

Elsevier Author Workshop: How to Prepare a Manuscript for International Journals

Sponsored by Elsevier and
China Economic Review



Overview

- Introduction to Elsevier
- Current state of research and output
- Why do we publish?
- What is a “good” manuscript?
- How to prepare a “good” manuscript for an international journal
 - Preparations before writing
 - Construction of a manuscript
 - Some technical details that need special attention
 - Language

Introduction to Elsevier

- 2,000+ journals
- 7,000+ editors
- 70,000+ board members
- 265,000 articles a year
- 10+ million articles on ScienceDirect, going back to 1823 (The Lancet)
- 350 million downloads a year by 13 million users



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SCIENCE  DIRECT®



ELSEVIER

Economics and Finance at Elsevier

- 80 Journals
- All International
- All English language
- Many of the top journals
- Virtually all journals are included in ISI

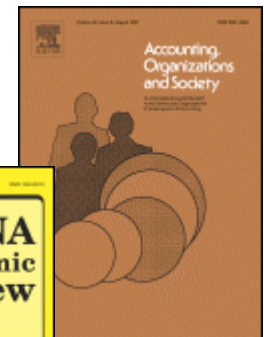
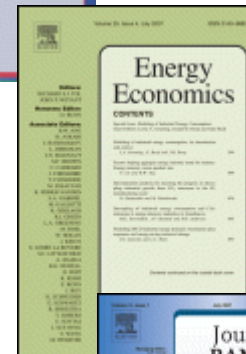
Main subject areas covered

Macroeconomics

Microeconomics

Econometrics

Finance



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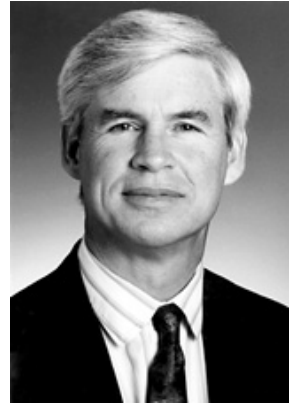
Nobel prize winners publish with Elsevier



