

Manuscript Rejection in Academic Journals: Some advice to doctorate students

Le rejet des manuscrits dans les revues académiques : Quelques conseils aux doctorants

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Abstract

Publishing a research article in a peer-reviewed journal is an essential step in advancing one's career as a researcher. However, the competitive nature of academic publishing coupled with high submission volumes and rejection rates necessitates that authors understand the reasons behind manuscript rejections and adopt the appropriate strategies to improve their publication success. In this article, we discuss the common reasons why articles are rejected and suggest strategies that authors can use to improve their chances of seeing their articles accepted for publication.

Keywords: Journal Submit, Manuscript Rejection, Manuscript Acceptation, Publishing Process, Enhancement Strategies.

Résumé

La publication d'un article de recherche dans une revue à comité de lecture est une étape essentielle dans la progression de la carrière d'un chercheur. Cependant, la nature compétitive de l'édition universitaire, associée à des volumes de soumission et des taux de rejet élevés, nécessite que les auteurs comprennent les raisons des rejets de manuscrits et adoptent des stratégies pour améliorer leur succès de publication. Dans cet article, nous examinons les raisons les plus courantes pour lesquelles les articles sont rejetés et proposons des stratégies que les auteurs peuvent utiliser pour améliorer leurs chances de voir leurs articles acceptés pour publication.

Mots-clés : Soumission de Manuscrit, Rejet de Manuscrit, Acceptation de Manuscrit, Processus de Publication, Stratégies D'amélioration.

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Introduction

The validation of the results of doctoral research through the publication of an article in a peer-reviewed journal has become a graduation requirement in doctoral programmes in most universities around the world, Algeria included. But, writing a manuscript is a time-consuming and laborious process that requires considerable effort from authors, particularly novice researchers, such as doctorate students. To succeed in this ardent task, doctorate students should produce a manuscript that meets the expectations of the gate-keepers – i.e., the journal reviewers who are established members of the disciplinary community in which the former bid entry. The role of the gate-keepers in this case is to evaluate whether the manuscript in question makes a real contribution to a specific academic discipline. However, the lack of discipline-specific training in writing publishable research papers coupled with the opacity of the publication process in often cases may result in the rejection of the proposed paper. Such a rejection, which is, unfortunately, the outcome of a considerable number of papers can be experienced as a serious setback, if not a failure. Moreover, rejection letters most often than not do not provide doctorate students with sufficient and detailed feedback on the reasons of the manuscript rejection. Consequently, improving the quality of the rejected manuscripts to make them publishable becomes an arduous and frustrating endeavor.

In addition to the quality of the manuscript itself, there are several other factors that influence whether or not a manuscript is accepted for publication, such as the journal's aims and scope, the number of submissions, and the availability of space. The first thing that doctorate students, in general, and Algerian students in particular should keep in mind is that rejection is a common aspect of the scientific publishing process. To avoid the rejection of their manuscripts or to render them publishable once rejection occurs, doctorate students should take into serious consideration the factors that may lead or have led to rejection in the first place, and then, in the light of this, strive to improve the vulnerable or weak aspects of work to enhance the publishability of their papers.

Within this scope, we seek to shed light on a number of major factors that may cause manuscripts rejection in academic journals, and provide some practical advice to Algerian doctorate students, in particular, and all novice authors in general to assist them in avoiding or overcoming the experience of rejection of their manuscripts. These tips are based on the first's and second author's experience as editor-in-chief and assistant editor respectively of a "C" ranked academic journal in the field of the humanities and social sciences accredited by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and also, on our experience as reviewers in different Algerian and international journals. We will provide examples for each aspect for rejection reports taken from the database of a "C" ranked Algerian journal to illustrate each of what we consider to be the major causes of rejection before offering tips that can help doctorate students and other authors to improve and enhance their chances of getting their manuscripts accepted for publication. Our attempt to locate papers on the Algerian context dealing with a similar topic on the internet was infructuous, which indicates that this is under-researched area in Algeria. Hence, the need for awareness raising on this issue. Based on the above, the present paper seeks to answer two related major questions:

- 1-What are the major causes of manuscript rejection?
- 2-What steps should be taken to avoid or overcome manuscript rejection?

1- The literature review

The literature suggests that the rejection of manuscripts is a multi-dimension problem and has big psychological and professional consequences for scholars. The reasons usually have to do with deficiencies regarding a lack of novelty, methodological flow, and badly articulated problems, as many studies indicate and emphasize the way journals give priority to the contribution according to its novelty and scientific rigor (Ali, 2010). Other support mechanisms, like writing classes and support groups, have been able to improve success with publication, according to McGrail (2006), who indicates that these organized support networks provide relevant feedback and encouragement. Day (2011) studied the psychological impact of rejection, pointing out that rejection results in lower productivity, professional isolation-even abandonment of research work. Day stresses that all of these emotional impacts are things the academic institution should take responsibility for, proposing that with the institution of various support mechanisms, such as mentoring and training programs, the negative consequences of rejection will be considerably minimized. Bordage (2001) furthers, *"Manuscript acceptances are more likely when the research problem is clearly articulated, methodology is sound, and writing is clear, which points to proper preparation again."* Thus, researchers are encouraged to seek professional support and refine their methodologies to enhance their chances of publication, reducing the emotional burden associated with the "publish or rejection" culture.

