

Reviewer Guidelines

Peer Review of manuscripts is a critical function of the journal and the quality of scholarship presented in *Family Relations*. As Editor, I am committed to working with authors to develop their manuscript to its fullest potential. As a manuscript progresses toward publication, it is not unusual for it to undergo up to two revisions in which you will be called upon to provide input.

Additionally, I encourage confidential "Comments to the Editor" which might assist me in decision-making and manuscript development. It is within this element of the review that you are free to comment on the manuscript's suitability for publication. **Please remember that in your comments to authors, you are to refrain from recommendations, references to, or opinions regarding editorial decision.**

Review Criteria

With regard to the reviews you submit to *Family Relations*, I appreciate your attention to all aspects of the manuscript. While technical suggestions are welcome, it is important that you give me a sense of the "big picture" as it pertains to the manuscript. It is my opinion, by virtue of our board membership and scholarly training, all of us are in a position to provide constructive feedback on any manuscript, even in the event that we may lack expertise in a specific substantive area or methodological approach. What follows is a list of specific issues to consider as you construct your review. I have organized these issues as they correspond to the current review criteria on the review evaluation score sheet.

1. Contribution to Knowledge

Focal Point: Relevance to family scholarship.

Does the study connect with important trends affecting families today?

Do its findings advance the field or contribute to an area of study in a meaningful way?

Does explanation or a "deepened" understanding result from the study?

Decide whether the manuscript is reflective of "applied, original, innovative and interdisciplinary scholarship that focuses on diverse families and family issues."

2. Method of Analysis/Presentation

Focal Points: Soundness of methodological approach and research plan.

Are questions/hypotheses appropriately stated? Are constructs adequately operationalized?

Is the study's methodology properly documented and supported by research or methodological sources? Is the study's focus congruent with its analytic approach? Are results understandable and reader friendly? Do they adhere to APA and website (<http://www.hhs.oregonstate.edu/hdfs/acock/tables/>) Are there redundancies between text and any figures and tables?

Keep in mind, if you can't understand the methods, analysis, and presentation of results, neither can most readers.

3. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Focal Points: The use of theory and scholarly literature.

Does theory inform or ground the study? Are study foci adequately defined and conceptualized? Does theory carry through the manuscript and inform the methodological plan and the interpretation of the study's findings? Consider also, the thoroughness and relevancy of the literature search, as well as evidence of critical thinking.

Suggest ways the author could expand their use of theory in the study or think critically about an issue.

When providing feedback in the form of citation information or other resources, provide the authors with complete information so they can find the material and use it to improve their manuscript

4. Clarity/Quality of Writing

Focal Points: The paper's organization, language usage, and overall readability.

Does the paper "flow"? Does the writing adhere to APA style standards? Does the paper adhere to the page number guidelines? (30 pp. Double-spaced with references and tables is the standard, 32 pp. for qualitative research). Does the author use active voice and appropriate grammar and language? Are all references included, and cited correctly?

Overall, does the paper make sense?

If the paper does not make sense to you, then you can bet it will not make sense to readers either. Think about suggesting ways to help the author organize the paper and "tighten things up." You are not responsible for "fine comb" editing, however, when you note technical errors in the paper it is appreciated.

5/6. Potential to Stimulate Further Research/Programming Implications for Practice and Policy

Focal Point: The applied relevance of the research/review in question.

Are the study's conclusions in keeping with the scope of the manuscript, and the broader scope of the journal? Are its findings applicable to practice, policy, education or outreach?

Do the findings lend themselves to the development of specific implications and strategies for practice or policy reform? If so, does the author develop the applied aspects of the paper to their full potential? Are the recommendations accessible or translatable to professionals in field who work with families?

Does the implications section seem "tacked on" or is it part of an integrated discussion?

Think about ways you can suggest the authors develop their findings for an applied audience. Recommendations for practice or reform should flow directly from the study's findings and make sense to readers in and outside of academia.