

## The Role of 'How to Publish an Article' Trainings in Reducing Common Obstacles Algerian Researchers are Likely to Face

Received date: 04/07/2022 Accepted date:10/04/2023 Published date:20/06/2023

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### Abstract:

The present research paper aims at investigating the major obstacles researchers in Algeria are likely to face when publishing scientific articles on the Algerian Scientific Journal Platform. Therefore, it is hypothesized that if researchers whether being PhD students or university teachers were provided with adequate 'how to publish an article' trainings they would face fewer obstacles in writing and publishing scientific articles. Interestingly, the researcher opted for quantitative research by the use of a questionnaire that was administrated to Algerian researchers. Findings revealed that there are several types of obstacles that are faced by researchers in publishing their articles; the most claimed ones are related to the journals rules of publication and the long period of time taken by the journals' reviewing peers. Thus, it is highly recommended to provide researchers with academic trainings at the level of curriculum and methodology as well as at the scientific level.

**Keywords:** Scientific Publication; ASJP; training.

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## **1. Introduction:**

Scientific publishing is one of the most important measures used to assess the level of scientific production, as science has no value if it is not published and made available to serve humanity (Alkhateeb, 2020). As it became globalized thanks to the use of information and communication technologies that facilitated communication between scientists and researchers regardless the geographical barriers. Furthermore, publishing scientific research has a great role in contributing to the knowledge of a discipline and in sharing research findings among scientists. Based on the quantity and quality of publications the research capacity of a researcher or the research performance of a university or a country can be evaluated (Phuong & Thi, 2016). That’s why the issue of research and academic publication has recently gained a great deal of attention from the Algerian government. Furthermore, although university lecturers and PhD students are normally seen as more established and experienced researchers, they are not without difficulties in research and publishing. Therefore, in order to overcome some of the difficulties that the Algerian researchers may face, and in order to impose a kind of transparency, especially when conducting the article reviewing process, the ministry of higher education and scientific research in Algeria has created an electronic platform under the name of the Algerian Scientific Journal Platform ASJP. This platform includes many Algerian scientific journals; additionally, it was designed in a



way that allows researchers to follow the various stages of publishing their articles. ASJP was mainly created to facilitate publishing articles for Algerian researchers, however, many researchers are still complaining on difficulties they come across in publishing an article on ASJP. Thus, the present research papers attempts to discuss different problems Algerian researchers are likely to face in publishing articles on ASJP, and suggest possible solutions to overcome such problems. In fact, a number of studies done by Algerian researchers have been focusing on the problems that Algerian researchers come across in publishing articles such as Deouib (2016) and Felta & Zerrougio (2019) who talked about publishing articles obstacles in an attempt to find some ways to overcome such obstacles (Deouib, 2016) (Felta & Zerrougui, 2019) .

To investigate different difficulties that Algerian researchers come across in publishing articles on ASJP a questionnaire was administrated to Algerian researchers who are preparing a PhD thesis and those university teachers who are seeking promotions in their academic career. The sample population of this study was chosen randomly from several universities in Algeria. Interestingly, the questionnaire consists of sixteen items, questions focus mainly on investigating the most frequent problems Algerian researchers are likely to come across in publishing on ASJP. More importantly, in analyzing the questionnaire responses a descriptive quantitative process will be conducted. Findings have shown that Algerian researchers face different difficulties in publishing articles; one of the



possible solutions to be proposed in this research paper to overcome such problems is the necessity to provide researchers who are supposed to write and publish an article and those who are supposed to review articles with academic training at the level of curriculum and research methodology. Consequently, this solution would promote the publication of scientific papers in Algeria.

**2. The Questionnaire Analysis and Results**

**Q1. Profession**

Profession	PhD Student	University Teacher	Other
Number	28	42	00
Percentage	40%	60%	00%

**Table 1.**

Table 1 displays that the present questionnaire was administrated mainly to university teachers and PhD students. Results show that the majority of respondents are university teachers with a percentage of 60% while the remaining respondents are doctorate students.

