Publishing in the Business Domain

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The nature of the Ph.D. qualification

- Traditionally, while the master’s degree is a license to practice, a doctoral degree is a license to teach - in a university.

- The concept stems from the need for a faculty member to be an authority, in full command of the subject, right up to the boundaries of current knowledge, and be ABLE TO EXTEND THEM (Phillips and Pugh, 1993).
Becoming a full professional

- That you have something to say that your peers want to listen.
- Must have the astuteness to discover where you can make a useful contribution.
- Must have mastery of appropriate methodology, analysis, theories, style of writing being used and aware of their limitations.
Becoming a full professional contd.

- Your work, deliberation, must be carried out in an international context: your professional peer group is worldwide.

- You must be aware of what is being discovered, argued about, written about and published by your academic community across the world (Phillips and Pugh, 1993).
The route to publication (and tenure) is fraught with undulating experiences but with a view to a “soft landing” for all parties involved (author, editor, reviewers).
Service to the academy is positively correlated with publication idea generation ($r = .59, p < .01$)

- Review manuscripts for journals and conferences
- Networking at academic conferences is key
- Stay in touch with your dissertation team after graduation
- Engage in joint work with colleagues.
Publishing in Top Journals

It’s a *totally* different perspective (Atuahene-Gima, 2009)

- Issue of 2, 3 or 4 sub-studies in an article
- Triangulation research
- Cross-national, Longitudinal research
- Topical research
“A+” journal articles

- J CR - Service quality perceptions among rural consumers in Ghana: rejected after 3 revisions, July 2008 ("the paper has made monumental progress in response to strong criticism on an earlier round of critique - the paper has shifted to a far more interesting positioning than in the earlier paper" AE).
- Currently working on:
  - Two articles for JM (since 2008)
  - One paper for J CR (since 2008).
Achieving Research Productivity

- Try to maintain an attitude of discovery – how can I learn more about this issue?
- Maintain intrinsic motivation – should be interested in the research question(s)
- View research as an on-going activity (work-in-progress) – work everyday by reading, writing, analyzing data. Do not wait for a good time – there isn’t.
- Develop your skills- be a student for life……
Researcher’s Dilemma

How do I know beforehand that my research idea (and paper) will be seen as:

- Making a new contribution,
- Making an interesting contribution, and
- Making an important contribution?
Contribution: What is it?

- To contribute - “join with others in a common cause, give ideas, suggestions”
- To create and diffuse knowledge and understanding - research idea
- What is involved in a contribution?
  - What, where, who, why
- Main source of contribution: why?
- The “why” must be compelling and rigorous
Conceptual Rigor: The “Why”

- Conceptual Rigor means:

  - The extent to which the research program is grounded in the baseline discipline and used a conceptual framework consistent with existing theories in the field.
Why is “why” the main source of contribution?

- Evaluation of theory is done on two fronts (Bacharach 1989):
  - Falsifiability – theory must be constructed in such a way that it can be refuted, “innocent until proven guilty”
  - Utility – the usefulness of theory – it must both explain and predict
    - Explanation – establishes the substantive meaning of constructs, variables, and their linkages
    - Prediction – tests substantive meaning by comparing it to empirical evidence
- A predictive statement alone is not theory
- A predictive statement without explanation is like ancient astronomy (Atuahene-Gima, 2009)
An Example of What Theory is not

- Predictive statement
  - Proposition – the greater the org size, the greater the horizontal differentiation
  - Derived hypothesis – the greater the # of employees, the greater the number of departments

- Only when the researcher shows how and WHY larger organizations have more departments will it be able to explain as well as predict

- Most rejected papers - make predictions but do not provide explanations

- NOTE: Past empirical evidence helps to predict not to explain
Sources of New Contributions

- **Substantive gap** – lack of managerial understanding of “how” to...

- **Theoretical gap** – insufficient explanation or prediction of some phenomena – the “why”

- **Empirical gap** – lack of studies or inconsistent findings on some phenomena – the “where” and “when”

- **Contextual gap** – generalizability (Does context matter?)

*TRY TO MAKE SEVERAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN ONE PROJECT OR PAPER*
Contribution in Business Disciplines

You should answer the key question:

So What?
How To Spot that Great Idea - 3

- Borrow ideas from one research domain and try it out in another domain
  - Dissatisfaction – as a means to balancing exploration and exploitation – Current project - idea borrowed from work on employee dissatisfaction and creativity (AMJ August 2001)

- Investigate an interesting practical conundrum
Making a New and Interesting Contribution

It's a Rhetorical Art

- It is all about how you frame or craft your contribution to the target audience (Atuahene-Gima, 2009)
Rhetorical Practices

- **Intertextual coherence**
  
  Sets the scene for contribution through a process of structuring the field – helps to show the relationship between the extant literature and the current study.