2- Means of Research

2-1- Research Design: To raise Algerian doctorate student's awareness to the prevalent causes of rejection, this study adopts a descriptive and analytical approach focusing on the common causes of manuscript rejection in academic journals. The design was chosen to systematically analyze various examples of rejected manuscripts and to extract patterns related to the reasons behind these rejections. The approach allows for attracting attention to the most common factors influencing editorial and peer-review decisions.

2-2- Data Collection: Data used in this research consist of editorial reports and reviewer's comments retrieved from one "C" ranked Algerian journal specialized in humanities and social sciences. Such documents shed light on the main causes of manuscript's rejection. Further, illustrative examples of reviewers' reports were screened and analyzed to showcase themes and specific areas where a manuscript usually fails to meet the journal criteria.

2-3- Data Analysis: First, the rejection reports were analyzed to determine the different issues cited by editors and reviewers as causes of rejection with specific reference to aspects such as clarity of language, methodological rigor, theoretical framework, and adherence to guidelines of the journal. The categorization of the various types of errors leading to frequent rejections allowed provided a basis for making some suggestions to novice authors about specific strategies for improving the quality of their manuscripts and avoid falling in the trap of rejection.

2-4- Ethical Considerations: All data used in this paper were anonymized in order to protect the identity of the very authors whose manuscripts were analyzed. In this regard, the names of authors of the rejected papers cited in the present paper were systematically changed.

3- Major Causes of Manuscript Rejection

Numerous factors can contribute to the rejection of a manuscript. Some of the most significant ones are outlined below.

3-1- Quality of Writing

The most important factor that can lead to article rejection is without doubt the quality of writing. Journals expect articles to be well-written, clear, concise, and a void of grammatical errors and typos. In addition, articles that lack structure or coherence may also be rejected. The articles that are well-written and well-structured are more likely to be accepted for publication. (Kember, 1997). For instance, in the case of **Hanane's** manuscript (**Image 1**), reviewers emphasized the detrimental effects that several grammatical errors, incorrect verb conjugations, and misuse of punctuation have had on the quality of the paper. This feedback demonstrates that neglected deficiencies in form can lead to rejection, hence the importance of meticulous proofreading and attention to language mechanics.

Re: مقال مرفوض. رسالة آلية' الرجاء عدم الرد عليها

1 message

Hanane <[redacted]@ail.com>

2 décembre 2021 à 07:46

À : A <[redacted]@l.dz>

السلام عليكم

.هل بإمكانني تصحيح الأخطاء وإعادة المقال مرة أخرى

On Tuesday, November 30, 2021,

<asjp@msnist.cerist.dz> wrote:

سيدي/سيدتي

يقدرتم رفضه. يمكن الإطلاع على ملاحظات المراجعين

في الأسفل

شكرا

.رئيس التحرير

[redacted]@l.dz

نحن آسفون ان نحبطكم علما ان مقالكم بعنوان " [redacted] رواية "

Commentaire du Reviewer

1 :

لغة راقية ولكن يرجى تصحيح بعض الأخطاء الواردة في البحث: يلجأون، تكتب: يلجؤون (تكتب الهمزة على الواو لأنها مضمومة وما قبلها مفتوح) تصحيح الخطأ النحوي الوارد في الخاتمة أي في عبارة (مثل: المخاطبون) نقول (مثل المخاطبين) لأنها وردت مضافا إليه مجرورا - حذف (الف التعريف) من كلمة (الخاتمة) تكتب بدون (الف التعريف): خاتمة

Commentaire du Reviewer

2 :

أخطاء إملائية ونحوية وتعبيرية كثيرة، مثال ذلك تكرير بعض الجمل والعبارات التي تصل إلى سطر كامل تقريبا، دون داع إلى ذلك، واستعمال "ما" في غير موضعها، كما أن هناك خلطا في إدراج حروف الجر، مثال ذلك قولك "تؤثر عليه" في إحدى الجمل التي كررتها في المقدمة، والصواب "تؤثر فيه" وليس عليه، فالتأثير يكون في الشيء وليس عليه، وكذلك إيرادك لجواب ما بعد "أما" من دون الفاء، والصواب إدراجها، وهو خطأ نحوي فادح لا يليق أن يصدر عن باحث أكاديمي في مقامكم، إضافة إلى بعض الأساليب التعبيرية الركيكة التي تشعر القارئ بوجود شبه انفصام ونشاز بين كلمات النص وجمله. خير كان منصوب دوما، "وقد أوردته مرفوعا في غير موضع. المضاف إليه مجرور وقد أوردته منصوبا في بعض المواضع. قولك "تعتبر مكان المعصومة" والصواب "يعتبر