**Q2. Affiliation/ University**

As it was mentioned previously in the abstract of this research paper, the sample population of the study was taken randomly from different universities in Algeria. The questionnaire was distributed online to PhD students and university teachers in different universities in



Algeria. The universities that were mentioned in the answers to this question are as follows:

Mohamed Khider University, Kasdi Merbah University, Sidi Belabbes University, Brothers, Mentouri University, Lounici Ali University, Abu Baker Belkaid University, Algiers2 University, Boumerdes University, Mohamed Lamine Dabaghin University, Mustapha Istanbouli University, HEC Algiers University, Ghardaia University, Msila University, ENS Messaoud Zeghar, USTHB, Abd Elhmid Ibn Badis University.

**Q3. Working on a doctorate thesis, the most difficult task is publishing an article.**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Number	54	06	10
Percentage	77.14%	8.57%	1.42%

**Table 2.**

Statistically speaking, 77% of respondents, i.e., the majority of the sample population, consider that the most difficult task in working on a PhD thesis is publishing an article. This can be related to different problems and difficulties that students and teachers come across when publishing an article. The author in this study attempts to highlight most of these problems through the next questions in the present questionnaire. Interestingly, results on table 2 indicate that only 8% of



respondents disagree about publishing an article being the most difficult part in writing a PhD thesis; while 1% of respondents stayed neutral in answering this question.

**Q4. Being obliged to publish only in a journal that belongs to categories A, B or C reduces the chances for me as a researcher to publish an article.**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Number	54	12	04
Percentage	77.14%	17.14%	5.71%

**Table 3.**

Following the rules and the academic law legislated by the Algerian ministry of higher education and scientific research, articles that are supposed to be part of the PhD graduation or part of teachers’ promotion from associate professor A to associate professor B, should be published in journals of category A, B or C. According to many Algerian researchers this rule creates obstacles which may reduce their chances in publishing articles since articles published in journals out of categories A, B or C would not be accepted for the graduation. Results on table 3 illustrate the above said since 77% of respondents agree that being obliged to publish only in a journal that belongs to categories A, B or C reduces the chances for me as a researcher to



publish an article; while only 17% of them disagree with this and 5% are neutral.

**Q5. The Algerian Scientific Journal Platform (ASJP) is so organized and useful since it gathers all the Algerian journals in one accessible space for researchers.**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Number	42	14	14
Percentage	60%	20%	20%

**Table 4.**

Table 4 displays that the majority of respondents are satisfied with the Algerian scientific journal platform organization and utility since most of them (60%) in answering question five they ticked the box “agree”; however, 20% of them disagree which means that they do not consider ASJP as an organized and useful platform for Algerian researchers. The remaining 20% are neutral. It can be said that the majority who agree on the benefits and the well-organization of ASJP see the matter from a positive angle; in other words, probably they consider ASJP as a great step towards digital education since a platform like ASJP provides a digital management which may reduce bureaucracy and contribute to save time by taking less time in looking



for resources on the platform as well as in spreading and publishing the Algerian work overseas.

**Q6. I consider the number of category C journals on ASJP very small compared to the large number of researchers in Algeria.**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Number	56	04	10
Percentage	80%	5.71%	14.28%

**Table 5.**

A large number of Algerian researchers, 80% of respondents which represents the majority of our research sample, consider that the number of category C journals on ASJP is very small compared to the large number of researchers. This can be due to the ministry of higher education law which imposes the publication in journals of at least category C; such law creates a capacity crowd towards category C journals in order to fulfill the graduation/promotion conditions. Additionally, table 5 shows that a minority of respondents (5%) considers the number of journals C on ASJP sufficient; while 14% of them stayed neutral.



