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Best Practices in Scientific Publication

Manual for authors, reviewers, editors and members of editorial boards

Version 2.0[1]
2017

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PRESENTATION

This document is a revision of the first version, dated 2010, of the Best Practices in Scientific Publication of the National Association of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Management - ANPAD. Best Practices Manual objective is to help Brazilian academic journals to achieve elevated levels of quality and performance and to enhance their impact as sources of reference in the areas of Management and Accounting. Even though it specifically addresses these two areas, we hope that this Best Practices Manual is also useful for improving the level of quality scientific publication in other areas of knowledge. These **Best Practices** represent a set of criteria and guidelines with respect to scientific publication and the roles of the principal actors involved in the process, as much from the ethical as operational points of view. The adoption of these Best Practices in scientific journal management will certainly contribute strongly to the consolidation of these two areas as fields of scientific knowledge.

This document does not impose a normative character, but rather offers orientation. Best Practices Manual was constructed based on existing literature and practical experience in scientific publication, and following it faithfully means managing it well. On the other hand, not following the Manual does not necessarily implicate mismanagement of scientific publication. That is, the solutions and recommendations contained herein lead to a satisfactory result, but such results can also be achieved through other means.

Scientific editing is understood, in this document, as rendering a service, whose final users are the subject area researchers and professionals and whose ultimate benefit from the process is the access to knowledge. The authors and their institutions are secondary beneficiaries, in that the former's careers and evaluations of the latter are influenced by the publication of researchers' efforts. In this way, editors and editorial bodies carry a significant responsibility, related to the development of a subject area of knowledge and authors' careers.

From the perspective of authors and their institutions, the primary function of an academic journal should be communication of research results in the broadest form possible. However, in the current culture[1], authors and institutions depend on publication in journals so that both can be well evaluated. Such a culture ends up modifying the original objective, making the publication of the greatest number of articles more important than divulging studies capable of having a significant impact.

Publication of a study is not, therefore, an act isolated to the authors, as it might seem. There is a network of interlocutors, likewise researchers, who interact among themselves, as parts of a system. This network is composed of editors, reviewers, members of Scientific Editorial Boards, and finally, the readers. Starting from this basis, we continue with a discussion of the ethical and operational aspects involved in the respective roles for each of these agents and propose a **code of conduct** to be observed by them during scientific production.

ANPAD hopes everyone enjoys reading this manual, and strongly supports its use.

[1] The discussion of institutional, program, and professional evaluation isn't within this document's scope, but it is indispensable to identify this as a dimension that places pressures on the higher education system and its actors.

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DEFINITIONS

Actors	**Author -** an individual who, when acting alone or in a team, during one or more stages of the elaboration of a manuscript - literature review, research definition, data collection and analysis, writing and revision of said manuscript - is responsible for respective content, independent of author order; **Editor** or **Editor-in-Chief** or **Chief-Editor** – responsible for the entire editorial process; **Associate-Editor** or **Deputy Editor** – Assistant to the Editor, especially in cases where there is a special need for evaluation of relevance (in such cases, the title can also be **Area Editor** or **Section Editor**) and/or in cases where there is an elevated number of submissions; **Executive Editor** or **Managing Editor** or **Assistant Editor** – journal manager; without being involved in the manuscript evaluation process; **Reviewer** or **Technical/Language Editor** or **Referee** or **Evaluator**– specialist in terms of the content, composition and/or methodology used in articles, responsible for the manuscript evaluation process.
Collective Bodies	**Editorial Policy Committee** or **Editorial Board** – board that deals with questions concerning editorial policy for the journal, which makes collective decisions; there is no involvement in content of any particular article or issue, rather with the collection as a whole, establishing general direction to offer guidance; **Scientific Editorial Board** – a multi-institutional board, comprised of specialists distributed in scientific as much as geographic terms. Different from the Editorial Policy Committee, the Scientific Editorial Board works individually and has significant involvement in the content of journal issues, primarily being concerned with the uniformity, continuity, quality and scientific rigor of what is published.
Editorial Process	**Desk Review** – the first stage in the article evaluation process, realized by the Editor-in-Chief and, eventually, by the Associate Editor. Desk review evaluates article pertinence to the journal's editorial focus and scope; manuscript originality; and potential to be published regarding relevancy, research quality, and composition. **Peer Review** – this process consists of the Editor-in-Chief (or Associate Editor) sending an article to one or more specialists from the article's subject area, so that they may do a detailed evaluation of the submitted work, making comments, requesting clarification and suggesting revisions, with the objective of contributing to the improvement of work to be published. **Double Blind Review** – this means that the reviewers chosen to evaluate manuscripts do not know who the authors are, just as the authors should not know who the reviewers are, in order to guarantee freedom from personal bias. In this stage, reviewers that are able to identify a manuscript author(s) should declare a conflict of interest.