Commentaire du Reviewer

3 :

هناك بعض العناصر يمكن الاستغناء عنها فهي من حشو الكلام ومما لا يمت بصلة إلى البنية السردية، إلى جانب أخطاء جمة في اللغة عليك إعادة النظر فيها، الخاتمة مختلطة بشكل كبير يطلب إعادة النظر فيها

Image 1: Example of Quality of Writing as a reason of rejection

This example demonstrates that grammar, writing, and punctuation errors are not specific to non-native authors of English academic prose; Grammar errors also occur when writing in one's mother tongue and reduce the quality of papers. This issue also stands as a major hurdle for publication for those who write their papers in Arabic as a first language. As far as this issue is concerned, some

novice authors may wrongly believe that content is far more important than form and, thus, fail to edit their manuscript before submitting to publication. Neglecting issues of form, however, may seriously compromise the quality of the paper and lead eventually to its rejection. It should also be noted here that there are aspects of academic writing that are shared across academic disciplines and other aspects that are specific to each discipline specific. The inability to demonstrate an adequate level of complying with these conventions results in rejection.

3-2- Relevance and Originality of Research

It is worth noting here that scholarly journals prioritize publishing articles that address timely and significant research questions while offering novel insights or perspectives. The primary goal of academic publishing is to advance knowledge and promote new ideas, and therefore, articles that demonstrate insufficient originality, fail to contribute to the field, or are too narrow in focus may be rejected (Vinkler, 2006). But, originality is a slippery criterion especially in the social and human sciences and each disciplinary community has its own ways of establishing the norms of originality. What complicates the issue even further is the fact the field experience frequent shifts in the pendulum which cause some themes to become fashionable and make others fall into disgrace. For instance, in the case of **Abd-Emalik's** manuscript (**Image 2**), the editor declined the submission, stating the topic was repetitive and lacked novelty. This highlights the importance of conducting thorough literature reviews to identify gaps in knowledge and ensuring that the research questions proposed offer unique insights or address unexplored aspects of the chosen subject matter.



Image 2: Example of Relevance and Originality of Research

The criteria used for peer review, such as soundness, significance, and novelty, may be multiple, and therefore can by no means be reduced to a single evaluative dimension. Furthermore, all manuscripts strive to introduce some form of novelty. Therefore, measuring the degree of novelty and distinguishing between various types of novelty regarding aspects like methods, theory, application context, research questions, or statistical analyses, is necessary for the obtaining positive peer evaluations. (CJ Lee, 2013).

Academic journals generally seek articles that are perceived by the members of target disciplinary community to represent a significant and original contribution to their field. Therefore, authors should ensure that their manuscripts address research questions, provide new insights, and present innovative research from the perspective of the target disciplinary community (Lindgreen, 2020). Originality can be achieved by addressing one or several of the aforementioned factors.

3-3- Compatibility with Journal Focus and Scope

Academic journals have distinct aims and scopes that define the type of research they publish and the audience they address. Submitting a manuscript that does not align with these parameters often leads to rejection during the initial desk review stage. For example, in the case of **Sabrina's** manuscript (**Image 3**), the editor's rejection comment indicates that the manuscript's topic did not align with the journal's particularism and focus. This example highlights the importance of carefully reviewing the aims and scope of a target journal before submission.

Authors should ensure their research aligns with the journal's specific areas of interest and meets the expectations of its readership. As Dwivedi (2022) found, aligning with the journal's editorial focus significantly increases the chances of acceptance. Taking the time to research and select appropriate journals can save authors time and effort in the long run.

Re: (رسالة آلية' الرجاء عدم الرد عليها).

À : <@gmail.com>
<@yahoo.fr>

----- Forwarded message -----

De : Sabrina <@gmail.com>
Date: jeu. 29 avr. 2021 à 12:46
Subject: Re: (رسالة آلية' الرجاء عدم الرد عليها).
To: <@gmail.com>

جزيل الشكر والتقدير

Le jeu. 29 avr. 2021 à 09:59, <supportasjp@cerist.dz> a écrit :

سيدي/سيدتي <حصرينة> :
نحن أسفون ان نحيطكم علما ان مقالكم بعنوان "دور الحوكمة" قد تم رفضه للأسباب التالية :

نحية طبية،

يرجى منكم إعادة مراجعة مجالات المجلة في النشر عبر البوابة، لأن موضوعكم لا يخدم مجالات النشر فيها.

خالص التقدير والاحترام

رئيس التحرير.

