To what is the review process relevant?

What’s right and what’s wrong with peer review for academic business journals

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to consider various strengths and weaknesses of the academic review process with an emphasis on the effect the process has on the relevance of business journals, particularly in the marketing literature.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors not only highlight some of the literature addressing the review process but also present insight and opinion largely based on decades of experience editing, reviewing, writing and publishing.

Findings – Reviewers can help develop research papers, but reviewers remain gatekeepers who, theoretically, protect journals from publishing research that would diminish the truthful body of knowledge within a field. However, many inefficiencies, some of which involve volition, allow one to question whether the review process as we know it best accomplishes that purpose.

Practical implications – Recognizing that reviewers affect journal prestige, the paper concludes with a number of ideas for improving the gate-keeping and developmental functions for academic articles.

Social implications – Society should extract value from what appears in publicly circulated, academic, refereed journals. However, to the extent that the publication process interferes with objective dissemination of knowledge, that value is diminished and perhaps even absent.

Originality/value – The paper intends to stimulate frank conversation about the Academy’s refereed publication process and factors that tend to interfere with its function.

Keywords Integrity, Publication, Marketing research, Academic journals, Review process

Paper type Viewpoint

Is the double blind-review process sacrosanct in business journals? One would think so based on the title of Kassirer and Campion’s (1994; p. 96) article: “Peer Review: Crude and Understudied, but Indispensable”. Human nature suggests that authors tend to think the review process works well when one’s papers are accepted for publication but works poorly when one’s papers are rejected. Interestingly, the pool of reviewers comes from the pool of authors, which means that reviewers and authors are actually the same people – at least until the reviewing begins! Do both reviewers and authors share a similarly strong motivation to advance scientifically knowledge in their disciplines? Or is that motivation clouded by realities of the academic workplace? The limited research on the review process, supported by anecdotal evidence expressed in author conversations, leads to legitimate questions about whether the review process is dysfunctional (Armstrong, 1997). Further, if the review process is functional, then what function does it perform?

If we are to reject the review process as we now know it, then what might be the alternatives? Some of the leading economics journals (among other disciplines) no longer
blind review submissions based on a belief that blind review does not improve quality (Fischman, 2011). Submission fees are common in finance journals with a portion of the proceeds going toward payments for peer reviews. Journals sometimes allow authors to pay for a faster than normal review, a move not without controversy (Cressey, 2015). Some call for a complete abandonment of the tradition double-blind reviewing and proffer crowdsourcing as an improved method of reviewing (Rehmeyer, 2010). Taking this concept further, why review at all? Perhaps a discipline should publish and then readers could provide criticism and commentary? Readers could indicate paper quality with a star system or perhaps an article “Yelp page” of sorts. These ratings could eventual replace or supplement journal ranking systems.

In contrast to some other disciplines, the marketing and management literatures remain fairly traditional with reviewers providing reviews without payment for services and at least the veil of blind-review remains. The purpose of this commentary is to provide a descriptive treatment of the peer-review process as it exists in the marketing and business research journals. Editors mediate the impact of reviewers in determining the content of a journal; and the content then garners citations and downloads that feed into the journal ranking system (Clark and Wright, 2007; Zinn and Goldsby, 2016). Reviewing then shapes rankings. We raise questions as to who are reviewers, what is the purpose of a review and what are potential consequences of the interplay between reviewers, authors, and editors? The points raised beyond the review including descriptive discussion and opinion arise from decades of experience as authors, reviewers with multiple awards for outstanding reviewing, considerable experience in paper selection for academic programs and over 15 total years in the editor’s office of top marketing journals. After providing a description with an emphasis on potentially controversial aspects of the review process, we offer suggestions regarding the critique of manuscripts for authors, editors and reviewers. We intend the suggestions as helpful advice for all and contribute to a healthy body of literature and opinion (Macdonald and Kim, 2007). In no way though do we intend this article as an exhaustive literature review on the topic of journal reviewing.

Reviewers

Who are reviewers?

