

# WRITING PUBLISHABLE ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS RESEARCH PAPERS ... AND GETTING THEM PUBLISHED

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# MAIN CONTENTS

- Writing papers in social sciences with concentration on economic and business disciplines;
- Creative thinking vs rational thinking;
- Creating a new research idea (deductive approach, inductive, and abductive approach);
- Painful and successful stories of researchers with international experience in scientific research;
- The bottleneck of a good scientific research;
- Critical tips of having your research work published and avoid rejection.
- How best to choose your international peer-review journal? and where should be indexed?;

# *DISCLOSURE*

- I have written many papers. Some have been published, some not.
- I am on the Editorial Board of several journals.
- I am working as a reviewer for several journals.
- I have many rejection letters from journals, and some acceptance letters.

# *THE GOOD NEWS*

- I know a method that guarantees that my papers will not be rejected by a journal.



# *THE BAD NEWS*

- This 100% effective method of avoiding rejection is *never to submit my papers to any journal.*

# *THE BAD NEWS*

- The disadvantages of this strategy are obvious.

My goal is to *get published*, not to avoid rejection. *Getting published requires risking rejection.*

# GENERATING RESEARCH IDEAS

## CREATIVE THINKING VS RATIONAL THINKING

### Rational thinking

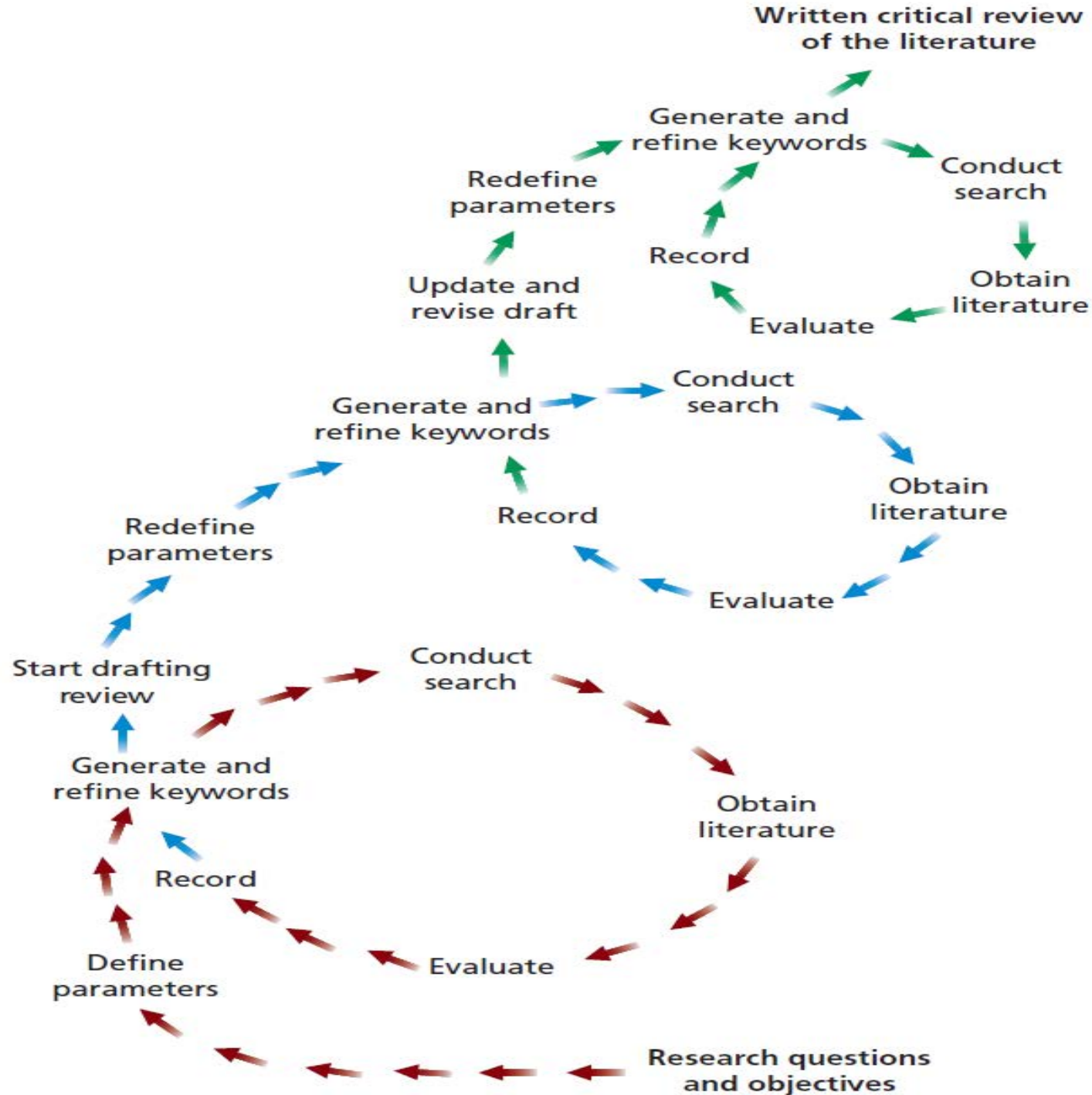
- Examining your own strengths and interests
- Looking at past project titles
- Discussion
- Searching the literature
- Scanning the media

### Creative thinking

- Keeping a notebook of ideas
- Exploring personal preferences using past projects
- Relevance trees
- Brainstorming

To construct a relevance tree:

- 1 Start with your research question or objective at the top level.
- 2 Identify two or more subject areas that you think are important.
- 3 Further subdivide each major subject area into sub-areas that you think are of relevance.
- 4 Further divide the sub-areas into more precise sub-areas that you think are of relevance.





