



Author Success Webinar 12:

# Choosing the Best Journal for your Manuscript

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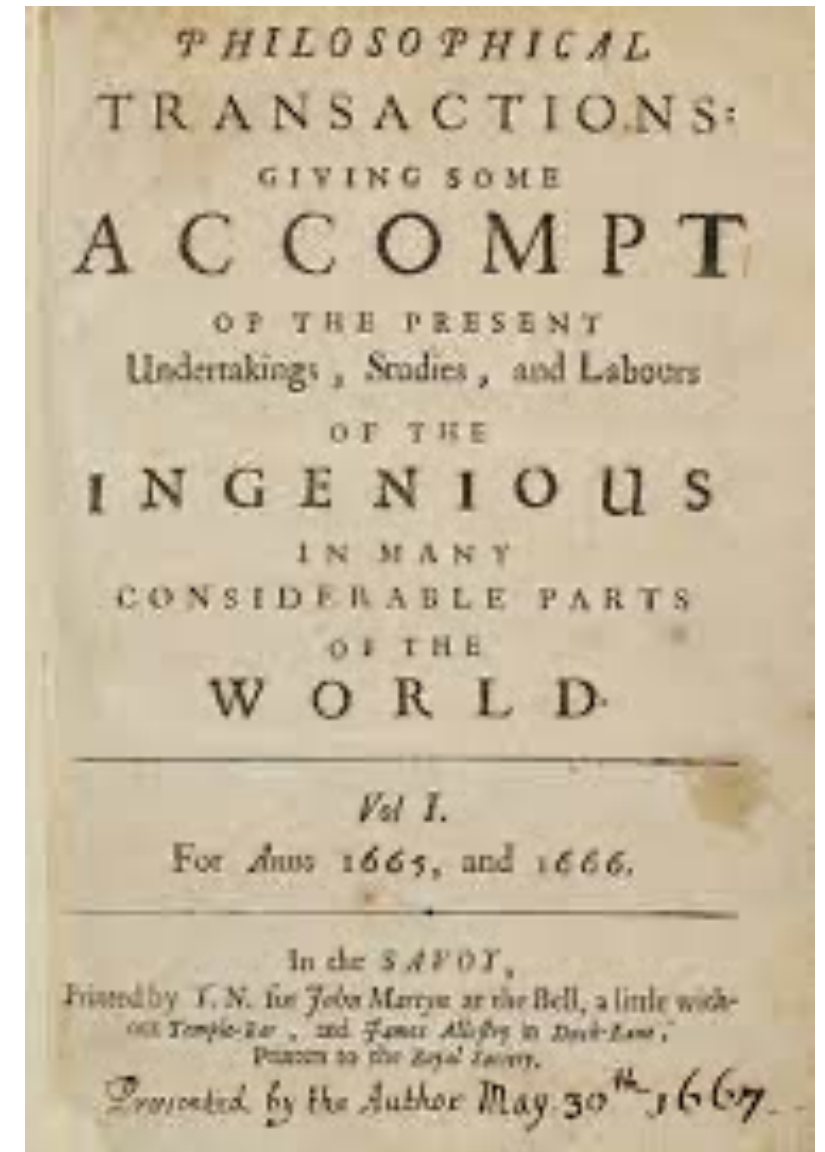
11 May 2023

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# Background

- Academic journals are the backbone of scientific research
- The first scientific journal was published in 1666
- Journals publish novel research that furthers progress in an academic field
- Publish on different schedules: yearly, quarterly, monthly or even weekly.
- Most important feature is the peer review process