We start by considering the question, “who are reviewers?” The well-known abbreviation PRJ stands for Peer-Reviewed Journal. Ostensibly then, reviewers are supposed to be peers. The word peer though has multiple meanings that may apply. A peer means an individual that shares perspective, knowledge and status with another. However, to peer means to extend considerable effort in trying to see something noteworthy. The first definition begs the question of what constitutes a peer (Bedeian, 2003). If one draws the peer circle too small, then even the most esoteric research may find acceptance within a sufficiently small community. If one draws the peer circle too large, then a reviewer may have difficulty relating to the research.

The second definition of peer begs the question of how hard should a reviewer look to see something unusual, out of character or some reason why a submitted manuscript does not contribute. If one looks even at work previously accepted for publication, then one will no doubt find problems. Do editors and reviewers look equally hard or does “who is the author” affect the amount of peering and consequences of reviewer criticism?

An interesting study took published research and resubmitted it to the same journal in which the work appeared as a manuscript with a fictitious author name(s) and fictitious (less well-known) institutions (Peters and Ceci, 1982). Editors, based on the input of blind reviewers, rejected over eight in ten of those submissions. Did the original reviewers not
look hard enough? Did the new reviewers look too hard? Was the identity of the schools and authors irrelevant in the decisions? Are editors and reviewers at highly ranked journals from self-perceived prestigious institutions themselves highly susceptible to bias by the influential university affiliation? Studies like Peters and Ceci (1982) shed light on these questions, but perhaps the results from the study are not completely surprising to many academics. Are editors heavily influenced by the idea that “famous” authors create more impact, allowing an editor to take credit for a higher journal ranking, that they do not see criticisms equally? Leakage exists within the peer-review system.

No doubt, prospective authors, perceiving or perhaps even fearing such bias, sometimes consider adding a famous fourth (or whatever the number may be) author from a prestigious institution as a way of improving the odds of publication. Perhaps the invited author is given a particularly light role in the authorship to entice cooperation. Alternatively, authors may add a name with no involvement from the additional author. A survey of over 200 highly ranked journal editors across multiple fields of science suggested “gift-authorship” as the third most serious concern for author integrity violations, trailing only plagiarism and conflicts of interest (Wager et al., 2009). If the goal is publication for the author, and high journal rankings for the editor, then perhaps the journal becomes complicit in gamesmanship over science (Babin et al., 2016). To the extent that such gamesmanship takes place, does the accurate reporting of scientific research as appearing in journals take a back seat?

Another way to look at the question deals with ways of picking who reviewers of a paper might be. Other authors use the term gamesmanship to refer to tactics that may circumvent or supplement review processes and create a desirable outcome for a submission (Macdonald and Kim, 2007). Authors engaged in the game of publication may expend considerable effort into a guessing game and believe that the reviewers’ identities can be predicted (Babin et al., 2016). In other words, the authors may try to speculate which “peers” will review their paper and try to appease them accordingly with flattering citations. At the least, the authors make sure to cite each person on the list of potential reviewers. Contributing further to the author prognostications of reviewer identity are submission system requests to which authors provide names and email addresses of potential reviewers. We return to the consequences of such requests later. On closer inspection, however, guessing reviewers may be much more difficult. First, review request turn downs are increasingly common. A substantial portion of requests are turned down, whereas 15-20 years ago, requests turn downs were extremely rare (at least within the marketing discipline). Second, most journal editors at highly ranked journals rightly loathe sending a reviewer more than one paper to review at a time. Thus, even if an author perceives a member of a journal’s editorial review board (ERB) as a perfect match, and so works especially hard to flatter that author, that reviewer may well already have a manuscript to review or have just completed a review making he/she an unlikely choice for another review. Third, all major journals rely heavily on ad hoc reviewers. Thus, the ERB does not provide an accurate sampling frame of potential reviewers.

Who should review?
Beyond the question of defining a peer based on areas of experience or interest is the question of the degree of engagement deemed adequate to serve as a reviewer. We can look at this question from several perspectives including, but not limited to:

Q1. What level of professional experience is appropriate for a reviewer?

