Developing quality criteria for research publication in the field of profession studies

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Introduction
The proposed paper presents our motivations and approach to investigate review practices and criteria in relation to journal publishing. Disseminating research results via internationally acclaimed journals is an imperative of academic practice. With the increased focus on research opportunities and obligations of the profession-oriented part of the higher education system comes a need for publishing channels with an interest in profession studies. To gain legitimacy as high quality research, profession-oriented publishing must be conditional on the fulfilment of the quality standards established within traditional, academic research. However, can these quality criteria translate directly into profession studies? Rooted in the editorial board of a profession-oriented journal, the authors wish to discuss the relevance and adequacy of established academic procedures and criteria for assessing the quality of publications within the field of profession studies. We will do this theoretically and on the basis of an empirical analysis.

Theory
We examine theoretical foundations and argumentation of the two dominant paradigmatic approaches to quality assessment of research publications; the peer review system on the one hand, and a more indicator-oriented approach aimed at providing directly comparable quantification. Both approaches to reviewing can be criticized (Foss Hansen & Jørgensen 1995). The peer review approach is firmly rooted in discipline-specific cultures of evaluating and recognising high quality and excellence in research (Lamont, 2009; Knorr-Cétina 1999). Indicator development has been on the rise concurrently with new public management ideals in public governance and is used as a tool to promote performance-based research funding in academia. We discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the two approaches to quality assessment in the specific relation to publishing of profession-oriented research.

Methods
We present our research design aimed at analysing empirical practices of a selection of profession-oriented journals, including our own. In total, 30 journals that include a form of the term “profession” in their title are accepted on the Danish Bibliometric Research Indicator (BFI). These are all level 1 indexed which implies that they are not as highly esteemed as the level 2 journals. A selection of journals from the list has been made to identify journals whose scope lie within the field of profession studies. We will compare these journals according to author characteristics (institutional affiliation, seniority, co-authoring, nationality, and gender), profession types under investigation, and practice versus theory prioritization.

Results and contribution
It is our ambition to contribute to a consolidation of the quality discourse within profession studies and to qualify the further development of journal review practices, including our own.