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SUMMARY

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1 Editorial Process Standards

1.1 Managerial and Editorial Structure

A scientific journal's primary and principal concern is to **deliver new and relevant knowledge in its subject area to its readers**. Its other two concerns, with both being equally important, are: **to do so in a timely fashion** and **to perpetuate**, that is, to be responsible for its own existence (Trzesniak, 2009).

Such concerns directly implicate the need for **editorial procedures** to be executed in a systematic and efficient manner. These procedures should be transparent to the greatest extent possible, in order to offer the possibility for all involved parties to follow them. In turn, these procedures demand: (I) solid **institutional support**; (ii) an **Editorial Policy Committee**; and (iii) **General Regulations** that address the succession/selection of the journal editor and scientific structure (Trzesniak, 2009).

The sequence of editorial process tasks is generally known to academics, but it isn't enough to know the basic process in order to achieve the desired results. It is necessary to understand how to operate it to achieve efficiency. As it is a process that involves various actors - editors, reviewers, authors - and that deals with a world of ideas, it is natural to expect that, despite being systematic, this process has a high dose of subjectivity (Kacmar, 2008). Trzesniak (2006) suggests that journals, beyond **General Regulations**, have an editorial process manual, containing a detailed description of each procedure that is part of the operational routine. This, beyond facilitating the editor's efforts, guarantees uniformity and, especially, process continuity over time, particular when there is a change in team membership (including the very editor).

Figure 1 illustrates the **scientific editorial structure** recommended for a journal. Note that the positions of **Editorial Policy Board** and **Editorial Scientific Board** come before and after the editor, respectively. The level of Associate Editors is shaded because, unlike the others, it isn't required under the Scientific Publication Best Practices, but becomes a necessity when the annual number of submissions accepted to the editorial process rises above a few dozen (in reality, nothing prevents Associate Editors from existing from the beginning).

Figure 1 - Scientific editorial structure for a journal

1.2 Minimum Requirements for a Scientific Journal

1. To have ISSN registration (International Standard Serial Number);
2. Divulge, on the website and in print editions (if there are), data concerning organizations responsible for the publication;
3. Explicitly state, on the website, the journal's **mission**, including its thematic focus, editorial policy (i.e. quality and focus concerns), and whether the journal undertakes blind or open peer review.[2]
4. Inform the public of the complete names and respective institutional affiliations of the Editor, Associate Editors (if any), Executive Editor (if any), and of all members of the Editorial Policy Committee and Scientific Editorial Board.

2 For further information see: http://blog.scielo.org/blog/2017/01/10/aumenta-a-adocao-de-avaliacao-por-pares-aberta/#.WJsKV_krLIU

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5. Annually publish on the website, as well as in the last issue of each volume for print versions, a list of anyone who has acted as reviewers for the journal during the year, without, however, establishing any connections between the reviewers and evaluated manuscripts, unless there is the option for open peer review, which permits the publication opinions, with the explicit consent of reviewers;
6. Submission norms, with explicit reference to official languages for submission and publication in the journal, and editorial policy, including a description of article processing and arbitration, should be permanently available on the website;
7. Publish at least two issues per year, containing documents of scientific/technological character that are significant to the journal's specific subject area and have been previously unpublished;
8. At the beginning of each article, the following should be included: title, abstract, and key words, in the language(s) in which the text is offered as well as in English; author(s) names and their respective institutional affiliation;
9. Publish the physical or electronic address for at least one of the authors.

2 Scientific Publication Best Practices

Beyond what was established in the previous sections, it is important to adopt the following precepts for policy concerning disclosure, quality, and ethical conduct:

- **Transparency**
  - We recommend the use of an electronic management system for the editorial process[3], which assures the standardization, uniformity, agility, transparency and traceability;
  - Include full bibliographic information, on the first page of each article, with complete information regarding copyright and editorial processing history (receipt date, revision, acceptance, and availability on the website);
  - Clear definition of the requirements and procedures for the choice of and roles and responsibilities of the editor-in-chief and associate editors (if any), of members of the Editorial Policy Board and of the Scientific Editorial Board, including the term of office and possibility for renewal.
- **Agility**
  - The primary actors in this process - editors, reviewers, and authors, should take action seeking to meet the following maximum deadlines in relation to the date of submission:
    - 30 days to communicate to the author(s) the results of desk review, which define whether or not the manuscript will be accepted for the journal's review process; and
    - 120 days to send the author(s) the first opinion of each of the reviewers, duly revised by the editor if necessary, or with a letter from the editor summarizing

[3] For journals that don't have their own system or one furnished by a publisher, we recommend the use of SEER/OJS (Electronic System for Journal Editing/ Open Journal Systems) developed by the University of British Columbia and Simon Frasier University, in Canada (Trzesniak, 2006). In Brazil the software has been adapted by the Brazilian Institute of Science and Technology Information (IBICT) and beyond being easy to install, maintain and use, it is available free of charge in Portuguese.

