

Bielefeld University Welcome Center
Academics in Sub-Saharan Africa
12 May 2017

The dos and the don'ts of submission to a journal
Hints for young researchers

Kurt Salentin

International Journal of Conflict and Violence (IJCV)



Focus of this presentation

- Young researchers are young authors
- Publish or perish
- Priority to peer-reviewed journal articles
- Some rules of scientific communication
- What journal reviewers pay attention to
- Frequent problems
- What you can do to improve your papers

Scientific communication: How to address your audience

- Make explicit why your contribution matters.
This is less obvious to the reader than to yourself.
- Locate your contribution in an on-going conversation or dispute.
- Be familiar with relevant literature.
- What is the problem that you solve? Choose a clear focus!
- Refer to open questions
- State which innovation your paper provides

Adhere to rules of scientific communication

- Explain comprehensibly how you arrive at your findings
- No frills, no detours:
Make sure everything you write contributes to the core argument
- Convince the audience you know more than them and they can learn something from you.
- Know what can be taken for granted (theories, methods, findings).
- Do not bother readers with commonplaces.
- Know the journal to which you submit:
study its scope, tradition, and formal requirements



International Journal of Conflict and Violence - ijcv.org

- founded in 2007
- independent
- peer reviewed
- included in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI)
- true open access, no authors' fees
- authors from 50+ countries

IJCv review criteria: grounds for approval or rejection

Manuscript Evaluation Form for reviewers:

Assessment

	Poor	Marginal	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
Pertinence to the Focus of the Journal	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Importance of Findings (Is the 'value added' significant?)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Adequacy of Literature Review	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Methodological Adequacy	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Clarity of Presentation (concepts, clarity of objections, organisation of the manuscript)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Validity of Conclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Overall Recommendation

- Accepted for publication without any revision
- Accepted for publication pending minor revision (as explained below)
- Conditionally recommended, but close revision and resubmission necessary
- Not acceptable, for reasons given below

IJCV review criteria

- Pertinence to the focus of IJCV
- Importance of findings:
Is there a significant contribution to knowledge?
- Adequacy of literature review
- Methodological adequacy
- Clarity of presentation:
concepts, objectives, argumentation, organisation of manuscript
- Validity of conclusions

IJCV manuscript rejections

- 50-80% of all submissions rejected
- higher risk for
 - young researchers
 - authors from the Global South

Frequent problems (1)

no access to scientific resources

- no access to costly books and journals
- popular vs. scholarly literature
- grey literature
- outdated literature
- local/national literature only

Consequences of deficient literature review

- Readers will not expect you contribute anything new if you are unaware of the old.
- Scientific communication tolerates no national borders.
- Reviewers will consider you an amateur or a newbie from which the reader cannot learn anything.
- Reviewers are adamant: They either not aware of access problems or they consider it "no excuse".

Frequent problems (2)

Lack of resources for primary research

- Desk research cannot substitute fresh evidence
- Value added by desk research is difficult to show
- Dedicated review articles are possible but demand absolute state of the art knowledge including long term trends

Frequent problems (3)

Disregard of rules of communication

- Promises not kept (title, introduction, abstract)
- Answer questions you have not asked in the introduction
- No clear focus (*giant slalom* problem)
- Re-discover what readers already know
- Conclusions not backed by evidence
- Opinion instead of facts

Frequent problems (3):

Disregard of formal requirements

- manuscript too long
- manuscript not anonymous
- citation style does not comply
- footnotes/endnotes not as expected
- etc.

Miscellaneous Hints

- Develop your article with an experienced mentor
- Consider co-authorship for your first attempts
- "Internal review": Listen to peers' critique before submission
- Rewrite comprehensively if necessary

Before submission:

- Carefully read author guidelines of each journal you consider
- Observe size limits and formal stipulations
- Let a native speaker check your language

Keep in mind:

- Rejection is a normal thing
- Happens to big shots, too
- At second glance reviewers' critique is justified more often than not
- Learn from rejections
- Revise and try again!

Thank you for your attention.

Kurt Salentin - ijcv@uni-bielefeld.de