James J. Heckman



Robert J. Aumann



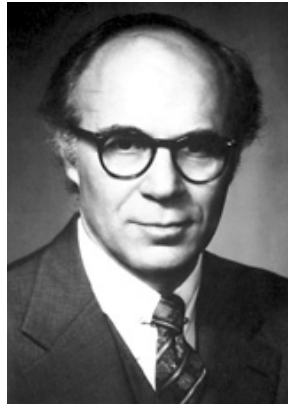
Robert F. Engle



Eric S. Maskin



Finn E. Kydland



Lawrence R. Klein

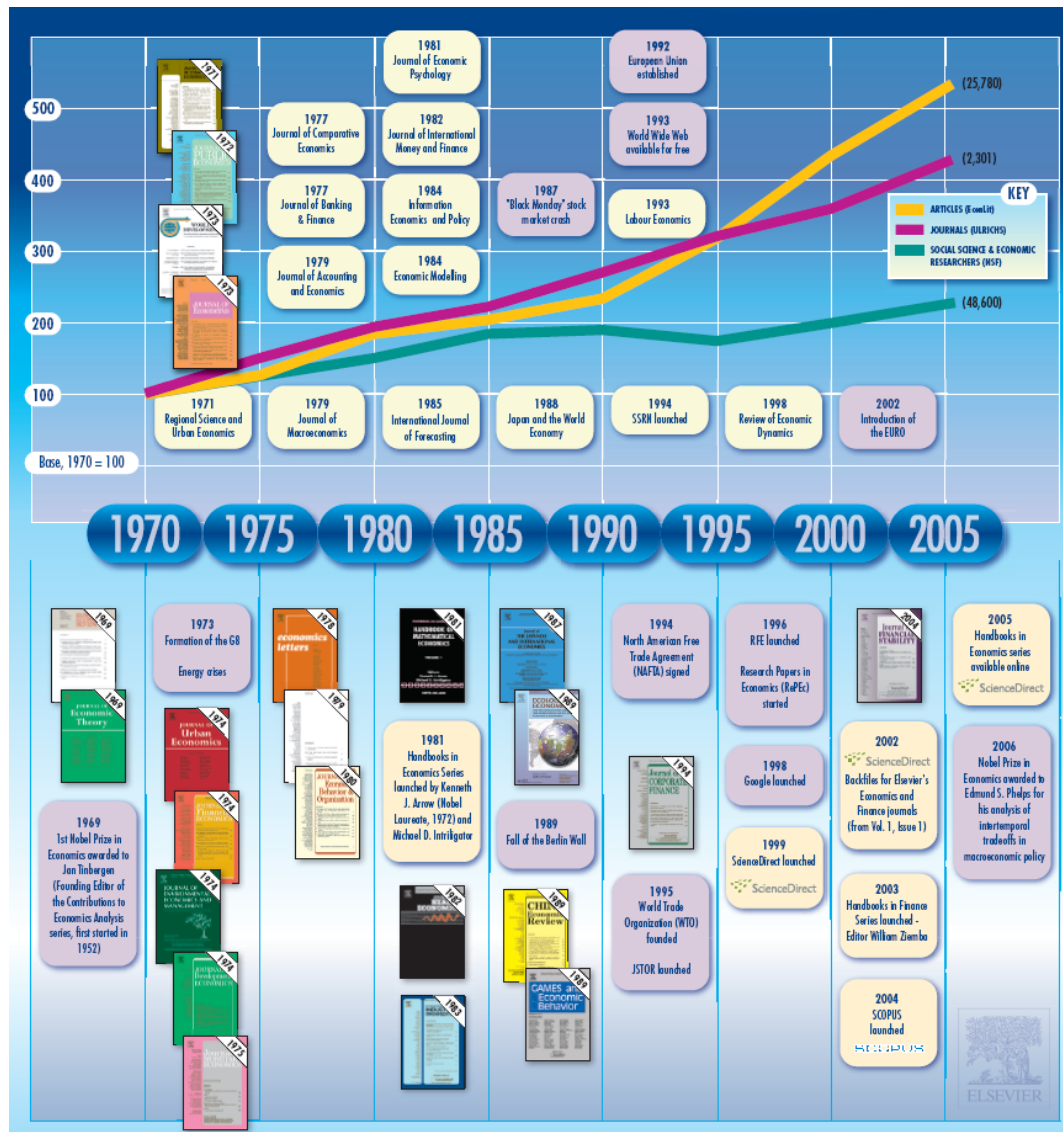


Kenneth J. Arrow



Elinor Ostrom

Growth in Economic research and output 1969-2006



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China - Some figures (Economics only)

2008

82,129 in higher educational institutions,
7,953 Senior staff,
22,814 sub –senior

144,049 Bachelors,
15,835 Masters,
2,274 Doctors;

Total enrolments – 668,269 undergraduates, 59,282 postgraduates

- Source: Statistics on Higher Education at <http://www.moe.edu.cn>

Some more figures

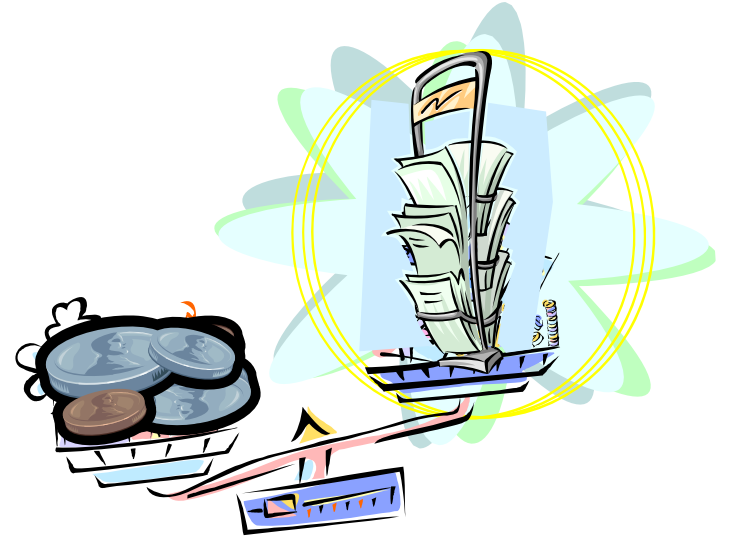
1,012 journals in economics and management, 98 included in the Chinese Social Science citation source (2010-2011)

- 215 Comprehensive Economics & Management
- 116 Macroeconomics & Sustainable Development
- 161 Industrial Economics
- 101 Agricultural Economics
- 95 Finance, taxes
- 88 Commerce & Trading
- 51 Accounting & Auditing
- 23 Telecom & Post Economics
- 21 Transportation Economics
- 32 Management Sciences
- 10 Operation & Decision
- ...99 in other smaller categories