**Q7. Some journals’ publication rules on ASJP obstruct publishing articles.**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Number	60	05	05
Percentage	85.71%	7.14%	7.14%

**Table 6.**

As displayed on table 6 above, most researchers complain about the complicated publication rules that are imposed by journals on ASJP. 85% of respondents find that one of the major obstacles for publishing an article on ASJP is the rules of publication. It is meant by the journal publication rules all that goes under the journal instructions concerning the article title, abstract, the problematic issue and the study aims without forgetting the bibliographical style. For instance, a journal may limit some parts of the written article with a certain number of words as it is usually done in the abstract, the introduction or even sometimes for the article as a whole. Another example of journals rules that must be followed can be the bibliography style required which is usually the APA style. For the sake of more scientific credibility and away from errors in handwriting of references when citing and referring, most of ASJP journals require automatic documentation, including the APA method within the Microsoft Word Office text editor in the body of the text and in



writing the reference list, using programs such as Worldcat, Zotero , EndNote, Mendeley. In other words, publishing an article on ASJP requires that the preparation of the research paper should be based on the international standards of article publication which are probably ignored by a large number of Algerian researchers. Yet, a minority of 7% of respondents does not consider the publication rules on journals on ASJP as a difficulty in publishing an article.

From a different perspective, the problem may not be mainly the journal rules it rather could be the diversity of different rules of publication imposed by different journals on ASJP which may make researchers feel lost or confused. This last can be observed in answers to question eight below.

**Q8. The reason why it is difficult to publish an article on ASJP is the absence of conventional/common publishing rules among different journals such as, the journal template which differs from one journal to another.**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Number	56	09	05
Percentage	80%	12.85%	7.14%

**Table 7.**



In the previous question (table 6) a big percentage of participants agreed on the fact that the rules of publications in many journals on ASJP can create problems and difficulties in publishing an article; one of these rules is the journal template which differ from one journal to another and which is considered by 80% of respondents as an example of confusing rules of publication. It has been said that different complicated journals templates may push the researcher to concentrate more on the template form rather than the article content. In an attempt to find a solution to such difficulty, some researchers suggested the standardization or unification of all ASJP journals template since this may help researchers to shift their focus from the article form to its content. Furthermore, table 7 above indicates that a minority of 20% of respondents is divided between those who do not find different templates a difficulty in publishing an article and those who stayed neutral.

**Q9. In the case of refusing an article, most journals on ASJP do not mention convincing/logical reasons for refusing an article.**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Number	53	08	09
Percentage	75.71%	11.42%	12.85%

**Table 8.**



Another obstacle that was declared by a wide range of researchers is the inconvenient reason of rejecting or refusing an article. Results on table 8 display that more than 75% of respondents agree that most journals on ASJP either do not provide their article rejection with logical reasons or they do not give any reason of rejection. On the one hand, this can be explained as an unprofessional work which can be mainly due to incompetency of journal editors and article reviewers. On the other hand, reasons like that the researcher does not respect the formal requirements of the scientific paper, whether in terms of adherence to the number of pages, the type and size of the font used, or the typical arrangement of the research elements are seen by the researcher as inconvenient reasons of rejecting an article since what is more important in an article is the content and not the form.

**Q10. I prefer submitting my article to other international journals than to those on ASJP because of the long time taken in reviewing articles on ASJP.**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Number	55	05	10
Percentage	78.57%	7.14%	14.28%

**Table 9.**



According to results on table 9 above, the majority of respondents usually opt for international journals to publish their articles instead of submitting their articles to ASJP because of the long time taken to review articles on ASJP. Compared to the period of time taken in reviewing articles in international journals, the tile taken in journals in ASJP is quite long, which is considered as an obstacle for Algerian researchers. This problem may have several reasons; one of these reasons could be the small number of reviewers in journals in ASJP compared to the large number of articles received to be reviewed. Another reason could be the fact that reviewers in journals of ASJP are volunteers i.e., reviewing articles is an unpaid task, which may affect their speed and sometimes even the quality of their work.

**Q11. Being unable to express myself in foreign languages  
(English/French) obstructs publishing an article.**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Number	26	28	16
Percentage	37.14%	40%	22.85%

**Table 10.**

Table 10 reveals that 37% of participants consider that being unable to write in English can be an obstacle in publishing an article. Writing in English is cognitively more demanding for non-native



speakers than for native speakers, which can be for non-native speakers a task that takes a long time. Besides, the presence of linguistic errors in a manuscript can negatively influence the outcome of the peer review process which is another point that can be considered as an obstacle for Algerian researchers particularly if the research being described is of mediocre rather than outstanding quality (Weijin, 2020). Furthermore, non-native speakers can have difficulties paraphrasing the work of others, which means they may unintentionally plagiarize the work of others.

