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Publishing Standards for Research in Forecasting (Editorial)

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When we first began publication of the *Journal of Forecasting*, we reviewed policies that were used by other journals and also examined the research on scientific publishing. Our findings were translated into a referee's rating form that was published in the journal [Armstrong (1982a)]. These guidelines were favorably received. Most referees used the **Referee's Rating Sheet** (Exhibit 1 provides an updated version) and some of them wrote to tell us that they found it helpful in communicating the aims and criteria of the journal.

We like to think that these editorial standards contributed to the success of our journal. Researchers found it useful and cited the papers. For the most recent two years of information, the *Journal of Forecasting* had the sixth highest citation impact factor of the 84 journals in management, business, and planning indexed in the SSCI *Journal Citation Reports*. (The citation impact factor is the number of citations per paper published in a given journal.)

Another indication of success is that the journal appealed to practitioners as well as academics. It achieved a high circulation rate for an academic journal (1,700 subscriptions by the third year). We feel that this is partly due to the stress we place on bridging the gap between theory and practice. We hope that the *International Journal of Forecasting* will have an even higher proportion of research that is relevant to real world problems.

As Editors of the *International Journal of Forecasting* we intend to maintain the standards that we set for the *Journal of Forecasting*. For example, we want to ensure that challenging and unusual contributions receive a fair review. A number of features in our reviewing procedure are designed to accomplish this. Of primary importance is our **Note to Referees** (exhibit 2) which allows the author to ask first for a review of the hypotheses, research method, and data; thus, the review is not biased by knowledge of the results. (The referee then is provided with the complete paper for review.) We also provide double-blind refereeing, which gives a measure of protection to unknown authors and lesser-known institutions [Armstrong (1982b)]. Our Referee's Rating Sheet places a high value on papers with important and surprising results.

We have no aversion to controversial papers. Indeed, we have added a section to the rating sheet that encourages referees to prepare their own comments for publication along with the more controversial papers.

We encourage papers on important and pragmatic topics. We also publish replications of important studies. Replications are of particular interest given the research showing that many studies cannot be successfully replicated. For example, Reid, Soley, and Wimmer (1981) found that 40% of the 30 replications that they were able to examine conflicted with the original results.

We welcome suggestions on ways to make further improvements in the Referee's Rating Sheet and the Note to Referees. Meanwhile, we will try to live up to these high standards. We will also try to complete the reviewing process for papers more rapidly than we have done in the past.

References

Armstrong, J. Scott (1982a), "Research on scientific journals: Implications for editors and authors," *Journal of Forecasting*, 1, 83-104.

Armstrong, J. Scott (1982b), "Is review by peers as fair as it appears?" *Interfaces*, 12, 62-74.

Journal Citation Reports is published annually by the Institute for Scientific Information in Philadelphia, PA.

Reid, Leonard N., L. C. Soley, and R.D. Wimmer (1981), "Replication in advertising research: 1977, 1978, 1979," *Journal of Advertising Research*, 10, 3-13.

Exhibit 1. Referee's Rating Sheet

Thank you for agreeing to review this paper. Your review will ...

- Help the author to improve the paper. Please write comments legibly on the margins of the manuscript, the more the better! We will send a copy to the author.
- Help us decide whether the paper should be published.

This Referee's Rating Sheet reflects the following concerns:

- Research has indicated that journals may be biased against the acceptance of innovative papers. We encourage *controversial* and *innovative* papers.
- We encourage full disclosure of data and method to aid *replication*.
- We favor papers dealing with *important* problems.

If this rating sheet does not suit your approach, feel free to review the paper your own way. This sheet is intended only as an aid to evaluating the paper against the journal's criteria.

- | | Of no
Importance | | | | Extremely
important |
|--|---------------------|---|---|---|------------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Importance of topic to
Practitioners
Other researchers | | | | | |
| 2. The <i>international Journal of Forecasting (IJF)</i> seeks papers that describe applications or indicate potential applications of forecasting procedures. Does this paper do an adequate job on applications? | | | | | |
| | _____ Yes | | | | _____ No |

3. How easy is this paper to understand?

1 2 3 4 5
Very hard to Average for Very easy to
understand academic journals understand

4. Is the title descriptive and short? _____ Yes _____ No

If "No," suggest new title: _____

5. Is the abstract complete and accurate? _____ Yes _____ No

If "No," suggest changes here or on the manuscript: _____

6. Can the length of the paper be reduced? _____ Yes _____ No

If "Yes," by what percentage? _____%. Provide suggestions on how to reduce the length here or on the manuscript: _____

7. Is the review of prior literature adequate? _____ Yes _____ No

If "No," list here or on the manuscript the relevant papers that should be added: _____

8. Are the references correct? _____ Yes _____ No

If "No," list errors here or on the manuscript: _____

9. The *IJF* gives preference to papers that compare "multiple hypotheses" (two or more reasonable hypotheses). Does this paper compare multiple hypotheses?

_____ Yes _____ No

Questions 10 to 14 relate primarily to empirical papers (papers using primary or secondary data). If not relevant, go to question 15.

10. How surprising did you find the results to be?

1 2 3 4 5 _____
Not at all Very Not applicable
Surprising Surprising

11. Did the design of the study help to ensure objectivity?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Not sure _____ Not applicable

Comments: _____

12. Are the research methods appropriate? _____ Yes _____ No

If "No," please explain: _____

13. Is sufficient information on the method and the data provided to allow for replication by others?
a. Information on method: Yes No
b. Information on data: Yes No
c. Not applicable
If "No," please explain: _____

14. Can you imagine any reasonable basis to expect that the results could have turned out otherwise?
 Yes No

15. Summarize your reasons *in favor* of publishing the paper in the *IJF*. _____

16. Summarize your reasons *against* publishing the paper in the *IJF*. _____

17. What is your overall opinion?
a. Publish as is
b. Publish with minor revision
c. Publish with major revision
d. Reject

18. If the paper were published, would you be willing to have a summary of your review published along with the paper (it would be written by you and published under your name)?
 Yes No
If "Yes," you can submit a written comment now or it can be done later.)

19. List alternative journals that might be relevant for this article (if you selected alternative d. in question 17): _____

20. Use this space for additional comments: _____

Exhibit 2. Note to Referees

The author(s) of this paper have requested that we send the paper to the referees with a "Note to Referees." In such cases, the editors have promised to find referees who will follow a special reviewing procedure. This procedure is as follows:

Do not open the envelope containing the manuscript *until* you have completed the ratings in items 1 o 3. To answer these question, read only the Note to Referees which is attached. ded only as an aid to evaluating the paper against the journal's criteria.

- | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|---|---|---|------------------------|
| | Of no
Importance | | | | Extremely
important |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
1. How important is the topic to
Practitioners
Other researchers
2. Are the research methods appropriate? Yes No
If "No," please explain: _____

3. Predict the outcome of the study: _____

When you complete these three items, open the envelope containing the manuscript and review it by following the structured guide (which is mandatory for this special review process).

Thank you,

The Editors
International Journal of Forecasting