Source: <http://acad.cnki.net/>

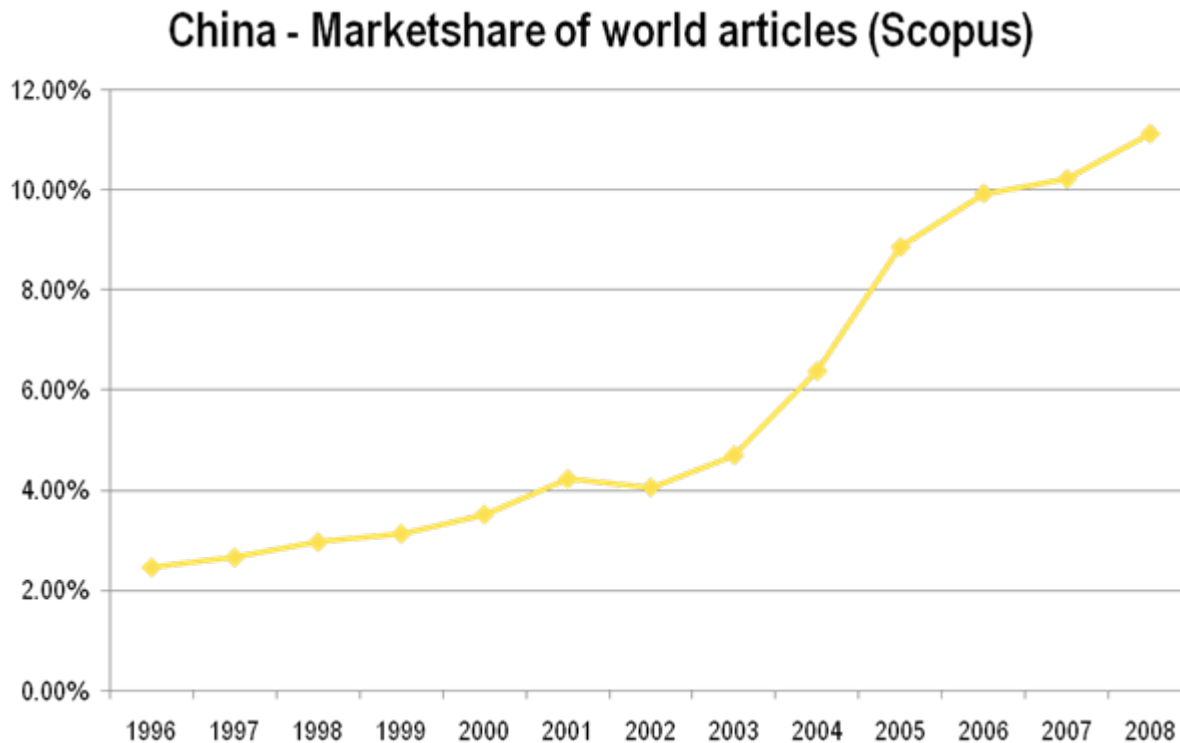


The Current Situation of Chinese Publications



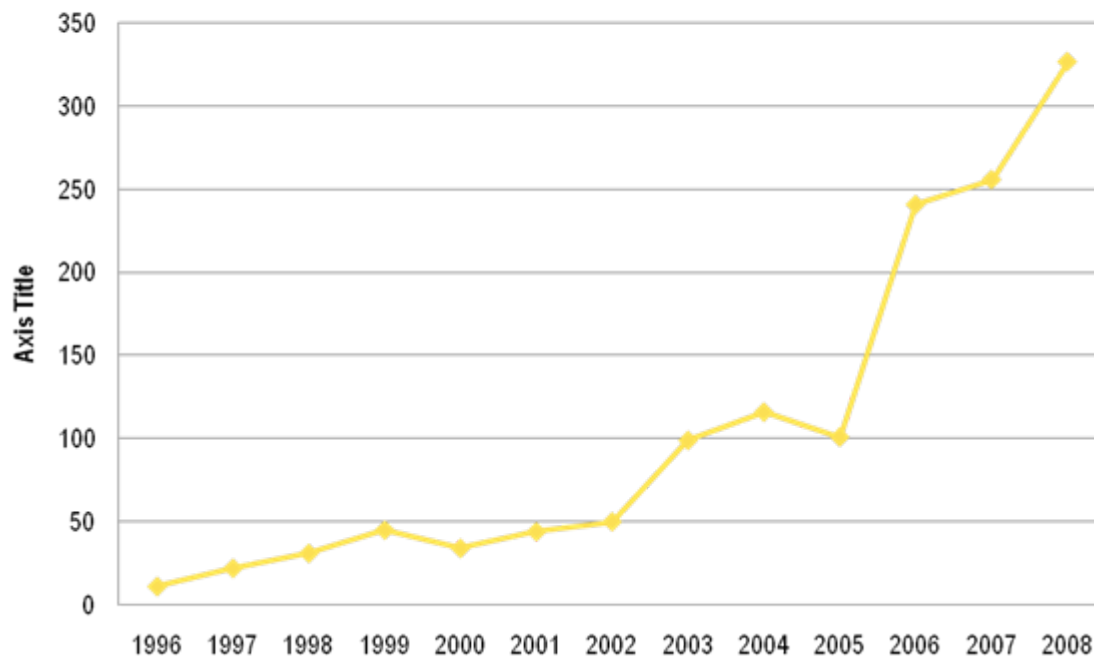
- Extreme growth of **quantity**
- Growth of **quality** still needed → low impact

