



# Journal Publications

## Some thoughts and Experiences

Eric T.G. Wang  
National Chair Professor  
Department of Information Management  
National Central University



# Basics

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Science
- Social Science
- Purpose: Scientific Knowledge
- Theory Development
- Methodology
  - The logic of justification
- Social Construction – Persuasion
- Contribution
  - Knowledge gap



# My Observations

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Doing research vs. publishing papers
- Quick and many publications
- Shallow plate research
- Combination of theories
- A respectful foreign scholar's observation of Taiwanese research
- Too little emphasis on good scholarship
- Too much focus on methods instead of methodology
- Ill-developed management field



# Self-Reflection

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Am I smarter than other researchers out there?
- Am I working harder than other researchers out there?
- Do I know my subject matter more than other researchers out there?
- IF all the answers are no, then what should I expect?



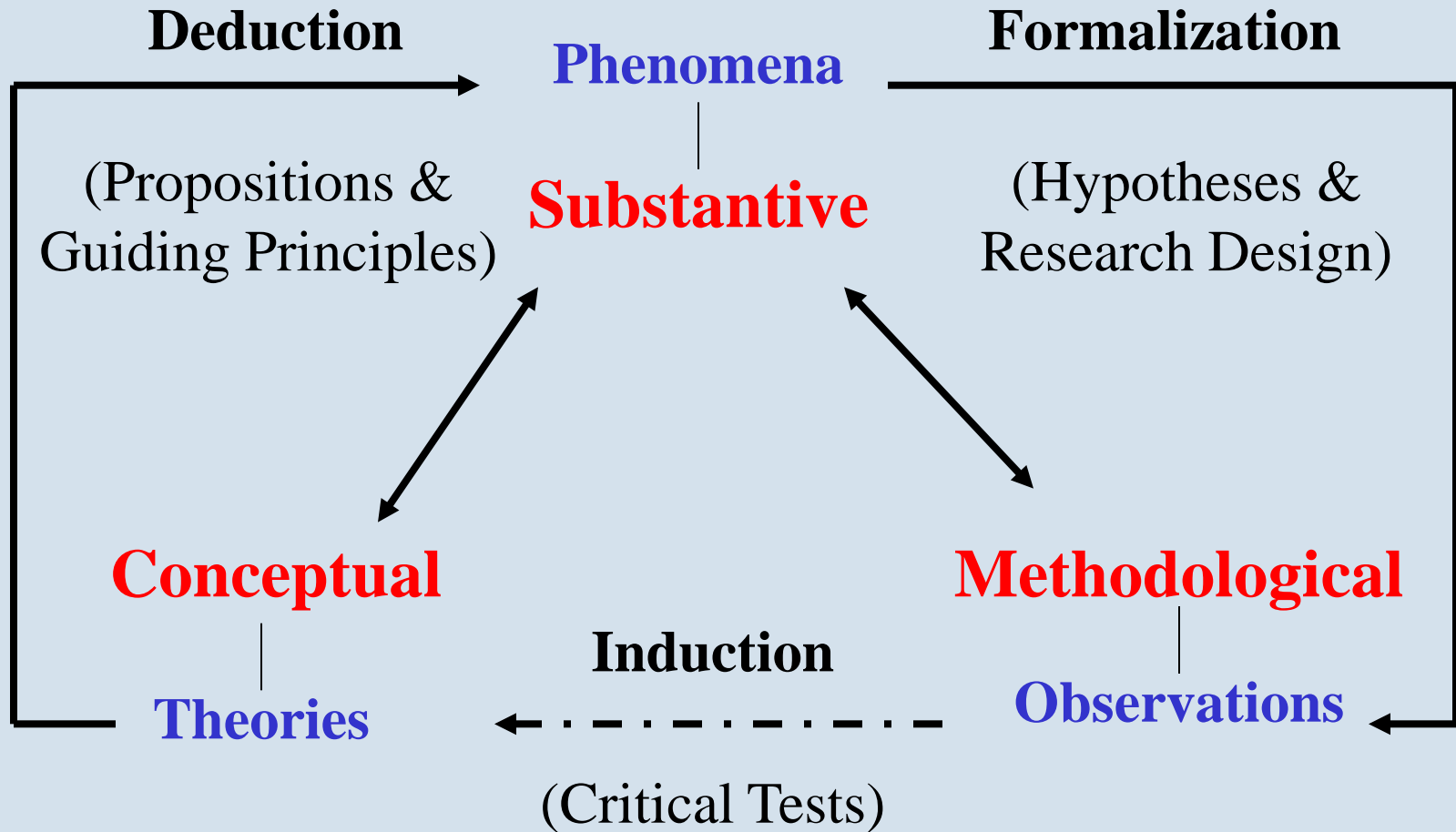
# A Personal Journey

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Doctoral program: learning from teachers the basics and the academic world
- A junior professor: self-improving and continue working with advisors
- Changing directions and methodologies: self-learning
- A full professor: working with graduate students
- Collaboration: working with domestic and foreign well-established scholars

