Perceptions of Scholarly Standards and Peer Review Guidelines in Technical Publication

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In fall of 2007, a survey was administered to the membership of the Associated Schools of Construction (ASC) to evaluate member perspectives on scholarly standards as relates to the International Journal of Construction Education and Research ("Journal"). The objectives of this study were to 1) survey respondent understanding of Journal aims and scope, 2) assess respondent interpretations of scholarly work, and, 3) survey respondent attitudes on the overall effectiveness of the Journal submission and peer review process. Of 115 respondents, 73% had previously published or reviewed for the Journal. While 65% of respondents indicated that the aim of the Journal was to publish scholarly works in areas of construction education and research, respondents were divided on whether non-original research constitutes scholarly work. Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Journal topics (87%), title (93%) and assessment criteria (83%) were appropriate. Ninety-six percent of peer reviewers felt the Journal review process was timely and efficient, compared to 80% of authors. Only 69% of authors felt peer reviewers had the knowledge necessary to effectively review their manuscripts. Nearly 3 in 4 (73%) reviewers stated that they relied more on their own intuition than Journal guidelines when conducting peer reviews. Of all respondents, two-thirds (67%) consider the Journal to be a "top tier" publication.

Key Words: peer review, guidelines, assessment criteria, construction education, construction research.

Introduction

A common goal of peer review is to maintain publication integrity and impact by evaluating manuscripts that best contribute to the body of knowledge in a particular field or profession. Peer reviewed manuscripts are generally evaluated on the significance of the topic, the originality, appropriateness and completeness of the research, and the extent to which conclusions and recommendations are supported by study findings and results. To a lesser extent, manuscripts can be evaluated on writing style, readability, structure, grammar and other editorial criteria. Peer reviewers are selected according to their knowledge and experience of the manuscript topic and are generally accomplished researchers or practitioners in the field of study. In addition to ensuring scholarly integrity, peer reviewers are expected to provide constructive feedback to help authors improve their research results and manuscripts. Peer review provides the opportunity to address the criticisms of experts and to challenge the accuracy of the research prior to publication.

In spite of many benefits, peer review is an imperfect process. A well documented threat to the validity of peer review in virtually any discipline is the lack of scientific, structured and standardized peer review procedures. When appropriate peer review guidance *is* provided,

reviewers often rely on their own tradition and experience when evaluating manuscripts. The peer review process may be further compromised by poor quality reviews and unnecessary delays. If limited numbers of reviewers are available, or, if reviewers are selected at random without regard to their background and experience, authors may have more expertise in their research area than the reviewers that review their manuscripts. General, non-specific or conflicting feedback from peer reviewers is often difficult for authors to incorporate, and, for editorial staff to use in rendering a decision as to whether or not a manuscript should be published.

The Journal of Construction Education was founded by the Associated Schools of Construction (ASC) in 1996 to encourage the sharing of ideas and knowledge, and, promote excellence in teaching, research and service relating to the construction industry. The publication name was changed to the International Journal of Construction Education and Research (e.g. "Journal") in 2004. The first issue of the Journal was published by Taylor and Francis in 2006. From November 2005 to 2007, a total of 43 manuscripts were forwarded for peer review. Eight manuscripts were rejected largely on the basis of lacking research significance and originality, or, conflict with Journal aims and scope. Several other manuscripts were rejected by editorial staff prior to peer review for similar reasons. Of 176 ASC peer reviewers sequestered from 2005-2007, more than one-third were either non-responsive (25%) or submitted poor quality or late reviews (14%).

In fall of 2007, a survey was administered to the ASC membership to assess member perspectives of Journal aims and scope, standards for scholarly work and the submission and peer review process. The goal of this research was to identify differences in how submission and review criteria are perceived among Journal authors and peer reviewers, and ultimately, what changes in Journal guidelines and procedures may improve the consistency and effectiveness of the submission and peer review process.

