

Guidelines for Reviewers @ Organization Studies



At Organization Studies (OS) we view the reviewing process as part of the developmental activities that a community of scholars undertakes. This has implications for the focus, content, style and overall tone of the review. A good reviewer's report has to be constructive, friendly and not aggressive in tone, and should offer indications on how to develop the paper further in terms of content, approach, method and theoretical contributions.

Below are some guidelines that you may find useful when reviewing for OS and beyond.

Abstract

A good paper begins with a good abstract. In assessing the paper, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the abstract clear?
- Does it convey a good idea of why the paper is relevant and what it aims to do?

Introduction

Even more important is the introduction of the paper. Good introductions generally are a 'fractal' of the overall paper, and provide an idea of why the paper is relevant (motivation), what it does, how, what audience and literature it intends to engage and what contribution(s) it makes. Other canons and style are also good, if the text is engaging and keeps you reading the paper (this is a rule that applies to the paper as a whole). In assessing the paper, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the motivation of the paper clear and relevant?
- Does it engage relevant literature(s) in a way that shows mastery of them?
- Does the paper speak to the readership of OS in terms of contents and approach?
- Is it written in a way that engages readers so that they are motivated to read the whole paper?
- Does it offer a clear overview of what it does, how, and why?

Literature review and theoretical aspects

The literature is a statement about what audience the paper aims to engage and why. In assessing the paper, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the review clear without mixing too many strands in ways that make it difficult to identify a distinct theoretical problem?
- Does it open a space for a theoretical contribution?
- Is the theoretical approach/model well-crafted and argued?

Methods (for empirical papers)

This is where the paper should describe how the research was done. OS is open to all kinds of methods but all have to be rigorous. We witness an increasing 'ceremonial' role for the methodological sections that tends to justify ex-post and in general ways how the work is done. In reviewing the paper, you want to make sure that this does not happen. In assessing the paper, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are the research design, the data collected and their analysis coherent with the theoretical issues the paper aims to address?

- Does the paper justify the various methodological choices and steps?
- For instance, when giving details about data collected (e.g. number of interviews; time of each interview), does the paper justify why these specific details are important for theorization?

Coherence of the arguments (for theoretical papers)

Theoretical papers are an exercise in logic and rhetoric, in a sense that they have to persuade the reader without reference to empirical data. In assessing the paper, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the line of reasoning logical, coherent and convincing?
- Is the prose and style of writing elegant, and engaging?

Findings (for empirical papers)

The findings speak about the empirical data/story. In assessing the paper, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are the findings interesting and compelling?
- Do they provide novel insights for theorization?
- Does the field material confront us with a novel issue that requires new theorization and theories?

Discussion & Conclusion

This is where the paper should convince the reader that the arguments are sound and relevant. In assessing the paper, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the paper go back to the theoretical motivation of the work to show how it has addressed the issues?
- Does the paper clearly provide a theoretical contribution?
- Does it draw the implications for further research in a clear and engaging matter?