China-Marketshare of world articles

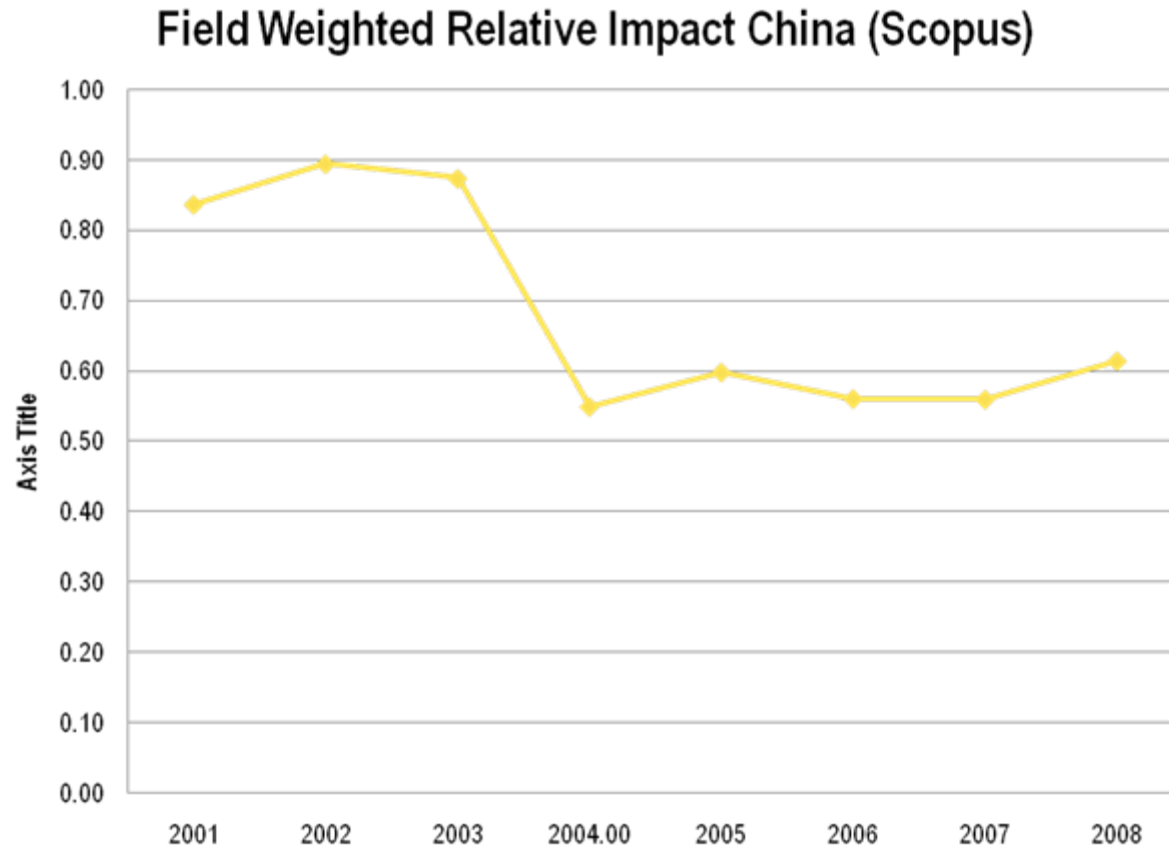


China papers published in international journals

China- Growth in Economics and Econometrics
Articles per Year (Scopus)



China - Relative Impact of Papers



From Yu & Gao: China Economic Review (accepted for publication)

Table 1 The 20 Most Published Journals by Chinese Institutions (2000-2009)

	Journal Name	Number of Publications	Percent (%)
1	CHINA & WORLD ECONOMY	101	5.35
2	INSURANCE MATHEMATICS & ECONOMICS	95	5.03
3	CHINA ECONOMIC REVIEW	85	4.50
4	ECONOMICS LETTERS	82	4.34
5	JOURNAL OF BANKING & FINANCE	74	3.92
6	APPLIED ECONOMICS LETTERS	53	2.81
7	JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE ECONOMICS	47	2.49
8	JOURNAL OF ECONOMETRICS	46	2.44
9	ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS	38	2.01
10	APPLIED ECONOMICS	36	1.91
11	JOURNAL OF FINANCIAL ECONOMICS	36	1.91
12	JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC DYNAMICS & CONTROL	34	1.80
13	HEALTH ECONOMICS	29	1.54
14	JOURNAL OF DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS	26	1.38
15	ECONOMIC MODELLING	25	1.32
16	WORLD ECONOMY	25	1.32
17	ECONOMIC THEORY	24	1.27
18	JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC BEHAVIOR & ORGANIZATION	24	1.27
19	PACIFIC ECONOMIC REVIEW	24	1.27
20	WORLD DEVELOPMENT	24	1.27
	Summary	928	49.13

Note: The total number of the publication is 1889.



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From Yu and Gao: Universities by Publications in SSCI Journals 2005-2009

Institutions	P	
	Value	Rank
Hong Kong Univ. Sci. & Tech.	110	4
Chinese Univ. Hong Kong	127	2
Peking University	149	1
University Hong Kong	120	3
City Univ. Hong Kong	84	5
Tsinghua Univ.	81	6
Lingnan University	54	7
Chinese Academy of Sci.	50	8
Chinese Academy of Social Sci.	42	9
Shanghai Univ. Finance & Econ.	33	14
Hong Kong Polytech Univ.	34	13
Renmin Univ. China	37	11
Zhejiang Univ.	36	12
Cent Univ Finance & Econ	41	10
Xiamen Univ.	29	16
Shanghai Jiaotong Univ.	25	18
CCAP, CAS	33	14
Fudan Univ.	29	16
Univ Int Busines & Econ	20	19
Nankai Univ.	20	19
Hong Kong Monetary Authority	20	19
Beijing Normal Univ.	18	24
Hong Kong Baptist Univ.	19	23
Macau Univ.	19	23
Sun Yat Sen Univ.	17	25
SW Univ. Econ & Finance,	13	28
China Agr. Univ.	15	27