# Domains and Relationships





# Minimum Domain Knowledge

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Substantive
  - Interesting, relevant, timely questions
- Conceptual
  - Interpretive scheme
  - Your worldview (philosophy) and underlying logic
- Methodology
  - Dominant paradigm



# A Typical Empirical Paper A Theoretical Path

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Identify an interesting question from the *substantive domain* and address the question from the *conceptual domain* with a solid theoretical base in order to form a *set of hypotheses*
- Collect data with a method or methods from the *methodological domain* to test that set of hypotheses.



# The Nature of Publishing

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Publishing in journals—”Joining a conversation in a cocktail party”
- Process: Understand → Join → Improve
- Develop an insider’s view of your topic
- Key to contribution: interesting problems informed by relevant scholarship
- What about starting your own conversation?

Huff: Writing for scholarly publications (Sage, 1999)



## Huff: Writing as Conversation

- *Scholarly work is rooted in the lively exchange of ideas — conversation at its best,*
- *Written work is the most enduring and often the most influential contribution a scholar makes to academic conversation.*
- *Writing is also important to scholarship because it clarifies thought and thus the generation of new knowledge,*
- *Even procrastinators often begin writing before establishing critical parameters of communication, thus diluting these benefits,*
- *Seeking advice from others, from the beginning, can save time and firmly put writing into a conversational mode.*

Source: Anne Sigismund Huff, *Writing for Publication*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002 4



## Huff's Guidelines for Good Conversation

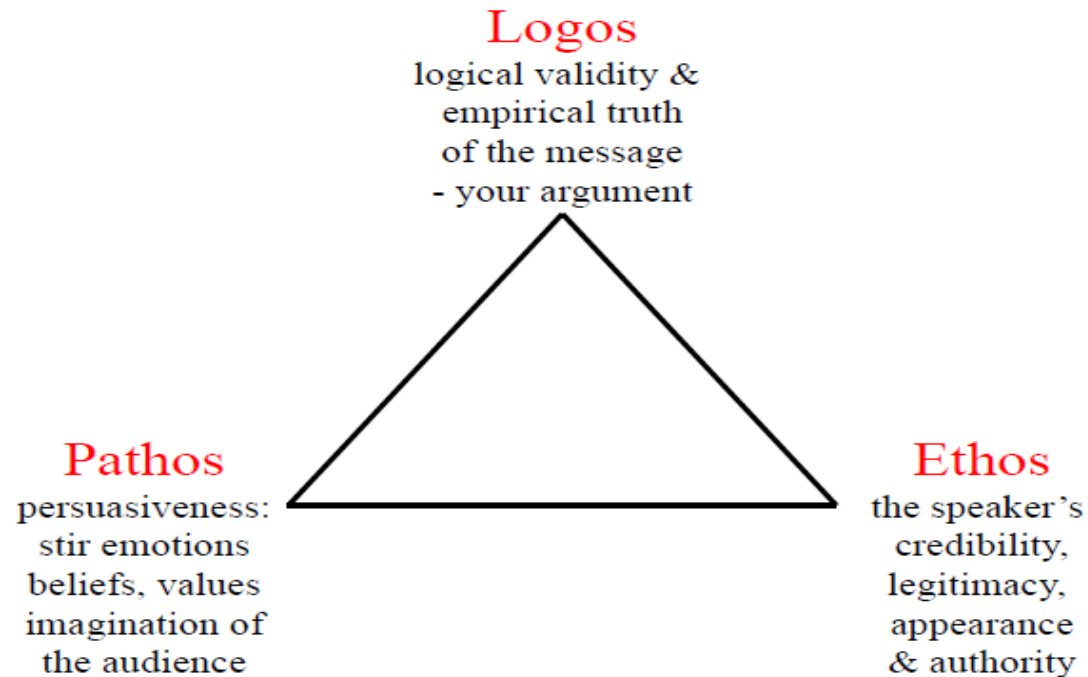
1. Listen before you speak.
2. Connect with points already made.
3. Be interesting.
4. Be polite.

## Andy's Guidelines for Good Living

1. Be appreciative - give credit where credit is due
  - Acknowledge & thank all contributions
2. Share the wealth - ideas, resources, opportunities
  - Pass it on
3. "Keep on the sunny side of life"



## The Rhetorical Triangle



Reference: Barnes, J. (ed.), 1995. *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.



