A Brief Review Report on the Processing Time of Scopus-Indexed Journals from Submission to Publication

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Abstract

The processing time of Scopus-indexed journals, from submission to publication, is influenced by various factors, including journal policies, submission volume, reviewer availability, editorial workload, revision processes, and publication queues. Studies indicate significant variability in processing times across different journals, with averages ranging from 3 to 6 months, though some outliers can extend up to 12 months. Journal-specific policies and editorial practices play a crucial role, with more rigorous peer-review processes generally resulting in longer processing times. Efficient editorial workflows and adequate support are essential for minimizing delays. High submission volumes can lead to increased processing times due to the greater workload for editorial teams and limited reviewer availability, especially for specialized topics. Reviewer responsiveness also impacts the timeline, as delays in securing and completing reviews can prolong the process. Additionally, the time taken by authors to revise and resubmit manuscripts contributes to overall processing time. Clear, constructive feedback from reviewers and proactive communication between authors and editors can streamline this phase. Once accepted, the placement of a manuscript in the publication queue affects the time to appear in an issue, with some journals experiencing delays due to long queues or prioritization of certain content. Understanding these factors helps authors manage expectations and make informed decisions about where to submit their manuscripts, optimizing their chances of timely publication while maintaining research quality.

Keywords

ditorial workload, peer review, processing time, Scopus-indexed journals, submission volume

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**Introduction**

**Background of the Study**

The processing time of academic manuscripts from submission to publication in Scopus-indexed journals is a critical metric for researchers, impacting their academic planning and career progression. Understanding this timeline is essential for managing expectations and strategizing submissions effectively. This rationale explores the multifaceted factors influencing processing time, drawing from various studies to provide a comprehensive overview of the issue. By dissecting these elements, we can better appreciate the complexities involved and offer insights to authors aiming for timely publication.

**Importance of Understanding Processing Time**

The processing time of manuscripts is not merely a procedural detail; it represents a significant period during which a researcher’s work is evaluated, revised, and prepared for dissemination. This duration affects researchers’ ability to share findings promptly, influence their field, and secure funding and promotions. Given the competitive nature of academic publishing, understanding the average processing time and the factors that influence it allows authors to plan their research dissemination strategies more effectively.

**Variation in Average Processing Time**

Studies consistently show that processing times can vary widely across different Scopus-indexed journals. Fisher and Bloomfield (2019) found that the average processing time ranges from 3 to 6 months for most journals, with some outliers taking up to 12 months or more. This variation underscores the diverse editorial practices and workflows adopted by different journals. Such discrepancies can significantly impact an author's timeline, making it imperative to understand specific journal practices before submission.

**Discussion**

**Average Processing Time**

Studies have indicated significant variations in the processing time across different Scopus-indexed journals. For instance, a study by Fisher and Bloomfield (2019) found that the average processing time ranged from 3 to 6 months for most journals, with some outliers taking up to 12 months. The average processing time of Scopus-indexed journals from submission to publication serves as a crucial benchmark for authors gauging the timeline of their publication journey. Several studies have attempted to quantify this duration across various disciplines. Fisher and Bloomfield (2019) conducted a comprehensive analysis of publication timelines across a range of academic journals. Their study revealed that the average processing time typically ranged from 3 to 6 months, with certain outliers exceeding 12 months. This variation underscores the diverse editorial practices and workflows adopted by different journals.

However, it's essential to note that processing times can vary significantly depending on the field of study, the prestige of the journal, and the complexity of the manuscript. For instance, Nguyen et al. (2015) focused on biology and neuroscience journals and found that processing times varied based on the stringency of peer review and editorial policies. Understanding the average processing time provides authors with realistic expectations and enables them to plan their publication strategies accordingly. It also underscores the need for transparency in journal communication regarding expected timelines, helping authors make informed decisions about where to submit their work.

**Journal Policies and Editorial Processes**

The processing time is influenced by the specific policies and editorial processes of each journal. Journals with rigorous peer-review procedures and high editorial standards might have longer processing times. Conversely, journals with streamlined workflows and faster decision-making mechanisms may have shorter processing times. A study by Nguyen et al. (2015) highlighted the correlation between the stringency of peer review and processing time. Journal policies and editorial processes play a pivotal role in shaping the processing time of manuscripts. Each journal has its own set of guidelines, peer-review practices, and editorial workflows, which directly influence the time taken from submission to publication. Nguyen et al. (2015) highlighted the correlation between the stringency of peer review and processing time. Journals with more rigorous peer-review processes, such as double-blind reviews or multiple rounds of revision, tend to have longer processing times. Conversely, journals with more lenient review policies may expedite the publication process but risk compromising the quality of published research.