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these opinions, in the case of manuscripts that have been accepted for desk review.

  - We also suggest the **advanced publication of articles**[4]. This means to make the articles available online immediately after their approval and editing, also known as *Ahead of Print*, *Early View*, *Publication First*, among others. As such, the scientific community has the possibility to access the scientific-technological knowledge presented in the article before the composition of the definitive number for that edition.

- **Open Access**
  - All published content should permit unrestricted online access free from any onus to the reader, preferentially under a Creative Commons license (CC-BY)[5], which is recommended in order to maximize the dissemination and use of licensed materials and align with the primary Brazilian open-access program Scielo[6].

- **Originality**
  - All published content must be original, which means that is has never been published in any other way, except in conference annuals;
  - In the case of articles with previous publication in conference annuals, only those that contain substantial advances in relation to the version presented in the events should be published, and this should be made explicit on the article's first page, even in the case of fast-track publishing;
  - In the case of dissertations and theses, it must be verified that the author of that work is necessarily the author of the article, even allowing for the insertion of other authors. It is important the original work be reference in the article in an explicit manner;

- **Ethics in Publication**
  - Verification of any similarities with existing published works should be carried out during desk review, rejecting, under any circumstance any occurrence of plagiarism or self-plagiarism. We suggest the use of software specific to this purpose;
  - Any and all fees charged by the journal, for editing and/or publication should be clearly presented to the author(s) at the time of manuscript submission for evaluation;
  - We suggest journals join the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)[7]

- **Information Standardization**
  - Include in the footnotes of each page a summarized bibliographical legend (journal name, volume, article pages) and the appropriate logo of the creative commons license, if adopted; at the top of each page, alternate author name(s) and article title;
  - Assign a DOI[8] (*Digital Object Identifier*) to all published manuscripts;
  - Identify authors via ORCID[9].

[4] See: http://www.scielo.org/local/File/Guia_AOP.pdf
[5] For further information about licenses, visit: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/
[6] See: http://blog.scielo.org/blog/2015/06/19/scielo-adota-cc-by-como-atribuicao-principal-de-acesso-aberto/#.WEB3_PkrLIU
[7] See: http://publicationethics.org/
[8] See: http://www.doi.org/doi_handbook/1_Introduction.html
[9] See: https://orcid.org/

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- **Institutional and Authorial Multiplicity**
  - The editorial process should be shared between researchers and teachers belonging to diverse institutions in such a way that avoids the creation of a proprietary journal, that is, one produced primarily by people affiliated with a specific institution;
  - Each year, the share of articles originating from any given institution (that is, with at least one affiliated author, teacher or student) should not exceed 15% of the total number of published articles;
  - More than one article from any single author should not be published, irregardless of author position.
- **Conflicts of Interest**
  - Articles authored by the Editor or Associate Editors, even if shared with other authors, should not be published, including by directors of institutions that maintain the journal, except in special cases. Any special cases must be noted and justified in the issue's editorial. It is also necessary to assign a special editor such articles, in order to keep author and reviewer anonymity.

3 Editorial Process Roles

3.1 The Editor

The Editor coordinates the editorial process and also promotes the development of journal authors and reviewers. Their commitment should be to offering the best in terms of new knowledge within the thematic area, while observing the highest ethical standards during the article selection process.

Best Practices suggest that the selection of journal editor be supervised by an Editorial Policy Committee, which should consider a variety of factors, including:

a) Leadership as a researcher in the subject area;

b) Recognition within the community;

c) History of acting as a reviewer and author; and

d) Their proposed work project for the journal[10] (Trzesniak, 2009).

Evaluation of potential candidates should thus consider:

- Their previous performance, involving their history of publishing in qualified journals; and
- Their future commitment, related to their proposals for improving the journal and the process for selecting works for publication.

Editor trustworthiness is important, especially regarding article selection, since journal publication is strongly related to the academic success of authors' careers (Shapiro; Bartunek, 2008). For authors, it is essential that individuals who act as editors demonstrate:

[10] Some guidelines for the editor selection process can be found in Trzesniak (2004a).

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- **Competence** in producing research and manuscript revision of high quality. They should demonstrate the ability to identify weaknesses[11] in manuscripts and the ability to work together with authors in a constructive manner, in order to correct these weaknesses and improve the articles. This demands editors be relatively up-to-date with the area of knowledge and related research methods;
- **Cordiality** in relation to new researchers and other professionals in the knowledge area. This is related to the way that revisions/opinions are prepared. It is desirable that an editor temper exaggerated criticism made by reviewers, and have sensitivity to communicate the ideas while their comments and suggestions should always be consistent with rules established by the journal for acceptance, and to be open to new ideas (theories, methods, etc.). The editor should review reviewer comments so that authors receive constructive and encouraging evaluation, even if the work does not remain in the journal review process. Respect and dignity are key-words in this process;
- **Integrity and consistency** as the producers, evaluators and mentors of high quality research. This is associated with the idea that ethical principles are consistently followed.