# Short Cuts to Publication?



- No Sufficient Condition but “Many” Necessary Conditions
- There are some things you can do to improve the chance of acceptance or at least reduce the chance of rejection



# The Nature of Academic Research

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Highly intellectual
- Demanding
- Long cycle
- Lots of negative feedback
- Uncertainty
- ...
- Life
  - Reject: frustrated ... those SOB...
  - Revise: suffered ... headache ...
  - Accepted: 30-min happiness & decreasing ...



# The Reality of Publishing in Academic Journals

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

- Publication takes a long time
- Acceptance rate at major journals is low
- Revision process is lengthy and challenging
- Big journal differences

# The Publication Game

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Doing research
  - Something creative and new insights for management
  - Risky ... but rewarding in Taiwan?
- Publishing papers
  - Mostly engineering type of work and patching up models
  - Less risky ... but being positively evaluated?
- Area differences



# What Do They Want?

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Contribution, contribution, contribution
  - Theory (“The paper lacks theory.”)
  - Practice
- Themes
- Generalizability
- Clear writing
- Quality data
- Strong implications



# Division of Labor in Papers

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Introduction
  - Importance of the research
- Theoretical background and the literature
  - Knowledge gap & a new or different theoretical perspective
- Things to be tested
  - Convincing arguments, not just citing or reiterating existing materials
- Appropriate methods
  - Area differences
- Findings - description
- Implications – discussion, deduction and elaboration



# Where to Send

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Difficulties
  - Top journals
  - Second tier journals
  - Below ...
- Evaluation
  - Area internationally
  - Area in Taiwan
  - School
- A pipeline



# Division of Labor

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- New substantial work
  - Identify new issues and learn new theories
- Work for quicker publications
  - For the sake of survival
- Revision
  - Good journals require at least couple revisions

# What Does it Take to Succeed?

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Passion (intrinsic motivation)
- Skills (continuous learning; 40 years of diploma)
- Support
  - Research time
  - Colleagues
  - Resources (RAs, funding)
  - PhD students
  - Family
- Strategize, organize and execute