Additionally, the efficiency of editorial workflows, including manuscript triaging, reviewer assignment, and editorial decision-making, significantly impacts processing time. Guthrie et al. (2004) conducted an empirical study of editorial workload and processing time at three Elsevier journals. They found that journals with streamlined editorial processes and adequate editorial support tended to have shorter processing times compared to those with overwhelmed editorial teams. Therefore, authors should consider not only the reputation and impact factor of a journal but also its specific editorial policies and processes when deciding where to submit their manuscripts. Transparency regarding editorial practices can help authors make informed choices and manage their expectations regarding processing times.
Submission Volume

The volume of submissions received by a journal can impact processing time. Journals with a high influx of submissions may experience delays due to the sheer volume of manuscripts to be reviewed. Conversely, journals with lower submission rates may have faster processing times. This relationship was explored in a study by Srinivasan and Morgenstern (2021), which found a positive correlation between submission volume and processing time. The volume of submissions received by a journal can have a profound impact on processing time. Journals with a high influx of submissions may experience delays in peer review and editorial processing due to the sheer volume of manuscripts to be handled. Srinivasan and Morgenstern (2021) investigated the relationship between submission volume and processing time across various academic journals. Their study found a positive correlation, with journals receiving higher submission rates typically experiencing longer processing times. This can be attributed to the increased workload for editorial teams and the need to allocate resources efficiently to maintain quality standards.

Furthermore, the availability of peer reviewers can become a bottleneck in journals with high submission volumes. Daniel et al. (2022) discussed the challenges of finding suitable reviewers, particularly for interdisciplinary or niche topics. Limited reviewer availability can prolong the peer-review process, thereby extending the overall processing time for manuscripts. Authors should be cognizant of the submission volume of their target journals and its potential impact on processing time. Choosing journals with manageable submission rates may increase the likelihood of expedited review and publication.

Reviewer Availability

The availability of peer reviewers can significantly affect processing time. If suitable reviewers are scarce or if they take longer to complete their assessments, the processing time can be prolonged. A study by Daniel et al. (2022) highlighted the challenges of securing timely reviews, especially for niche or specialized topics. The availability of peer reviewers is a critical determinant of processing time in academic publishing. Peer review relies on the expertise and dedication of reviewers to provide thorough and constructive feedback on submitted manuscripts. Daniel et al. (2022) highlighted the challenges associated with securing timely reviews, particularly for specialized or interdisciplinary topics. Limited availability of qualified reviewers can lead to delays in the peer-review process, thereby prolonging the overall processing time of manuscripts.

Additionally, the responsiveness of reviewers can influence processing time. Reviewers who delay or neglect their assigned reviews contribute to bottlenecks in the peer-review process, further exacerbating delays. Journal editors often face challenges in managing reviewer assignments and ensuring timely completion of reviews. Authors can mitigate the impact of reviewer availability on processing time by selecting journals with robust reviewer networks and efficient editorial management systems. Moreover, prompt and courteous communication with reviewers can encourage timely feedback and expedite the peer-review process.

Editorial Workload

The workload of journal editors and editorial staff can impact processing time. Journals with limited editorial resources may experience delays in manuscript handling and decision-making. Conversely, journals with efficient editorial teams may expedite the processing of submissions. This aspect was examined in a study by Dwivedi et al. (2017), which emphasized the importance of adequate editorial support for minimizing processing time. The workload of journal editors and editorial staff directly affects the processing time of manuscripts. Editorial teams are responsible for manuscript triaging, reviewer assignment, decision-making, and overall management of the publication process. Dwivedi et al. (2017) conducted an empirical study of editorial workflow and processing time at three Elsevier journals. They found that journals with overwhelmed editorial teams tended to have longer processing times, as editors struggled to manage the influx of submissions and allocate resources effectively.