Interestingly, 40% of participants do not consider English an obstacle in publishing an article. Those who do not see the English language a problem to publish an article either master the English language in a way that they have no problem in writing an article in English, or publishing in their field of study most of the time does not require the mastery of English language, which means that they use Arabic or French instead of English in their research. More than 22% of participants ticked the option “neutral” in answering this question, a possible explanation to such results can be because they did not think or try before to publish in English or may be because they were not asked before to write an article in English.



**Q12. Incompetence in using ICTs is one of the major reasons of not being able to publish an article.**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Number	29	31	10
Percentage	41.42%	44.28%	14.28%

**Table 11.**

Publishing an article nowadays is all about digitalization. In other words, in addition to the hard copy all journals use websites or electronic platforms to receive, treat, review and publish articles. This last needs some knowledge and competency in IT and ICT from both those who are supposed to submit their articles, and from those who are supposed to receive, review and publish the articles. Results on table 11 above reveal that there is not a notable difference between the number of participants who consider that tone of the main obstacles in publishing an article is their technological illiteracy and participants who do not find technological illiteracy a reason why they could not publish an article (41% and 44%). It can be said that some Algerian researchers suffer from the issue of technological illiteracy and inability to use computers and the internet effectively; this can be because some of them do not possess the necessary skills in this field, so they depend on colleagues to retrieve the required information or on librarians. However, some other researchers, especially younger



ones, do master ICT due to the fact that the recent generations are more familiar with the use of all what is related to technology and computers unlike old generations who are less acquainted with the use of ICTs.

**Q13. The lack of systematic, methodological and scientific trainings to researchers in Algeria reduces their opportunities to publish an article.**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Number	59	10	01
Percentage	84.28%	14.28%	1.42%

**Table 12.**

A wide range of researchers, more than 84%, consider that the lack of systematic, methodological and scientific trainings to researchers in Algeria is one of the main reasons why publishing an article on ASJP is difficult. It is meant by systematic, methodological and scientific trainings all trainings that are related to the field of methodology and curriculum, i.e., the international standards of writing and reviewing an article. In other words, researchers being both reviewers and article submitters should be trained on the basic elements and fundamentals of writing and reviewing articles since they can be helpful in promoting the scientific research and



publication and reduce a large amount of problems faced in this field. Unfortunately, Algerian researchers are not provided with such trainings and programs, yet recently in a few universities there were initiatives of seminars and study days where a training section was devoted to mainly PhD students who are in their way to publish an article.

A percentage of only 14% of participants do not see that lack of trainings in the systematic, methodological and scientific fields may contribute in creating problems to researchers in publishing their article; while the remaining participants (1%) stayed neutral.



**Q14. From the following, what is the ONE reason that you consider a major obstacle to Algerian researchers in publishing an article on ASJP.**

	The long time taken in reviewing an article	The difficult to publish rules that differ from one journal to another	Refusing articles not being justified by the journal editor	Not mastering the English language	The small number of category C journals	Incompetency in using ICTs
Number	42	06	08	04	10	00
Percentage	60%	8.57%	11.42%	5.71%	14.28 %	00%

**Table 13.**

After trying through the present questionnaire to collect researchers different views about some obstacles that the author considers as the most frequent obstacle that may face researchers in Algeria when publishing an article on ASJP, in this question participants were provided with a list of several common problems



that one may come across in publishing an article and they were asked to choose only ONE obstacle that they think is the major obstacle faced in publishing. Statistically speaking, 60% of participants, which means the majority, consider that the major obstacle researchers in Algeria come across in publishing an article is the long time taken in reviewing articles. In an attempt to explain the present results it can be said that there must be several reasons behind the long time taken in reviewing articles; one possible reason could be the fact that almost all journals reviewers on ASJP are volunteers which means that they are not being paid for the task of reviewing articles. Such conditions may neither motivate nor oblige the reviewer to finish reviewing a given number of articles in a limited period of time, especially in case the journal is receiving a large number of submitted articles to be reviewed.