Q2. What degree of experience is appropriate with the particular journal?
We adopt the career stage terminology ranging from graduate student, assistant professor, associate professor, to full professor for the purpose of this discussion. All do participate in the review process. A graduate student may be:

- directly assigned to review a manuscript as a peer;
- assigned the role of sub-reviewer performing (or assisting) the review for a faculty member; or
- assigned the role of a trial reviewer as a means of gaining experience in the review process.

Do graduate students have sufficient experience to professionally conduct a review? A graduate student may have the advantage of currency on many theoretical or methodological topics given the requisite emersion in the corresponding literatures. A student may well be fully capable of performing a “text-book” evaluation.

Clearly, not all graduate students are one in the same. Some have established scholarly records before being awarded a degree. Such students seem reasonable candidates to evaluate scholarly work. However, less seasoned students may lack sufficient knowledge within a field to integrate proposed contributions or new discoveries. Conversely, one could ask similar questions about more experienced scholars. With experience, one may become less capable of integrating new developments. More importantly, retired scholars may lose interest in academic journals. However, senior scholars also have a disproportionate amount of citations and, thus, are ready targets to be identified as a candidate for a reviewer. The question becomes whether reviewers themselves recognize when they are capable reviewers and have the wherewithal to turn down a review request otherwise. Additionally, most editors do not provide specific instructions to specific reviewers. A reviewer may be capable to evaluate a statistical technique but be incapable of judging contribution or vice-versa. In other times, particularly as a topic becomes relatively narrow, an editor might ask someone not within the particular content domain to examine the paper for general fit and appeal. An outside perspective can be useful. In either case, the editor should pass such instruction on to reviewers so they know the specific task expectation.

How many reviews?
Reviewing is a critical form of service that contributes to the respective research discipline. Authors of journal articles should feel obliged to review papers as their success in publication depends on the service of others. Further, researchers benefit from performing reviews by seeing the types of projects and potentially innovative works that are submitted to journals. Further, if one wishes to publish in a particular journal, then he or she can support the journal and learn more about it by performing reviews.

Inevitably though, the journal process produces more manuscripts to review than there are manuscripts accepted for publication. Thus, a researcher is likely to do more reviews than manuscript submissions by a factor of several-fold. Can one person do too many reviews? Unfortunately, reviews are not evenly dispersed, with a recent study of the biomedical literature finding that 20 per cent of the researchers perform 69 to 94 per cent of the reviews (Kovanis et al., 2016). Further, the study reports that 70 to 90 per cent of researchers spend 1 per cent or less of their research time on peer reviews. Such distributions likely apply to the business literature as well:

- Reviewer perspective: Reviewing manuscripts can be time-consuming and exhausting. Thus, reviewers sometimes spend a full working day or more reviewing
a single manuscript. Thus, at some point, editors may be asking too much of a particular reviewer. No reviewer should be asked to spend more time reviewing than they do in direct involvement with students, with the exception of the rare researcher who may not have a standard teaching load through tools such as research grant buyouts. Otherwise, the risk is that the reviewing activities would conflict with one’s ability to be prepared to teach classes or spend time advising undergraduate and graduate students. Journals vary in the number of submissions a reviewer will do annually. Out of respect for the conflicting demands on a professor’s time, including from other journals, no single journal should ask a reviewer to review more than five manuscripts per year. Reviewers should be wary not to commit to reviewing to the point where he or she is always facing multiple assignments due within the same four-week time period or to where teaching demands become secondary.

- **Author’s perspective**: While authors typically want a speedy review, which heavy reviewer burdens can help achieve, authors also likely want quality reviews. Like any other effortful endeavor, one must take shortcuts when faced with role overload. Thus, the quality of review is likely to diminish from an overburdened reviewer. Additionally, the fact that one reviewer, particularly if the reviewer is considered a specialist within a specific field, tends to exert too much influence on the direction of research, the result could be detrimental to the development of objective and potentially diverse knowledge or opinions.

- **Discipline’s perspective**: Following from the last point, reviewers that do more reviews have more influence on the discipline. More specifically, a reviewer that conducts a disproportionate amount of reviews for one particular journal exerts a disproportionate share of influence on the content of the journal. At some point, the reviewer is having the influence normally attributed to an editor’s role.