# *A STORY*

Dr. George Akerlof  
Nobel Prize, 2001



for “The Market for Lemons”,  
*Quarterly Journal of Economics*,  
1970

# *A STORY*

In 2003 Akerlof published the story of how his “Lemons” paper got to be published.

(Quotes that follow are from that paper.)

# *A STORY*

- He submitted the paper in 1967 to the *American Economic Review*. The editor wrote back that the journal “did not publish papers on subjects of such triviality.”

# *A STORY*

- Then he submitted it to the *Journal of Political Economy*. He received two referee reports, both explaining why his article was wrong.



# *A STORY*

- Then he submitted it to the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, which published it.
- What is the point of this story?

# *THE POINT*

- (1) Most journal editors are clueless. Their opinion of your paper may have little or no relationship to its actual value. If your paper is rejected, *send it to another journal.*

# *THE POINT*

(2) Most referees are narrow-minded, highly opinionated, unimaginative, dense, and inflexible (except myself, of course).

However, you still need to do what they tell you to do.

# *THE POINT*

- (3) There is much randomness in the journal review process. Papers are often accepted that are not good. Papers are often rejected that are not bad. *If your paper is rejected, send it to another journal.*



# *THE POINT*

(4) *Never give up*. No matter how good your paper is, you may have to submit it to several journals, one after the other, to get it published.

*But it helps to find the right journal for your paper.*

# WHAT IS THE *BOTTLENECK?*

For you personally, what stands in  
the way of writing and  
publishing papers?

You tell me!

# TIPS

#1

Make only one point per paper. If you have two points to make, write two papers. (Robert Hollaender, my dissertation advisor)

# TIPS

#2

Find a co-author whose skills are different, and complementary to yours.

(Samuel Bowles & Herb Gintis;  
Jagdish Bhagwati & T.N. Srinivasan)



# TIPS

#3

Offer to edit or co-edit a special issue of a journal (perhaps the proceedings of a symposium); include your own paper in the issue

# TIPS

#4

Choose to attend conferences  
whose proceedings will be  
published.

# TIPS

#5

When you write a paper, send it to a list of scholars interested in the topic; one of them might invite you to a conference, or to submit to an edited volume. (From an editor of the *Journal of Labor Economics*)

# TIPS

#6

Befriend journal editors and editorial board members. Ask them what they are looking for.



# TIPS

#7

Develop a library of single issues of journals, to get an idea of what journals publish what kinds of articles.

# TIPS

## EXAMPLE:

*Journal of Economic Issues* accepts non-mathematical, non-technical articles on policy or theory. It publishes many short articles per issue.

# TIPS

#8

Post your paper(s) on a standard website like RePec, Research Gate, Social Science Research Network, or International Development Economics Associates:  
[www.networkideas.org](http://www.networkideas.org)

# TIPS

#9

When you find an opportunity, tell others about it; when they find an opportunity, they will tell you: Conferences; funding; periods when publishers have free downloads of journal articles; and so on.



# TIPS

#10

What helps me most to do research:

- (1) Making a commitment to someone (like a conference) to write a paper by a specific date.
- (2) Having someone to talk to about the research.

# TIPS

## EXAMPLE

The book review editor of the *Economics of Peace and Security Journal* (who is Palestinian – Basel Saleh, Radford University) invites Palestinians and others to review books on this topic written in English, Arabic, or other languages.

# TIPS

There are many types of articles & journals:

- Field research
- Analysis of an existing dataset
- Discussion of teaching techniques
- Discussion of policy
- Theory
- History of economic thought
- Discussion of the field of economics itself
- Research method/statistics/econometrics
- Book review essay (several books, same topic)

# HOW BEST TO CHOOSE YOUR INTERNATIONAL PEER-REVIEW JOURNAL?

- Not limited to these publishers (Elsevier, Springer, Emerald, John Willy and Sons, Better Advances Press Canada, ... and so forth).
- Editorial Board.
- Authors of previous published issues.
- Quality of published papers in the Journal.
- Process of the journal publishing.



# WHERE SHOULD BE INDEXED?

- Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) under Thompson and Reuters (ISI). Science Citation Index (SSCI) for natural sciences.
- Scopus.
- Academic Departments.
- But, The following indexes and others can be enough or NOT enough. It depends .....

ABDC, CABI, Canadiana, CrossRef, DOAJ, EBSCO, EconLit, e-journals, Google Scholar, LOCKSS, Open J-Gate, PKP Open Archives Harvester, RePEc, Standard Periodical Directory, Wanfang Data, ... and so forth.