Journal Club Presentation
on

# Meeting Criteria of Quality Research Journals

by
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# Research Paper

Reports on any type of research undertaken by the author(s), including:

- The construction or testing of a model or framework
- Action research
- Testing of data, market research or surveys
- Empirical, scientific or clinical research
- Papers with a practical focus

-***Emerald Publishing***

# Research Paper

Manuscripts reporting original research, typically containing between 6,000 and 12,000 words

***SAGE Publishing***

Articles containing developments on a specific topic, significant data, methods and outcomes

***Elsevier***

# Research Paper – Typical Structure

- Title
- Abstract
- Key words
- Introduction
- LR – Theoretical background and Hypothesis
- Research Methodology
- Measures
- Data analysis
- Results
- Discussion
- Implications – Theoretical & Practical
- Limitations and Scope for future research
- Conclusion
- References
- Appendix/ Exhibits

# Quality Research Paper - Attributes

## Choice of Research Topic: Questions

- What is the importance of the research topic to the existing body of knowledge?
- What are the research questions and its relevance to different readership groups?
- What are the significant contributions that the research endeavour makes to the existing literature(s)?

# Quality Research Paper - Attributes

**Choice of research topic: Questions**

- Which methodologies and measurement procedures will ensure capturing high-quality data for answering the specified research questions?
- What meaningful story can be told by addressing the expressed research questions?
- What will be the appropriate targeted journal for a research endeavour?

***David J. Ortinau (2014)***

***Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice***

# Quality Research Paper - Attributes

- **Five distinct criteria:**
  - Significance: Taking on the "Grand Challenges"
  - Novelty: Changing the Conversation
  - Curiosity: Catching and Holding Attention
  - Scope: Casting a Wider Net
  - Actionability: Insights for Practice