Top 50 Journals

Institutions	P	
	Value	Rank
Hong Kong Univ. Of Sci. & Tech.	58	1
Chinese Univ. Hong Kong	47	2
Peking University	37	3
University Hong Kong	33	4
Lingnan University	17	7
City Univ. Hong Kong	19	6
Tsinghua Univ.	28	5
Shanghai Univ Finance & Econ.	16	8
Xiamen Univ.	14	9
Shanghai Jiaotong Univ.	8	11
Chinese Academy of Sci.	6	13
Chinese Academy of Social Sci.	6	13
Central Univ. Finance & Econ.	9	10
Hong Kong Polytech Univ.	8	11
Macau Univ.	4	15
Fudan Univ.	3	17
China Agri. Univ.	2	21
Beijing Normal Univ	3	17
Zhejiang Univ.	4	15
Nankai Univ.	2	21
Cheung Kong Grad Sch of Business	3	17
Renmin Univ. China	3	17
Guizhou Univ.	2	21
Wuhan Univ.	2	21
Hong Kong Baptist Univ.	2	21



Note: (1) We only give the rankings of the institutions with 2

Elsevier hopes to work with more top Chinese scientists to boost Chinese research in the world





Researchers today are all under great pressure to publish MORE... (for funding, career success, etc.)

We are obliged to publish our results, but let's consider...

**why do we have to publish
???**

Why do we publish?

We are doing scientific research. Publishing is one of the necessary steps embedded in the scientific research process...

- To present new, original results or methods
- To rationalize (refine, reinterpret) published results
- To review the field or to summarize a particular subject

Why do we publish?

At least we should provide something that advances, not repeats, knowledge and understanding in a certain scientific field.

- We are not supposed to create garbage...

- Reports of no scientific interest
- Work out of date
- Duplications of previously-published work
- Incorrect/unacceptable conclusions
- ...



- Content is essential
- Presentation is critical



**You need a GOOD manuscript to
present your contributions to the
science community!**

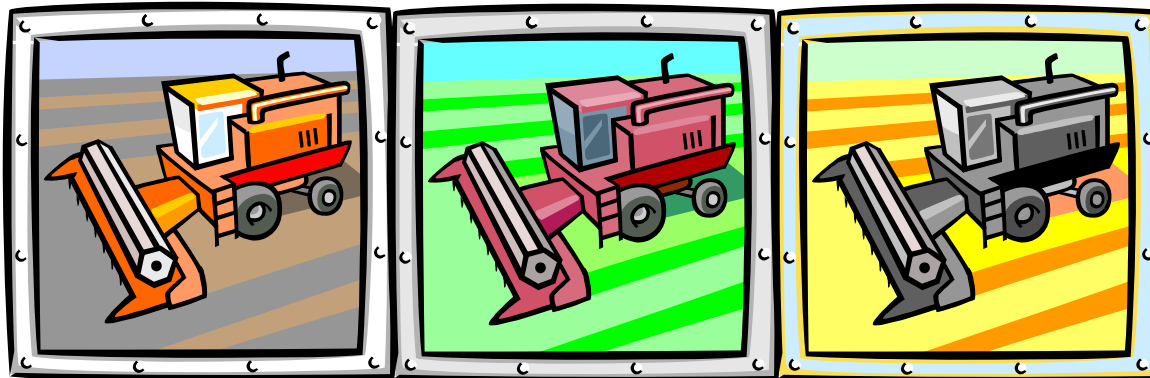
What is a good manuscript?

- Contains a scientific message that is clear, useful, and exciting.
- Conveys the authors' thoughts in a logical manner such that the reader arrives at the same conclusions as the author.
- Is constructed in the format that best showcases the authors' material, and written in a style that transmits the message clearly.

What is a good manuscript?

- A good manuscript makes readers (especially reviewers and editors) grasp the scientific significance as **EASILY** as possible.

Writing a good manuscript is NOT easy!
Be prepared to work hard on it!



What is a good manuscript?

BE HONEST

Source: China Daily, 15 March 2006

- Chinese authorities take strong measures against scientific dishonesty
- Plagiarism and stealing work from colleagues can lead to serious consequences

Plagiarism, fake research plague academia

by Zhu Zhu

As China marks the World Consumer Rights Day today, the spotlight would inevitably be on poor products and shoddy service.

But attention is also being focused on the rights of a special group of consumers: subscribers or readers of academic journals.

Plagiarism and fake research have become rampant in China, and are

eroding people's trust in academia, Ren Yuing, a member of the Councilors' Office of the State Council, told the recent meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the top advisory body.