The second obstacle that was chosen as a major reason in not being able to publish an article on ASJP is the small number of category C journals. 14% of participants consider that compared to the large number of researchers in Algeria, the number of classified journals or category C journal is not sufficient. In order for an unclassified journal to be included within category C (or even A and B) a number of conditions should be fulfilled. These conditions include but are not limited to that among the journal reviewers there should be reviewers from foreign universities. Many Algerian journals do not provide such condition due to several reasons such as the



reason that was previously mentioned concerning the unpaid task of reviewing articles in Algerian journals, in addition to that in many cases the selection of reviewers can be based on courtesies and relationships rather than being done on scientific and academic basis.

The rejection of publishing articles without a clear logical reason was the third major obstacle that was ticked by 11% of participants; while 8% of them consider that the complicated rules of publication that differ from one journal to another is the main obstacle in publishing an article on ASJP.

**Q15. Please feel free to add any further obstacles you come across when publishing an article on ASJP.**

Asking such question the author intended to give participants space to mention any other obstacles they face in publishing an article except those that were mentioned in the previous questions of the present questionnaire. Participants answers were as follows:

- The complicated template that differs from one journal to another
- The platform is almost always saturated. It is poorly managed. It is a snag rather than an objective platform to collect papers. It absolutely needs to be eliminated.
- The difficult publishing instructions and rules
- No professionalism in treating articles



- Finding serious reviewers mastering ICT is a major problem for journals especially as reviewing is not paid and the platform show sometimes technical problems.
- the choice of appropriate axes or topics is not indicated
- Bureaucracy and favoritism are the biggest hurdle for Algerian researchers aiming to publish an article as partial requirement for getting their PhD
- Take a long time to send the reviewers decisions
- The small number of category A, B journal
- Refusing articles after a long time
- The huge amount of time taken by reviewers to review an article. The large majority of reviewers have no background in reviewing articles.
- Lack of training on how to write and publish an article is the major obstacle
- As far as I'm concerned, , the problem behind my discouragement to publish my articles on the platform is the technical problems and breakdowns of the site which is not very effective, especially when it comes to receiving modifications from reviewers that never arrive. The editor does not know the technical side as well as the author which leaves the article stuck and pushes its author to give up.

According to results obtained from question 15, it is clear that obstacles Algerian researchers are likely to face in publishing articles



on ASJP are not limited only to those problems that were mentioned by the author of this research papers, yet there are some other problems stated above in the respondents answers to this question that researchers face. These problems and obstacles can be put as a list of possible further research suggestions.

**Q16. Providing researchers who are supposed to write and publish an article and those who are supposed to review articles with academic training at the level of curriculum and research methodology would promote the publication of scientific papers in Algeria.**

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Number	60	03	07
Percentage	85.71%	4.28%	10%

**Table 14.**

It was noticed on table 12 above that most researchers consider that the lack of systematic, methodological and scientific trainings is one of the major problems contributing in having difficulties in publishing an article on ASJP. Researchers answers to question 16 illustrates what was said in question 13 since 85% of respondents agree that trainings in the field of methodology of reviewing and writing articles is of a great importance in overcoming



researchers’ problems in publishing articles. A percentage of only 4% of participants find that there is no need for a systematic methodological training in order to enhance article publishing on ASJP while 10% of respondents stayed neutral.

### **3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on quantitative data, this study has explored the major obstacles Algerian researchers are likely to face in publishing articles on ASJP and suggest possible solutions to overcome such problems. The findings showed that overall despite the fact that many researchers are satisfied with the organization and utility of the Algerian scientific journal platform which facilitates the task of publishing articles to Algerian researchers, many other researchers suffer from different problems in publishing an article some of which are related to ASJP others are related to researchers themselves. As far as problems that are related to ASJP and according to participants answers to this study questionnaire, the most frequent difficulties Algerian researchers are likely to face in publishing on ASJP are some journals complicated rules of publication which differ from one journal to another (see tables 6, 7 and 13), the long period of time taken by the journals’ reviewing peers in order to review an article which can be due to several reasons mainly the fact that reviewing articles on ASJP is unpaid (see tables 9 and 13), and the small number of journals (category C) on ASJP compared to the large number of researchers in Algeria (see table 13). Therefore, in an attempt to



reduce the number of difficulties Algeria researchers face in publishing articles on ASJP, the author would suggest some recommendations.