We recommend that the Editor have a **fixed mandate**, without objection to eventual renewal. We also suggest that Editors interact with peers (ex: those promoted by ABEC - Brazilian Association of Scientific Editors) as a way to exchange knowledge and experiences with other editors and with specialists of themes related to scientific editing.

3.1.1 Editor Duties and Responsibilities

We present here a list of general duties and responsibilities for editors, which are primarily based on the editor code of conduct from the Committee on Publications Ethics (COPE, 2011).

- **The Editor is responsible for everything that is related to the journal.** When deciding to approve the publication of a manuscript, the Editor should examine it in its entirety, and suggest and negotiate with the author(s) to have them make any necessary modifications to benefit clarity in the communication of ideas and scientific rigor - but this should not interfere with author style (Tobochnik, 2008; Botsford, 1993). The Editor's responsibility cannot, however, include undesirable or unpredictable consequences that might stem from the use or application of information published in the journal. A scientific journal disseminates the results of research whose evidence is satisfactory in all aspects for the continuity of investigation at an academic level, but is not sufficient for totally secure and predictable use in any other context. The consequences of such use are the exclusive responsibility of those who do so, which should be made explicit to the readers;
- The Editor should make efforts to **constantly improve the journal**, seeking to meet the needs of all actors involved in the publication process, but should dedicate priority attention to the journal's readers, primary beneficiaries, and preferential clients;

[11] This should be understood as any problem with logical coherence, accuracy or theoretical or empirical clarity in scientific content. Editors (and reviewers),should also remain aware of the possibility for fraudulent articles. We suggest as an initial reading on this subject the W*ikipedia* page about the Sokal hoax: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sokal_affair.

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- It is also the Editors responsibility to **promote the speed** of scientific dissemination. When the journal has in reserve two or more issues ready for publication, this means that the journal should increase the number of articles per issue and/or the number of annual issues;
- The Editor should publish guidelines for authors about everything that is expected of them. These guidelines should be updated as necessary;
- Upon receiving a manuscript, the Editor should arrange for a **desk review**, to be performed either by him/her or by an Associate Editor (if any) or a member of the Scientific Editorial Board, to make sure that the manuscript meets the basic requirements to be accepted into the editorial process (scientific relevance, correct language, good general presentation, and adherence to the norms and editorial policy). If any of these requirements are not met, the original manuscript should be immediately, but politely, rejected, with sufficient firmness. Indeed, by accepting a manuscript that has obviously been prepared with little effort, the Editor becomes co-responsible with the author(s) for the questionable attitude for transferring author responsibility onto the reviewers;
- Another requirement that justifies immediate rejection of an original manuscript, and which should be equally enforced during revision, is a **lack of originality and the incidence of plagiarism or self-plagiarism**. In addition to checking books and other journals, the Editor must verify cases of resubmission to the same journal. There have been reports of identical works submitted more than once to the same journal, and it being rejected the first time and subsequently accepted for publication, with aspects of quality justifying both cases;
- Furthermore, the Editor should attempt **academic reciprocity**. Works submitted by authors that refuse to act as reviewers or who simply do not respond to requests by the Editor should have their manuscripts rejected during desk review;
- Guidelines for the **peer review process** (including guidelines concerning everything expected of reviewers) should be published and updated as necessary. In instances of significant divergence from these guidelines, the Editor should be prepared to justify them;
- For the sake of ethics, **reviewers should not belong to the same institution or be frequent co-authors with any author of a manuscript.** Likewise, it is unethical to induce acceptance (or rejection) of a work, by sending submissions to reviewers whose rigor is considered lower (or higher) than average, or whose scientific paradigms are in agreement (or disagreement) with those of the author(s);
- The Editor **coordinates reviewer evaluation of submissions**, however, this can be delegated to an Associate Editor or even a member of the Scientific Editorial Board. The final decision as to whether or not to publish a work still remains with the Editor and should be based on the importance, originality, clarity, and relevance of the article to the journal's subject area. Such a decision can contradict reviewer recommendations, as long as the Editor is not convinced by the justifications presented by reviewers or if there are serious scientific limitations observed in the article;
- In other words, **Editors are not hostage to the opinions and recommendations they receive**, but, if it is necessary to act against them, they should do so with very clear ethics and discernment.