# Exponential Rise of Academic Journals



Estimated to be 34,000 peer-reviewed academic journals

- Number increasing by 5–7% annually



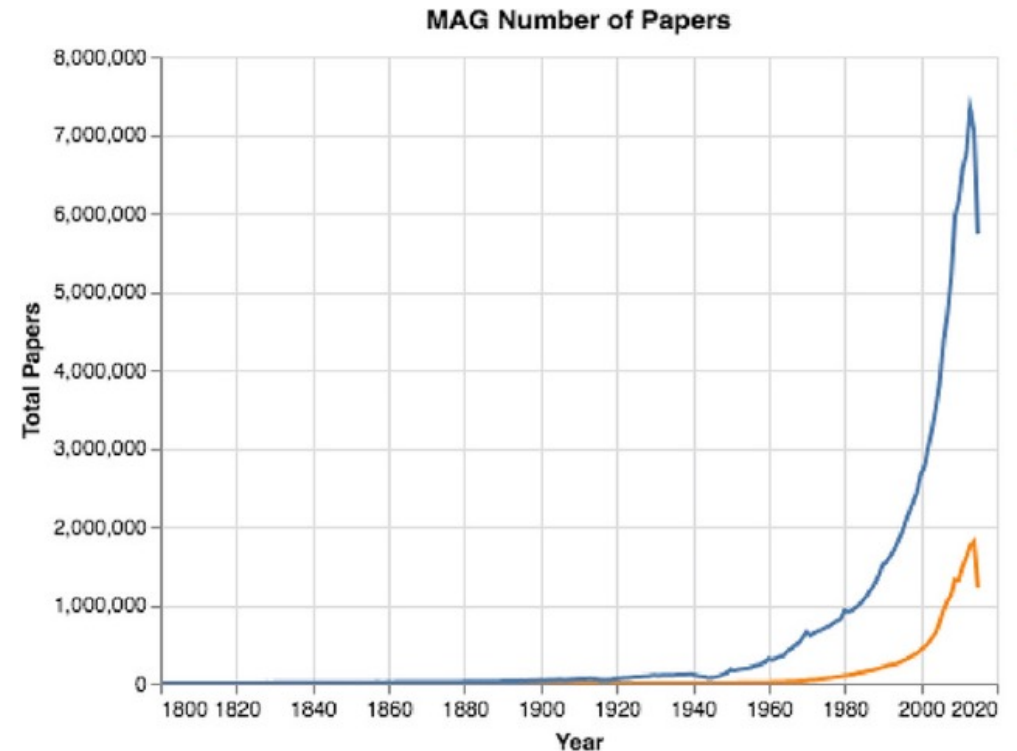
Number of papers increased from < 1 million papers per year in 1980 to > 7 million today



Competition gets harder and publishing times get longer



Selecting the wrong journal means your research may never be read!



MAG: Microsoft Academic Graph

Fire, M. & Guestrin, C. (2019). Over-optimization of academic publishing metrics: Observing Goodhart's Law in action. *GigaScience*, 8.

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# Traditional Subscription Model



Traditional model restricted access  
to subscribers



Subscribers were universities or  
individuals



Nowadays, journals appear both in  
print and online



Possibility of “early view” publication  
online



Online versions can be longer and  
include supplementary materials,  
media and other relevant links.



Author does not pay publication fee,  
but journal retains copyright

# Open Access

Most traditional journals now offer an Open Access (OA) option – many newer journals are completely OA



## Advantages:

- Greater visibility - anyone can see your work without paying
- Potential societal impact - policymakers, non-government agencies, media, educators and practitioners can access and apply your findings
- You can freely share your research
- Funding bodies and research institutions increasingly require research outputs to be published OA



## Disadvantages:

- Publishers charge authors for OA because they don't receive subscription fees
- Predatory journals take advantage of OA - they take your publication fee but provide little in return

# Mega-journals

Mega-journals have a few distinct features that offer both advantages and disadvantages.





# Predatory Journals

Definition provided by The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE):

“These journals (predatory or pseudo- journals) accept and publish almost all submissions and charge article processing (or publication) fees, often informing authors about this after a paper’s acceptance for publication. They often claim to perform peer review but do not and may purposefully use names similar to well established journals.”

Predatory journals are proliferating: they operate only to make money, not to advance science

Your reputation may be at risk if you publish in them



# How to Spot Predatory Journals



They often contact authors directly asking them to submit papers



Journal website doesn't provide common metrics



Promise suspiciously fast turnarounds



Often fail to mention publication fees until paper has been accepted



Almost no chance of rejection



Output typically very low quality: check standard of research and quality of writing, formatting and presentation



Check that the editorial board members are genuine



# How to avoid predatory journals

Rest of the webinar will focus on  
how to shortlist potential  
journals and review their  
scientific rigour and  
trustworthiness



It will ensure the best match  
between paper and journal  
based on a range of criteria

Following the advice given here  
will ensure you don't  
inadvertently send your paper  
to a predatory journal



And if it seems too confusing,  
use our journal selection service!