Literature Review

Peer Review Processes and Standards in General

The purpose of journal peer review is to help editors decide which papers should be published (Armstrong, 1997; Fletcher, & Fletcher, 1997; Gosden, 2003). By implementing peer review, the editor maintains the quality, reputation and integrity of a journal (Gilmore, Carson, & Perry, 2006). Peer review is used by experts to evaluate the significance and originality of the research (Benos, Bashari, Chaves, Gaggar, Kapoor, LaFrance, 2007). Peer review assists authors in improving the elements of the manuscript that were evaluated weak (Fletcher, & Fletcher, 1997). Based on the reviewers' comments and suggestions, authors can enhance the quality of the manuscript and its written presentation (Armstrong, 1997; Fletcher, & Fletcher, 1997; Gilmore et al., 2006; Benos et al., 2007).

One of the major problems in the area of peer review seems to be a lack of scientific, structured and standardized peer review procedures (Armstrong, 1997; Fletcher, & Fletcher, 1997; Gosden, 2003). Peer reviewers rely mostly on tradition and their experience when reviewing manuscripts

(Fletcher, & Fletcher, 1997). Benos et al. (2007) noticed the following problems related to the peer review process; bias toward certain authors, unfairness, unnecessary delays, ineffectiveness, inability to identify major flaws, reviewers' conflict of interests, and intellectual property rights. Often papers that present new, innovative and controversial findings are rejected by reviewers (Armstrong, 1997; Epstein, 1995; Benos et al., 2007), even though it would be reasonable to accept such papers to encourage progress in a specific field (Cicchetti, 1997; Benos et al., 2007).

Often reviewers look for reasons why a paper should not be published rather than why it should be published (Armstrong, 1997). Some reviewers put forth insufficient effort and spend little time on their reviews which leads to poor quality reviews (Armstrong, 1997; Epstein, 1995). High status, experienced reviewers are less likely to spend enough time to provide a quality manuscript review compared to low status reviewers (Fletcher, & Fletcher, 1997). If reviewers are selected randomly, authors may have more expertise in their research area than the reviewers that evaluate them (Armstrong, 1997; Cicchetti, 1997; Singh, 2003). The more general reviewers comments are, the more difficult it is for authors to use those comments for the revision (Gosden, 2003). Reviews often differ from each other (Armstrong, 1997; Cicchetti, 1997) complicating the decision about whether a paper should be accepted or rejected (Fletcher, & Fletcher, 1997; Armstrong, 1997).

In the usual peer review process, editors select expert reviewers, manage communication between reviewers and authors, and establish criteria for manuscript publication (Benos et al., 2007). The primary responsibility of the editor is to assure quality and fairness throughout the peer review process. The editor should try to look for reviewers that will provide constructive and objective reviews within a specific time (Armstrong, 1997; Gilmore et al., 2006). The editor needs to evaluate the reviewers work and expect the same standards of science of reviewers as they expect of authors (Armstrong, 1997). The editor should provide standardized, written review guidelines and criteria for the reviewers (Gilmore et al., 2006; Epstein, 1995). Peer review in clinical research for example, evaluates manuscripts on the following criteria; background, rationale and aims of study, methods, presentation of results, significance of study, discussion of limitations, strength of conclusions, organization and style of manuscript, quality of abstract and appropriateness of the title (Fletcher & Fletcher, 1997).

The literature has further identified the following as "enablers" to paper acceptance:

- Original research with statistically significant results (Rowney & Zenisek, 1980).
- Strong fundamentals, theory, method and substance (Singh, 2003).
- Concise problem statement and definition (Singh, 2003).
- Clear presentation of results (Singh, 2003).
- Logical organization and layout (Singh, 2003).
- Appropriate writing style (Singh, 2003).
- Author's scholarly reputation (Rowney & Zenisek, 1980).

Conversely, the literature has identified the following as "barriers" to paper acceptance:

- Lack of clarity (Gosden, 2003).
- Insignificant studies (Rowney & Zenisek, 1980).

- Inappropriate analysis (Rowney & Zenisek, 1980).
- Experimental data with no control group (Rowney & Zenisek, 1980).
- Poor writing style (Singh, 2003).