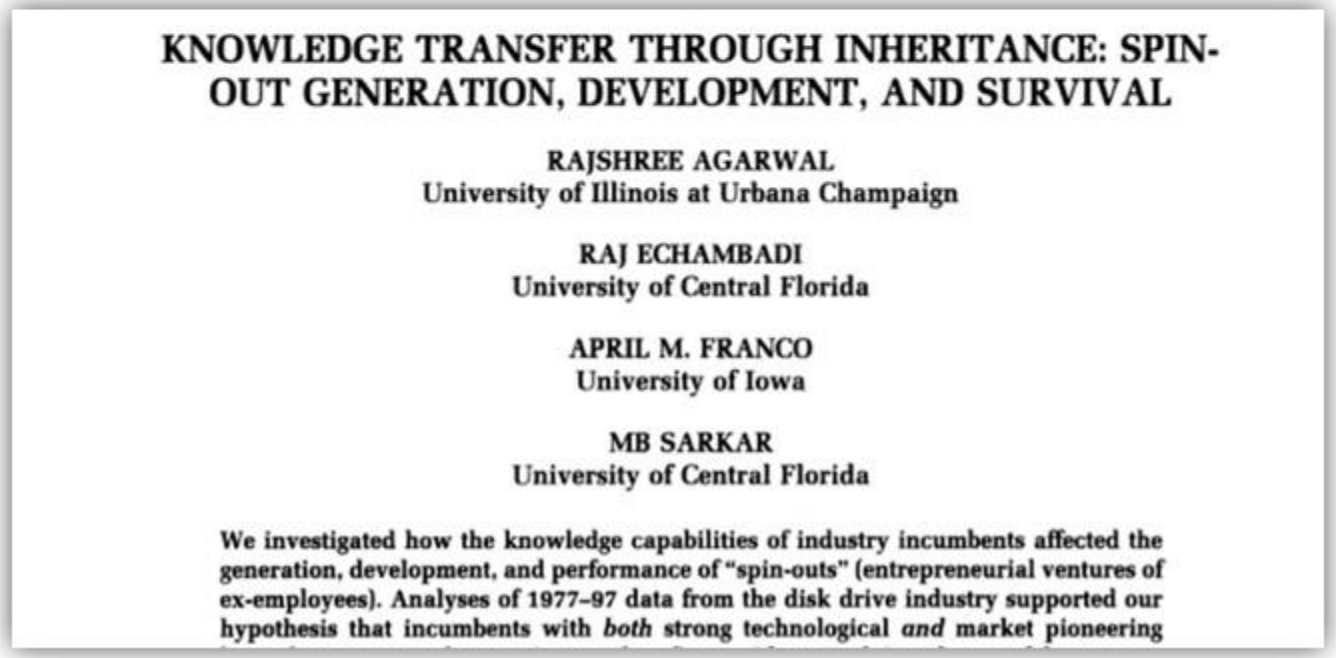
*-Academy of Management Journal*

# Quality Research Paper - Attributes

- **Five distinct criteria:**
  - Significance: Taking on the "Grand Challenges"

# Quality Research Paper - Attributes

- **Five distinct criteria:**
  - Novelty: Changing the Conversation
    - New Direction – Forming new ideas/ constructs/ knowledge recombination (i.e. bridging two different literatures)



**KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER THROUGH INHERITANCE: SPIN-OUT GENERATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND SURVIVAL**