المجلة

<@gmail.com>

Image 3: Example of Compatibility with Journal Focus and Scope

3-4- Lack of Transparency in the Review Process

Lack of transparency refers to reviewers' failure to provide detailed or comprehensible feedback, hindering authors' ability to address concerns and improve their work. Transparency in the review process is a significant problem that affects the quality and integrity of peer review. The authors often receive confusing or unhelpful feedback when reviewers' comments do not align with the editor's decision to reject the manuscript, or when the feedback offers little insight into their decision (O'Brien, 2021). For instance, in the case of **Amel's** manuscript (**Image 4**), while the reviewers ultimately recommended rejection, their comments varied significantly in focus. One reviewer emphasized linguistic issues and questioned the research methodology, while another critiqued the theoretical framing and overall structure. This inconsistency in feedback, without clear consensus or justification, illustrates how a lack of transparency can hinder the author's ability to understand the reasons for rejection and revise the manuscript effectively.

Re: (مقال مرفوض. رسالة آلية' الرجاء عدم الرد عليها)

2 messages

Amel <cholog@mail.com>
À : <dz>

12 décembre 2021 à 18:18

Le ven. 10 déc. 2021 à 16:23

<asjp@msnist.cerist.dz> a écrit :

سيدي/سيدتي

لجنة الإدماجية ببر

"قد تم رفضه. يمكن الإطلاع على ملاحظات المراجعين في الأسفل

شكرا

رئيس التحرير

@univ dz

Commentaire du Reviewer

1 :

هناك خلل لغوي في العنوان: "البو" بدل "بيو" - شكليا: يجب أن تلتصق الواو بالكلمة التي تليها، كما يجب تغيير الفواصل بالفاصلة الأجنبية: ، إلى هذه الفاصلة: - في كامل المقال. - هناك ارتباط إيجابي خاص بين مؤشرات الصحة النفسية و سمات التطهير النفسي بعد صيام شهر رمضان. كيف تم التأكد من وجود هذا الارتباط بأربع حالات فقط؟؟ - صيام شهر رمضان : تقييد إشباع الحاجات البيولوجية للجسد و إعلاء إشباع الرغبات النفسية في الشهر الهجري التاسع "رمضان" من طلوع الشمس إلى غروبها و بكيفية تجعل من الجسد وسيطا ص لك . وكذلك تقييد الحاجات والنزوات اللببية (الجنسية). - هناك هفوات إملانية كثيرة كسوء استعمال ألف لام التعريف ما جعل من قراءة المقال غير سلسة. يجب الاستعانة بمدقق لغوي إن اقتضى الأمر. - "بتطبيق مقياس الصحة النفسية من المنظور الصوفي الإسلامي" ما المقصود بالصوفي في هذه القضية؟ - في الملخص تم الحديث عن توظيف: الفحص النفسي العيادي المقارن لأربع حالات في حين نجد حديثا عن: 12 في الدراسة الإستطلاعية.. هل تم استخراج الأربع حالات من الـ 12 فردا في الدراسة الإستطلاعية؟ تم في تقديم نتائج مقياس الصحة النفسية لفقيه العيد عاد صاحب المقال إلى أفراد الدراسة الإستطلاعية. - هناك خلط في ترتيب مستويات الشعيرة الدينية - لم يتم التعريف باختبار الإحباط-عدوانية لروزنزاك كما حدث مع بقية المقاييس المذكورة قبله؟؟ - الفرس، الصينيون، والروم، والهنود والبابليون ليسوا من الشعوب البدائية

Commentaire du Reviewer

2 :

تناول الباحث موضوعا مهما، غير أنه لم يوفق في طرحه من الجانب المنهجي. فقد ساد هذا الموضوع الكثير من اللبس خاصة ما تعلق بالدراسة الميدانية التي تستدعي الدقة والإيضاح، الأمر الذي لم نلمسه في هذه الدراسة. لم يتمكن الباحث من ضبط فرضياته إجرائيا، لم يوفق في اختيار المنهج المستعمل و لا الوسائل البحثية. ما أسفرت عنه النتائج المتوصل إليها غامضة. بمعنى غابت الكثير من العناصر المهمة كتحديد المتغيرات تحديدا دقيقا و كذا ضبط المتغيرات الدخيلة. الخلاصة: لا يرتقي هذا المقال إلى مستوى النشر

Commentaire du Reviewer

3 :

منهجية البحث غير منظمة، نكاد لا نميز بين الدراسة الاستطلاعية و الدراسة الأساسية. هل يقوم المنهج الوصفي على أربع حالات؟ طريقة المعاينة (اختيار العينة) غير محددة اختيار مهنة الحالات غير مبرر. تعليم ، أمن ؟ ضرورة التمييز بوضوح بين الدراسة الاستطلاعية و نتائجها و الدراسة الأساسية و نتائجها، ما هو كذلك وجود APA الأسلوب الإحصائي الذي سمح لكم بإيجاد ارتباط إيجابي؟ لم يتم تحديد نوع المقابلة عند التطرق إلى أدوات البحث التهميش لا يستجيب لمعيار أخطاء إملانية كثيرة . ضرورة مراجعة المقال

Image 4: Example of Lack of Transparency in the Review Process

To promote transparency, some journals have adopted practices like open peer review, where reviewers' identities are disclosed, or post-publication peer review, which allows for ongoing feedback even after publication. Such approaches foster a more collaborative and accountable review process, ultimately benefiting both authors and the advancement of scholarly knowledge(Tennant, 2017).