Who should not do reviews?
Anecdotal evidence suggests that co-authors often examine review board memberships and try to steer the content and citations of a particular manuscript in the hope of avoiding specific reviewers or perhaps encouraging that another get selected. Although the prediction of reviewers is perilous, engagement in such activity represents a challenge to publishing integrity falling more in-line with gamesmanship than a valid description of the research (Babin et al., 2016). Editorial review systems often require that authors suggest reviewers. The reviewer suggestion system opens further the opportunity for reviewer fraud. Further, in a few cases, editors may avoid using authors’ reviewer recommendations. As such, authors may be wasting their time researching and considering who might make a good, potential reviewer.

Should a close friend or family member review your manuscript? Would they not know whose paper it is? Or perhaps the author could make sure indeed that the reviewer(s) would know whose paper it is with the expectation of a favorable recommendation. In fact, circles of reviewers promising favorable reviews to each other can improve the likelihood of publication greatly. In the extreme, perhaps one can volunteer to review a manuscript he/she authored him/herself. In such a situation, a speedy review is almost always guaranteed. Both scenarios may seem far-fetched, but in fact, both have been responsible for surprisingly numerous retractions at Elsevier and Springer alone (Ferguson et al., 2014). Obviously, one should not perform a “blind-review” of his/her own submission, but similarly, one should not have expectations of favors returned by participating in reviews of
certain manuscripts. To the extent that authors try to manipulate the reviewer selection process, they share something in common with authors conspiring to produce fraudulent reviews.

The review

Evaluate

What is the purpose of peer-review? Before the advent of peer-reviewed journals some three centuries ago, research communications among scholars were communicated through written correspondence (Lee et al., 2013). Double-blind peer review processes intend to provide an objective assessment of the quality of a research communication. Such a process is objective in the sense that if the reviewers are not known, and better still if neither reviewer nor author is known, then reviewers should have no reason to give anything other than their honest opinion. Well, like many academic admonitions, the blind peer-review process may work in theory but becomes deeply suspect when put under the bright lights of real-world social processes. As alluded to earlier, leakage in the review process allows factors like author and author affiliation to play a role in biasing reviews and the chances of publication. Editors and reviewers from prestigious schools themselves may be most susceptible to the knowledge or suspicion of authors’ affiliation prestige (Hamermesh, 1994). Furthermore, if objectivity is indicated by reviewer corroboration, then reviewer opinions of any particular work should agree. Empirical evidence though shows surprisingly low inter-reviewer reliability (Babin, 2008; Lee et al., 2013).

The review process also suffers from bias of the “received view”. Business research is likely not unique in succumbing to the theory du jour syndrome where reviewers expect research to be caste in the light of the currently most popular theory. Truly novel research findings, novel meaning that to some extent the findings defy explanation by the received view(s), become truly difficult to publish. Thus, the peer-review process does lead to much more of a subjective, social construction of knowledge than an objective assessment of successive approximation of the truth (Bedeian, 2004). Truly novel findings also end up getting stifled in the review process as reviewers favor rigor over discovery (Mintzberg, 2008). Biases such as these pervade the grant review process at least as much as the journal process. Thus, scientific knowledge, and particularly scientific discovery, is greatly affected by social forces.

Critique and develop

Constructive criticism in the form of a thorough critique provides a secondary purpose of peer review. Reviewers supposedly, and in reality often do, intend to improve the reviewed manuscript. However, critiques also are subject to bias.

Authors are known to suspect reviewers’ identities based on requests to cite specific authors. Are reviewers easily susceptible to such flattery? Perhaps faculty evaluation systems that today emphasize impact, which is assessed by citations, over mere publication motivate reviewers to use their role in shaping authors’ works as a tool for more citations (Baron and Russell-Bennet, 2016). To the extent that authors follow through with citations to navigate the review process rather than create the best possible paper, scientific knowledge becomes biased. Also, reviewers have theoretical biases and lenses through which they see the world (Bedeian, 2004). Thus, the choice of reviewers likely affects the final positioning of research articles.