# When Should You Select Your Target Journal?



Right from the beginning  
of the research



Familiarise yourself with the  
journal: add to the ongoing  
“conversation”



Tailor your writing style and  
content to match the  
journal and its audience



Format to meet journal style  
guide, e.g.:

- word count
- sections to include
- reference format

# How Do you Start?



Define the intended message of your paper and your target audience:



What is the take-home message of your paper?



Who will it appeal to?

- Academics in your field, broader scientific community, practitioners, policy makers, general public

# Evaluate the Significance of your Findings



## Novelty

how much does your study contribute compared with other papers in your area?



## Relevance

are your findings relevant to a regional or international audience?



## Appeal

is your study on a “hot topic” in your field, or even more widely?

# Start Compiling a Shortlist



Aim to shortlist five journals initially



Start with the main journals in your field



Where are your “favourite” papers published? (i.e., those that your research is based most closely on)



Scan reference lists of favourite papers to highlight most relevant references and their journals



# Use a Journal Selection Tool (JST)

## Various JSTs available:

- Some belong to publishers themselves, (e.g. Taylor & Francis, Elsevier)
- Some are independent (e.g., journalguide.com)
- Some are specifically for OA journals (e.g., doaj.org, mdpi.com)
- Some are field-specific (e.g., medicine: jane.biosemantics.org; engineering: ieee.org)

Enter your abstract into the search box



# Challenging behaviour in looked after young people: Parental self-efficacy and psychological well-being in foster carers.

## Abstract

Previous research into the parenting task has demonstrated that behavioural difficulties in children are associated with poorer psychological well-being and less sensitive parenting on the part of birth parents. However, there has been little research examining whether this situation applies to foster carers. This study explores the relationship between looked after young people's behavioural difficulties and the stress, anxiety and depression experienced by their carers. In addition, **parental self-efficacy** is considered as a mediator between **young people's challenging behaviour** and **foster carer well-being**. Fifty-eight foster carers completed a series of quantitative self-report measures; subsequent hierarchical regression analyses

demonstrated that levels of challenging behaviour in the young people were significantly associated with increases in the stress, anxiety and depression experienced by their foster carers. Mediation analysis showed that parenting efficacy partially mediated these relationships, reducing the negative effect of challenging behaviour on carers' psychological well-being. The results are important in considering **effective support for foster carers** and promoting **stability for looked after young people**, and the **clinical and theoretical implications** of the findings are discussed.

Young people; challenging behaviour; foster carers; carer well-being; parenting self-efficacy




# Example of the search output from two search engines - Elsevier and Taylor & Francis




Showing 40 journals matching your paper

Sort by: Best match

### Children and Youth Services Review

ISSN: 0190-7409

Text match score: 

CiteScore: 3.3  Impact Factor: 2.519  Acceptance rate: 17%  Time to 1st decision: 15 weeks Time to publication: 2 weeks


Publishing options for this journal




**Open Access** US\$2,820  
Article Publishing Charge (APC), excluding taxes  
Your article will be made publicly available upon publication.

**Subscription** No publishing charge  
Your article can be shared according to this journal's article sharing policy.

### Personality and Individual Differences

ISSN: 0191-8869

Text match score: 

CiteScore: 5.3  Impact Factor: 3.950  Acceptance rate: 15%  Time to 1st decision: 3 weeks Time to publication: 2 weeks

Publishing options for this journal

**Open Access** US\$3,190  
Article Publishing Charge (APC), excluding taxes  
Your article will be made publicly available upon publication.

**Subscription** No publishing charge  
Your article can be shared according to this journal's article sharing policy.

Open Select

### Journal of Public Child Welfare

About Metrics

**Citation metrics**

Impact Factor: 1.307 (2021)  
CiteScore: 2.0 (2021)  
SNIP: 1.011 (2021)

**Speed / acceptance**

Submission to first decision: 39 days  
Acceptance rate: 43%

Read more about understanding journal metrics

Learn more and submit

or visit the [cost finder](#) to calculate the article publishing charge

Open Select

### Journal of Family Social Work

About Metrics

Publishes research on family social work and social and mental health workers' tradition of working with couples and families in their life context.

