

Human Relations

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Submission guidelines



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Please read the guidelines in full before submitting your manuscript. Manuscripts not conforming to these guidelines may be returned.

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For a detailed set of Instructions to Authors and information on the online manuscript submission system, please visit:

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Guidance for contributors

1. Articles must advance knowledge, and make a strong theoretical and/or empirical contribution to the literature on work relationships and organizational work processes.
2. Authors should use clear English comprehensible to readers outside of their area of specialism.
3. Authors should ensure that their methods section is not too long, avoiding overly long explanations of why particular norms and standards have been chosen.
4. Where relevant, details may be provided in an appendix or a separate document that readers may download as a data supplement or seek direct from the author.
5. Articles must be original research and must not have already been published or be under consideration for publication elsewhere.
6. All quotations from published work, including any of the author's own previous work, must be acknowledged as such and fully cited. (Authors may only repeat the method from their own previous published works without citation.)

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10. Studies referring to simulation exercises involving students or others without experiential knowledge of the simulated context are discouraged. For example, while work team simulations with undergraduate students cannot provide the sole basis of papers considered for publication, the same simulations with Executive MBA students (who are working full-time while going to school) or more generally who have prior experience working in 'real' teams proffers a higher likelihood of favourable review.
11. Field-study results are more likely to be accepted if they use more than a single technique of data collection and analysis. You should strengthen the validity of, for example, questionnaire scales or constructs by considering multiple influences in the context of the field study.
12. We encourage articles with strong research methods, and particularly those that use longitudinal design.
13. We welcome articles that deploy novel or emerging research methods. We do not normally publish articles that address mainly research design or methods, for example those developing or testing research instruments. Articles discussing methodology in a wider sense are welcome.
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Data requirements for articles

Some very short reflections

The editorial team 'desk rejects' about half of all the articles we receive. This note comments on one reason, the nature of the data deployed. Its purpose is to contribute to the raising of standards. Work that was acceptable in the past may not be published today, and colleagues need to be aware of what we are looking for. Two preliminary remarks set the comments in context.

First, new empirical data are not required. We publish articles presenting theory development, critical and analytical reviews, and interventions in current areas of controversy (e.g. articles in 2013 by [Lindebaum and Zundel](#) in June and by [Nielsen](#) and by [Mingers and Willmott](#) in August). We particularly welcome articles that address the big issues, including meta-analysis and careful qualitative reviews of a field.

Second, in empirical papers, suitable data are a necessary but not sufficient feature to get to full peer review. We also need many other things, including a strong theoretical motivation for a study and an explanation of the importance of the contribution. Spotting a gap is not enough. Why does the gap matter, and has filling it told us anything of general importance?

Turning to the question of data, perhaps the most common reason for rejecting quantitative papers is a reliance on single-respondent cross-section designs. Such designs are not necessarily wrong. They can work well where, for example, mainly factual data are collected and where causal analysis is either not the purpose or where causal inferences can be justified. Similarly, hard-to-reach or marginalized populations may afford only cross-sectional research access. But, all in all, cross-sectional designs have well-rehearsed limitations for causal analysis, and there are now many alternatives including longitudinal and multi-level designs.

need to say a little more about qualitative data, specifically interview data. We are aiming to move away from papers that present only a limited number of interviews without

appropriate contextual or comparative information. We are certainly not saying that more is necessarily better, though it is the case that we need enough weight of evidence to sustain the points being made. Small numbers of interviews can be acceptable where there is a genuine reason for an exploratory account, where the interviews are tightly focused within an occupation or other group of interest, or are consistent with a detail-intensive analytical approach (e.g., conversation analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis).

Human Relations aims to promote high quality social science. The above comments suggest ways in which this goal can be pursued. They are to an extent objectives rather than prescriptions: progress is likely to occur slowly, and there are many valid ways of conducting research. We hope, however, that they both indicate an overall aspiration and help to explain what we will be looking for in individual papers. One measure will be whether desk rejects on grounds of data inadequacy become rarer.

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Preparation and submission guidance

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Submission checklist

- Read our [Aims and Scope](#), [Mission Statement](#), [Guidance for contributors and data requirements](#).
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