- Stimulating the movement of research, translation and scientific publishing, and motivating researchers financially and morally. In order to achieve this the government support to the scientific research should be increased and the private sector should participate in funding scientific research, to some extent, this may financially help to pay journals reviewers which can motivate them to perform better as this may contribute in increasing reviewers number in a journal.
- Providing professional training programs to reduce technological literacy among researchers, and technicians, administrators and reviewers in scientific journals. Said differently, preparing training courses for researchers in general and doctoral students in particular on how to write the research paper according to international standards, how to document, refer and quote in accordance with international standards, and how to use modern software in compiling, organizing and managing references and conducting documentation (Felta & Zerrougui, 2019).
- Researchers should be patient and persistent and do not give up too quickly. If a paper is rejected try to use the editors’ and reviewers’ comments and feedback to further improve the



quality of the paper and in case at first you don't succeed, try again.

- Researchers have to collaborate with other researchers and make contact with those who have more experience, and look for potential areas of collaboration.
- Researchers should read papers in their field of research by prominent researchers and try to mirror their rhetorical styles and imitate it however they should beware of committing plagiarism (Burrough-Boenisch, 2003).



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**Appendices**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ASJP**

Dear researchers,

Thank you for accepting to answer the present questionnaire. We would very much appreciate your candid response to questions therein included which may help to carry this study about investigating the major obstacles researchers in Algeria are likely to face when publishing scientific articles on the Algerian Scientific Journal Platform.

1.Profession \*

PhD student

Teacher

Other

2.Affiliation/ University \*

.....  
.....

3.Working on a doctorate thesis, the most difficult task is publishing an article \*

Agree

Disagree

Neutral

4.Being obliged to publish only in a journal that belongs to categories A, B or C reduces the chances for me as a researcher to publish an article \*

Agree



Disagree

Neutral

5.The Algerian Scientific Journal Platform (ASJP) is so organized and useful since it gathers all the Algerian Journals in one accessible space for researchers \*

Agree

Disagree

Neutral

6.I consider the number of category C journals on ASJP very small compared to the large number of researchers in Algeria \*

Agree

Disagree

Neutral

7.Some journals' publication rules on ASJP obstruct publishing articles \*

Agree

Disagree

Neutral

8.The reason why it is difficult to publish an article on ASJP is the absence of conventional/common publishing rules among different journals such as, the journal template which differs from one journal to another \*

Agree

Disagree



Neutral

9. In the case of refusing an article, most journals on ASJP do not mention convincing/logical reasons for refusing an article \*

Agree

Disagree

Neutral

10. I prefer submitting my article to other international journals than to those on ASJP because of the long time taken in reviewing articles on ASJP \*

Agree

Disagree

Neutral

11. Being unable to express myself in foreign languages (English/French) obstructs publishing an article \*

Agree

Disagree

Neutral

12. Incompetence in using ICTs is one of the major reasons of not being able to publish an article \*

Agree

Disagree

Neutral



13.The lack of systematic, methodological and scientific trainings to researchers in Algeria reduces their opportunities to publish an article \*

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neutral

14.From the following, what is the ONE reason that you consider a major obstacle to Algerian researchers in publishing an article on ASJP \*

- The long time taken in reviewing an article
- The difficult publishing rules that differ from one journal to another
- Refusing articles not being justified by the journal editor
- Not mastering the English language
- Not mastering ICTs
- The small number of category C journals

15.Please, feel free to add any further obstacles you come across when publishing an article on ASJP \*

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16.Providing researchers who are supposed to write and publish an article and those who are supposed to review articles with academic training at the level of curriculum and research methodology would



promote the publication of scientific papers in Algeria \*

Agree

Disagree

Neutral



