

How to Help Solve the Reviewer Problem in Academic Publishing

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We are delighted to introduce Volume 26 of the ABR, and this editorial is about a problem that journal editors in all academic disciplines face.

The situation is a familiar one to Academic Journal Editors. You have a deluge of submissions, and authors vigorously follow up on the status of their submissions while reviewers are reluctant to accept the review request. To the credit of ABR reviewers, they get the review done once they accept the assignment. Our last year's editorial (Upadhyaya and Roy, 2022) thanked those reviewers. We thought we should explore the "finding reviewer" problem in our 2023 Editorial, given that the problem is so pervasive in academic publishing.

Unlike a jury, double-blind peer reviewers work anonymously for the author/s and other reviewers (The PLoS Medicine Editors, 2007). The reviewers do not confer with each other, although Editors might decide to share the anonymous review reports after a decision. While the peer review process has many criticisms (Kelly et al., 2014) in business research, peer review is required for scholars for multiple goals. These goals vary by country but generally involve earning a Ph.D., getting a job in academia, earning tenure and promotion, and receiving or maintaining AACSB accreditation for business schools.

The eagerness of authors to hear back from reviewers is thus easy to understand. At ABR we are trying to find solutions to the reviewer problem, and we urge our readers, authors, and reviewers to help as much as possible.

WHY ARE REVIEWERS RELUCTANT? SOME IDEAS TO CONSIDER

There are several reasons why scholarly authors are reluctant to review. First, it can be a time-consuming process. A thorough review can take several hours, and finding the time to do this can be challenging when you are also trying to write your research and teach classes. A solution to this problem is to ask reviewers who have recently published in the area or are cited by the authors to opine on the paper's contribution. Such a reviewer with specific expertise can decide quickly if the manuscript under review has a potential contribution to the literature. ABR has started asking for names of potential reviewers in all new submissions to use this approach. The disadvantage of this approach is that a scholar who has spent years building a position may not kindly consider budding authors who challenge their established position on an issue. The Editor can try and referee this or ask for a second opinion.

Second, reviewing can be a thankless task at multiple levels. (1) **Employers of reviewers:** While publishing your research is valued, there is wide variation worldwide in the credit a reviewer gets at their employer institution. Here employers through the academic chain of command can help by

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recognizing the review work by faculty. (2) **Authors:** A reviewer knows that the author/s do not appreciate perceived adverse comments. And yet the purpose of the double-blind expert review is to help develop the submitting author's work and contribute to the discipline. Even if your paper is rejected, we urge authors to consider the comments and concerns of the reviewers as they develop the research. This helps knowledge development and your discipline. (3) **Editors:** If a reviewer rejects a paper and the reviewer finds that the paper is published, then the reviewer feels disrespected by the Editor. Here it can be helpful for Editors to share reviews and decision letters with reviewers. Several suggestions in the literature about recognizing reviewers include providing free access to the journal, discounts to the journal's conference, and recognition in databases like ORCID.

Third, some scholars may feel they are not qualified to review specific types of research. For example, an author specializing in options trading research may not feel comfortable reviewing a paper on leadership. Here scholars can help by listing their current areas of interest on their Google Scholar profiles. ABR Editors try hard to find reviewers with a current interest in the area of the paper under review.

Finally, some scholars may not be interested in reviewing. They may feel that their time is better spent on other activities, such as writing their research or teaching. We appeal to such scholars to consider that their discipline relies on them to move the discipline forward. This is one of the best ways to "give back" to scholarship in your discipline. Also, if you recall how paradoxically eager you are to hear back from reviewers for your research, it can remind you to do your part as a reviewer.

CONSEQUENCES OF RELUCTANT REVIEWERS

The reluctance of scholarly authors to review can have several negative consequences. First, it can delay the publication of new research. A paper is typically assigned to two or three reviewers when submitted to a journal. If one or more reviewers are reluctant to review, the process can be delayed significantly.

Second, the quality of published research can suffer. When papers are not reviewed thoroughly, it is more likely that errors and flaws will go undetected. This can lead to the publication of false or misleading information.

Third, the reputation of the scholarly community can be damaged. When scholars are reluctant to review, it sends a message that they are not committed to the quality of scholarly research. This can make it more difficult for the scholarly community to maintain the public's trust.

HOW CAN YOU HELP ABR IF YOU ARE REQUESTED TO REVIEW? ACCEPT OR DECLINE QUICKLY

You can help by accepting or declining a review request immediately. Let us explain how the ABR electronic manuscript-handling software works. Most manuscript-handling software works similarly.

If you accept the review, the system notifies the Editor, and we know we can expect a review report from you. While review times are set at 30 days, we are happy to accommodate delays at your end if you let us know.

If you decline promptly, you help the review process more than by not responding. Any declines are notified to the Editor, who can try and find other reviewers. And as we explained in our 2022 editorial, it's not impolite to decline to review. Also, any declines will not be held against you if you decide to submit a paper to ABR.

Let us together move research forward!

Here are the articles in our Volume 26, Issue 1

- The Paycheck Protection Program: Minority vs. Non-Minority Bank Response
- Distinguished Competency and Efficacy of Working Capital Management Ensuing Firm Survival, Liquidity, Solvency and Profitability: A Study on Automotive Industry
- Relational Job Design Based Cognitive Pathways to Employee Entrepreneurial Behaviour
- Urban Crime and Its Net Implicit Price to North Carolina Households
- The Effect of Traditional and Contemporary Management Accounting Practices on Organisational Outcomes and the Moderating Role of Strategy
- Corporate Cash Holdings and Firm Performance in India: An Empirical Investigation of the Effects of Audit Quality and Firm Growth
- Dynamic Linkages of Energy Commodities with Bullion and Metal market: Evidence of Portfolio Hedging
- The Fiscal Transmission Mechanism of Inflation
- Contribution of Exchange Traded Funds in Hedging Crude Oil Price Risk
- Demystifying the Effect of High-Performance Work Systems on Job Involvement Based on Dual-Path Mediation Model
- Nexus Between Travel & Leisure Stocks and Uncertainties: An Extreme Risk Spillover Analysis

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