Using more reviewers and implementing blind review process can help in improving fairness of review (Armstrong, 1997). On the other hand, Epstein (1995) argues that blind review contributes to the bias and irresponsible reviewing. To avoid this problem, Epstein (1995) and Benos et al. (2007) suggest that reviewers sign their reviews and authors provide evaluation of the reviewers work. Alternatively, authors may nominate potential reviewers for their manuscripts (Armstrong, 1997; Epstein, 1995). Editors should select reviewers with complementary, rather than similar expertise (Cicchetti, 1997). Reviewers should be trained to provide high quality, reliable and objective reviews (Cicchetti, 1997, Benos et al., 2007). Once peer reviews are completed, the journal editor should consider reviewers' recommendations about possible paper improvement rather than simply counting votes (Armstrong, 1997). The editor should have right to override the reviewers' suggestions about paper acceptance or rejection (Epstein, 1995).

Peer Review Processes and Standards in Technical Publications

Literature on peer review is published mostly in the disciplines of medicine, sociology, psychology, physics, social science, management science, and economics (Armstrong, 1997). The literature about peer review in those areas has grown in last 20 years, but studies on peer review in engineering journals are very rare (Godoy, 2006). The peer review process in most engineering journals employs review of the manuscripts by two to three experts that are anonymous to the authors (Godoy, 2006). Godoy (2006) identifies several problems related to the peer review process in engineering journals. There is no formal training for the peer reviewers. Reviewers are usually selected based on their research abilities without considering their abilities to review manuscripts. Reviewers work is usually not evaluated by editors causing poor quality of reviews. Reviewers are often experts in the same research area as the authors, and may therefore be competitors. Godoy's study (2006) showed that expert reviewers often evaluate the weaknesses of the manuscripts rather than strengths. Godoy (2006) also showed that inexperienced reviewers tend to evaluate manuscripts more on the quality of written communication than the strengths and weaknesses of the research design and results. Callaham, Knopp, & Gallagher (2002) suggest that peer reviewers should be trained to address the following criteria in their peer reviews:

- Major strengths and weaknesses of the study design and methods.
- Presentation of data, study limitations and discussion of results.
- Written qualities of the manuscript.
- Constructive and professional guidance to help improve the manuscript, and, assist the editor in deciding whether the manuscript should be published.

Also, reviewers should be ethical and decline a review request if they (Godoy, 2006):

- Do not keep up with the current state of art in the field.
- Do not have sufficient time to perform a review.

- Have a conflict of interest.

International Journal of Construction Education and Research

The Associated Schools of Construction (ASC) is a professional association of approximately 100 U.S. universities and colleges. The Journal of Construction Education was founded by ASC in 1996 to publish manuscripts related to construction education and construction industry research. In 2004, the name of the publication was changed to the International Journal of Construction Education and Research (e.g. "Journal") and in 2006, the first issue of the Journal was published by Taylor and Francis. From November 2005 to November 2007, 43 manuscripts were submitted to the Journal. Thirty-five (81%) manuscripts were accepted while eight (19%) manuscripts were rejected. One hundred seventy six reviewers were asked to provide reviews, of which 95 (54%) accepted or conditionally accepted manuscripts pending changes. Thirty-seven (21%) reviewers rejected manuscripts while 44 (25%) reviewers did not respond. Forty-four percent of the submitted papers were classified as educational research, while 56% of manuscripts present industry research. Figures 1 and 2 provide the distribution of Journal publication topics in both educational and industry research from 2005-07.