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This way a good relationship can be maintained with the reviewers, valuing their work, instead of acting like an untouchable judge;

- The Editor should also **ensure compliance with deadlines for reviewer opinions**. An alternative action is to suggest a deadline and request an explicit agreement or counter proposal from the reviewer. This prevents the sentiment that the deadline is being imposed upon the reviewer (who is, after all, a volunteer), and that he/she, by participating in the deadline definition, becomes more committed and responsible for meeting it;
- The Editor needs to ensure that reviewers' opinions analyze: (i) the originality of work, that is, if the manuscript really offers a contribution to the area of knowledge, or if it is merely a restatement of ideas and concepts; (ii) the firmness of the research foundations; and (iii) in the case of empirical articles, the rigor of the conditions in which the research was conducted. Furthermore, it is indispensable that opinions contain suggestions that can improve a research and a clear and grounded position as to whether the article should be published or not. If opinions do not meet these requirements, they should be discarded, and I necessary, another reviewer was chosen;
- The Editor should **mediate the relationship between reviewers and authors,** verifying the pertinence of any requested changes, and when appropriate, accepting authors' arguments for not enacting them. Reviewers, at times, solicit exaggerated modifications to an original research, which may misrepresent it, or propose changes contrary to submission norms or editorial policy. It would be natural for authors to argue against the appropriateness of such changes, but they might be reticent to do so. It is thus up to the Editor to promote a constructive scientific dialogue, minimizing reluctant and non-critical compliance with any requests of dubious validity;
- Unless serious problems are identified with a manuscript, the Editor should not reverse any decision to accept it, nor should a new Editor do this, relative to a previous Editor's decision;
- The Editor should attempt to **enhance the visibility of material published** in the journal, including indexation in primary scientific resources (bases, repositories, etc.), beyond divulging it on lists and social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.;
- Following the same criteria used for other materials, there should exist a special opportunity for publication of articles and commentary that challenge or critique research previously published in the journal. Only very strong and convincing reasons, which should be made explicit to authors of criticism, can justify not accepting it. Similarly, authors of criticized material should be given the opportunity to respond. It is preferable that criticism and response to it be published simultaneously;
- The Editor must be certain that any published research material is in compliance with **internationally accepted ethical norms**. Therefore, requests should be made for evidence that any investigation involving sensitive topics (health, children, among others) have been approved by an adequate organization (for example, Research Ethics Committee, Institutional Review Board). However, such approval doesn't necessarily guarantee that research has effectively followed ethical principles;
- The Editor should protect the **confidentiality of individual and corporate information** (for example, obtained from a consultant-business relationship). Hence, it is almost always necessary for authors to provide written consent from all involved;

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- The Editor should take all reasonable measures to guarantee the **quality of published material** and never allow the interests of individuals or institutions that support the journal compromise academic standards;
- There should be procedures that guarantee the confidentiality and integrity of all materials submitted to the journal, especially during the review stage;
- The Editor should be willing to **publish corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies, whenever necessary;**
- The Editor has the duty to act in any instance of bad conduct. This obligation extends to authors and reviewers;
- If, after an appropriate investigation, an article is identified as fraudulent, **it must be excluded.** The exclusion should be clearly identifiable for readers and indexing systems. Whenever the Editor recognizes than an imprecise, misleading or distorted material has been published, the problem should be corrected immediately and with all due attention;
- Editors should have systems in place for managing conflicts of interest for the distinct actors involved in the editorial process: management collaborators; authors; reviewers; members of the Editorial Policy Board and Scientific Editorial Board; associate editors, and themselves.
- The Editor should clearly and publicly, in journal pages and/or on the journal website, have a mechanism for submitting complaints, so that anyone who is unsatisfied can do so; any complaints should be addressed.

3.2 The Editorial Policy Committee or Editorial Board

In order to conform to Best Practices in Scientific Publication, a journal must be structured to have two collective bodies: the Editorial Policy Committee or Editorial Board and the Scientific Editorial Board.[12]

Combining the concepts from Lo Bianco, et al. (2002), and Trzesniak (2001, 2009), the Editorial Policy Committee is formed of the Editor and by members that adequately represent the interests of:

(i) the subject area;

(ii) institutions that ensure the journal's scientific credibility;

(iii) institutions that offer legal support.

This Committee deals with **questions concerning a journal's editorial policy** and acts as a unit (holding meetings, either in-person or virtual), making decisions collectively and eventually voting on materials; they don't have any involvement in the content of any specific issue or article, but rather with the collection as a whole, establishing the general guidelines.

3.3 The Scientific Editorial Board and Associate Editors

The Scientific Editorial Board is a necessarily multi-institutional body, integrated by specialists that are uniformly distributed in as much scientific (covering all areas of knowledge pertinent to the journal) as well as geographic (covering distinct regions of Brazil and other countries). Different from the members of the Editorial Policy Committee, those of the Scientific Editorial Board work individually

[12] The journal might also have other collective bodies, such as a Representative Board (possible international), whose members act only to disseminate the journal and help garner articles, or a Consultative Council, to which the editor can turn to when needed to resolve more complex problems. These instances, however, have specific attributes, non-editorial, and therefore are not an obligation concerning the level of Best Practices in Scientific Publication.