At some point, even a well-intentioned review may exert too much influence on a manuscript. If authors are forced to change substantially every section of their paper and critical nature of the research itself in an effort to persuade a reviewer to provide a favorable
rating, then is the reviewer still functioning as an evaluator? Or has the reviewer stretched beyond those bounds to a role closer to that of an author? Review lengths vary but a very long review may require changes to a manuscript with the end-result being that the final product bears little resemblance to the initial submission. Even if well-intentioned, if the reviewer imposes his/her worldview on the research, then the author, eager to gain another publication and the subsequent material rewards, may be all too willing to acquiesce. The research report is the intellectual property of the authors, not the reviewers. Reviewers should not be allowed to take on such a dramatic role in shaping the meaning of that property. On the other hand, another question that surfaces in such cases is whether the reviewer should receive credit for authorship. While this may sound extreme, truly developmental input could constitute a contribution large enough to constitute authorship in a non-blind situation.

Further, reviewers should expect authors to respond to their criticisms, but only to the extent that changes actually develop a better contribution. Authors are wise not to totally ignore reviewers unless encouraged to do so by an editor (Ortinau, 2011). On the other hand, reviewers become overwhelmed with extremely long reply notes. Despite what appears in the notes, the manuscript still has to stand on its own in the journal.

**What should a review look like?**

Editors interested in allowing the authors to retain the ownership of their ideas could perhaps limit the length of reviews or at least direct authors carefully only to the most salient elements of a review. Up until about 1990, the top marketing journals typically sent prospective authors the rating sheets completed by the reviewers that displayed the qualitative assessment and quantitative ratings of the submitted manuscript. As that process ended, authors received only the written comments of reviewers. The typical number of reviewers per paper ranges from two to four. If each reviewer averaged three pages of comments, then an author could easily face over 10 pages of revision notes.

If the goal of the review process is to evaluate and not to provide levels of critique that approximate authorship, then perhaps shorter and more pointed reviews would function better. Some journals now provide reviewers with a list of six to ten questions to address in assessing the manuscript. Thus, the questions direct the reviewer comments to those specific issues. Also, the questions may function to reduce the length of reviews. Shorter but pointed reviews can speed up the review process and still allow the author to maintain control of the intended intellectual property.

Manuscripts sometimes find themselves in the review process for months or even years facing multiple rounds of lengthy reviews. The ultimate catastrophe for the author is to have such a process end with a rejected manuscript. How much reviewing, or how many rounds of reviews, is too much? Certainly, multiple rounds of reviews do not contribute to speedy dissemination of knowledge. Furthermore, more rounds of reviews do not necessarily mean a higher quality finished product. If the degree of revisions to a manuscript could be limited, then perhaps a single review with the editor then assessing the quality of the changes based on the review could be adequate in improving manuscript quality and providing a speedier route to dissemination. Following a single review, the editor could oversee subsequent revisions. If the single review is insufficient, then perhaps a second round of reviews could serve as a consultation with reviewers on the paper’s prospects. But more than two rounds of reviews seems counterproductive to discovery and timely dissemination.

Occasionally, reviewers may become entrenched in the gate-keeping mind-set. Reviewers sometimes show their displeasure with those wishing to publish certain work with caustic comments. Clearly, the mind-set is not one to try to improve the scientific quality of work...
Editors, authors, reviewers

Editors, authors and reviewers all come from the same population. The same people, individual business academics, play multiple roles. An editor is also an author of and also a reviewer for other journals. Also, the academic community is finite and the researchers within each discipline come to know and become familiar with each other. The potential for conflicts of interest is great.

Editors come to understand their reviewers. Some reviewers provide very good evaluations and pointed comments to help improve the research, but they always vote to reject manuscripts. Conversely, some reviewers seem to like all papers. In this latter group, reviewers who do not thoroughly read a paper are sometimes more likely to give a positive evaluation with very little commentary. An editor then faces potentially rejecting a paper based on a more thorough evaluation although the author may well interpret the superficial, positive, review as a quality indicator. Thus, it is incumbent on the editor to understand the tendencies of his/her reviewers and take those into account when making decisions.