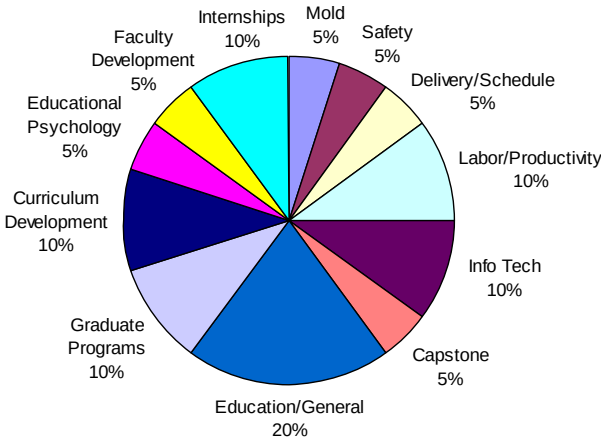

Figure 1: Educational research topics

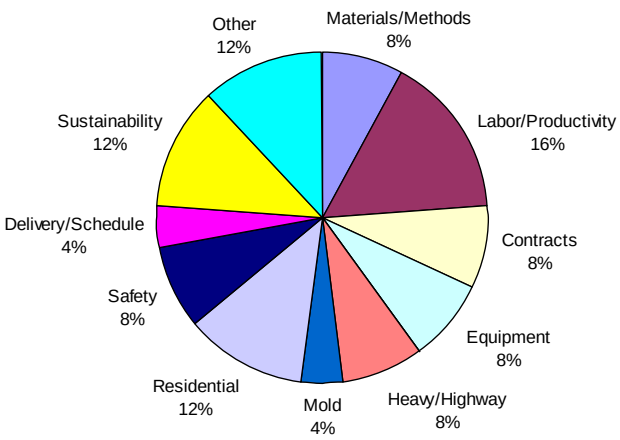

Figure 2: Industry research topics

Manuscripts first submitted to the Journal are reviewed by the editorial office for appropriate content and composition. Manuscripts approved for peer review are sent for a "double-blind" review to a minimum of three peer reviewers selected according to their knowledge and experience on the paper topic. Based on the number of positive reviews, a manuscript is either accepted or rejected. A manuscript can be either accepted without need for revision or accepted conditionally, in which case, the manuscript must be revised and sent for a second review by the editorial staff, peer reviewers, or both. The Journal editor and two associate editors are responsible for managing the manuscript submission and peer review process.
The Journal provides standardized manuscript submission and review guidelines for both authors and peer reviewers. Specifically, the Journal provides the following general *Instructions to the Authors* when submitting manuscripts:

- The manuscript should be original.
- The manuscript should not be considered nor has been published in whole or in part within another journal.
- If manuscripts have been published in conference proceedings (such as ASC's annual International Conference proceedings), the author should make significant changes to the document unless the manuscript has been recognized as a quality or "best" conference paper by conference coordinators or editorial staff.

(http://www.ascjournal.ascweb.org/submission.html)

In addition, the Journal also provides *general instructions to reviewers* and *instructions for critiquing the manuscript*. General instructions include a formal request to complete the standardized *manuscript review form* with a reviewer's critique of the manuscript, as well as a description of the review process. Instructions for critiquing the manuscript recommend reviewers to provide professional and specific comments that will help authors revise the manuscript. The following criteria are used in the Journal peer review process:

- Manuscripts should be reviewed for the degree to which the content represents the Aims and Scope of the Journal, technical correctness of the content, contribution to the professions, appropriateness of any examples given, and clarity and conciseness of the content.
- General guidelines dictate that reviewers should consider the abstract and key words, the purpose, scope and significance of the topic, the summary any conclusions drawn, references and acknowledgments of previous research by others (Manuscript Review Form, 2007).

The *manuscript review form* requires reviewers to assess a manuscript by using the following criteria:

- Topic significance
- Significance to teaching educators
- Significance to industry practitioners
- Originality
- Intellectual quality
- Scientific quality

Reviewers also need to provide a recommendation for manuscript publication and a written critique of manuscript.

Methods

A draft of the survey instrument was developed and first sent to the Journal editorial office for review. The draft was then forwarded to the ASC Board, and, to the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for their approval to conduct research on human test subjects. Once all approvals were received, an on-line survey link was sent by the Journal editor to all 614 ASC

members. The online survey, which automatically recorded responses to a database, was conducted for a period of approximately three weeks in October 2007. Participants were shown an on-line Informed Consent Disclosure Agreement prior to taking the survey. This agreement provided information about the purpose of study, what participants would be asked to do in this study, potential risks, compensation, benefits, and confidentiality. Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous.

The survey instrument (Appendix A) consisted of 26 questions related to the aims and scope of journal, peer review assessment criteria, importance of the criteria for paper acceptance or rejection, quality of the current peer review process from both the authors and reviewers perspective, and opinions about enablers and barriers for manuscript acceptance. Five questions related to the demographics of the respondents. Seventeen questions were posed in a 4-point Likert scale format to evaluate respondent perceptions of scholarly standards and peer review guidelines in technical publication. The remaining questions were framed in open-ended format to allow survey participants to elaborate on their responses.

Data Analysis and Results

One-hundred-fifteen responses to the survey were received resulting in a 19% response rate. The sample size (n = 115) relative to the population size (n ~ 600) yielded a margin of error of approximately 7% at a confidence interval of 90%. The response rate was consistent with published survey research data. A margin of error <5% at a confidence interval of >95% would require a 40% response rate given such a small population.

