

# **A systematic study on the need for quality publishing**

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## **Abstract**

The term quality, in context of research can be defined as a measure for analysing the outcome of the research work done by an individual. There are several parameters which defines the quality of any published work. Novelty, impact on society, accuracy of results etc. are few parameters which help us to assess the quality of the work done. This paper mainly focuses on the role played by different entities in deciding the quality of the research done. The paper also evaluates the level of awareness among educated professionals about the need for quality publishing. A short survey was conducted among a group of educated people from multiple disciplines about the need for quality publishing and the discussions are included for getting a clear idea about the view of society on this matter. The discussions reveal that the growing needs of our education system and policies imposed by government have improved the way in which educated people think about publishing. The survey also shows that there is lack of awareness in certain areas of quality publishing which has to be addressed immediately.

*Keywords: Indexing, Quality publishing, indexing parameters, review methods, Impact factor.*

## **Introduction**

The impact of science and technology in our daily life is increasing day by day with the new innovations happening around the globe. Inventions cannot happen without a stringent background study or research. Research is the key for all the new inventions happening in any field. So doing research has become highly inevitable part of our life if we want to progress further. The current education system is getting highly impacted by the advancements happening in each field and hence quality research is mandatory to survive even in the field of education. Here comes the need for quality publishing. The research done by an individual will not be appreciated if it is not published in quality journals. To publish our work in quality journals it is mandatory to understand the parameters and factors which

decide the quality of any journal. So this paper conducts a systematic review on different parameters which defines quality of journals as well as articles published in them. There are numerous parameters which measure the quality. This paper mainly focus on entities like peer review methods and policies, role played by indexing agencies in quality publishing and few indexing parameters which helps to analyse quality.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study conducted here is to give an idea to the research community about the metrics to be taken care while publishing an article and to create an insight about where each one stands in this race. This will help researchers to identify the quality journals to make their valuable work available to the society without getting diverted to publishing in predatory journals. The survey conducted as part of this study was also meant to make people self-conscious about the parameters to be followed while publishing in quality journals.

### **Metrics for quality publishing**

Quality publishing helps for maintaining the standards of research work done. There are few common metrics to be followed which will help us to choose the right journal for publishing. The section below explains few parameters to be considered while publishing any research work.

#### **a) Review Methods**

The methods followed by any journal for checking the reliability of information given by author can be generally termed as the review process. Different journals follow different approaches for doing peer review depending on the journal policies. The time taken for review process and the comments given in review report will give author an idea about whether to proceed with publishing in that journal [11]. Most of the reputed journals will have stringent review process with well-defined rules for maintaining the quality of work published in their journal. The most common review processes includes: single blind peer review, double blind peer review, triple blind peer review, open review etc.

- Single blind peer review:

Single blind review process will hides the reviewer details from the author. The reviewer will know about the identity of author but the author won't be able to know identity of reviewer. Even though this is a most widely practiced approach, this type of review has many pros and cons. There is a chance of bias from reviewer in this type of review which can

be based on gender, religion, region etc. The reviewers can do discrimination based on their interest to few authors and also can take it as an opportunity for revenge in case if they have any dispensary with the author which results in making the process unfair.

- Double blind review:

Double blind review process hides the details of reviewer from author and vice versa making the process more transparent. Here author and reviewer details will be hidden from each other and only the editor in chief will know the details regarding both. This type of review will result in more accurate results as the chance of bias is very less. This approach also has some disadvantages if reviewers are more interested in giving false and negative critical comments thinking that the identity won't be revealed. This will result in worse judgement if not addressed properly. But other than that double blind review is more transparent and reliable.