Learn more and submit

or visit the [cost finder](#) to calculate the article publishing charge

Open Select

### Journal of Social Service Research

About Metrics

Publishes empirical research on new social services, focusing on outcome-based research and practice that affect management and policy decisions.

Learn more and submit

or visit the [cost finder](#) to calculate the article publishing charge

Open Select

### Educational Psychology in Practice

About Metrics

Publishes research on educational psychology, focusing on applied psychology and the theory and practice crossing cultural and state boundaries.

Learn more and submit

or visit the [cost finder](#) to calculate the article publishing charge

# Decide on Your Shortlist



Discount any search findings that are clearly not a good match



Combine favourites from your review of papers and your database searches



Evaluate the top 3–5 journals on your list

# Review the Journal's Aims and Scope



Reputable journals always provide a clear statement about their aims and scope



Most important criteria for selection – if your paper is not a good fit, it will be rejected even before review



Familiarise yourself with the journal's content



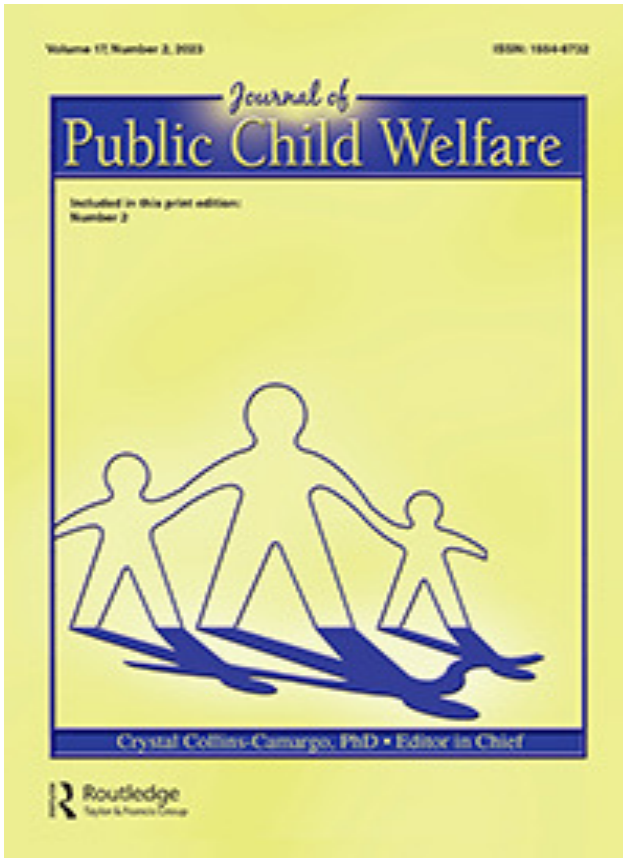
Review the quality of the research it publishes