**RAJSHREE AGARWAL**
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

**RAJ ECHAMBADI**
University of Central Florida

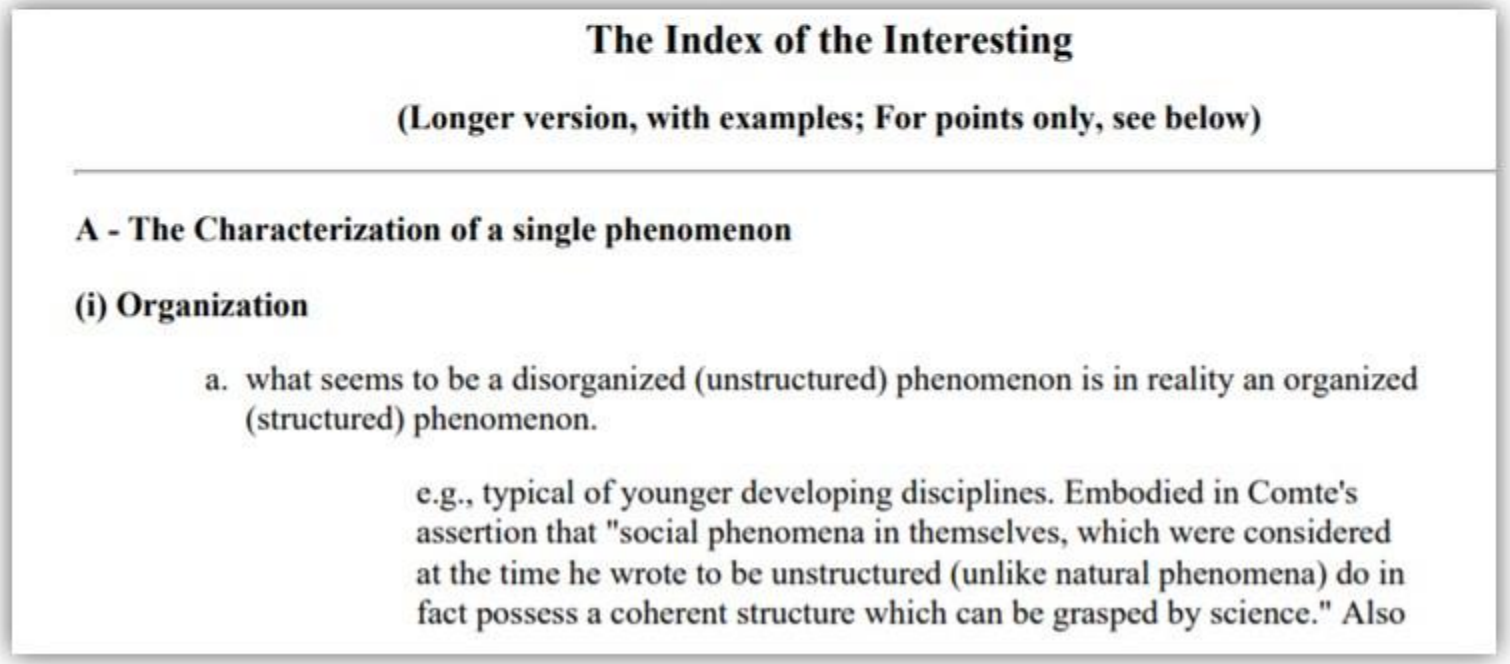
**APRIL M. FRANCO**
University of Iowa

**MB SARKAR**
University of Central Florida

We investigated how the knowledge capabilities of industry incumbents affected the generation, development, and performance of "spin-outs" (entrepreneurial ventures of ex-employees). Analyses of 1977–97 data from the disk drive industry supported our hypothesis that incumbents with *both* strong technological *and* market pioneering

# Quality Research Paper - Attributes

- **Five distinct criteria:**
  - Curiosity: Catching and Holding Attention
    - *"Topics are interesting when their propositions counter a reader's taken-for-granted assumptions"* Davis (1971)