Review refusals

Once upon a time, researchers saw a review request as an honor and the request was most often accepted. Never was it truer than when editors penned a personal hand-written request on the form letter accompanying the physically mailed copy of a manuscript. That was another day and another time. Review requests today arrive within a myriad of SPAM and give the appearance of being generated by a machine. Publishers maintain reviewer databases, so editorial staff can find potential reviewers by matching keywords. The end result is that for many journals potential reviewers refuse or ignore more than half of review requests. Reasons for refusals include the fact that many reviewers feel overworked and at any given time, already overburdened with review requests. In addition, the fact that editors may not know the reviewers, particularly ad hoc reviewers that are often computer-generated selections, may lead to a less than perfect fit. Further, a reviewer who does not know the editor may not feel socially obligated and, thus, may be less likely to accept a request or follow through.

Perhaps more interesting are reasons to accept the request to review a paper, particularly motivations that go beyond the noble call to serve the discipline. More than one editor in “Meet the Editor” sessions at conferences has mentioned they take note of those who refuse review requests. A journal with many submissions has so many refusals that it would be hard for an editor to remember every reviewer who ever turned down a review request. However, the paper management system makes that information available by automatically recording refusals. Thus, data on refusals are available in the editorial management system. The implication is that an editor may remember some refusals or has access to the data in the system. Will a refusal become relevant particularly when that same reviewer turns author and submits a paper to the journal? While this may seem like a one-way ethical breech on the part of the editor, one may also consider that it is at least in poor taste for a prospective author to refuse to serve a journal in which he/she desires to publish. This is only one example of how political pressures influence what content actually appears in academic journals.
Reviewer evaluations

Editors often have ways to evaluate reviewers. Not the least of the evaluations is the memory of the editor. However, systems keep statistics on reviewers, and editors take note of how often reviewers return reviews on time (more than half late) and what the recommendations tended to be. The editorial management systems sometimes provide a scoring method allowing the editor or area editor to evaluate and indicate a quality score for a particular review. Thus, editors acknowledge that not all reviews are high quality. On a given submission, chances are that at least one of the reviews will not receive a stellar rating. However, editors often feel the pressure to bring closure to a review process such that they will work with a less than high-quality review rather than encounter a delay by including an additional reviewer. Editors also feel pressure to provide a “speedy” review. In addition, editors often reuse reviewers with a history of poor reviews, particularly when the paper is in a relatively narrow area of expertise. Thus, the scoring of reviews and reviewers is only so useful.

While reviewer quality evaluations must be completed by an editor or area editor, a recently established website, Publons (publons.com), is now able to document the number of reviews a researcher completes. Reviewers can create an account in Publons, which then verifies their reviews in any journal. A reviewer’s statistics can be shared or kept private. As such, Publons may encourage reviewers to review since their reviewing activity can be documented and potentially used for merit purposes (tenure, promotion, raises, grants, job applications, etc.). Additionally, reviewers can compare their activity with that of others reviewers with Publons accounts.

Finally, the role of the editor cannot be over-emphasized. Reviewers provide input to editors who then make final decisions about what appears in the journal. Editors do indeed play a prominent role in decision-making, particularly when reviewers’ recommendations are inconsistent (Gilliland and Cortina, 1997). What appears in the journal then helps to influence the journal’s prestige and rankings (Clark and Wright, 2007). The ranking systems are likely susceptible to political influences as well. One also has to consider another player in the process, that is, the audience. Just who is the audience for PRJ articles, particularly given the pressure for impact and ratings? While impact should extend beyond the academic circles, the PRJ reviewing process remains almost entirely an academic exercise. Applied journals that take on an outside perspective often do not follow the traditional blind review process, but applied journals often are not ranked highly academically. For instance, in the USA, a publication in Harvard Business Review or in Business Horizons does not count toward tenure or promotion at some research institutions. Further research is needed to understand the role of the audience in determining journal impact and the manner in which reviewing influences the audience.

