Management and Organization Review

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Letter from the Editor

Preapproved and Preregistered Studies

Effective immediately, *Management and Organization Review* encourages authors to submit proposals for preregistered and preapproved studies. After peer review, such proposals can receive a conditional acceptance in *Management and Organization Review* – all before data are collected and results are obtained.

The editors of *Management and Organization Review* would like to engage with authors at the earliest stage of developing their research study. This will allow us to nurture the study of research questions that highlight important questions or phenomena, open new directions, offer alternative or competing explanations for existing findings, or otherwise question extant management research when situated in transforming economies, anchored in indigenous history, culture, values, and national aspirations.

The *Management and Organization Review* preapproval and preregistration process offers an important benefit for science: It determines the merit of a proposal – and the likelihood of its publication – *before* the findings are known. The underlying theory and research questions are peer-reviewed and deemed important and interesting; hypotheses and data collection procedures are understood and established before commencing data collection and hypothesis testing. With this, we combat the temptation to hypothesize after the results are known, the all-too-common practice of squeezing empirical findings into a theory that may be ill fitting. Rather, we want to understand reality as it is, whether 'as predicted' or not.

The Editors of *Management and Organization Review* are committed to assist authors with preapproval-preregistration to enhance the importance of the research, satisfy falsifiability requirements, and enhance data transparency, rigor, and replicability (Lewin et al., 2016). This is an ambitious goal that will set apart articles in *Management and Organization Review*, by alleviating the publication bias inherent in research bias toward 'counterintuitive' findings and supported hypotheses (Starbuck, 2016). A recent study estimates that 24%–40% of results in strategic management cannot be replicated (Goldfarb & King, 2016). Another suggests that the real number may be even higher (Bergh et al., 2017), even if this journal is comparatively safer (Li, Sharp, & Bergh, 2017).

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Preapproval-preregistration can help authors clarify their goals and plans before embarking on the time-consuming (and sometimes irreversible) effort of data collection. For preregistration, authors register the proposal in a public, open-access repository (but they may keep the registration non-public during the review process). Then, authors submit for peer review a proposal, akin in content to a dissertation or grant proposal. The proposal should describe the research questions that the study proposes to address and the key hypotheses and data collection plan. Essentially, authors submit what typically constitutes half of a ready manuscript, up to and including the data and description of the empirical approach. However, the proposal should not include data analyses, results, or conclusions. Instead, authors should provide a time estimate for completing the study, once it is preapproved (detailed instructions appear in Instructions to Contributors on our website https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/management-and-organization-review/information/instructions-contributors).

The *Management and Organization Review* preapproval process is applicable to both quantitative and qualitative work, as well as inductive and deductive work. The editors of MOR recognize that inductive qualitative research is indeed a discovery process and authors should carefully think through and discuss what discoveries the study aims to make and why such discoveries are important.

To gain preapproval, authors should articulate what theoretical debates the research will address, how the outcome of the research will advance theory or society, regardless of whether the hypotheses are confirmed. Theoretical significance, knowledge impact, and thoroughness and rigor of the research plan are the major criteria for preapproval.

Proposals are received by our most senior editors: The Editor-in-Chief or one of the Deputy Editors. If deemed of interest to the journal, it is assigned to a Senior Editor. They will guide the developmental peer-review process. After peer review, the Senior Editor, in consultation with Editor-in-Chief or Deputy Editor, may reject the proposal, request revisions, or approve it. If approved, the authors commit to collecting data and completing the study as proposed. In return, the journal grants conditional acceptance – regardless of the findings. In other words, because of the importance of the subject matter, we will publish the final manuscript whether the results are as hypothesized or not, whether positive or null.

After conditional acceptance, authors embark on data collection, analysis, and writing to turn the proposal into a manuscript. However, preapproval-preregistration should not restrict flexibility in the knowledge generation process. Following preapproval, authors should update the editor on progress and seek advice, as needed.

The manuscript will be published in *Management and Organization Review* in two parts: The first part will report results of the study according to the approved and registered plan. The second will present and discuss exploratory (post hoc) analyses, which may arise while analyzing and reporting the originally approved study. Both parts will feature the preapproval and preregistration badge.

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The Editors of *Management and Organization Review* accept that preapproval-preregistration entails more effort on their part, a stronger commitment to knowledge co-creation. We understand that it requires us to shepherd the knowledge co-creation process, rather than act as gatekeepers.

I am confident that the preapproval process will result in higher quality of accepted manuscripts. It would also combat the crisis of confidence in the social sciences, revitalizing the research and publication culture in management and organization science.



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