**The Index of the Interesting**

**(Longer version, with examples; For points only, see below)**

**A - The Characterization of a single phenomenon**

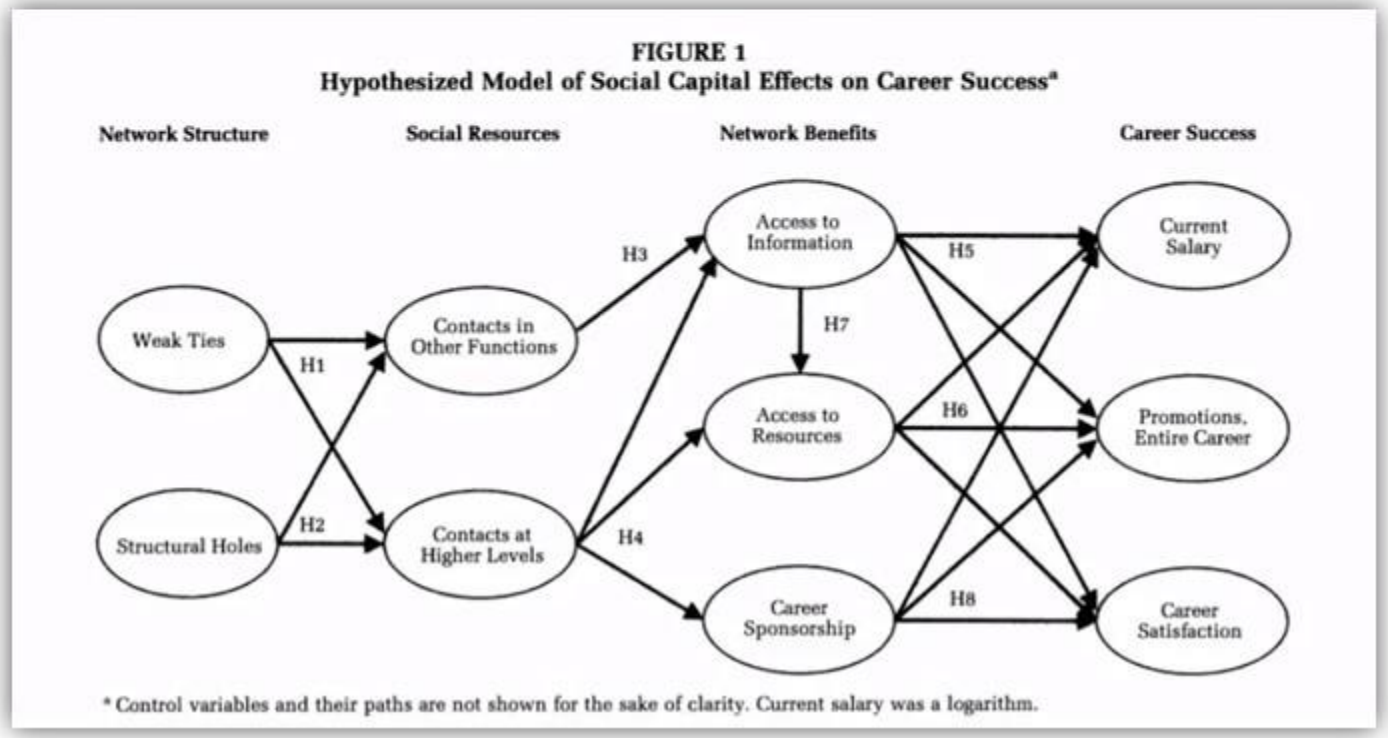
**(i) Organization**

a. what seems to be a disorganized (unstructured) phenomenon is in reality an organized (structured) phenomenon.

e.g., typical of younger developing disciplines. Embodied in Comte's assertion that "social phenomena in themselves, which were considered at the time he wrote to be unstructured (unlike natural phenomena) do in fact possess a coherent structure which can be grasped by science." Also

# Quality Research Paper - Attributes

- **Five distinct criteria:**
  - Scope: Casting a Wider Net
    - E.g. A Social Capital Theory of Career Success



# Quality Research Paper - Attributes

- **Five distinct criteria:**
  - Actionability: Insights for Practice
    - Meaningful insights for managerial or organizational practice
    - Vermeulen (2007) – Research has relevance when it can generate insights that practitioners find useful, especially if it concerns variables that are within the control of managers

# Quality Journals - Indexing bodies

- UGC CARE List
- Scopus
- ABDC (Australia & New Zealand) - A*, A, B, C
- ABS (UK) – 4, 3, 2, 1
- CNRS (France) – Rank 1, Rank 2, Rank 3, Rank 4
- FT50 – Financial Times 50 Journals
- UT Dallas List of Publications

# Quality Journals – Manuscripts' Rejection Major Reasons

**"Why referees reject manuscripts"**

- Journal of hospitality & tourism research (2007)

**Scopus & ABDC 'A' journal**

# Introduction & Literature Review (LR)

- Top information sciences journals: manuscript acceptance only 10% to 15% (Straub, Ang, & Evaristo, 1994)
- Leading marketing journals: around 10% acceptance, 80% rejected at the first review round (Summers, 2001)
- Some papers are bad fits for the journal (Aims & Scope) and would be received more favorably had they been submitted elsewhere.

# Introduction & Literature Review (LR)

- Other major issues:
  - Lack of contribution to knowledge
  - Poor writing style
  - Issues with development of the theory or framework

  (Czyzewski & Dickinson, 1990; Glogoff, 1988; Gorman, 2000; Kassirer & Campion, 1994: McConnell, 2000; Pierson, 2004: Straub et al., 1994)

# Introduction & Literature Review (LR)

- Holschuh (1998) - major reasons:
  - Research that does not contribute anything new to the field of study
  - Problems in the design
  - Implementation of the research
  - Problems related to the quality of the writing itself.
  - Many authors have difficulty in stating clearly the importance of the study and its significance

# Introduction & Literature Review (LR)

- Yuksel (2003) - 43 reviewers - eight key areas for empirical papers:
  - Contribution to knowledge
  - Innovation and originality
  - Meeting journal objectives
  - Clarity of writing
  - Use of literature
  - Quality of the argument made
  - Research methodology and data analysis
  - Research implications

# Introduction & Literature Review (LR)

- Bonjean and Hullum (1978) - systematic analysis of 600 rejection letters:
  - Unimportant or insignificant contributions were identified most often, reflecting about 30% of the reasons given.
  - Specifically, papers were rejected because they were seen to add nothing new to the knowledge and understanding of the subject, or made little or no attempt to relate the empirical research to some theoretical construct.