Questions related to the demographics of respondents yielded the following data:

- Thirty-three percent of respondents were peer reviewers only, 10% were authors only, while 30% were both peer reviewers and authors.
- Sixty-eight percent of respondents held a Ph.D., while 24% held a Master's degree.
- Fifty-eight percent of respondents had a background in construction management, 25% in engineering and 8% in architecture.
- Thirty-six percent of respondents were assistant professors, 32% associate professors, 24% full professors and 6% were non-tenure accruing faculty (e.g. lecturers or instructors).
- Forty-six percent of respondents said that faculty performance in their department is evaluated primarily on teaching, 26% on research and 4% on service. Twenty-four percent of respondents indicated that faculty performance was evaluated on an equal combination of two or more of these criteria, or, on criteria other than teaching, research and service.

Sixty-five percent of respondents indicated that the aim of the Journal is to publish in both construction education and research, while 10% of respondents indicated education only compared to 9% in construction research only. Twelve percent of respondents indicated that the Journal should include engineering research in addition to either construction education, research or both (Figure 3). Approximately half of respondents (51%) indicated that the Journal aim is to

publish both original and non-original research, while 41% of respondents indicated that only original research should be published. A minority of respondents (4%) felt that only non-original research should be published in the Journal (Figure 4).

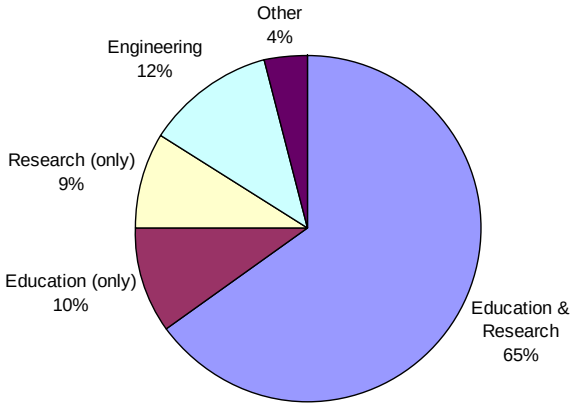

Figure 3: Perceptions of Journal aim and scope

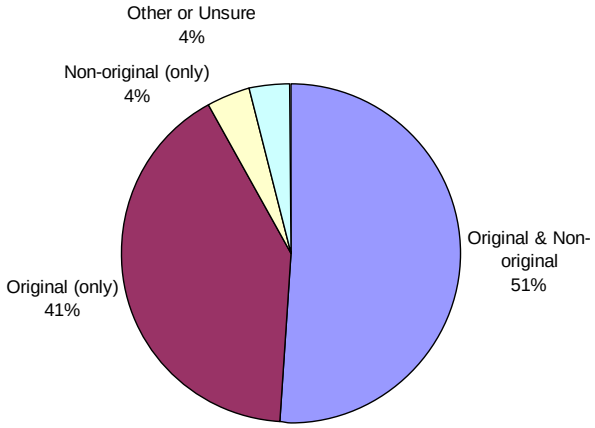

Figure 4: Perceptions of scholarly work

A majority of respondents (87%) agreed that the scope of Journal adequately embraces pedagogical and industry content through a broad spectrum of construction-related topics. Most of respondents (93%) agreed that the current journal title adequately represents its aims and scope. Eighty-three percent of respondents thought that the Journal assessment criteria provided on the ASC website was adequate. When asked to rate on a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important) the level of importance of the specific assessment criteria for paper acceptance or rejection (Figure 5), respondents indicated that "significance" and "grammar" (4.33) were most important followed closely by "structure and readability" (4.31) and "technical content" (4.19). The assessment criterion given the lowest level of importance was research "methodology" (3.19).