Conclusions

The blind peer-review process is not perfect. Reviewers are often overworked (or at least the good ones) and sometimes biased. Some authors attempt to “game” the system by requesting friendly reviewers, friends and, in the worst case, even themselves (unknowingly to the editor). And they may refuse requests to review for the journal to which they plan to submit. Editors may also show bias, relying on author recognition and school-affiliation or prestige in their decision-making. In some cases, they may provide little guidance to the authors on how to interpret the reviews and may provide little guidance to reviewers as well.

Nonetheless, the review process is widely perceived as necessary and involves many actors with good intentions. Still, improvements in the process are possible and perhaps
necessary for academic research to retain any semblance of value in creating true scientific advancement. Below are some potential enhancements that one could consider:

1. **Reviewer golden rule:** Treat the submission the way you would want a reviewer to treat your own submission.

2. Journals could consider allowing more synchronous, immediate communication between the authors and reviewers as opposed to the current asynchronous communication method. Specifically, authors could pose specific questions to reviewers if the authors are having difficulty understanding the reviewers' comments. Additionally, authors could get advice on which of several theories or methods may be appropriate to address a particular issue the reviewer raised. Perhaps innovation to the editorial management systems can accommodate such an "author-review chatroom".

3. Reviewers should be encouraged to subscribe to Publons.com so that they get credit for their reviews. This could encourage more individuals to review and encourage particular reviewers to complete more reviews, opening up the supply of potential reviewers. Reviews should be acknowledged as intellectual contributions and they should indicate one's active engagement in their discipline.

4. Journals that require reviewers to subscribe to Publons.com or a similar service, which validate reviewers, can help prevent fraudulent reviews. They should also consider making publicly available reviewer scores.

5. Editors should be more proactive in soliciting potential reviewers, particularly doctoral students and early scholars, as these individuals may not feel qualified to perform reviews. The editors should also acknowledge to authors when a review is not playing a role in the decision process for a publication. A developmental review might not play a role, but there are other reasons why a review might not be important, including the fact that the editor considers the review off base or potentially in error in some comments.

6. Journals should allow authors to rate and comment on their reviewers. Such information could help editors in selecting reviewers, would encourage better reviews and may serve as a means of merit for reviewers. Of course, similar to student evaluations, one might view these comments and ratings with a "grain of salt".

7. Prior reviews could be accessible to the readers of manuscripts. Doing this would increase transparency of the review process. Additionally, such information could be beneficial to researchers, as this would better inform researchers about the review process. Accessible reviews may also increase the quality of the reviews.

8. Reviews should be more evaluations than coercive attempts to change the nature of a manuscript.

9. If a reviewer truly does not have the time to complete a review, then he/she should refuse the request.

10. Editors should carefully weigh trading off speed against quality reviews.

11. Reviewers should not use the review process to promote their own personal research agenda nor improve their own impact ratings.

12. Authors should not try to manipulate the review process by gaming through means such as adding a prestigious author or an author from a more prestigious school for purposes of gaining a more favorable reaction from in the review process. Authorship is not a trivial issue.
Authors should also realize their duty to serve the academic community to which they intend to contribute by participating in the review process. All too often, younger scholars feel they should not review papers because it takes precious time away from their own publication agenda.

Journals should consider other avenues for critiquing research including user ratings.

Editors and reviewers should consider the COPE guidelines for responsible reviewing, which include suggestions that reviewers (COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics, 2013):

- should declare any potential conflict of interest;
- not allow the suspected origins of a manuscript to influence their review;
- refrain from hostile or derogatory personal comments;
- in no way should a reviewer try to pretend to be another person; and
- not use information obtained through reviewing to promote their own advantage.

The review process changes with the technologies and professional standards of the day, but it is not likely to go away any time soon. Thus, the quality of what we publish will remain qualified to the extent that editors, reviewers and authors act with less than the highest standard of professional integrity and non-scientific, albeit perhaps subtle, motivations. Those motivations include strong drives to publish and demonstrate impact that potentially over-ride a strong sense of integrity. For journals, a strong motivation to climb the rankings may serve similarly to skew the aims of scientific peer review. The review process clearly is relevant to the latter two concerns.

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