- **Synthesized coherence**
  
  Cite and draw connections between works or streams typically not cited together – network of researchers in disparate areas unaware of commonality – thus common ideas not explored.
Rhetorical Practices

- **Progressive coherence** - indicates researchers linked by shared theoretical perspectives and methods - cumulative knowledge and growth and the construction of consensus
  
  E.g., org design theory and marketing strategy making

- **Noncoherence** - construction of discord among network of researchers
Rhetorical Practices

Problematizing the Situation – calls into question the intertextual field established to locate the current work in order to show how much the offered contribution matters.

This is done in three ways:

- Incompleteness – to develop the field further, specifies where this is to be done (e.g., MO Strength; Dimensions of market Knowledge – JMR 2007)

- Inadequacy – work has overlooked relevant perspectives important to understand the phenomena – contribution is to point out the oversight and introduce different perspective, framework or both (Impact of po strategies on Corporate performance – JAR 2008).
Rhetorical Practices

Incomensurability – claims not only that the literature overlooks different and relevant perspectives but the literature is wrong. Field has moved in the wrong direction – contribution is to point out and correct the error (How does MO affect organizational sensemaking?)
Rhetorical Practices

- **Inadequacy** – work has overlooked relevant perspectives important to understand the phenomena - contribution is to point out the oversight and introduce different perspective, framework or both (MO as process-oriented construct).

- **Incomensurability** – claims not only that the literature overlooks different and relevant perspectives but the literature is wrong. Field has moved in the wrong direction - contribution is to point out and correct the error (How does MO affect organizational sensemaking?)
Rhetorical Practices

To gain favorable attention

- **Title of paper must be provocative**
- Abstract must contain theoretical and practical contributions
- Introduction & positioning - strong positioning of contribution - **be humble but powerful**
- Build sophisticated models and analysis - usually mediating and moderating models
- Discussion must reinforce contribution - to theory, methods, context, etc.
- Use study limitations to reinforce newness and importance of your contribution (Bonsu and Belk - JCR, 2003; Arnold - JCR, 1989)
- For beginners - Follow your favorite authors’ style
Self-assessment: Judging Your Contribution

Three important tests by Don Berg (AMJ 46 (2) 2003)

Is the contribution valuable?
- Does it add insight that is important and relevant for other researchers and/or practitioners?
- Does it extend or revise theory development?
- Would it change development of explanations and how researchers think about the topic? (e.g., Understanding sub-Saharan African culture and International Marketing)
Self-assessment: Judging Your Contribution

- Is the content of the contribution imitable?
  - Are all reasonable competing explanations controlled for either through logic of theoretical model or research method?

- Is the contribution rare?
  - Is the contribution surprising and unexpected?
  - Does it represent novel and unique insight?
  - Is it original?
Is that the end of the story?

No, because for empirical work, lack of methodological rigor (research design, sample, measures, data collection methods and analysis) can kill your new and interesting contribution

- But that is another story to be told another day.
NOTE
EVEN THE FAMOUS GET REJECTED

Why? Because a contribution is a socially constructed phenomena
Revising and Re-submitting Academic Manuscripts

Principles and Rules for revising academic manuscripts – Strutton (2009)
PRI NCI PLES for Revision -

1. *Commit to executing the opportunity* to revise as soon as possible, provide the Editor with a date by which said revised manuscript will be resubmitted, honor that commitment.
PRINCIPLES for Revision –

2. *Re-type* - as opposed to cut and paste
   - the entire set of Reviewers’ and the Editor’s ‘constructive criticisms and suggestions for improvement’.
PRI NCLES for Revision –

Compile these into a ‘Summary of Author Responses to Reviewer (A, B, or C [and-or to the Editor him-herself]) Document’, as Journal and Review needs dictate.

a. Completing this is usually laborious task - allows authors the time and provides them more mental-processing space to more deeply understand Reviewers’ and Editor’s true objections, criticism and underlying intentions.
3. Re-read your original manuscript, start to finish. Along the way, edit it judiciously, by hand. Complete this task prior to responding formally to any single Editorial or Reviewer criticism/suggestion for improvement.
PRINCIPLES for Revision -

4. Prepare mentally for the task ahead. You sometimes may be required to expend roughly as much effort revising as you originally spent writing; that is, if you seek a publications at this journal.