- Triple Blind review:

In triple blind review process the identity of reviewer will be hidden from the author as well as the identity of author will be hidden from the reviewer and the editor. Here there is no chance of any bias and is highly transparent. But still it is possible to guess the identity of authors if the reviewer is familiar with the writing styles of author like any other approach. Other than that the method maintains a fair policy. But very few journals follow this practice due to complexities related to anonymizing the identity

- Open Review:

Open review process is where the author, reviewer and editor will know each other. This is more critical review process and the authors should be highly confident for moving to this approach. The authors should be very conscious about the materials written and the comments made by reviewer should be carefully framed to avoid criticisms. This method is rarely followed by journals.

Review process plays an important role in deciding the quality of journal. So it is always advisable to scan through the journal review policies prior to doing publishing. Along with the review process, there are other numerous different factors which influence the quality of journals. One such important measure of quality is the indexing attained by the journal. Numerous indexing agencies are available throughout the globe and hence it is the

responsibility of authors to have a thorough study on these agencies and choose a journal which meets the quality standards.

### **b) Indexing**

Indexing or abstracting is a process of documenting scientific journals which are maintaining excellent quality standards in any particular database. The journals indexed in reputed databases are considered to be having greater quality and relevance [1]. So it is an important parameter to be considered for publishing the quality work done. As the number of publications is getting increased tremendously, it is mandatory for any journal to be indexed in any popular indexing database for its survival [2]. Few examples of indexing agencies include Web of Science, Scopus, Google scholar etc.

The indexing agencies have definite measures and policies for assessing the quality of journals indexed by them. They will be continuously monitoring the standards followed by journals indexed in their databases. The indexing agencies will keep track of the relevance and novelty of articles published in the journals indexed by them, ethical practices followed by journals, review process done, time taken for publishing, details of the editorial board, frequency of journal issues getting published, article count in each issue etc. Any journal indexed once by an indexing agency doesn't mean that it is a lifelong permanent contract. The indexing agency has the right to remove the journal from their database any time if they found the journal is not meeting the quality standards or if the journal is involved in any unethical practices. The points mentioned clearly give us the idea that it is always good to publish in journals which are indexed by reputed indexing agencies. This will contribute greatly to the author satisfaction and reputation. The indexing is influenced by different parameters depending on the agency.

### **c) Indexing Parameters**

Journal indexing parameters can be defines as a set of metrics followed by indexing agencies for maintaining the quality of articles indexed in their databases. There are several metrics available for calculating the journal rank and for assessing the prestige of journal. Few examples include metrics such as impact factor, cite score, SCImago Journal Rank etc. These metrics are calculated mainly based on the concept of citations [4]. Citations are actually an entry made in any research article about the source from which the information is collected. In precise it refers to the source of data. Most of the indexing parameters count the

number of citations received for a journal as a primary component. The preceding section explains few common indexing parameters.

- Impact Factor

The impact factor is one of the indexing parameter coined by Eugene Garfield, the founder of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) [6]. It is calculated for all the journals indexed under Journal Citation Reports (JCR) by Clarivate Analytics. Impact factor is commonly used to evaluate the relative importance of a journal within its field and to measure the frequency with which the “average article” in a journal has been cited in a particular time period [3]. The more the value of impact factor more the ranking of the journal. It is calculated as a ratio between number of citations received for journals in previous two years to number of citable items published by that journal in the previous two years [5]. The term citable item generally includes research articles and review papers.

- CiteScore

CiteScore is another metric used for indexing journals specifically for the journals indexed in Scopus database which is owned by Elsevier. It is also based on the number of citations. But the difference is it is calculated for three years instead of two years [9]. Another key difference is that apart from research reviews and articles, CiteScore considers all other types of documents including editorials, letters, notes, conference proceedings etc. which are indexed by Scopus while generating the score.

- SCImago Journal Rank

SCImago Journal Rank (SJR indicator) is another journal ranking metrics which uses the data from 3 years. The main source of SJR ranking is the Scopus database. It is a measure of scientific influence of scholarly journals which considers the citation count along with the source of citations [7]. A journal's SJR is a numeric value indicating the average number of weighted citations received in a year [1], by articles published in a journal in the previous 3 years [8]. Higher SJR values are meant to indicate greater journal prestige.