# Introduction & Literature Review (LR)

- Bonjean and Hullum (1978) - systematic analysis of 600 rejection letters:
  - Methodological problems ranked second and represented about one fourth of all reasons for rejection.
  - The use of an unsound theoretical framework ranked third, followed by the failure of the manuscript to meet the journal's criteria and poor presentation.

# Introduction & Literature Review (LR)

- Bordage (2001) - content analysis of reviewer comments - 123 manuscripts:
  - Problems with the results section were identified most frequently, due to the inappropriate use of statistics and the mis-/ over-/ under interpretation of the results.
  - A failure to identify the problem statement clearly and frame it in the literature emerged as the second most commonly cited reason.
  - Weaknesses in the instrumentation, data collection, and sampling ranked next.

# Methodology

- A quantitative analysis of 373 referee reports, since 2000, where rejection or major revisions were recommended to 76.5% of submissions.

- 104 criteria were identified that could be grouped into 17 broad categories.

- Nine of these categories relate to specific sections of the paper, such as the abstract, introduction, literature review, method, sampling, data analysis, discussions, conclusions, and references.

# Methodology

- Other eight categories addressed more fundamental issues relating to the paper's significance, its writing style, the appropriateness for the journal, overall organization, rigor, whether the paper was plagiarized in whole or in part, whether it followed the journal guidelines, and finally, whether any sections were missing.

- Content analysis (i.e. a technique used for gathering and analyzing the content of text) was done by the 5 authors – each of them reviews between 25 and 30 manuscripts annually, and have been appointed to more than 30 editorial boards, and have collectively published more than 250 refereed journal articles

# Findings

**Table 1**
**Rank Order of Deficiencies Cited in Manuscripts (% of manuscripts reviewed)**

| Category | % of Manuscripts |
|---|---|
| Methodology | 74.3 |
| Significance / "so what" | 60.3 |
| Writing style | 58.4 |
| Literature review section of paper | 50.9 |
| Data analysis section of paper | 42.1 |
| Organization | 34.6 |
| Quality and rigor | 30.0 |
| Sampling | 29.2 |
| Conclusions section of paper | 27.6 |
| Discussions section of paper | 25.2 |
| Reference section of paper | 23.6 |
| Appropriateness of the paper for the journal | 16.1 |
| Failure to follow journal guidelines | 14.2 |
| Introduction section of paper | 14.2 |
| Manuscript is incomplete (sections missing) | 7.0 |
| Abstract section of the paper | 3.2 |
| Paper plagiarized or published elsewhere | .8 |

# Findings

**Table 2**
**Methodological Issues**

| Issue | % of Manuscripts |
|---|---|
| Method not explained, explained poorly or in a confusing manner | 32.2 |
| Terms not defined well | 19.8 |
| Method chosen is weak, unreliable, or problematic for the problem being studied | 18.5 |
| Research instrument or questionnaire not explained or explained poorly | 15.0 |
| Wrong method | 9.4 |
| Poor operationalization of variables and/or selection of variables not justified | 8.0 |
| Poor questionnaire design | 7.2 |
| Method not justified if justification is needed | 5.9 |
| Sample size calculated incorrectly | 5.1 |
| Lack of available data, including small dataset, or unreliable data | 5.1 |
| Limitations in method not stated | 5.1 |
| Old dataset used | 3.8 |
| Poor hypothesis formulation | 2.9 |
| Failed to explain data source | 2.7 |
| Irrelevant information included in method section (i.e., results) | 1.9 |
| Research instrument wrong and/or cannot answer question | 1.3 |
| Unethical method used | .9 |
| Does not understand method | .3 |

# Findings

- Two broad categories can be observed:
  - Failure to explain the method adequately
  - Technical concerns about the validity of the method chosen or its application
- One in five manuscripts adopted a method that was unsuitable for the type of research undertaken
- One in 10 manuscripts simply used the wrong method

# Findings

- Many authors appear to be genuine enthusiasts of the topic being examined or the method used. Their enthusiasm seems, at times, to curb their ability to analyze critically the validity of the method or the reliability of the results it produces