3-5- Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns in research encompass various forms, with plagiarism and data manipulation being among the most serious, transgressions(Ioannidis, 2014). Issues related to redundant publication and self-plagiarism are more frequent, wherein the line between acceptable and unacceptable behavior can be ambiguous and subject to interpretation. While it is reasonable

to aim to maximize the impact of one's research, attempting to do so by reusing previously published work or misleading readers regarding the originality of publications is deemed unacceptable (Martin, 2013). Journals may employ various methods to identify and prevent such ethical issues, including the use of plagiarism detection software (Kumar, 2014). For example, in the case of **Hichem's** manuscript (**Image 5**), the editor explicitly identified the submission as a clear case of plagiarism, providing evidence of copied content from another published work. This example illustrates the severe consequences of plagiarism and emphasizes the importance of upholding ethical practices in research.



Image 5: Example of Ethical Considerations

Authors should utilize plagiarism detection software like **Turnitin*** or **iThenticate*** before submitting to any journal. These tools help identify instances of text overlap and ensure the originality of the work. The editor of the journal also make a final decision on the fate of the article based on the extent of plagiarism tools (Kumar, 2014).

3-6- Theoretical and Methodological Concerns

Desk rejections may occur due to insufficient theoretical grounding, weakly supported hypotheses, limited sample sizes or reliance on student samples, and inadequate reliability and validity in quantitative studies. In addition, papers that argue in favor of adopting a particular technology without studying empirically the effects of this technology on behavior and usage may also be desk rejected. Similarly, qualitative papers with a lack of grounding in a clear rationale or theoretical background may be subject to desk rejection. It is worth noting that merely describing interview results is insufficient to make an adequate contribution. Unfortunately, many qualitative submissions suffer from this issue and are consequently desk rejected (Dwivedi, 2022). Various factors can affect the rigour of the authors work, the most commonly inappropriate research methodology, e.g. misalignment between research objectives and chosen research methods, wrong sampling strategy, poor data quality, potential

*Turnitin (<https://turnitin.com/static/index>).

*iThenticate (<http://www.ithenticate.com>).

bias of chosen respondents, inappropriate data analysis techniques, lack of rigour in data analysis, etc (Dwivedi, 2022).

For example, in the case of **Issam's** manuscript (**Image 6**), reviewers found the research problem to be poorly constructed and lacking scientific justification. Additionally, they criticized the sample selection, noting that the chosen individuals lacked expertise in artificial intelligence, which was central to the research topic. This example demonstrates how misalignments between research objectives, methodology, and sample selection can lead to rejection. This case illustrates the importance of articulating a robust and well-justified research design to get one's manuscript published.

اسباب رفض المقال

1 message

À : issam@univ-boumerdes.dz

10 février 2022 à 15:31

1-

ملحظات للمؤلف - Résume a reformuler - Les entraîneurs, ont ils a leurs disposition les moyens électroniques (intelligence artificielle) proposés pour votre étude? quelle est la réalité de la disponibilité de ces moyens sur le terrain? L'objectif de cette recherche est il un souhait d'utiliser ou l'importance d'utiliser ces moyens électroniques pour détecter les faiblesses de l'équipe et remédier a ces dernières, durant les entraînement, par les entraîneurs. il faut suivre des entraîneurs utilisant cette technologie et d'autres sans l'utiliser et faire la comparaison de leurs évolutions et de leurs résultats respectifs

البحث مرفوض للأسباب التالية: 1- "مشكلة الدراسة" غير مبنيّة بطريقة علمية سليمة، وغياب المبررات 2- العلمية لطرح مشكلات البحث. 2- عينة البحث غير ملمة علميا بالذكاء الاصطناعي وليس لها تجربة ميدانية!!! باستخدام الذكاء الاصطناعي، فكيف تم اختيارها لاجراء البحث عليها؟

Image 6: Example of Theoretical and Methodological Concerns

3-7- Adherence to Formatting Guidelines

Noncompliance with journal-specific formatting requirements can result in manuscript rejection. Journals often have specific requirements for things like referencing style, font size, and margins. Failure to adhere to these guidelines can result in an article being rejected as well. Studies, such as the one conducted by **Davies** have shown that reference errors represent the highest percentage in negative reviewers' feedback. According to him, reference errors represented 49.1 percent in a journal pertaining to the field of Information and Management. More specifically, the overall error rates were categorized as follows: author "56 percent", page number "22 percent", article title "15 percent", volume (3 percent), publication year "2 percent" and journal title "2 percent" (Davies, 2012). The study found that articles that did not adhere to the journal's formatting guidelines were more likely to be rejected.

