

Targeting relevant journals for publication a paper

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Introduction

After a decide that an author have some research results that can be published, he need to look for an appropriate journal. This is called a "target journal". Most of the time in our country we select journal after completion of writing a paper. There are many reasons to identify a target journal before writing a paper. There are many reasons to identify a target journal before writing a paper. To know whether the paper fits within the journal's scope, one could make sure that he adheres to any length or word count specifications given by the journal. Etc. If an author doesn't choose a target journal before writing his paper, he may miss out on a lot of useful information!

What is an appropriate target journal?

Choosing a target journal is not a trivial task, and there's no straight route to the answer. You have to think about a number of factors and balance them. There are some factors describe below to find out an appropriate journal.

Impact Factor:

A journal's impact factor is a measure of its quality or prestige. This metric, owned by Thomson Reuters, is commonly used by researchers to identify appropriate target journals, but this approach can be problematic. Impact factors are rigorously calculated from citations, as [described on the Thomson Reuters website](#). Journals with a high impact factor quickly convince readers that they are reputable or prestigious. There are other metrics that measure journal quality, such as the [eigenfactor score](#) and [SCImago journal rank](#). The impact factor has become the hallmark of journal prestige — so

much so that it has even spawned misleading 'fake' metrics in which high ranks can be bought by [unethical](#) publishers. There's even one called the 'journal impact factor', which can be easily confused with the Thomson Reuters impact factor.

And the impact factor itself has received criticism from Nobel laureate Randy Shekman and from articles published in a number of leading journals, including some with high impact factors. Be aware that impact factors are not comparable across fields. You also need to be aware that much of the information you need to interpret a journal's impact factor may be missing. Journals with high impact factors often promote them on their websites but this doesn't convey the full picture. For example, you may need to know what other journals have similar impact factors. But if you want to know about all the impact factors of journals in your field, you'll need access to the [Thomson Reuters' Journal Citation Reports](#), which are not free. In some niche fields, reputable journals may not even have an impact factor. This can be because their topics interest only a small community. But they might still be the best place to publish if you are going to reach the right audience. By the way, predatory or suspicious journals may present fake metrics to dupe authors. Some of these fake metrics even have the phrase "impact factor"!

Stay away from predators:

Academics involved in research are often evaluated based on their research output or publications. Whether they get a degree, get hired, get promoted or get tenure is often tied to the quantity and quality of the publications they have recently authored. And in some country's quantity takes precedence over quality and becomes a defining factor in

career progression. Researchers working in such environments may be tempted to publish more and faster. Thus, the demand for publication outlets increases, and so does the supply — in the form of more academic publishers and journals.

In scholarly publishing, no overall body sets standards and processes. Anyone can buy a domain name and set up a journal with a name of their choice. The sole motive may be making money by charging authors for publishing articles. These publishers may have an editorial board, but its members may be complicit. Such publishers tend to name their journals in a grand way, with meaningless words such as 'global', 'international' or 'advanced'. They may also have an overly broad title or scope that includes many areas of research (to attract more papers).

Jeffrey Beall, a librarian at the University of Colorado in Denver, United States, maintains a list of such 'predatory' journals and publishers. These journals may publish papers after cursory or no peer review, despite claiming otherwise. Researchers may send their papers to predatory journals either knowingly or naively buying into the false claims made.

And although poor peer review actually suits authors who have not done work of a sufficiently high quality to get published in established journals, many more are victims. Researchers in developing countries often do not receive adequate research guidance early in their careers. They work in resource-poor environments and they lack research writing skills. Yet they face the same pressure to 'publish or perish' as their counterparts in developed countries. However, publications in such journals eventually lose value and may even bring harm. Some researchers may be able to temporarily advance their careers on the strength of their publication count, but they may be shamed later on in front of their colleagues and students as awareness of predatory publishers increases. Others may face disciplinary action by promotion or

tenure committees that are already aware of predatory publishers. And, of course, serious researchers are likely to ignore papers published in suspicious journals, so these papers may not be read or cited.

