

## Editorial

### A Two-Step Interactive Review Process

I am pleased to make a formal announcement regarding the JCP review procedures. In the past, JCP – like other journals – has been following what I call the one-step review process to facilitate knowledge production. More specifically, when an author submits his/her manuscript to JCP, the editor typically sends the paper to two or three reviewers; the reviewers send their review to the editor; and the editor provides his/her feedback to the author based on the reviewers' comments and his/her own judgment. In this system, the author is a passive recipient of the editor's feedback without an opportunity to participate in the editor's deliberations. It is only after receiving the editor's feedback that the author has an opportunity to react to this feedback either in the form of a revision (if the paper is offered a revision) or in the form of an appeal (in a few rare cases after rejection).

I believe that this current system, while efficient and straightforward, is not the most desirable process to facilitate knowledge production. To me the primary goal of a journal is to acquire and disseminate new and useful knowledge to readers. To achieve this goal successfully, it is imperative for a journal to engage in a more effective collaboration with the manuscript author by having him/her adequately represented in the review process. The author as a contributor of knowledge is a critical stakeholder in the success of a journal. His/her input and active involvement in the knowledge creation and dissemination process are as vital as a consumer's input and involvement in the success of a firm's new product. It is, however, somewhat unfortunate that under JCP's traditional review process, the author's input and involvement in knowledge creation and dissemination are not as interactive and collaborative as they could be. The traditional review system appears to be based on several important, yet unfortunately not always applicable assumptions:

1. The editor is perfectly clear about the contents of a manuscript, its contribution, and the reviewers' comments, thus being able to offer the optimal constructive suggestions for the improvement of a manuscript.
2. The review team (reviewers and the area editor) never fail to appreciate, properly interpret, or recognize the key contributions of a manuscript, despite a number of potential obstacles such as fatigue, time pressure, or confusion (due to the poor communication by the author).
3. The review team is neither consciously nor unconsciously biased in their review, despite their unique training and perspectives.
4. An increase in the number of reviewers will effectively minimize the potential problems noted above (#2 and #3) rather than potentially magnify the same problems.

5. The author is inherently biased (either intentionally or unintentionally) in favor of his/her own manuscript, which makes it better to leave him/her out of the review process until the editor's decision is made.

As a result of these assumptions, the author, despite being a critical stakeholder who ultimately determines the quality of a journal and its reputation, is placed outside of the formal review process. The author is in fact the passive recipient of good or (more likely) bad news from the editor regarding the fate of his/her manuscript and the measures for improving its quality.

While acknowledging that there is no perfect review system, I nevertheless believe that an improvement may be in order for a review process that effectively facilitates the knowledge creation process. Therefore, several months ago, on a trial basis, I instituted a **two-step, interactive process** for manuscript review. According to this process, I perform the moderator role for knowledge production by sharing the review team's feedback (reviewers' comments and an area editor's comments and recommendation) with the author when a manuscript has a potential to make contribution (this process does not apply to the manuscript that is either desk rejected or has only marginal contribution). I then offer him/her an opportunity to respond to the review team's feedback in terms of (1) how he/she may accommodate and pursue the revision(s) pertaining to the issues raised by the JCP review team and (2) why he/she may not want to accommodate specific suggestions made by the review team, if there are any. Only after receiving the author's response to the JCP review team's comments do I make a final "accept", "revise", or "reject" decision about a manuscript. The most unique aspect of this two-step, interactive review process is that I as editor make a final decision based on information from two different sets of feedback: the JCP review team's feedback to the author and the author's feedback to me based on the JCP review team's comments. I give the author one week to send me his/her feedback in two pages or less. However, this feedback is clearly indicated as optional, meaning that the author is not required to respond. Based on my experience with this new system over the past few months, I have witnessed the following benefits:

1. I have a better understanding of the author's stance toward the revision. The author's feedback provides me with information about his/her willingness and commitment to participate in the knowledge production process.
2. I have a better understanding of the author's perspective toward the general direction and plan for revision. How and why the author will approach the revision task gives me information about the manuscript's likelihood for successful revision.

3. I can assist the author in a much more proactive manner in resolving any confusion or conflict encountered when revising his/her manuscript because the author is given an opportunity to air his/her views concerning the revision.
4. I have a better understanding of the author's reasoning and logic for the issues raised by the JCP review team that might not have been apparent from the manuscript alone. Such understanding helps me to translate the author's point of view to the reviewers.
5. The opportunity to immediately respond to the JCP review team's feedback appears to instill a spirit of collaboration between the JCP review team and the author through the interactive communication moderated by the editor. The author seems to derive considerably more value from the JCP review team's comments and suggestions when given an opportunity to respond to them prior to the final decision, and appears to enjoy a feeling of equity and respect. Since s/he can communicate any disagreement with some of the JCP review team's comments and suggestions more freely and informally, this also helps me to better understand the issue under consideration.
6. The author often provides me with highly creative and constructive solutions in response to the problems or issues raised by the JCP review team, while also asking my feedback on the suggested solutions. This clearly expedites the knowledge creation process because with one correspondence the author and I are able to achieve a number of tasks that are mutually beneficial time- and content-wise. In addition, it certainly helps me to provide the author with a higher quality decision letter and more specific directions with regard to the required revision.
7. Finally, providing an opportunity to respond to the JCP review team's comments within a week appears to shorten the time needed by the author to tackle the revision task by renewing his/her motivation and interest in revising his/her manuscript.

All in all, I have found that this two-step, interactive review process has thus far been highly beneficial to both authors and the Journal, mainly because it greatly enhances the spirit of collaboration between knowledge contributors (authors) and the knowledge disseminator (journal).

On the flip side, there are certainly some disadvantages associated with this additional feedback system. They include a possible time delay for the entire review process, authors' potentially heightened expectations for a positive outcome of the manuscript review (by the editor asking for the author's feedback to the JCP review team's comments, the author may think that his/her manuscript is more likely to be accepted for revision), a possible workload increase for the journal editor, as well as for the author, if s/he chooses to prepare a response to the JCP review team's comments. Nevertheless I am confident that these potential problems can all be handled successfully, depending on how the editor approaches them. For example, by handling the review process in a timely manner (e.g., the editor sending the JCP review

team's comments to the author shortly after receiving them), delays in the review process can be easily avoided. Moreover, preparing the final decision letter equipped with two sets of feedback (one from the JCP review team and the other from the author) helps the editor avoid many uncertainties and ambiguities that might otherwise surface when he/she has to rely on the JCP review team's comments alone. Such ambiguities and uncertainties often hamper the quality and the substance of the editor's final decision letter; hence, due to avoiding such issues, the two-step interactive review process has not substantially increased my overall workload, while ensuring great collaborative benefits for all the parties involved in the knowledge creation process.

C. W. Park

Editor