

**SWERA 2022**

**How to get published: An editor's  
perspective**

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# FOCUS OF THE PRESENTATION

- Selecting a journal
- The submission process
- The review process
- Common mistakes & how to avoid them!



# TYPES OF JOURNALS

- Generalist education / 'sector' journals
  - *Research in Education*
  - *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*
- Specialist journals – by topic
  - *International journal of leadership and management*
  - *International journal of inclusive education*
- Specialist journals – by focus/theory
  - *Gender and education*
  - *Race, ethnicity and education*
  - *Ethnography and education*
- Methodology & Comparative journals
  - *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*
  - *Comparative Education*



# SELECTING A JOURNAL TYPE

- What is the main audience for your paper?
- What is the main contribution you want to make?
- What part of your PhD you want to present?

Your answers (SHOULD) make a difference to:  
**focus, background, concepts, conclusion**



# SELECTING A JOURNAL FOR YOUR ARTICLE

Get to know a journal

- a. Relevance, focus and coverage (theoretical, methodological, etc.)
- b. Nature of the field – degree of specialisation of article / journal
- c. Past published articles



# **PART II: THE SUBMISSION PROCESS – THE JOURNAL**

About the journal

Journal instructions for authors

Editorial policies/ editorial board

**Significance of a good abstract**



# STEP 1: THE SCREENING PROCESS

Screening – the publishers / the editors

- Who does the screening?

– Criteria & purpose

Why are some manuscripts rejected at the screening stage?

What makes some manuscripts stand out at the screening stage?



# COMMON REASONS FOR REJECT

- Too much borrowing (legitimately) from other published sources

[View Submission](#)  
[Similarity Check Results \(17%\)](#)

[View Submission](#)  
[Similarity Check Results \(52%\)](#)

[View Submission](#)  
[Similarity Check Results \(77%\)](#)

- Poor quality writing
- Length, format, style
- Not enough 'education' in the paper
- Not enough empirical material - poor design and/or framing.





# STEP 2: THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS

- What does peer review mean?
- Selecting referees
- Do you have to do everything the referees ask for?
- Who are the referees & how are they selected?



# WHAT DO EDITORS EXPECT REFEREES TO COMMENT UPON?

All aspects of the manuscript, from beginning to end !

The nature of the contribution to the 'field' ... (back to how the focus of the paper and focus of the journal are defined)

To highlight strengths, weaknesses, areas of improvement



# COMMON CRITIQUES AND PROBLEMS

- The focus
- Lack of analysis section / weak links between 'analysis' and findings
- Poor /no theorising
- Thin in data /or, data not analysed convincingly
- No clear contribution (the 'so what?' question)
- Balance of various sections
- Poor writing
- Out of date or poor referencing / excessive self-referencing



# REFEREES' JUDGEMENT – VARIATIONS ON THE FOLLOWING:

1. Accept manuscript
2. Minor revision
3. Revise & resubmit/Major revision
4. Reject and resubmit
5. Reject because it is unsuitable for this journal
6. Reject because it is not scientifically sound

## Comments to the Editors



# STEP 3: THE EDITORIAL DECISION

- Grounds for decisions
- Second round reviews - Turnaround times & Resubmissions
- Final decisions & editorial judgement / challenges?
- Language editing



# STEP 4: FINALISING REVISED TEXTS

- Follow suggestions of Editors - **they are the ones who decide** what will happen to your manuscript
- Contradictory or non-compatible comments from different reviewers
- Be very careful with editing your text – this on its own can result in a non-acceptance decision
  - \*\* **Letter Responding to Reviewers' comments** \*\*
- Follow detailed instructions on website for referencing, style, etc.



# AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS' COMMENTS

## What NOT to do

”Thank you for your comments. We have addressed this point.” **A BIG NO**

## What TO DO

“We thank Reviewer 2 for constructive and very detailed feedback. Our response in detail:

- We have addressed the comment and recommendation of Reviewer 2 regarding the slightly uneven cover of the political situation between the two countries. Also, we have attended to the criticism around ‘decentralisation’ processes in the two countries, clarifying and amending the text as necessary;
- We have reduced to some extent the administrative issues that we present for each country in order to simplify, but also to highlight better the ‘bigger’ contextual issues that frame ECEC ideological and policy questions;
- We thought very carefully about the suggestion of Reviewer 2 to decrease the issues covered and to focus on fewer dimensions in each period. We decided however against such a revision. This would fundamentally alter the design of the study that aimed to present ECEC developments over a fairly large time period as well as include the major ideological, governance, and policy questions that framed and shaped such developments.
- All the major changes feature in color red in the revised text. The smaller changes or mergers, still feature in black font.
- ... .. ”



# MAKING REVISIONS VISIBLE - AN EXAMPLE

childcare for children under the age of 3 as a universal right (Law 630/1991). As a result, and in combination with wider progressive family policies, parental insurance schemes (Sweden) and higher female paid employment (Ferrarini & Duvander, 2009), there was a continuing increase in demand for places, as well as costs of public childcare throughout the 1980s.