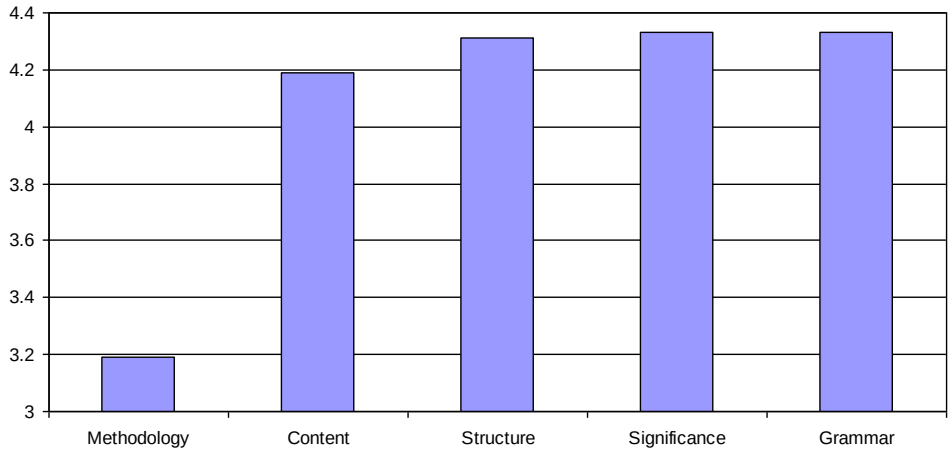

Figure 5: Importance of peer review criteria

A majority of the peer reviewers (93%) considered themselves to be knowledgeable in the areas of the Journal papers they were asked to review. Most of peer reviewers (96%) agreed that the time they were given to provide a peer review was adequate. Seventy-three percent of peer reviewers indicated that they rely more on their own education, experience and intuition when providing a review than the Journal guidelines and assessment criteria. A majority of the reviewers (87%) thought that the quality of peer reviews they give to the Journal is consistent with the quality of peer reviews they give other publications. Most reviewers (88%) agreed that someone without an accepted paper in the Journal can serve as a peer reviewer as long as they have "adequate" knowledge.

Most authors (80%) agreed that the Journal paper submission, review and publication process is efficient and timely. Almost the same number of the authors (81%) thought that the feedback they receive on papers is consistent with the Journal guidelines and is adequate in detail to correct or improve the paper. Sixty-nine percent of the authors agreed that peer reviewers for the Journal had the necessary level of knowledge to review their papers. The vast majority of the authors (94%) agreed that peer reviewers for the Journal should be evaluated for their responsiveness and the quality of their reviews.

Sixty percent of all respondents agreed that there should be recognition for the best papers and best peer reviewers provided by the Journal. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents agreed that the Journal is a "top-tier" publication venue that is favorably viewed by their peers. More than half of all respondents (56%) indicated that they read or reference from Journal once per month, 29% read or reference every issue, while 15% neither read or reference from the Journal.

At the conclusion of the survey, open-ended questions were provided to allow respondents to identify author-related "barriers and enablers" to paper acceptance. A few of the more common barriers to publication along with suggested "tips" for authors to overcome these barriers include:

- *Inconsistent aims and scope*. Ensure manuscripts are relevant to the advancement of construction education and research, and, attempt to stimulate the interest of a broad and diverse audience.
- *Irrelevant topic*. Address current issues facing the construction industry and construction education.
- *Unoriginal research*. Present research that contributes to the body of knowledge by defining a clear problem statement or hypothesis through concise and thorough literature review.
- *Poor research design and methodology*. Present a research methodology in sufficient detail that can be validated and repeated by others.
- *Unsupported conclusions*. Provide recommendations that are supported by the research data and results while avoiding opinion or assumption.
- *Poor writing style*. Ensure readability by using appropriate English grammar and spelling, and, ensure paper structure and format is consistent with Journal guidelines.
- *Failure to address reviewer questions and comments*. Indicate how reviewer comments will be incorporated into the manuscript, or, why suggested revisions are invalid.

Respondents also identified barriers to paper acceptance related to peer reviewers and the peer review process. A few of the more common review process-related barriers to paper acceptance for peer reviewers and editorial staff include:

- Ambiguous or vague peer review guidelines.
- Poorly defined or inconsistent interpretation of Journal aims and scope.
- Poorly defined or inconsistent interpretation of qualifying scholarly work.
- Unknowledgeable, unqualified, inexperienced or subjective peer reviewers.