# Findings

- **E.G. 1** a manuscript "proved" the potential market for a special interest product was 200 times larger than the existing, mature market – received following comment
  - *"Simply stated the results are incredible in the sense of being unbelievable . . . A much more interesting paper would be to write a cautionary tale about the risks of conducting such research using a naive instrument and flawed methodology that concludes enormous market potential when, in reality, none exists."*

# Findings

- **E.G. 2** Likewise, an advocate of a particular forecasting technique believed it could predict the impact of periodic shocks on tourism systems, even though the data clearly showed this was not the case. The following comment was offered:
  - *"rejection of the paper is recommended, as the author demonstrates conclusively that the [xyz] model is not a valid predictor for [abc] catastrophic event . . . The author could re-write the paper showing how poorly forecasting models work in forecasting catastrophic effects"*

# Findings

- Problems with sampling were also identified in about 30% of cases

**Table 3**
**Sampling Issues**

| Issue | % of Manuscripts |
|---|---|
| Sample size and/or population poorly explained | 16.4 |
| Sample too small | 8.0 |
| Wrong population or sample selected and/or failed to represent the results/response rate too low | 6.2 |
| Sample size not stated | 1.3 |
| Misuse of terms (i.e., random when convenience was used) | 1.1 |
| Attempt to obscure flaws in sampling | .3 |

# Findings

**Table 4**
**Significance / So What**

| Issue | % of Manuscripts |
|---|---|
| Study fails to make a significant contribution to literature and/or lacks "so what" implications | 45.6 |
| Nothing new and/or replication of other work | 13.4 |
| No purpose or need for this study | .3 |

- Around 60% of the manuscripts were rejected due to Significance and/or "so what" issue

# Findings

- Editors say *"a paper must make a substantive contribution, either theoretically or methodologically or it should be rejected"*

- Response to superficial paper: *"this manuscript reads like a student's term paper. Nothing new is offered. The information in the paper is pretty much common sense and has been published in textbooks and earlier journal articles."*

- Another comment*: "the authors wander far from the stated title and objectives of the paper. Indeed, they seem more intent on trying a variety of qualitative and quantitative statistical methods rather than answering the research question."*

# Findings

| Quality of Writing | % |
|---|---|
| Poor, sloppy grammar, punctuation, spelling, proofreading | 37.3 |
| Inappropriate wordings and/or terms used | 11.0 |
| Inappropriate title used | 9.1 |
| Quality of English writing (not readable) | 6.2 |
| Paper is overwritten or underwritten | 5.4 |
| Did not focus on argument made and/or stated title | 4.3 |
| Lack of comprehensibility and/or could not determine the argument being made | 3.2 |
| Shallow and/or insufficient scope of argument | .3 |

# Findings

| Organization of Paper | % |
|---|---|
| Tables, figures, and diagrams presented poorly | 18.0 |
| Too much superfluous information and/or repetitive | 7.5 |
| Misdirected, confusing presentation and/or lacking in flow | 4.8 |
| Too many tables, figures, and diagrams | 4.3 |
| Sections not integrated | 3.8 |
| Trying to do too much and/or focus in one issue, or divide into multiple papers | 2.7 |
| Poor arrangement of subdivisions | 2.4 |
| Problematic numbers | 2.4 |
| Irrelevant tables included | 1.1 |
| Failure to provide sufficient details | .5 |

# Findings

| Rigor | % |
|---|---|
| Contains factual errors, unsubstantiated arguments, or misleading information | 16.4 |
| Overall lack of rigor throughout | 9.9 |
| No empirical testing of ideas and/or hypotheses | 3.2 |
| Ignored existing literature sources | 2.7 |
| Fundamentally flawed in conceptualization | 2.4 |
| Project sliced too thin | .8 |

- Rigor refers to the soundness or precision of a study in terms of planning, data collection, analysis, and reporting

# Findings

- Manuscripts with spelling and grammatical errors and those that are not carefully proofread are likely to receive a negative reaction from the referee.