These conditions opened up debates about the contribution of private financing to ECEC, although still in their infancy. So, in Finland private actors were allowed to set-up operations (after approval), but explicitly prohibited profit-making (Law 36/1973, 23, 27§). This was revised later when municipalities were allowed to purchase ECEC services from other municipalities, or from private providers (Law 677/1982, 3§). This opened the way for for-profit types of privatizations in later decades. Similarly, in Sweden while in the mid-1980s most ECEC provision was still publicly provided and funded, the need for further places saw private actors being allowed to provide childcare. The Social Democratic government of the time was not positive to the idea of commercialization of ECEC, fearing a differentiated by price and quality provision across the country (Martin Korpi, 2014). This was soon to change in the next decade.

## Ideas around childhood and pedagogical developments

This period's policy developments were important in defining the purposes of ECEC, both from a policy perspective, and in relation to evolving understandings of children's welfare and views around childhood. Childcare in both countries was part of welfare politics, drawing heavily on the rationale of labour market participation of parents, and increasingly on social equality and equality between men and women (Bradley, 1990; Välimäki, 1999). But, in this 'modern period', in addition to employability and equality discourses, there were also emerging narratives that focused on ideas around children's care as a public duty. So, the 1983 Amendments to the Finnish Act on Children's Daycare defined the purpose of ECEC in two ways, as supporting homes in the upbringing of children, and as promoting the child's balanced physical, social and emotional development, through aesthetic, cognitive, ethical and religious education (Amendments 25.3.1983/304, 2a§). The dimension of care was also included in references to daycare offering 'continuous, safe and warm relationships, versatile activities and support development' (ibid.). Similarly, the Swedish dominant arguments around childcare as primarily for labour market participation were supplemented in the 1984 Bill by ideas that brought children's development, early learning and socialization at the core of the politics of childcare provision (Govt. Bill 1984/85:209). In addition, the social equality debates in Sweden extended beyond the gender equality in the labour market, to include equality of opportunity for children with different socioeconomic backgrounds.

integrated in the preschool work through combined play and learning (NBHW, 1987).

## MODERN PERIOD II: Diversification, refinement and divergence (1990-2010s)

The two countries' development of ECEC up to (about) 1990 show considerable similarities, both in the welfare ideas that supported the creation and institutionalization of ECEC as a sector, and in the pedagogical ideas that drove the development of pedagogical plans and cultures of daycare and preschools. There is a close policy relationship between the two countries in the field of education in the 1980s-1990s period. Finland organized visits to Sweden with a focus on reform implementation, especially at the level of municipalities and teaching associations, and this pattern is also reflected in the 2012 OECD review that recommends that Finland considers the strategies adopted in Sweden in the field of quality of ECEC workforce. But, the 1990s represent some departures from political and ideological positions, that see the beginnings of a widening of differences in how ECEC was conceptualized and provided in the two countries.

## Policies, governance contexts and financing

The 1990-2013 period of developments in Finland is characterized by universality of ECEC, since after 1990 all children under the age of 3 could have full-time attendance in daycare, soon extended to cover all children under school age (Law 1128/1996). This expansion coincided with the deep recession of the early 1990s, and was accompanied by a significant shift from a centralized to a decentralized, 'culture of trust' based governance. Municipalities took over the administrative functions of the central administrative boards, and the governance of ECEC became the responsibility of the Centre for Research and Development of Welfare and Health (Pihlaja, 2003). As a result, the steering capacity of the central state over social services was weakened (Ahila, 2013), and the municipalities were given new freedoms to decide on local services, produce them more efficiently and ensure savings (Niemelä, 2008; Authors, 2021). In a period of high unemployment and reduced demand for childcare, municipalities cut daycare placements and closed daycare centres (Välimäki & Rauhala 2000). Subsequent legislation allowed municipalities to make payments or acquire services through other agreements (Law 365/1995), in what Välimäki and Rauhala (2000:399) argue was the beginnings of a breakdown



# WHAT IF I GET REJECTED?

- **Everybody gets rejected ! It is part of the process**
- Moving on – recalibrate and resubmitt

But

- Back to the earlier points about journal 'fit'
- Think seriously about the reviewers/editors comments – why were you rejected? Take these comments as feedback



# OTHER ISSUES

- Contacting the editor
- Resending to the same or other journal?
- Reviews of the literature as papers?
- Submitting to more than one journals at the same time? (*NEVER*)