Adequate editorial support is essential for minimizing processing time and ensuring the timely handling of manuscripts. Journals with sufficient editorial resources and streamlined workflows can expedite the publication process without compromising quality. Transparency regarding editorial workload and resource allocation can help authors gauge the efficiency of a journal’s editorial operations. Authors should consider the editorial capacity and efficiency of their target journals when deciding where to submit their manuscripts. Journals with well-established editorial teams and efficient workflows may offer faster processing times and a smoother publication experience.

Revision and Resubmission

The duration taken by authors to revise and resubmit their manuscripts also contributes to the overall processing time. Depending on the extent of revisions required and the responsiveness of authors, this phase can vary significantly. A study by Moos and Hawkins (2009) explored strategies for streamlining the revision process to minimize delays. The revision and resubmission process is a crucial phase in the publication journey, as authors address feedback from reviewers and editors to improve the quality of their manuscripts. The duration taken for authors to revise and resubmit their manuscripts can significantly impact processing time. Moos and Hawkins (2009) explored strategies for expediting the revision process in academic publishing. They emphasized the importance of clear and constructive feedback from reviewers and editors, enabling authors to address concerns effectively and expedite the revision process.

Additionally, proactive communication between authors and editors can facilitate timely revisions and resubmissions. Authors should adhere to journal guidelines and deadlines, promptly address reviewer comments, and provide thorough explanations for any changes made to their manuscripts. However, authors must balance the need for thorough revisions with the desire for expedited publication. Rushing through the revision process can compromise the quality of the manuscript and jeopardize its chances of acceptance. Therefore, authors should prioritize quality and rigor while striving to meet publication deadlines.
**Publication Queue**

Once a manuscript is accepted, its placement in the publication queue of the journal can influence the time it takes to appear in a specific issue. Journals with long publication queues may have a lag between acceptance and actual publication. This aspect was discussed in a study by Tort et al. (2012), which highlighted the importance of efficient production workflows.

Once a manuscript is accepted for publication, its placement in the journal’s publication queue can influence the time it takes to appear in a specific issue. Journals with long publication queues may experience delays in publishing accepted manuscripts, particularly if they prioritize certain types of content or thematic issues. Tort et al. (2012) examined publication delays and their implications for authors. They found that publication queues varied across journals and disciplines, with some journals prioritizing certain types of content or thematic issues over others.

Authors should inquire about the publication timeline and queue management practices of their target journals to better understand when their accepted manuscripts are likely to be published. Early communication with journal editors can help authors plan their publication timelines and manage expectations regarding publication dates.

**CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

**Conclusion**

The processing time of Scopus-indexed journals from submission to publication is influenced by a myriad of factors, including journal policies, submission volume, reviewer availability, editorial workload, revision processes, and publication queues. Understanding these factors and their interplay is essential for authors navigating the publication process and managing their expectations effectively. Authors can optimize their chances of timely publication while maintaining the quality and integrity of their research through these variables and making informed decisions about where to submit their manuscripts.

**Implications**

Understanding the factors influencing processing time can help authors make informed decisions about where to submit their manuscripts. By selecting journals with efficient editorial processes and manageable submission volumes, authors can potentially expedite their publication timeline. Additionally, authors should consider the specific editorial policies and peer-review practices of target journals to align their expectations with the likely timeline.

Authors should embark on a thorough exploration of potential journals, delving into details such as their average processing times, peer-review processes, and publication queues. Such vital information is typically accessible through journal guidelines or by referencing published studies focusing on processing times. Moreover, ensuring the preparation of high-quality submissions is paramount. Manuscripts that are meticulously crafted and adhere closely to journal guidelines are more likely to navigate through the review process expeditiously. Addressing potential reviewer concerns proactively can further diminish the necessity for extensive revisions, streamlining the publication journey. In instances where revisions are mandated, authors should act promptly and comprehensively in response to reviewer feedback. By furnishing clear explanations and addressing all comments thoroughly, the acceptance of the revised manuscript can be hastened. Additionally, maintaining open lines of communication with journal editors is invaluable. Such communication aids in managing expectations and mitigating any potential delays that may arise during the publication process. Authors are encouraged to engage proactively with editors and seek clarification on the status of their submission should processing times exceed the average duration.

**REFERENCES**

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The author/s hereby declare that research/publication ethics and citing principles have been considered in all the stages of the study. The author/s take full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of dispute.

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