For instance, in the case of **Dalila's** manuscript (**Image 7**), the editor explicitly stated that the reason for rejection was the author's failure to adhere to the journal's required APA referencing style. This example highlights the importance of carefully reviewing and following the specific formatting instructions provided by the target journal.

مقال مرفوض. (رسالة آلية: الرجاء عدم الرد عليها)

1 message

مدينة <asjp@msnist.cerist.dz>

5 février 2023 à 09:37

Répondre à : <[redacted]>

À : <[redacted]>

> سيدي/سيدتي <[redacted]>

: نحن آسفون ان نحيطكم علما ان مقالكم بعنوان "الإتجاهات النظرية نقدية" قد تم رفضه للأسباب التالية

APA

- عدم التزامكم بطريقة التمهيش المتبعة

يمكنكم إعادة ارسال مقالكم بعد ادخال التعديل المطلوب

يرجى عدم إرساله في شكله الحالي

رئيس التحرير.

الم. [redacted]

ahoo.fr.

Image 7: Example of Adherence to Formatting Guidelines

3-8- Incomplete or Inaccurate Data

Journals prioritize the publication of research based on clear, accurate, and complete data. Submitting a manuscript with incomplete or inconsistent data can lead to rejection, as it hinders reviewers' ability to properly evaluate the research and draw meaningful conclusions. For example, in the case of **Zineb's** manuscript (**Image 8**), reviewers noted that the data presented was incomplete, lacking key variables and demographic information necessary to understand the context of the study. Furthermore, inconsistencies were observed between the results described in the text and those displayed in the tables and figures, raising concerns about the accuracy and reliability of the findings.

As highlighted in **Bordage's** study, various data-related issues concern inappropriate or incomplete statistics, over-interpretation of results, inappropriate or suboptimal instrumentation, small or biased samples, inaccurate or inconsistent data reporting, incomplete, inaccurate, and insufficient data presentation, and defective tables or figures. Such issues were among the reasons for article rejection (Bordage, 2001).

اسباب رفض المقال حسب المحكمين

10 février 2022 à 15:19

À : J.zineb@[redacted]

1- رقة البحثية المعروضة للنشر لا ترقى للتطلعات المنهجية التي تميز المبررات البيداغوجية ، وأهمية النتائج المحرزة

ومناقشتها. الموضوع غامض و عدم وجود معايير الإدراج ومعايير الاستبعاد الخاصة بعينة البحث

البحث مرفوض للأسباب التالية: 1- البحث ضعيف من ناحية الهيكلية المنهجية. 2- غموض وغياب معايير قبول

3- مفهوم المتغيرات الرئيسية والمعلومات الديموغرافية مفقودة، والتي من شأنها أن تعيق الفهم الشامل. ورفض افراد العينة

لسياق البحث وتحد من قابلية تعميم النتائج

-

Image 8: Example of Incomplete or Inaccurate Data

3-11- **Lack of Clarity or Coherence**

Clarity and coherence are essential aspects of academic writing that significantly impact the success of a manuscript. Articles that lack organization, present ideas in a confusing manner, or fail to maintain a logical flow are often rejected. The case of **Issam's** Manuscript (See **Image 6**), provides a relevant example. Reviewers criticized the manuscript for having a poorly constructed research problem and lacking a clear and concise presentation of objectives. This feedback suggests that the author's ideas were not conveyed in a readily understandable manner, hindering the reviewers' ability to grasp the research's purpose and significance.

As highlighted in **Mpofu's** analysis of multiple studies, issues with clarity, coherence, and structure (unclear introduction, objectives, article structure, language, text coherence, weak methodology and poor data analysis explanations), frequently lead to manuscript rejection (Mpofu, 2021).

4- **Some Suggestions for Enhancing Manuscript Publishability**

Based on the diagnostic presented above regarding the factors that play a determining role in the rejection of manuscripts, we would like to provide novice researchers with some advice about the strategies that are susceptible to improve their chances of getting their manuscripts published.

4-1- **Choosing the Right Journal**

Authors should thoroughly research and select the most suitable journal for their manuscript, considering factors such as the journal's aim and scope, target audience, research focus, and impact factor, taking into consideration that publications in high-impact journals, obviously, tend to receive greater citation rates. (Nederhof, 2006). Some of the factors to consider when choosing a journal include journal scope include making sure your topic matches the scope of the journal; targeting the right disciplinary audience, and addressing the topics covered by the journal (Schneegurt, 2015).

4-2- **Compliance with Submission Guidelines**

Strict adherence to journal-specific submission guidelines is essential to avoid immediate rejection. Journals have specific requirements for manuscript submission that authors should carefully review the journal's submission guidelines and ensure that their manuscript meets all of the requirements. Some common requirements include:

- Manuscript formatting (e.g., font, margins, spacing).
- Reference style.
- Figures and tables formatting.