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and **have a significant involvement in the content of journal issues**, concerning themselves with the uniformity, continuity, quality and scientific rigor of what is published.

The hope is that members of the Scientific Editorial Board are **credible and renowned** researchers within the academic community, with as many senior as junior researchers, with the full dominion of the concepts, methods and theories employed in manuscripts. Diversity in the origins of group members is a very important element for assuring a plurality of vision regarding models and theories, and avoiding monocultural biases; more so, this can help increase the number of submissions to a journal.

Associate editors collaborate closely with the Editor, and usually members of the Scientific Editorial Board, with significant quotidian involvement in the editorial process. In terms of attributes, they only do not make the final decision whether or not to publish a work. They can have general responsibilities, or can be involved with submissions to only one area, or even exclusively respond for one section of a journal, such as book reviews. An Editor can freely choose them, while respecting journal regulations. In order to provide stability to the journal, it is important the process for renewing these bodies always be partial, in order to preserve tacit knowledge and the memory of events is preserved.

The number of associate editors and size of the Scientific Editorial Board should be the result of a balance between acceptable workload for each individual and the level of consistency resulting from these specialists efforts. A larger number reduces individual responsibilities, but increases the chances of internal work inconsistencies concerning article review. For example, for a journal with about 100 accepted submissions to the editorial process each year, Trzesniak (2009) proposes between two and four associate editors and an Editorial Board of between 20 and 35 members. On average, this corresponds to about thirty articles per associate editor and three for each member of the Scientific Board per year. Feldman (2008) coherently suggest that an editor should not shoulder more than 50 manuscripts per year. In any way, the editor-in-chief, who is responsible for the final decision to accept or reject manuscripts, ends up being involved in all submissions.

We suggest considering an ideal maximum of 50 articles for both associate editors and members of the Editorial Board. This recommendation is because Best Practices in Scientific Publication implies that, in at different times, the two entities end up being involved in the same articles. What has been most commonly proposed (stressing that this doesn't mean there aren't good alternatives) is that associate editors and members of the Scientific Editorial Board be responsible for the desk review and suggesting the ad hoc reviewers, and based on these latter's opinions recommend the first editorial decision to the editor (reject, revise/resubmit, revise/accept). In the case of an revise/accept, the article, after the author(s) revise it, should go to a member of the Scientific Editorial Board, or to the editor, in order to verify compliance or justified refusal to comply with reviewer suggestions and to offer a final recommendation for acceptance or rejection. This division of labor and responsibility has the double merit of gathering diverse opinions and avoiding overloading those involved.

The role defined in the previous paragraph for associate editors competes with the editor in journals with few annual submissions (below 50), which justifies the non-obligatory nature of their presence in every journal. On the other hand, *it is necessary and salutary* that such a role *eventually* be exercised by a member of the Scientific Editorial Board. Here, we illustrate the essential difference between editors and members of this body: the difference isn't in the *nature* of the tasks, but in the *frequency* with which they are executed by whom is in one or another function. Thus, when a researcher is invited to join the Scientific Board, the editor should clearly state what the expected work load will be and the standards for review and written responses that are expected of them. This attitude will make the group more motivated at their work, because only truly motivated people will accept the invitation (Feldman, 2008).

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3.4 The Reviewer

Review work is **fundamental to journal quality**, and more broadly, to the scientific literature of an academic area. Harrison (2002) argued that, over time, developing good opinions builds a positive reputation and a social network of grateful editors and colleagues. In addition, **acting as a reviewer is counterpart to the review of your manuscripts by others (academic reciprocity).** To this point, it should be expected that the opinions should be very well developed and constructive and that the evaluation time be short, since, when roles are reversed, and a reviewer is an author, they expect a response from a journal to come quickly and with pertinent contributions. Another argument, more or less along the same lines (of giving in order to receive), is that developing good opinions endows the right to demand quality scientific literature in the knowledge area. To make use of the latter without contributing to the first is a debatable ethical behavior.

Journal review is completely different from that prepared for events and take a lot of a reviewer's time. The scientific even has the objective of discussing "hot" emergent knowledge, with the time limit for submission as close as possible to its creation. The focus of evaluation in this context is to either accept (or not) a work for presentation. However, the journal, even if faster than a book, can take more time: the primary objective for evaluation is improvement of the manuscript, and not the definition to publish it (or not).

The reviewer should take a **positive, cordial and constructive tone during evaluation**. If they find weaknesses[13] in a manuscript, they should use **encouraging adjectives**, such as *interesting, creative and ambitious*, followed by expressions such as: *however*, *there are still such and such gaps.* Keep in mind that the author when reading a review, must feel motivated to invest their time in improving the text, and not in replying to criticism that could be considered disrespectful or offensive. Trzesniak (2009) mentions that *it is a joint mission for reviewers, authors and editors to establish cordial complicity, towards the goal of content excellence.*

The recommendations from the previous paragraph, however, are only valid for cases in which *it is clear that authors have made their best efforts in preparing a manuscript.* It has become quite common for works to be submitted without attention to detail nor dedication, in an attempt to "delegate onward", to reviewers and editors, the responsibilities of authorship. This attitude is frankly abusive and ethically inadequate, and once identified, should be firmly discouraged in written opinion.