- *"There are numerous grammatical and logical faults throughout the entire manuscript. I have basically stopped copy-editing the manuscript after the first sentence. The author should have found a professional editor to proofread the manuscript before sending it to a refereed research journal."*

# Findings

- *"Careless editing—how can an article be submitted with question marks on references—should reviewers make a guess?"*

- For Poor Structure: *"the paper never really gets started. By page 8, the authors are still telling us what they intend to do in the paper. By page 18 the reader is still waiting to see what the paper is all about."*

# Findings

**Table 6**
**Literature Review**

| Issue | % of manuscripts |
|---|---|
| Failure to place the study in a broader context | 25.7 |
| Failure to establish theoretical framework, if needed | 12.6 |
| Old and/or outdated sources | 8.3 |
| No critical evaluation of the literature | 5.9 |
| Literature review not relevant to study | 4.3 |
| Poor referencing | 3.8 |
| Did not cite key sources | 3.2 |
| Too short or too long | 1.9 |
| Repetitive | .8 |
| Reference stacking (too many references for too few points being made) | .3 |
| Plagiarism | .3 |
| Contradictory—the literature review argues against itself | .3 |

# Findings

- About one half of the rejected manuscripts had weak literature reviews.
- Two key roles of the literature review, contextualization and conceptualization, were often poorly addressed
- One manuscript was rejected because “this paper is concerned with [a certain type of] tourism but it does not mention a single published study in the area”
- Another one was not supported because “the author ignored completely the latest development in tourism [topic].”

# Findings

| Analysis | % |
|---|---|
| Results interpreted incorrectly | 18.5 |
| Mode of analysis poorly explained | 9.9 |
| Does not answer question | 9.4 |
| Wrong technique used | 7.5 |
| Technique used is too simple for the journal | 2.7 |
| Technique used inappropriately | 2.4 |
| Misuse of terms (i.e., significant) | 1.9 |
| Failure to analysis sample size and/or population | 1.3 |
| Technique not justified, if required | .8 |
| Fail to provide statistical results | .8 |
| Confusing presentation of the data | .5 |

Poor data analysis affected about 40% of rejected manuscripts

# Findings

| Discussion | % |
|---|---|
| Unsubstantiated claims or editorial comments made | 9.4 |
| Discussion is contradictory and argues against itself | 4.8 |
| Findings are not related to the study | 4.6 |
| Lacks depth and/or too simple | 3.8 |
| Findings do not flow logically from the data | 2.1 |
| Irrelevant information included (i.e., results) | 1.9 |
| Validity tests not conducted and/or poorly conducted | 1.3 |
| Repetitive | 1.3 |
| Too much information. The story gets lost in the minutiae of the data | .8 |
| Findings not related to the literature | .8 |
| Does not answer question | .5 |

| Conclusions | % |
|---|---|
| No implications stated and/or weak conclusion | 11.5 |
| Conclusions not warranted from data | 8.0 |
| No recommendations or recommendations too simplistic, shallow, or wrong | 6.4 |
| Conclusions not relevant to paper | 2.7 |
| Not integrated in paper | .3 |

# Findings

- Deficiencies in the discussion and conclusions sections affected about one fourth each.