Remember: "The only place where Success arrives before Work is in the dictionary" … Lombardi (c. 1965)
PRI NCI PLES for Revision -

5. Impose appropriate constraints, on yourself. Remember: some manuscripts - revised or otherwise - defend themselves vigorously against being carefully read and considered for publication by virtue of their length.
   a. To the extent possible, write succinctly.
PRINCIPLES for Revision -

b. By contrast, authors should over-execute (over-deliver) in terms of their development of responses to Reviewers and the Editor, specifically in their “Summary of Author Responses” document.

c. Authors should always respond affirmatively to everything each Reviewer and the Editor suggests be done to improve the original manuscript -

Revisions are not matters of pride or opportunities to win arguments. Instead, revisions represent opportunities to get one’s ideas published; nothing more, nothing less.
PRI NCITE PLES for Revision -

6. *Keep the main thing the main thing.* Respond, not just to your satisfaction, but to the satisfaction of critical Reviewers and Editors.

a. What am I explaining in this revision? (Is what I am explaining sufficiently important, and has the case been made with sufficient clarity and forcefulness that whatever I am explaining is sufficiently important?)
b. What am I predicting or trying to predict here? (Am I assessing the right problems/challenges/trends/unresolved questions?)

c. After the justification and foundation for your study has been constructed (or reconstructed), propositions structured (or re-structured), sample frame and methodology selected and executed (or altered or sufficiently defended), data collected and analyzed, you must reframe, reconstruct or refine (Strutton, 2010).
d. inferences/prescriptions: Ask - Are my managerial or theoretical prescriptions correct? Are they defensible and defended? Are they sufficiently compelling (meaning, is anybody in the academy going to care enough to publish them)? Are my prescriptions/normative suggestions based on reliable or valid evidence?
PRINCIPLES for Revision -

7. *Create (or enhance) true value.* The truest measure of any manuscript’s value resides in its capacity to explain, predict and prescribe interesting/important marketing or business phenomena through a reliable and valid methodology.
PRINCIPLES for Revision -

(Ask yourself: Does the revised version of my manuscript ‘past muster’ with regard to each of these three discrete metrics?)

a. If the answer is yes, the manuscript likely is ready for resubmission, because you will have eliminated all substantive rationales on which your manuscript might be rejected?

b. If the answer is no, more work remains to be done (See Principle #4).
RULES for Revisions -

As put by Strutton (2009), when offered the opportunity to revise an original manuscript, you should:
RULES for Revisions -

1. Never argue or disagree with Reviewers or Editors during the revision process. save respectful (i.e., polite, professional) and thoughtful (i.e., fact-based) disagreement exists.

(e.g., a situation might arise if you absolutely could not collect additional data, despite a Reviewer’s request that you do so. Then, you not only could, but indeed must argue for the merits of your current sample frame or data set.)
RULES for Revisions -

2. Never assume anyone – Editors, reviewers, readers – is ever obligated to pay attention to or agree with everything you are saying or how you say it in your resubmission. (This exact prescription applies as well to original manuscript submissions).

Recall, So What?
RULES for Revisions -

3. Never forget to respond clearly, logically and compellingly (fact-based) manner in any aspect of your revision (i.e., the manuscript and ‘summary of author responses’ document.)

If you cannot explain and justify your key points clearly and logically to Editors and Reviewers, you have not engaged successfully in scholarship and greatly diminished your prospects of publication.
RULES for Revisions -

If Reviewers or Editors don’t understand some premise or managerial/theoretical prescription associated with your original or revised manuscript, whose fault is that?

In this regard, when you finish an original manuscript, put it down for two weeks and then re-read it from the perspective of a prospective Reviewer.

1. Ask: Does any part or concept in the manuscript standout as being difficult for others to understand?
2. If so: Clarify…
RULES for Revisions -

When you have revised your original manuscript, put it down for one week, and then re-read it from the perspectives of Reviewer 1, 2, and 3?
RULES for Revisions -

Churchill, W.: “Broadly speaking, short words are the best, and the old words, when short, are best of all.”

- Avoid long wordy sentences.
- If possible, write in active voice not passive voice.
- Write in a simple and straightforward fashion.
RULES for Revisions -

Adhere to “good language” in your original or revised manuscript preparation.

Give the manuscript to colleagues to critically review for you.

Finally, subject it to a thorough editorial review.