# Skills

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

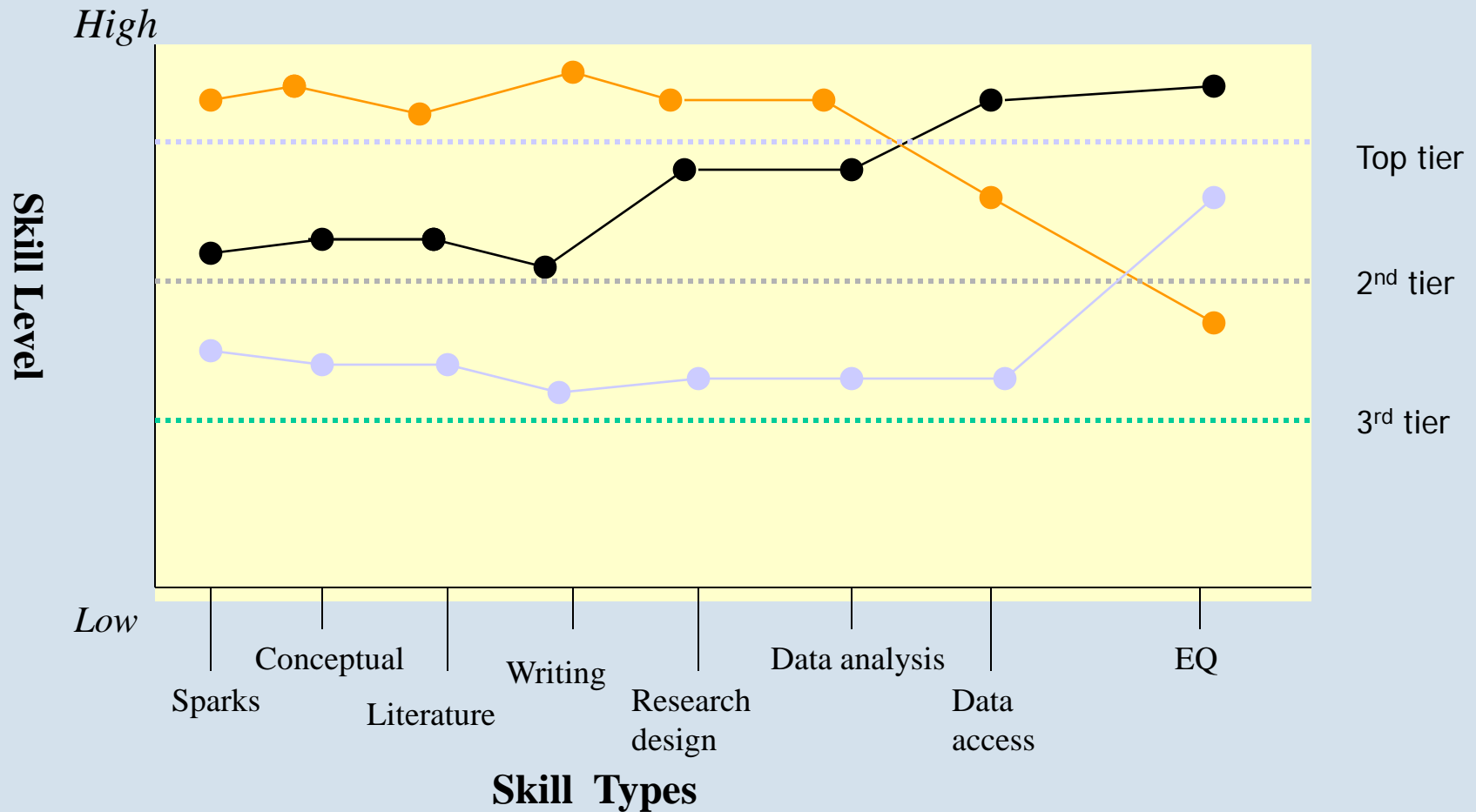


- Sparks (creative, critical, out of box thinking)
- Conceptual integration (theorizing)
- Swim in the literature
- Writing (clear, logical, framing, much beyond language skills)
- Research design
- Data analysis (knowing what tools to use)
- Data access (where network, access matters)
- Emotional strength (cope with negative feedback, persistent, execution, interpersonal skill)



# Your Research Skill Profile?

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY





# Commonly Asked Questions

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- When is a manuscript ready for submission?
- Where to submit the manuscript?
- How do you survive the revision process?
- How do you respond to reviewers who are in disagreement?





# Reasons of Rejections

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

- Fail to pass the screening
- The research issue
- Theory building or theory testing
- Arguments
- Validity and Reliability of instrument and quality of data
- Implications
- The revision process
- Us
  - English problems
  - Taiwanese data



# After Being Rejected or Asked for revision

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Be honest with yourself
  - Can you really say something good about your paper?
- Take the opportunities to learn
  - Reading and digesting reviews and try to improve the current piece and future works
- Resubmission
  - Is there always a journal for a paper?
  - Too many non-respectful journals?
- Be a reviewer yourself



# As a PhD student

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Develop your research skills!!!
  - **Write** (“turn tacit knowledge into explicit, refined”)
  - Read broadly (top journals in diff. fields)
  - Pick up analytical tools
- Pick research topics and methodology that fit your value, interest, personality, and capabilities
- Work with multiple faculty members to acquire hands-on research experiences



# As Junior Scholars

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Pick a position that offers you the best **research support** (colleagues, resources, atmosphere, pressure)
- Stay focused on research, not get distracted!!!
  - Build your teaching and consulting around your research!!!
- Work 100% plus to establish yourself!
- Collaboration begins with strengths!!!
  - competencies, reputation, and integrity



# How Not to Get Your Article Published

## - David J. Smyth

- Send it to the wrong journal
- Make sure the paper is very long
- Make sure the physical aspects of the paper are unsatisfactory
- Don't type the paper in the journal's house style
- Make several controversial points in one paper so that you can be sure the referee will hate something in the paper
- Make sure the reference list is replete with enemies

# How Not to Get Your Article Published

- David J. Smyth

- Don't have any up-to-date references
- If the paper is full of math, make no effort to provide intuitive explanation
- If you get the chance to revise ...
- If your paper has been rejected by another journal
- Being a really lousy referee yourself
- Don't give up, there are many journals out there ready to reject your paper



## Increasing Odds of Journal Acceptance



- Do not submit paper prematurely
  - rule of thumb: two major revisions before submission
- Make your paper user friendly
  - address journalist's questions in first paragraph
- Be compulsive about craftsmanship
  - careful copy-editing, conform to journal editorial style
- No reviewer is ever wrong
  - It is self-destructive to go one-on-one with a reviewer
- Become a reviewer yourself
  - write & volunteer to review in your areas of expertise
- Watch out for activist reviewers that Meyer advocates

Alan D. Meyer, "Balls, Strikes, and Collisions on the Base Path: Ruminations of a veteran reviewer," 1995.



# Academic Life

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Networking is 50% of the job
  - Single-blinded
  - International and domestic
- Take the rejection and reviews as a chance to improve your work
- Training and education your own students





# My Own Experience

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Stronger theory, better research design, more sophisticated analytical methods and more intense data collection
- Review cycle is getting longer
- 20% rule?
- Networking is critical
- Have I been treated unfairly?
- There is a big gap between top journals and the second tier
- Books about writing for publications



# Final Words

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CENTRAL UNIVERSITY



- Have I been treated unfairly?
- There many people out there who are ready to make your life miserable and make you feel like an idiot
- Don't be blinded by your value system and ideology
- Read the logic and presentation not just the issues, models and methods
- There is a big gap between top journals and the second tier – but always trying
- Be a scholar and researcher
  - Attitude, attitude, attitude