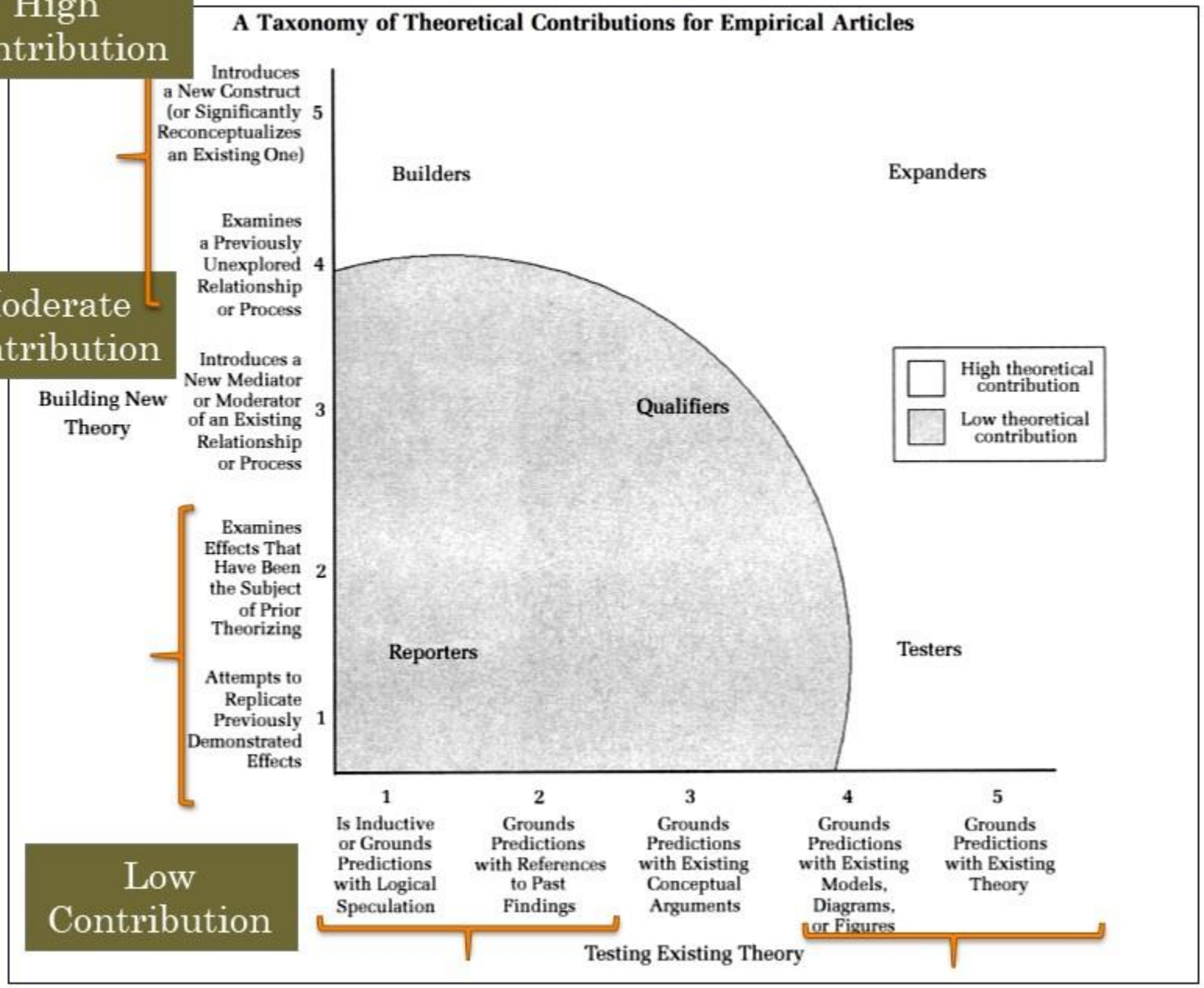
- Discussion and conclusions sections often include material that is not relevant to the study or cannot be warranted by the data.

# Top Tier Quality Journals' Expectations

High Contribution

Moderate Contribution

Low Contribution




**Trends in theory building and theory testing: a Five-decade study of the academy of Management journal (2007)**

# Learnings shared by the Participants Post presentation

- It is important to go in depth of different aspects of the research study
- We need to be careful about the Writing (grammar & proofreading) part
- Methodology to be selected and written appropriately in the research paper
- Focus on Significance and 'So-what'
- Write meaningful insights linked with the Findings in the 'Discussion' and 'Conclusion' part
- While finalizing the topic, consider 5 distinct criteria: Significance, Novelty, Curiosity, Scope & Actionability
- Ensure that research study is relevant to the readership groups
- Focus on overall structure of the research paper
- Understand the Journal requirements from Editors' and Reviewers' perspective before finalizing and submitting your research paper

# Thank You