Reviewers should use their position with great discretion and discernment, because they are able to propose that a manuscript be rejected for publication, and editors, *even though it is their prerogative to do so*, in general, do not oppose recommendations for rejection coming from reviewers. This veto power can make it difficult for unconventional ideas to flourish. This is not saying that a reviewer might be making a grave ethical failure, such as by opposing the publication of an article in order to protect their own particular interests within an area of knowledge, but rather that they might not be "ready" to appreciate the contributions of works that contain new ideas: under the gaze of established and widely accepted knowledge in an area, it *might seem* that innovative manuscripts are theoretically inconsistent or do not meet rigorous research standards (Frey, 2003).

To follow up, we list here recommendations for Best Practices for reviewers, based upon the cited references:

- A reviewer should not accept an assignment to evaluate a manuscript in which they don't feel professionally qualified with respect to the theme;

[13] It should be understood that *weakness* means any problem with logical coherence, accuracy or theoretical, empirical or methodological clarity in a manuscript. A reviewer should also point out any grammatical errors they *might* identify in a text, but this should not be their primary concern.

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- If it is a double blind review process, **the reviewer must inform the editor if they are able to identify the identity of the author.** As to the associate editors and members of the Scientific Editorial Board, even though they might not be explicitly informed as to who authors are, they might eventually recognize them based on the style or content of a particular article. Such identification should not be an impediment for proceeding through the desk review and being sent on to possible reviewers;
- Each journal should establish a **deadline** for reviewers to return opinions and these should be explicitly agreed to and met, or an alternative deadline negotiated. Meeting an agreed upon deadline is a question of ethics, respect and responsibility;
- The reviewer should **carefully read a journal's editorial policy and instructions for reviewers.** Editors might have guidelines with which reviewers are not familiar or do not agree with, which raises the risk that they will request changes that are incompatible with journal policy.
- In order to obtain a first general impression of an article, we recommend that reviewers read an article in depth in a single session. Afterward, they can return to make notes, but the idea is to understand the everything in the beginning, rather than specific aspects. We then recommend rereading the article three or four days later, this time in detail and simultaneously writing an opinion;
- Reviewers should pay attention to the fact that paradigm differences *might* influence their decision about the quality of a manuscript and they should make conscious efforts to prevent this from happening;
- Reviewers should **point out correctable errors** and *necessarily* indicate what should be done to remedy them. A good reviewer, however, enables authors a flexibility to continue composing an article in the manner they desire. The reviewer should always evaluated the cost-benefit of any requested changed in terms of how effectively it can improve manuscript quality;
- Whenever it is scientifically relevant, **reviewers should suggest authors as reference** for a manuscript and/or its revision.
- Reviewers should make every effort to point out *all* alterations they deem pertinent during their first review, in order to avoid new recommendations each time a manuscript is revised and returned;
- Whenever receiving a manuscript that has been revised by the author(s) based on recommendations from themselves, other reviewers, or editors, **reviewers should pay attention to all recommendations by the others before issuing a new opinion;**
- Whenever a manuscript shows *uncorrectable* errors, consider the possibility of pointing them out as *research limitations in the article* in an appropriate section. If that is not valid, then recommend rejection, indicating that these errors are the reason;
- Whenever recommending rejecting a manuscript, a reviewer should **clearly and objectively define the reasons.**

3.5 The Author

As mentioned at the beginning of this document, authors have their respective careers affected by articles published in journals, which frequently leads them to believe that they are the core of the process. In addition, many novice researchers see scientific editing as a black box.

To help with this, we list here relevant ideas, inspired by Moizer (2009), Konrad (2008), Ryan (2008) and COPE (2011), that can prove useful in helping authors' efforts at getting their manuscripts published.