Limitations and Further Research

The goal of this research was to identify differences in how current submission and review criteria are perceived among Journal authors and peer reviewers. Specific changes in Journal guidelines and procedures that may improve the consistency and effectiveness of the submission and peer review process will be an objective of a future study. Although the findings in this study are consistent with available published literature, research results are not intended to be representative of other technical publications or disciplines. In this study, only the members of *Associated Schools of Construction (ASC)* were invited to participate in this research. Only one journal, the *International Journal of Construction Education and Research*, was analyzed. Only questions related to aims and scope, manuscript assessment criteria and peer review policies in this particular Journal were considered in the survey instrument. Only descriptive statistical analysis of the survey results are presented in this manuscript. Statistical analysis correlating respondent demographics and survey responses will be an objective of a future study.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Survey results indicate that the Journal provides a well structured and standardized peer review procedure, although nearly 3 in 4 reviewers stated that they relied more on their own intuition than Journal guidelines when conducting peer reviews. In spite of Journal efforts to qualify potential peer reviewers and assign reviewers based on their knowledge and experience, nearly one-third of authors (31%) felt peer reviewers lacked the expertise to objectively review their manuscripts. Journal records indicate that nearly 40% of 176 requested peer reviews from 2005-2007 were late, of poor quality or non-responsive. Although 65% of respondents correctly stated that the aim of the Journal was to publish scholarly works in construction education and research, respondents were divided on whether non-original research constitutes scholarly work. Fifty-one percent of respondents felt that the aim of the Journal was to publish both original and non-original research, compared to 41% who felt that only original research should be published in the Journal. On a scale of 1 to 5, respondents indicated that grammar and writing style was significantly more important (4.33) than research design and methodology (3.19). Nearly 3 in 4 respondents were from academic units where faculty performance is evaluated by factors *other* than research. More than half of all respondents earned terminal degrees in non-traditional research fields such as construction management and architecture.

Given the diverse composition of ASC membership in non-traditional research fields, it is recommended that potential reviewers be better trained and qualified prior to conducting reviews. As part of this training, manuscript submission and peer review criteria should clearly define Journal aims and scope as well as clarify whether non-original research constitutes scholarly work. Qualification of new peer reviewers should include a thorough review of the candidate's curriculum vitae or abbreviated tenure and promotion package to verify proven areas of expertise. Furthermore, it is recommended that the performance of peer reviewers continue to be monitored for quality and timeliness of reviews. According to the literature of standardized peer review criteria in other disciplines, a quality peer review should address manuscript compliance with Journal aims and scope, topic significance, originality, problem definition, research design, and presentation of results. To a lesser extent, reviewers should consider writing style, grammar, organization and other editorial issues.

Reviewer feedback to authors should be constructive, addressing both the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript while providing objective and specific recommendations for improving the paper, regardless of the decision to accept or reject. The Journal may also consider recruiting authors to assist in evaluating peer reviewers, or, requesting that authors nominate potential peer reviewers for their manuscripts. Reviewers that consistently submit poor quality or late reviews, or, are non-responsive to peer review requests, should be removed from the Journal peer reviewer list. Reviewers should be encouraged to decline performing reviews if they do not have the appropriate expertise, have a conflict of interest, or, if they simply do not have the time to complete a quality, timely review.

The Journal should also consider recognition for outstanding manuscript submissions and peer reviews at the ASC annual conference, and, use the ASC conference proceedings as a "feed stock" for future Journal submissions. The literature strongly recommends however, that changes in peer review standards or procedures be made slowly and that the consequences of these changes (intended or otherwise) be carefully monitored.

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Appendix A: ASC Peer Review Survey

1. Please select from the following that best describes your past relationship with the *ASC Journal*:

   ☐ Peer reviewer
   ☐ Author
   ☐ Both (peer reviewer and author)
   ☐ Neither (peer reviewer or author)

2. What is your educational background?

   ☐ Bachelors
   ☐ Masters
   ☐ PhD
   Other

3. What best describes the area of your professional preparation?

   ☐ Engineering
   ☐ Construction management
   ☐ Architecture
   Other

4. What best describes your current academic position?

   ☐ Adjunct
   ☐ Lecturer/ Instructor
   ☐ Assistant professor
   ☐ Associate professor
   ☐ Full professor
   Other

5. In your opinion, faculty performance in your department is evaluated primarily on:
   ☐ Teaching
   ☐ Research
   ☐ Service
   Other

6. It is your understanding that the aim of the *ASC Journal* is to publish scholarly work in which of the following topical areas (choose all that apply).