4-3- **Improving One's Performance in Academic Writing**

As has been stated above, acquiring a high level of command of the generic and discipline-specific features of the academic discourse in which novice authors bid entry is a highly challenging yet amply rewarding aspect of their apprenticeship in the doctorate journey. Achieving this goal requires a considerable amount of time and effort, but it is the only insurance for significantly minimizing the risks of manuscript rejection. The skills of paraphrasing, synthesizing, and summarizing are primordial to accomplishing the decisive task of writing the manuscript. These three skills can only be developed through hard work, continuous training, and seeking detailed feedback from senior members of the target academic community.

Employing clear and concise language throughout the manuscript enhances readability and comprehension for a broader readership (Huth, 1994, p. 37). Some flexible journals have made general, open statements about using language that is appropriate for an international

readership. These guidelines emphasize the importance of using clear and concise language that can be understood by a broad readership, without the need to adhere to native benchmarked norms (McKinley, 2018). It is important to use specific language to avoid any generalities or assumptions, and to clarify and define any terms or definitions used (Elsevier, n.d.).

4-4- Manuscript Structure and Clarity

A well-structured and concise manuscript is crucial for publication success, as it facilitates understanding and engagement for reviewers and readers alike. One study found that manuscripts that were well-organized, clearly written, and easy to follow were more likely to be accepted for publication (Callahan, 2002). Authors should ensure that the manuscript is well-structured, with clear headings and subheadings, and that it follows a logical and coherent narrative (Huth, 1994, p. 586). To write a clear and concise manuscript, researchers should use concise sentences and simple straightforward language in a consistent manner throughout the manuscript to convey the details of their research (Mary, 2021). The manuscript should contain a clear scientific message that is useful and exciting, and it should convey the author's thoughts in a logical manner so that the reader arrives at the same conclusions as the author (Sachdeva, 2020).

4-5- Methodological Rigor and Data Analysis

Authors should employ rigorous, well-suited research methods (Huth, 1994, p. 607) and data analysis techniques in their research (Huth, 1994, p. 109). This aspect is essential for ensuring the validity and reliability of the research, thereby strengthening the manuscript's prospects for publication.

Using appropriate methods and data analysis can help authors to ensure the validity and reliability of their research (Ferreira, 2020). Validity refers to whether the methods used to collect data measure what they are supposed to measure, while reliability refers to the consistency of certain measurements (Jarek, 2020). Failing to consider reliability and validity can lead to several types of research bias and seriously affect the quality of the research (Fiona, 2023). To ensure the validity and reliability of their research, authors should create a strong research design, choose appropriate methods and samples, and conduct the research carefully and consistently. It is also important to discuss reliability and validity in various sections of the thesis or research paper to show that they have been taken into account in planning the research and interpreting the results (Fiona, 2023). By ensuring the validity and reliability of their research, authors can increase the credibility and trustworthiness of their work.

4-6- Response to Reviewers

Addressing reviewers' comments is an important part of the publication process. Authors should assume that the reviewers are acting in good faith and giving feedback to improve the paper. It is important to address every comment unless it is impossible or the editor has instructed otherwise (Balan, 2022). Authors should take time to understand the reviewers' feedback and consider what they are asking to do (Carnovale, 2019). Addressing a comment does not always mean doing exactly what the comment says, but it means addressing the underlying issue or concern (Balan, 2022). If a manuscript is rejected and sent back with reviewers' comments, authors should carefully address these comments and revise the manuscript accordingly. This can help address any weaknesses in the research and increase the chances of the manuscript being accepted for publication (Gastel, 2022, p. 144).

4-7- Collaborate with co-authors

Collaborating with co-authors can lead to a stronger manuscript. One study found that articles with more than one author were more likely to be published and cited than those with only one author(Tscharntke, 2007).

Collaborating with co-authors can bring a number of benefits to the research process, including:

- Collaborating with co-authors who have complementary skills or expertise can strengthen the research project by bringing in additional perspectives and knowledge.
- Co-authors can share the workload of the research project, which can help to reduce the amount of time and effort required from individual authors.
- Co-authors can provide feedback on the research project and help to identify areas that may need improvement before submitting the article for peer review.
- Collaborating with co-authors from different institutions or countries can increase the visibility of the research project and help to attract a wider audience.
- Collaborating with co-authors who are well-respected in their field can increase the credibility of the research project and help to establish the authors as experts in their field.

4-8- Seek feedback from colleagues and mentors

Seeking feedback from colleagues and mentors can help improve the quality of a manuscript. The manuscripts that received feedback from colleagues and mentors were more likely to be accepted for publication(Weller, 2001). This can help identify potential issues with the manuscript, such as unclear or weak language. Sharing the manuscript with colleagues via email or online platforms, by seeking feedback from colleagues, authors can improve the quality of their manuscript and increase its chances of being accepted for publication(Belcher, 2014).

