Getting Published in PAJAIS: A Practical Guide from the Editors Perspective

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Abstract

In the previous issue, an editorial comment categorized PAJAIS articles in order to provide future authors with the necessary details on how to connect their works with PAJAIS. PAJAIS has been selected to the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) issued by Thomson Reuters Corporation; it is also recorded by the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) Journal Quality List, and the UK-based Association of Business Schools Journal Quality List. This practical guide sets out the basic essential requirements framework for what editors consider a theoretical and/or practical contribution to PAJAIS. It outlines the considerations that are a necessary part of any submission, and describes how future submissions will be evaluated.

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Overall evaluation

We first assess the originality of the manuscript, as well as the clarity of presentation before continuing any review process. All papers submitted to PAJAIS are then assessed for editorial fit with PAJAIS’s scope and standards. PAJAIS will reject a manuscript when it is clearly not within the scope of the journal, has a weak theoretical foundation, or if it deals with a narrow issue that is unlikely to be an important topic in the Pacific Asia region. Our future authors should be aware that their studies must address the interests of our audience. Some questions authors should ask themselves before submitting their papers to PAJAIS are: Do similar topics like yours appear in PAJAIS? Have you considered papers that have appeared in PAJAIS? How do your findings inform the current works in PAJAIS? If the answers to these questions still leave the potential authors in doubt, we invite them to read or reread our editorial comment, “Knowledge Profile in PAJAIS: A Review of Literature and Future Research Directions,” and have them decide if their research can begin to have a conversation with PAJAIS literature. If they wish, they can then carefully reorient their manuscript following this literature review.

All manuscripts should be theoretically and methodologically novel and rich, while balancing the weight and length of each section to produce the most effective report (Colquitt & George, 2011; Grant & Pollock, 2011). We are interested in whether the manuscript seems original, the data is of sufficient quality, and that the paper derives nontrivial conclusions. To make a theoretical or practical contribution to PAJAIS, a manuscript must sufficiently make novel use of, or develop a new theory. Indeed, “theory is King and it is in the evaluation of the theoretical contribution that most reviewers become convinced, or not.” (Straub, 2009, p. vi). Our future authors should effectively dialogue with previous studies that have examined the targeted field or theory, and focus on underlying theoretical and practical issues. Engaging the underlying theoretical narrative explains how the authors’ work fits into the body of literature and highlights potential contributions that could go beyond the current contributions (Sparrowe & Mayer, 2011).

A framework for good papers

We structured the following overarching framework to define a manuscript that is complete and satisfactory. In Table 1, we summarized the detailed criteria for evaluating future submissions into five primary sections: (i) Introduction, (ii) Literature Review, (iii) Methodology and Analysis, (iv) Discussion, and (v) Conclusion. The criteria within the framework relate to the originality of the research, address the adequacy of the methodology and analysis, and the soundness of the literature review.
### Table 1. A framework for good papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Describe the problem or issues that motivate the study</td>
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<td>Position the study relative to other publications in the field</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Outline the aim and purpose of the study/paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Derive the research questions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Define the Unit(s) of Analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Briefly describe the underlying ontology and methods</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Briefly outline the benefits of the study for academics and practitioners</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe the disposition of the paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literature Review</strong></td>
<td>Include at least 4 articles from the last four years</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Critically engage and review, do not summarize</td>
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<td>Outline the knowledge gaps or problematize to realize research opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Methodology and Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Describe methods with sufficient information to facilitate replication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Include a discussion of validity, reliability, ethics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>First provide a descriptive analysis, then an inferential analysis</td>
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<td>Clearly state the results of each proposition/hypothesis test</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion</strong></td>
<td>Benchmark results against other researchers’ results</td>
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<td>Develop or advance the theory</td>
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<td>Outline academic and practitioner implications</td>
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<td>Outline possibilities for future research</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>Summarize the study</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Answer the research question(s)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conclude with the study’s contribution to theory and practice</td>
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</table>

### Introduction

The introduction should identify important business issues in the Pacific Asia region. We expect authors to provide a clear, concise background to their studies and identify any controversy that arises from existing literature - what is known and unknown about the topic. In laying out the issues, authors should try to position their work against other publications in the field and avoid broad generalizations that are not supported by their literature review (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011). This helps define where the targeted theory is relevant and articulates the context of the theory more precisely, so that researchers and practitioners attain a clearer understanding of how and where the research questions arose (Makadok, Burton, & Barney, 2018).