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- Carefully analyze editorial policy and a sample of recently published articles from various journals in order to **select the journal** to which a manuscript should be submitted. Alignment between editorial policy and a manuscript greatly increases the probability of acceptance to the editorial process, whereas a lack of alignment often leads to rejection during desk review;
- Only submit manuscripts that have been **edited for grammar** and that strictly follow the norms for formatting, citations, and references established in a journal's **instructions for authors**. If a manuscript doesn't meet these, it will probably be rejected during desk review;
- Clearly present ideas, including an adequate use of illustrations and references. Research should follow a journal's recommended format, and in general, be composed of the following parts: (I) **introduction**, which establishes the purpose of the research (what is the article theme, the reason for the research, its objective) and explains its relevance; (ii) **theoretical reference**; (iii) **methodology or methods and techniques**; (iv) **results and discussion**; (v) **conclusions and recommendations**; and (vi) **references** that have been carefully formatted to conform with journals standards;
- Brown (2005) stresses the importance of divulging, presenting and **discussing manuscripts** in workshops. This practice increases the probability of acceptance by scientific journals. Another recommendation is to ask colleagues to read and review a manuscript and comment on it before submitting it. Relevant contributions can be recognized by inserting an acknowledgment in the text of any who has done so, including any reviewers whose opinions were especially constructive, and which led to significant improvement in the work. It is important to highlight how a version submitted to a journal contains substantial advances over any previous versions presented in conferences or events;
- A serious ethical mistake is to submit the same manuscript to more than one journal or to send it to a new journal without formally removing it from any other where it is being evaluated;
- Submitting articles that have considerable overlap in content is only acceptable when the texts are targeted at different audiences (for example, professional and academic), but is unacceptable (unethical) if the audiences are the same. Along this line, it is only acceptable to produce various manuscripts from the same data set if: (i) it isn't possible to integrate all data into a single, clear and impactful article; and (ii) the various articles have different purposes (Fine, Kurdek, 1994);
- It is **abusive and unacceptable**, in ethical terms, for authors to submit an article with limitations that they are aware of, if these limitations can be corrected, with the expectation that the article might be accepted as is or with the intent of transferring the responsibility of improving the article to the editors and reviewers. It is just as serious to benefit from recommendations from one journal's reviewers, making changes based on the recommendations, and then send the manuscript to another journal;
- Always duly reference any adoption of other researchers' methods and of all assertions that are not specifically supported by the research in the article. However, this means that one must always respect and reference **ideas and arguments**, and not **decontextualized phrases**, of referenced authors. It is also important to remember that an article should have a contribution from whomever authored it, and should not, therefore, have references in a comparable number to paragraphs;
- It is a **severe unethical consideration** to reference works of dubious pertinence, seeking to expand their respective impact. On the other hand, it is equally unethical to fail to do so because of antipathy or prejudice of any kind;

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- Authors must understand that all cited authors are candidates to review submitted manuscripts;
- Remember that admission to the review process **does not imply acceptance** for publication;
- It is also important to be aware that a manuscript can **always** be improved using an external point of view. It is very common, when receiving comments or recommendations from a reviewer opinion, for authors to have trouble understanding why a reviewer made a specific notation or recommendation. An author might believe everything is perfect: by knowing the text so well after composing it, their mind is able to fill in any gaps and eliminate any imperfections. Our recommendation is to thus to never dismiss anything a reviewer writes: they might not have understood the exact spirit of a specific part, but felt that there was something just not right with it. This means that a revision is almost certainly necessary (Trzesniak, 2004b);
- Authors to learn to absorb comments stemming from the review process and make maximum efforts to understand and incorporate the majority of them. However, if after such efforts some comments show to be justifiably inadequate, **do not incorporate them**: prepare an astute message for the reviewer, explaining the reasons for not accommodating the request. In general, a message should always be sent to the journal, explaining how each point raised by the reviewers was used to improve the manuscript;
- Authors should **learn to accept rejection** and analyze the reasons for it. Consider the possibility that a new document should be create based upon the rejection or a revised version of the document might be published in another journal. It is not a good idea to simply send the same unaltered manuscript to another journal. Among other things, the manuscript might be sent to the same reviewer at the new journal.
- **Remain motivated!** Motivation and confidence in your own work are important elements that help determine acceptance of a manuscript;
- Authors should **avoid the practice of *salami/data slicing*,** which refers to the practice of fragmenting the results of a research into various parts, with the objective of realizing distinct publications as if they were the results of independent research;
- **Work in networks with other researchers**, because the collaborative process, beyond helping sustain motivation and productivity, offers multiple views, identifying and bypassing limitations and perfecting ideas and arguments. However, ethically, **only include as coauthors those that have effectively and significantly contributed to the research** (Sherrell; Cabelo; Griffin, 1989). A formal acknowledgment of gratitude in the text, is an acceptable alternative (Best Practice) for relevant, but minor, involvement in manuscript development;
- After an article has been published, authors should make sure to divulge it as widely as possible, including on social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.;
- Always develop more than one manuscript at a time, because there is generally a lapse in time between submission to a journal and publication;
- Avoid submitting more than two articles per year to the same journal;
- **Practice reciprocity**, that is, expect to be invited to act as a reviewer by the journal that publishes your manuscript, especially if it was well received. Editors always consider the authors of articles they publish are potential reviewers, especially if they judge them to be discerning and capable of responding within a short period of time. In case you become a reviewer, do your work with dedication, promptness, and maximum scientific rigor. Contribute to the

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improvement of any manuscript as if it were your own, with the hope that after publication the author(s) can be justifiably proud of the text, and that it will have a significant impact on the knowledge area.

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