Look for verifiable claims

Don't be swayed by grand claims made on a journal's website or in calls for papers unless those claims can be verified. Being 'under the indexing process' with ISI, Scopus and so on. is an example of an unverifiable claim that often appears in calls for papers from suspicious journals. In fact, receiving a call for papers out of the blue is a warning sign. Unless you receive the call in a discussion list you are a member of, or from a journal you have submitted papers to or published in, or from another trustworthy source, you should be wary. I regularly receive calls for papers from random journals because they have harvested my email address online and have added me to their bulk mailing list without my permission.

Some claims can be verified: for example, a journal's membership in the [Directory of Open Access Journals \(DOAJ\)](#), [Open Access Scholarly Publishers' Association \(OASPA\)](#), and [INASP Journals Online \(JOLs\)](#). These are notable collections of open access journals, and the DOAJ is putting in place more rigorous criteria for membership.

A journal's membership in publishing societies such as the [Committee on Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#) is also a good sign. However, newly established journals may not be quickly indexed in academic [databases](#) or may only slowly become part of publishing societies. New journals are set up all the time to address new, neglected, regional and other kinds of research that are not well served by existing journals. You should definitely consider new journals that are relevant for your work but first evaluate the editors who run them. Look at the editor's profile on a university website, links to their online profiles (for example, on [ResearchGate](#), [Google Scholar](#) or [LinkedIn](#)) or evidence of their dedication to the profession of journal editing, for example,

membership of organizations such as the [Council of Science Editors \(CSE\)](#), [European Association of Science Editors \(EASE\)](#) and [World Association of Medical Editors \(WAME\)](#).

Understand the open access model:

Academic publishers typically operate their journals using either the traditional subscription model or an open access model. In subscription journals, readers pay to access papers. In the open access model readers are not charged — but somebody has to pay to keep the journal running. So open access journals either ask authors to pay article processing charges (APCs) or are supported by higher [education](#) institutions or [funding](#) bodies. Some journals use a 'hybrid' open access model: authors can choose to make their work freely available by paying an article APC, or if they don't pay this their article will be available only to subscribers.

The open access movement aims to make research accessible to anyone who needs it. This is a noble mission but is misused by predatory publishers. They ask authors to pay article processing fees, knowing that they have very few readers who would pay for their journals under a subscription model. But remember that the open access model is not necessarily predatory. Far from it. There are many excellent open access journals that charge APCs, such as those in the PLOS family and BioMed Central. Authors who wish to publish in open access journals should try to include APCs in their research budgets and should check to see if fees are waived for authors in developing countries.

Readership

One good way to select a target journal for your paper is to think carefully about the audience: Who are likely to be the readers of your paper? What kind of journals do they read? How do you want to influence or impact them with your work? In some fields of research, notably theoretical ones, the audience may be global. However, some research projects are strongly connected to the local or regional context, or they address local or regional priorities. An international

audience may not be very interested in such studies, but they could be extremely important at a regional level. If you're working on such a project, a regional journal may be a good choice. These days, any journal that is online can potentially have an international readership. So even if you publish in a regional journal, researchers elsewhere can access your paper.

Instructions to authors

When you read research papers in the process of arriving at your research question or doing your research project, make a note of journals that have published research papers of interest to you. These could be suitable target journals for your future paper. To learn the expectations of a journal, visit the journal's website to look up the instructions to authors. The instructions may be called "author guidelines", "manuscript guidelines", or something else.

Prioritizing target journals

It could well be that there's more than one appropriate target journal for your paper. But you can only submit your paper to one journal at a time, so it's a good idea to identify your first target: That is, what's your first choice of journal for publishing your paper? You can then have a second choice, a third choice, and so on.

Conclusion:

So before writing any article one must have to think about the target journal, it will help an author to write properly and minimized extra time. This article has been developed by INASP, an international development charity in the UK, as an extension of the work carried out by the AuthorAID team. Visit inasp.info and authoraid.info to learn about their work.

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