviewer/editor comment in the document and mention below each (in *italics*) how you have amended (or not and why) the manuscript per their comments
 - Provide the page and/or line number in the manuscript where the change was made, if any
 - Sometimes an explanation is all that is needed and no change to the manuscript is required
 - Sometimes a footnote in the manuscript is better than changing the manuscript text
- Update the article/manuscript as needed
 - Many journals require that you highlight (in yellow or blue) or italicize the areas of the manuscript that have been edited
 - This is not the time to make additional edits unless very minor
 - Format manuscript following the journal style sheet



Accept Decision

- Celebrate for a few days.....!
- Format manuscript following journal style sheet if you haven't already
- Make any final changes requested by the editor
- List your paper as forthcoming on your CV
- You will be asked to review the proofs prior to publication
 - Check the proof carefully and note any typos, missing text, etc.
 - Proof stage is not the time to make new changes



Examples

- Detailed response to review doc
- Marked revised manuscript
- Letter to editor



Response to Review Doc

Response to Editor/Reviewer Comments

Manuscript: The Impacts of Drought on Southwest Tribal Economies

The Authors response to each editor and reviewer comment is provided in italics below each comment. The amended text in the manuscript is highlighted in yellow.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR'S COMMENTS TO AUTHOR:

Associate Editor

Comments to the Author:

Reviewer 2 still has a couple of concerns, which I share. First, the authors need to be more explicit and clear about the difference between county-level impacts and reservation-level impacts of drought. Second, they need to explain better the counterintuitive results that Reviewer 2 notes.

Response: We have addressed these concerns and clarified our assumptions below in our response to reviewer 2. Thank you.

REVIEWER(S) COMMENTS TO AUTHOR:

Reviewer: 1

Recommendation: Accept the paper essentially as it is.

Comments:

My only other suggestion is perhaps to add in the introduction a note about this method being useful to overcome a lack of data at the appropriate geographic scale to isolate the impacts of drought on tribal communities.

Response: Thank you for your comment. We added the following sentence in the Introduction Section on page 4:

“Additionally, we employ an approach to overcoming a lack of agricultural data on the tribal level which may prove useful in the presence of data unavailability for other studies.”

Additional Questions:

Technical Quality. Is the paper technically sound? Are assumptions reasonable and clearly



Additional Questions:

Technical Quality. Is the paper technically sound? Are assumptions reasonable and clearly stated? Do computations seem correct? Are conclusions properly supported by interpreted data? The authors have addressed most of the questions and concerns in regard to technical quality, however, I am a little concerned about being very explicit about what the economic impact results mean. While there is some reference to "total regional impacts" related to each reservation (on page 30), backward, forward, and total impacts are reported for the reservation themselves on page 19. The authors have added the assumption that if a sector exists in a county that that are also present on the reservation (page 20), but this is a very, very generous (and I would argue- incorrect) assumption given that each reservation's model often includes more than 1 county, often more than 3 counties. There are no issues with the direct effects, but as currently reported the paper implies that the total effects are occurring *on reservation*, which is incorrect. Revisions could be made to the titles of Tables 7-12 and throughout the paper to more explicitly describe that the total economic effects are regional effects in the counties of which each reservation lies.

Response: Thank you for pointing this out. We were mistaken in stating that if a sector exists in a county, then its assumed present on the reservation as well. We have removed that statement on page 21. The impacts are indeed regional as stated on page 13. The social accounting matrix (SAM) captures all economic relationships in a region and since the agricultural sectors on the reservation interact with sectors outside the reservation the impacts are indeed regional.

Also, we amended the text to say "reservation area" to clarify that they are not occurring solely on the reservation (see pages 4, 12 and 19 for examples). We also amended tables A1 to A6 (prior tables 7-12) to state reservation area or regional effects. This was also done in new tables 7-8, created based upon your suggestion below.

Marked Revised Manuscript

2010; Bauman et al., 2013). However, few studies examine the economic impacts of drought on tribal communities, and particularly those that are vulnerable to drought due to their location in the arid southwest and their reliance on agriculture for subsistence and cultural traditions. For example, Knutson et al. (2007) estimated that livestock producers in the Hualapai Tribe lost \$1.6 million between 2001 and 2007 because of a 30% herd reduction brought on by a 50% loss in grazing efficiency due to drought.

The current study aims to fill the gap by estimating the impacts of drought on the productivity of selected agricultural sectors, as well as overall impacts to tribal economies in southwestern U.S. **Additionally, we employ an approach to overcoming a lack of agricultural data on the tribal level which may prove useful in the presence of data unavailability for other studies.** In this study we focus on the cattle and hay sectors since cattle and hay production are among the major agricultural activities in the studied region. For example, livestock sales on Navajo Nation are 21% of all agricultural sales, and cattle and calves are the second most important livestock group after sheep and lamb (USDA NASS, 2019). Also, livestock is a traditional source of livelihood and plays a significant role in many tribal economies, including Navajo Nation, San Carlos Apache, White Mountain Apache, Hopi, Uintah and Ouray, and Tohono O’odham Nation (Redsteer et al., 2013).

Nania et al. (2014) provide examples of how climate change and drought impact livestock production in the southwest, focusing on Navajo Nation. They describe how drought impacts availability and rangeland quality, water, and livestock health, as well as what factors



Letter to Editor



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

January 11, 2022

Venki Uddameri, Ph.D., P.E.
Editor-in-Chief
Journal of the American Water Resources Association

Dear Dr. Uddameri,

Please see the attached revised manuscript, "The Impacts of Drought on Southwest Tribal Economies" (with co-authors Tatiana Drugova and Man-Keun Kim) for publication consideration in the *Journal of the American Water Resources Association*. This submission is for the special issue "Severe Sustained Drought Revisited: Managing the Colorado River System in Times of Water Shortage 25 Years Later" edited by Dr. George Frisvold.

We have responded to the comments of the two reviewers in the response to review attached below. We have revised the manuscript accordingly and those edits are highlighted in yellow. Additionally, the manuscript has been reviewed and edited. The manuscript has been edited and is formatted per journal guidelines

Thank you for the opportunity to have our work considered for publication in the *Journal of the American Water Resources Association*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kynda Curtis".

Kynda Curtis, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Applied Economics
Utah State University

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Next

- March 27: Reviewing manuscripts for journals
- April 10: Time management skills



Questions?

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