Research questions should be clearly outlined, and the motivation for the work adequately explained. The unit(s) of analysis are often overlooked, which means researchers are unable to make theoretical contributions about whom they are theorizing. Makadok et al. (2018) urge that with careful adjustments, the element of a specific theory at a certain level of analysis could be at least partly relevant to other levels of analysis, and that these adjustments imply a contribution to the targeted theory. In the pursuit of nontrivial and/or popular research questions, sufficient context of theory and appropriate levels of analysis should be provided in the manuscript, in order to enhance theoretical understanding.

### Literature review

A well-written literature review section ensures that a manuscript is grounded, and reflects due diligence on the part of the author regarding existing research. Authors must demonstrate the relevance of the manuscript under review for the PAJAIS.
community. The literature review should not only be current (at least 4 articles from the last four years) but also reflective of the contributions of significant previous research findings. It should illuminate knowledge that is relevant to the research question, if it exists, how the question or problem has been previously addressed (including research designs, methodological concerns, target populations, and theoretical perspectives), and which concepts and variables have been shown to be associated with the research question. The findings of this section will lead naturally to the new concepts and variables introduced by the manuscript, or describe how they are redefined and extended (Makadok et al., 2018).

A literature review is a concise summary of the existing literature, with appropriate references that fit the research context. A literature review is not a summary report. Previous studies must be analyzed, gaps in the research literature must be clearly identified as the basis for the current study (Makadok et al., 2018; Sparrowe & Mayer, 2011). Through the review of previous studies, authors can offer explanations, relate assumptions, and make recommendations taking previous findings and theories into consideration, using them to frame the research question.

Methodology and Analysis

The methodology and analysis sections involve preparing the data for analysis, analyzing the data to answer the research questions, testing the research hypotheses, representing and interpreting the results of the data analysis. Zhang and Shaw (2012) have summarized three C’s - completeness, clarity, and credibility – to assist authors in crafting their methodology and analysis sections. High-quality methodology and sound procedures of data analysis, for both quantitative and qualitative research, evince the conscientiousness and rigor of authors in the preparation of their work.

In quantitative research, the development of the instruments must be sufficiently described and detailed to provide complete transparency. Sampling procedures and the selection method of analytic techniques should also be thoroughly described. In qualitative research, provide a solid chain of evidence, e.g. the content of the structural protocols or interview questions, and the preparation of interviewers and raters must be sufficiently described. Analysis should contain techniques such as peer checking or triangulation that ensures trustworthiness of the data. Within each type of research methodology, samples and methods should be described with sufficient information for replication.

Discussion

The discussion should avoid redundant reporting of numerical results and should open with the most important findings first. Authors should ensure they justify any findings drawn from the results and fully explain the significance of the study. To satisfy the requirement of providing new insights to the current literature body, the discussion must compare and contrast results with previous publications, in either PAJAIS or other MIS journals, and explain these contrasts in great detail. It is important that authors link their findings to previous studies and demonstrate how they have added value to what was previously shown. We also expect that authors can create a constructive bridge between research and practical management.

Authors should also use this section to show how they have moved the targeted theory forward conclusively. This section brings closure to a study by relating the revealed theoretical implications to previous studies, and also develops a new theoretical understanding (Geletkanycz & Tepper, 2012). In this exploration and addition of a new direction to the targeted theory, there are four suggested strategies (Geletkanycz & Tepper, 2012). First, examine the causal explanations that enrich the understanding of the targeted theory. Second, explore and reveal unexpected boundary conditions or even assumptions which can provide new
insights to previously overlooked gaps. Third, test alliterative explanations that can reflect key differentiating aspects among theoretical perspectives. Last, discover unsupported hypotheses to inform theoretical development.

**Conclusion**

Provide an overall summary to list the strengths, weaknesses, and unexpected outcomes of the study. Authors need to summarize the major findings and contribution(s) to existing knowledge. Conclusions must be well stated and linked to the original research question, rather than drawing broad conclusions about the findings (Geletkanycz & Tepper, 2012). To disambiguate, the Discussion section includes interpretations of theoretical findings and practical implications, whereas the Conclusion section solidifies the theoretical significance of the research.

**Summary**

We intend to publish papers that have an interesting topic and solid theoretical foundation. This practical guide provides a basic framework to explain how and why editors consider a manuscript to be complete and satisfactory. We are very fortunate that many authors have been, and continue to be, willing to contribute their work to PAJAIS. We are hopeful that prospective authors will find this commentary beneficial to their research writing and that it will encourage them to continue publishing with us.

**References**