He cited a recent survey of 180 PhD degree holders, of whom 60 per cent paid to be published in academic journals; and about the same percentage copied others' work.

"The situation exists in almost every well-known Chinese university," He

Weifang, a professor at Peking University's law school, told China Daily. He is also an activist in fighting what he called academic corruption.

Some 100 Chinese professors plan to publish an open letter calling for the establishment of a national supervision mechanism to root out academic plagiarism. The move follows a series of academic scandals:

■ Qiu Xiaoqing, a biomedicine professor at Sichuan University, was last year accused of publishing fraud-

ulent research in the November 2003 issue of Nature Biotechnology.

■ Zhou Yezhong, a professor at Wuhan University's law school, was last December accused of copying others' work "word for word."

■ Shen Luwei, an associate professor at Tianjin Foreign Studies University, was removed from his post in January for plagiarizing 10 articles in his book.

>>>Page 2, Corruption



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What are the components of a GOOD manuscript???

In the following section, you will learn how to raise your chances of getting accepted, including...

- Basic principles that should always be kept in mind
- What editors and reviewers love, and what they hate

How to prepare a good manuscript

REMEMBER

- Cherish your own work – if you do not take care, why should the journal?
- There is no secret recipe for success – just some simple rules, dedication and hard work.
- Editors and reviewers are all busy scientists, just like you – make things easy to save their time!

How to prepare a good manuscript

Before you start

Think about WHY you want to publish your work.
(Actually, you should check the originality of the idea at the very beginning of your research.)

- Have you done something new and interesting?
 - Is the work related directly to a current hot topic?
 - Have you provided solutions to some difficult problems that others may find useful?
-
- If all answers are “no”, then find another idea.

How to prepare a good manuscript

Before you start

Choose the target journal

- Choose one right journal for your work. You can only submit to one journal at a time!
- Read recent publications (at least go through the abstracts) in each candidate journal. Find out the hot topics, the accepted types of articles, etc.
- Check Thomson's *Journal Citation Index* (available through your library) for indicators of journal quality and appropriate level for your article.
- Make sure you cite relevant articles published in the journals you review—it's a disaster to ignore an author who may review your manuscript!



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How to prepare a good manuscript

Before you start

One more thing before typing your manuscript...

**Read the 'Guide for Authors' of the target journal!
Again and again!**

- Apply the Guide for Authors to your manuscript, even to the first draft (text layout, paper citation, nomenclature, figures and table, etc). It will save your time, and the editor's.
- All editors hate wasting time on poorly prepared manuscripts. They may well think that the author shows no respect.

How to prepare a good manuscript

Sources of Published Work and Working Papers

- Social Science Research Network
 - www.ssrn.com
- Econlit
 - *EconLit* is provided by libraries and universities throughout the world. To obtain information on access for libraries or other organizations, contact any of the EconLit [information service providers](#).

Individual AEA Members will have access to [EconLit for Members](#), a new search service coming soon in March 2007!



How to prepare a good manuscript

References

Typically, there are more mistakes in the references than any other part of the manuscript. It is one of the most annoying problems, and causes great headaches among editors...

- Cite the main scientific publications on which your work is based
- Do not over-inflate the manuscript with too many references – it doesn't make a better manuscript!
- Avoid excessive self-citations
- Avoid excessive citations of publications from the same region.
- BUT Make sure you know the relevant literature (see example next slide)

How to prepare a good manuscript

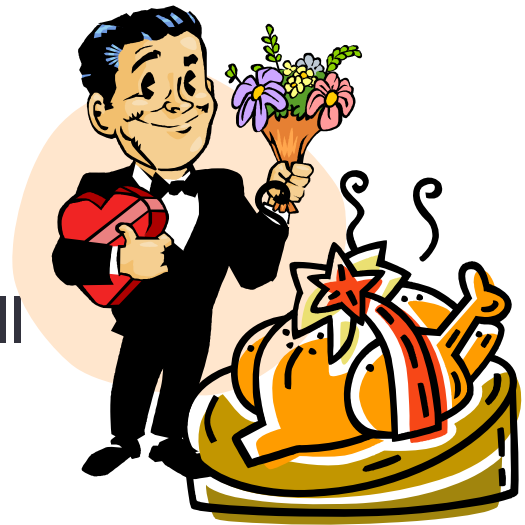
This paper was rejected!

- "... the study is not well embedded in the literature. Although it is easy to find studies on ...the authors .. do not cite any of these works. Thus, the contribution of the paper is difficult to judge. ... the authors do not carefully compare their results with the findings outside China or in China."

How to prepare a good manuscript

References

- Make the reference list and the in-text citation conform strictly to the style given in the Guide for Authors!!!
- Presentation in the correct format is the responsibility of the author, not the Editor!
- Checking the format is normally a large job for the editors. Make their work easier and they will appreciate the effort.
- Check the following:
 - spelling of author names, year of publications
 - Usages of "et al.", and punctuations.