The metrics mentioned above are few parameters which helps authors to analyse the quality of journals. Metrics vary for different indexing agencies based on the underlying policies [10]. But most of them follow some common practices for all the journals indexed by them. So analysing and investigating on the indexing gained by the journal we will make the

authors more confident and clear about decision to be made for publishing articles in any journal.

Based on the parameters mentioned and by considering the factors influencing the journal quality, a short analysis was done on an educated group of people to get an idea about the outlook of people towards quality publishing. The survey shows that there are areas which require more attention and improvements.

### **Research Problem Statement**

There is a lack of understanding on the norms to be followed while publishing research papers even in an educated group of people. The study conducted on awareness of quality publishing reveals this fact.

### **Methodology**

The survey was conducted on a group of educated people by using a questionnaire generated using google forms. The questions were purely related to general understanding on the terms and policies related to quality oriented journal publishing. The participants were asked to give their response for 10 questions which was shared to them through online media. Each correct answer added 1 point to the participant out of 10 points. So the performance of participants was categorised as bad, average and good using a scale ranging from 0 to 10 as depicted in table below.

<b>Range</b>	<b>Performance</b>
0-3	Bad
4-7	Average
8-10	Good

Fig 1: Performance Assessment Scale

### **Results**

The survey was conducted for 36 respondents from different fields of study. All the participants chosen for the survey were highly educated. The participants were given assurance that their personal information won't be revealed. The score distribution is as

shown in the table below. The points scored by participant's ranges from 1 to 9 with average 6.22.

Score	No of participants
1	1
3	1
4	5
5	3
6	9
7	9
8	4
9	4

Fig 2: Score table

## Discussions

The score table generated as part of the survey reveals the fact that most of the responses belongs to the average scale. This gives some positive as well as negative insights. It is really encouraging that the participants are having general awareness on the terms related to quality publishing. But at the same time, the decrease in number of count in the scale 'good' indicates an alarming situation which has to be addressed seriously. Most of them were not aware of the journal review policies, quality parameters and research approaches to be followed while performing research. So this shows that more interest has to be taken for creating awareness on need for quality publishing. The table below shows the summary of responses.

Qn. No	Question	No. of correct responses
1	Which of the following can be considered as a measure for assessing quality of a journal?	14
2	Can we consider Impact Factor of journal as a mark of its quality?	32
3	Which among the following is not a review method?	15
4	Which statement correctly defines h-index?	17

5	Will PhD improves quality of journal publishing?	35
6	Which of the following is not a research approach?	11
7	Is Google Scholar an indexing agency?	24
8	Scopus is owned by: ?	17
9	Relevance of doing literature survey on improving the quality of research	29
10	Will the idea of open access journals improves research quality?	30

Fig3: Summary of responses

### **Conclusion**

The impact of research in modern society has improved the human lifestyle tremendously. Innovations are happening in our day to day life at a speed of blink of eye. Research is actively happening in all the areas. So irrespective of the field of study, it is very essential for any individual to be involved in one or the other research activity as part of their career. Publishing the research work in quality journals will help researchers to improve their reputation and will motivate them for further achievements. Moreover most of the universities across the globe have made it mandatory for faculties to have a handful of articles published in research journals with high quality every year. The student community will be highly benefited by this practice. This paper gives an insight about the parameters to be considered for quality publishing which will help the authors to choose right journal for publishing their research outcomes. The short survey included in this paper reveals that there is still lack of complete awareness on quality procedures even among educated community. As the survey was conducted for a small group of educated people it is not possible to generalize that most of them are less aware of quality metrics. The study can be further improved and made accurate in future by increasing the number of participants. The stability of responses in category 'average', gives us an indication that there is some level of understanding on the needs for quality publishing. However, the results are not fully satisfactory as the response count in category 'good' is very less which indicates that more measures has to be taken and motivation has to be given for promoting quality research and thereby make the society more better and stronger.

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