4-9- Use professional editing services

Professional editing services can help improve the quality of a manuscript. One study found that manuscripts that had been professionally edited were more likely to be accepted for publication (Communications, 2019). Professional editing services can offer several benefits, including:

- Professional editors can help authors to refine the language, structure, and style of their manuscript to make it clear and concise for readers to understand the research and its significance.
- Professional editors can also help authors to correct grammar and syntax errors that may be present in the manuscript. Correcting these errors can improve the overall readability and professionalism of the manuscript.
- Professional editors can provide suggestions on how to improve the organization of the manuscript, including the order of sections, headings, and subheadings. This can help readers to navigate the manuscript more easily and understand the flow of the research.
- Professional editors can also help authors ensure that their manuscript meets the guidelines of the target journal. This can include formatting requirements, word limits, and reference style.
- Manuscripts that have been professionally edited are more likely to be accepted on the first submission, as they are less likely to contain errors or inconsistencies that may result in reviewer comments and requests for revisions.

It is important to note that using professional editing services does not guarantee acceptance for publication, but it can improve the quality and readability of the manuscript and increase the chances of acceptance.

4-10- **Stay up-to-date with the latest research**

Authors should stay up-to-date with the latest research in their field. This can help them identify gaps in the literature and develop innovative research questions that are more likely to be of interest to journal editors and reviewers (Kelly, 2014). By staying current with the latest research, authors can:

- Staying up-to-date with the latest research can help authors to identify gaps in the existing literature and ensure that their research is original and contributes to the field.
- Staying current with the latest research can help authors to incorporate the most recent findings and methodologies into their research. This can improve the overall quality of the manuscript and increase its relevance to the field.
- Staying up-to-date with the latest research can also help authors to ensure the accuracy of their references. As new research is published, it may contradict or support previous studies, and staying current can help authors to ensure that their references are up-to-date and accurate.
- Manuscripts that are based on the most current research are more likely to be of interest to readers and reviewers, increasing the chances of acceptance for publication.

4-11- **Engage with the research community**

Participation in conferences, workshops, and online forums fosters collaboration, facilitates feedback exchange, and promotes awareness of current trends within the field (Lee, 2003). By engaging with the research community, authors can:

- Engaging with the research community can help authors to receive feedback on their work from other researchers and experts in their field. This feedback can help authors to improve the quality of their manuscript and ensure that it is relevant and contributes to the field.
- Engaging with the research community can help authors to build relationships with other researchers and experts in their field. These relationships can lead to collaborations and future research opportunities.
- Engaging with the research community can also help authors to increase the visibility of their work. By presenting their research at conferences or publishing in respected academic journals, authors can attract the attention of other researchers and potential readers.
- Engaging with the research community can also help authors to stay up-to-date with the latest research and developments in their field. This can help authors to ensure that their work is relevant and contributes to the field.

4-12- **Be persistent**

Finally, authors should demonstrate perseverance and not give up if their article is rejected. Evidence and experience suggest that authors who are committed to publishing and know how to handle a rejected manuscript have a reasonable chance of achieving publication success (Woolley, 2009). Many journals allow authors to resubmit their manuscript after addressing reviewers' comments. They should carefully review the feedback from reviewers and use this feedback to improve their manuscript before submitting it to the next journal (Guillou, 2002). Being persistent can help you to:

- By submitting their manuscript to multiple journals, authors can increase their chances of acceptance. If their manuscript is rejected by one journal, they can submit it to another journal and continue the publication process.
- By submitting their manuscript to multiple journals, authors can receive constructive feedback from multiple reviewers. This can help them to improve their manuscript and increase the chances of acceptance.

- By being persistent and submitting their manuscript to multiple journals, authors can learn from the publication process. They can learn what works and what doesn't work, and use this knowledge to improve their manuscript and increase their chances of acceptance in the future.

Conclusion

Several factors contribute to manuscript rejection, including inadequate research design or methodology, a lack of originality or significance, poor writing, and failure to comply with journal guidelines. Nevertheless, authors can address these challenges by utilizing various strategies to enhance their manuscript and increase their chances of acceptance. These strategies may include collaborating with co-authors, seeking professional editing services, staying updated with the latest research, engaging with the research community, utilizing appropriate methods and data analysis, and maintaining persistence. By implementing these strategies, authors can elevate the quality of their manuscript, receive constructive feedback, and improve their chances of publication.

It should be noted here that the most important factor for manuscript rejection is undoubtedly the lack of adequate proficiency in academic writing. While the other factors can be overcome relatively easily by paying attention to some details, acquiring a good command of the generic and discipline-specific conventions of academic writing in any language is an arduous task fraught with many pitfalls, and can only be acquired through a lengthy apprenticeship process guided by expert members of the target academic discipline working in a sane and collaborative environment.

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