Some technical aspects of manuscripts

Manuscript Length

- 25- 30 pages is the ideal length for a submitted manuscript, including ESSENTIAL data only.
 - Title page
 - Abstract 1 paragraph
 - Introduction 1.5-2 manuscript pages
 - Methods 2-4 m manuscript pages
 - Results and Discussion 10-12 manuscript pages
 - Conclusions 1-2 m manuscript pages
 - Figures 6-8
 - Tables 1-3
 - References 20-50 papers
- Letters or short communications have a stricter limitation of the length. For example, 3000 words with no more than 5 illustrations.

Some technical aspects of manuscripts

Text layout

- Keep consistent throughout the manuscript.
- Double line spacing and 12 font is preferred: make it convenient for reviewers to make annotations.
- Do not right-justify.

Some technical aspects of manuscripts

Abbreviations

- NEVER use acronyms or abbreviations in the title
- DO NOT USE IN ABSTRACT OR TEXT before they are spelled out
- Examples
 - SME = small and medium enterprises
 - SOU = state-owned units
 - RE = random effects
 - IPO = initial public offering
- Exceptions (maybe): GDP, RMB, ASEAN

Some technical aspects of manuscripts

Title

Make your title informative and not overly long or too “cute.”

Too long

Taking a market-oriented direction and pushing forward in a gradual way—the basic experience of China's economic reform

Just Right

How and why China succeeded in her economic reform



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Some technical aspects of manuscripts

Author names

- Keep consistent in the style of writing your full name and the abbreviation for all your publications – for the efficiency of indexing and searching.

E.g.,

Standard:

Ouyang Zhongcan (Ouyang Z.),
or OUYANG Zhong-can (Ouyang Z.C.),

Following are also found in literature: Ou-yang Zhong-can,
Ouyang Zhong-can, Ou-Yang Zhongcan, Ouyang, Z.C,
Zhongcan Ouyang, Zhong-can Ou-Yang,



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Language

- **Attention!** If the language prevents reviewers from understanding the scientific content of your work, the possibility of acceptance will be lowered greatly.
- **At a minimum**, you should provide the best English you can manage along with your high quality science. Please have a skilled writer or someone fluent in English help to check your manuscript before submission.
- **Better, obtain profession English-language polishing** (Elsevier web sites list sources).

Language

Long Sentences

Direct and short sentences are preferred!

- Long sentences will not make the writing more professional. They only confuse readers.
 - Nowadays, the average length of sentences in scientific writing is about 12-17 words.
 - It is said that we read one sentence in one breath. Long sentences choke readers.
 - The Chinese language can express more complicated meaning with fewer words than English. You have to change your style when writing in English. One idea or piece of information per sentence is sufficient. Avoid multiple statements in one sentence.



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Language

Long Sentences

Don't state the obvious!

Example:

"This paper is a report on an investigation into the causes of economic growth in China."

Critique:

What paper could it be other than this paper? If it's not a report, what is it? What does the word investigation tell us?

Better:

"The causes of economic growth in China are still not well understood, despite the contributions of many fine scholars."



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Language

Use clear, direct writing to convey your meaning. Draw the reader into your topic.

Original as submitted

This paper tries to investigate effects of China's reform on economic growth, especially focusing on the impact of lagged reform of labor market on regional disparity.

As edited

Lagged labor-market reform has had a major impact on China's increasing regional disparity.



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Language

Examples of good introductions from the literature

“In a capitalist democracy there are essentially two methods by which social choices can be made: voting, typically used to make ‘political’ decisions, and the market mechanism, typically used to make ‘economic’ decisions.”

Kenneth J. Arrow, *Social Choice and Individual Values*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1951, p. 1

Language

Examples of good introductions from the literature

“The theory of the determination of wages in a free market is simply a special case of the general theory of value.”

J. R. Hicks, *The Theory of Wages (Second Edition)*. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1964, p. 1



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Don't tax the reader

Don't make the reader look back to find "former" and "latter" references! This gives the reader a headache.

Example:

"The horse and rider were seen in the distance. The former had a tail; the latter did not."

Better:

"The horse, with tail, and rider were seen in the distance."

Don't tax the reader

Don't make the reader look back to find "former" and "latter" references! This gives the reader a headache.

Example:

"The production function and product demand were both estimated using fixed-effects methods. The former exhibits constant returns to scale and the latter is very elastic."

Better:

"The production and demand functions were both estimated using fixed-effects methods. The production function exhibits constant returns to scale, and the demand function is very elastic."



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Don't tax the reader

Use active voice rather than passive voice

Example

“Economic growth in China has been obtained with a number of market oriented policies.”

Better

“The implementation of market reforms have contributed to China's economic growth.”

Reporting Results

Naming Variables

Avoid using complicated acronyms for variables, even if they are supposed to aid recognition.

Example: **HHHLYINC = Household Head's
Income Last Year.**

Better: YH(t-1) followed by a list of variable definitions.

MOST IMPORTANT: use the variable definition in the table where results are reported.