   ☐ Education (e.g. research in teaching methods improvement or innovation)
   ☐ Construction research (e.g. research in methods, material science, materials application and management, construction applications)
   ☐ Engineering research (e.g. research in design theory and analysis)
   Other

7. It is your understanding that the aim of the *ASC Journal* is to publish scholarly work in which of the following types of research (choose all that apply).

   ☐ Original research (involves the collection of data that does not already exist)
   ☐ Non-original research (involves the summary, collation or synthesis of existing research)
   Other

8. In your opinion, the scope of the *ASC Journal* adequately embraces pedagogical and industry content through a broad spectrum of construction-related topics.

   <u>Currently listed topics</u>:
   Methods, materials, estimating, contracts and construction law, labor issues, productivity, project management, scheduling, simulation, computers in construction, construction equipment, safety, information technology, business practice, management, case studies, automation, robotics, environment, sustainability, international construction, alternative energy, mechanical systems, electrical systems, specialty construction, subcontracting, design-build, alternative delivery methods, and dispute resolution.

   ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

9. The title of the *ASC Journal* (International Journal of Construction Education and Research) adequately represents its aims and scope.

   ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

   Recommended title:

10. The *ASC Journal* assessment criteria (significance to teaching educators, significance to industry practitioners, originality, intellectual quality, and scientific quality) provided on the ASC website is adequate.

    ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

11. On a scale of one to five (1 – not important; 5 – very important) please rate the level of importance of the following *ASC Journal* criteria in terms of being a deciding factor in paper acceptance or rejection:

    a. Technical content. (not important) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 (very important)

    b. Significance. (not important) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 (very important)

    c. Methodology. (not important) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 (very important)

    d. Structure/readability. (not important) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 (very important)

    e. Grammar/spelling. (not important) ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 (very important)

Peer Reviewers Only

(Please answer the following questions ONLY if you have served as an *ASC Journal* peer reviewer. If you are an **author-only please skip questions 12-16 and go to question 17**)

12. In my opinion, I am knowledgeable in the areas of *ASC Journal* papers I am asked to review.

    ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

13. The time that I am given to provide a peer review to the *ASC Journal* is adequate.

    ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

14. I consider the *ASC Journal* guidelines and assessment criteria when providing a review, but I rely more on my own education, experience and intuition.

    ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

15. The quality of peer reviews I give to the *ASC Journal* is consistent with the quality of peer reviews I give other publications.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ n/a*
* not applicable, do not review for other publications.

16. In my opinion, someone without an accepted paper in the *ASC Journal* can serve as a peer reviewer as long as they have "adequate" knowledge.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

ASC Authors Only

(Please answer the following questions ONLY if you have <u>completed</u> at least one *ASC Journal* submission cycle as an author or co-author – regardless of acceptance or rejection. If you are a **<u>reviewer-only</u> please skip questions 17-20 and go to question 21**)

17. The *ASC Journal* paper submission, review and publication process is efficient and timely.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

18. The feedback I receive on paper(s) are consistent with the *ASC Journal* guidelines and are adequate in detail to correct or improve the paper.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

19. Based on the responses I have received, I feel that peer reviewers for the *ASC Journal* have the necessary level of knowledge to review my paper(s).

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

20. Peer reviewers for the *ASC Journal* should be evaluated for their responsiveness and the quality of their reviews.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

ASC Authors and Peer Reviewers (ALL: If you are either a peer reviewer, or an author, or both peer reviewer and author, please answer questions 21-26)

21. In my opinion, there should be recognition (awards, incentives, etc.) for the best papers and best peer reviewers provided by the *ASC Journal*.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

22. In my opinion, the *ASC Journal* is a "top-tier" publication venue that is favorably viewed by my peers (e.g. tenure/promotion, impact, audience, etc.)

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

23. My department (program, school, college, etc.) currently subscribes to the *ASC Journal*.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

24. How often do you read or reference from the *ASC Journal*?

☐ Every issue ☐ Once per year ☐ Never

25. From your experience, what are the major "enablers" to an accepted *ASC Journal* publication?

26. From your experience, what are the major "barriers" to an accepted *ASC Journal* Publication?