Reporting Results

Estimated parameters of augmented matching functions (7a) and (7b)

Independent variables	(2)	(3)
Cons.	-9.233 (-14.32)	-6.881 (-10.41)
t	0.096 (14.71)	0.067 (10.02)
1/t	-	-
δ	-0.223 (-2.88)	-
g	-	4.666 (6.48)
ln U	0.655 (20.93)	0.637 (21.81)
ln V	0.276 (10.28)	0.306 (15.88)
Slupsk	-	-
Koszalin	-	-
Pila	-	-
Suwałki	-	-
R ²	0.904	0.912
Adj. R ²	0.903	0.911
DW statistic	1.910	2.177
No. Of. Obs.	343	343

You can't read the table without referring back to the text.

Reporting Results

Table 3
Production Function Estimates 1985-2003

Dependent variable: $\log(\text{GDP}_t)$	(1) OLS, 2 periods	2-way FE, 2 periods,	
		(2) Scale Unconstrained	(3) Scale Constrained to CRS
Intercept	-1.68*** (-13.38)	4.44*** (9.42)	0.42*** (7.70)
$\log(\text{Capital}_t)$	0.95*** (29.54)	0.48*** (19.81)	0.54*** (18.95)
$\log(\text{Labor Secondary and Higher}_t)$	0.015 (0.26)	0.20*** (3.55)	0.43*** (6.85)
$\log(\text{Labor Below Secondary}_t)$	0.20*** (5.47)	-0.18*** (-2.82)	
$\log(\text{Capital}_t) * \text{Year 1994}$	-0.45*** (-8.17)	-0.18*** (-7.52)	-0.03 (-0.94)
$\log(\text{Labor Secondary and Higher}_t) * \text{Year 1994}$	0.49*** (5.59)	0.16*** (4.37)	-0.03 (-0.69)
$\log(\text{Labor Below Secondary}_t) * \text{Year 1994}$	-0.18*** (-3.79)	-0.092*** (-4.29)	
Year 1994	1.28*** (7.08)		
N	513	513	513
R square	0.97	0.996	0.99
Adjusted R square	0.97	0.996	0.99
F-statistics	2060.29	2357.90	1003.07
F Test for No Fixed Effects: F Value (Pr > F)		89.54 (<.0001)	62.87 (<.0001)

Notes:

1. Hainan is included in Guangdong; and Chongqing is included in Sichuan. Tibet and Inner Mongolia are excluded for lack of continuous data.

2. t-values are in the parentheses. The stars *, ** and *** indicate the significance level at 10%, 5%, and 1%, respectively.

3. YB = 1 if year < 1994; 0 otherwise.

4. Units of measurement. "GDP": 100,000,000 yuan. "Capital": 100,000,000 yuan. "Labor Secondary and Higher": 10,000 workers. "Labor Below Secondary": 10,000 workers. All the monetary values were deflated with the base of Beijing 1990.

Table is self-contained



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Submitting Your Manuscript

- Submit to the right journal (scope and prestige)
- Submit to one journal only
- Submit 1 article to 1 journal
- Check the English!
- Pay attention to structure
- Pay attention to journal requirements
- Be honest!

Manuscript Revision

Revision after review

- Accompany the resubmission a letter of responds to the reviewers' comments. Address the comments for each reviewer and the Editor **point by point**.
- Cut and paste each comment, answer it directly below. Do not miss any point
- Identify where on the manuscript changes have been made (page and line number)
- You are encouraged to provide a convincing, solid and polite answer if you think a reviewer is wrong!

Manuscript Revision

- Remember

Editors and reviewers hate to see the same mistake twice!

- If you want to submit the rejected manuscript to a different journal, begin as if you are going to write a new article. Please re-evaluate your work according to the comments from the reviewers. And you **MUST** read the Guide for Authors of the new journal, again and again...

Do not resubmit the rejected manuscript directly to another journal without any significant revision. This won't save any of your time and energy...and the paper might be sent to the same referee(s)!!!!

Manuscript Revision

Revision before submission

- One of the MOST important things before submission. You should make every attempt to make the manuscript as good as possible before submission.
- After you complete the first draft, take several days of rest. Refresh your brain with different things. And come back with critical eyes.
- Ask your colleague and supervisors review your manuscript first.
- Generally, taking enough time to revise your manuscript before submission will bring you an early decision in return.

Manuscript Revision

Which procedure do you prefer?

1. Send out a sloppily prepared manuscript → get rejected after 4-6 months → send out again only a few days later → get rejected again → ... → sink into despair
2. Take 3-4 months to prepare the manuscript → get the first decision after 4 months → revise carefully within time limitation → ... → accepted

You are **SUBMITTING** your manuscript to a scientific journal, not **THROWING** it out . Please cherish your own achievements!

磨刀不误砍柴工

Conclusion: what leads to Acceptance?

- Attention to detail
- Check and double check your work
- Consider the reviews
- English must be as good as possible
- Presentation is important
- Take your time with revision
- Acknowledge those who have helped you
- New original and previously unpublished
- Critically evaluate your own manuscript
- Ethical rules must be obeyed

Questions?

Thank you!