# Journal of Public Child Welfare

## Aims and Scope

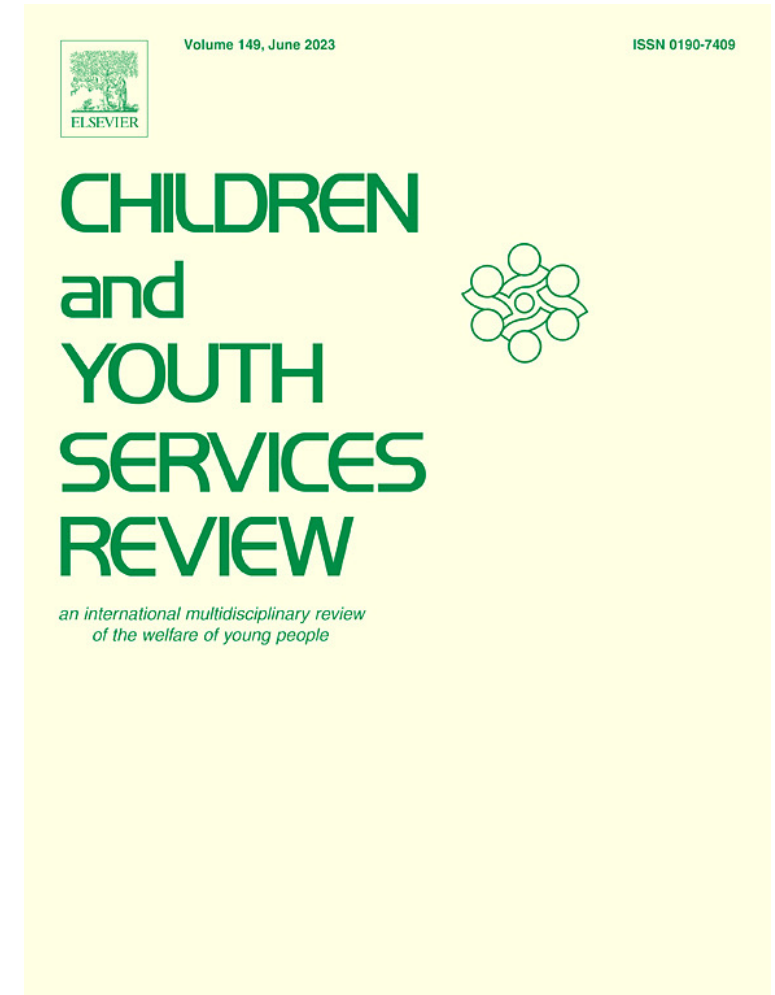
Decisions made in the practice of child welfare have lifelong effects on children and their entire families which in turn affects every facet of society. To effectively practice in this vital field, social workers, psychologists, counselors, juvenile court judges, attorneys, and other child welfare professionals need to stay informed about the latest findings and important issues in public child welfare. To answer this crucial need, the *Journal of Public Child Welfare* provides a broad forum for theory-based and applied research in child welfare. Rather than limit itself to primarily private agencies, this essential journal provides the quality research and comprehensive information that child welfare professionals and public agencies need most. The legal mandate of vital public child welfare programs is safety, permanence, and child and family well-being. With this in mind, the *Journal of Public Child Welfare* presents quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods theory-based or applied research, cogent reviews of the literature, policy analyses, and program evaluation articles about child welfare.



# Children and Youth Services Review

## Aims and scope

*Children and Youth Services Review* is an international, multidisciplinary journal that focuses on disadvantaged or otherwise vulnerable children, young people, families and the systems designed to support them. The journal provides a forum for rigorous scholarship relevant to policies, interventions, programs and services intended to improve well-being. We invite original scholarly works including empirical research, methodological developments, theoretical perspectives, and practice and policy assessments related to services that address individual and societal factors that negatively affect the welfare of children, youth, and young adults ages 0 to 25 and their families.





# Adoption & Fostering

## Aims and scope

### Aims and scope

*Adoption & Fostering* is the only quarterly UK peer reviewed journal dedicated to adoption and **fostering issues**. Edited by Dr Dennis Golm (Lecturer in Psychology, University of Southampton, UK), it also focuses on wider developments in **childcare practice and research**, providing an **international, inter-disciplinary forum for academics and practitioners in social work, psychology, law, medicine, education, training and caring**.



# Are they a Good Fit?



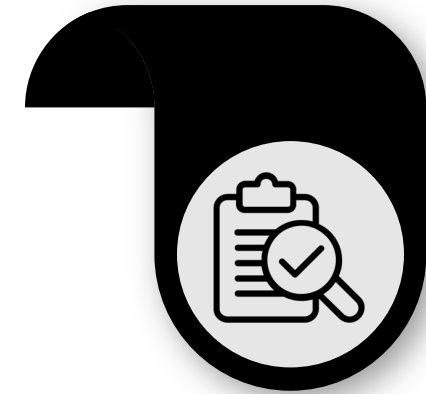
All of the journals reach both academics and professionals, so the study would reach the right audience



Look at past papers: search results for “foster carers” – many recent papers on related topics



The journals all publish original research



If submitting a different type of paper, e.g., review article, check the journal accepts this type of submission



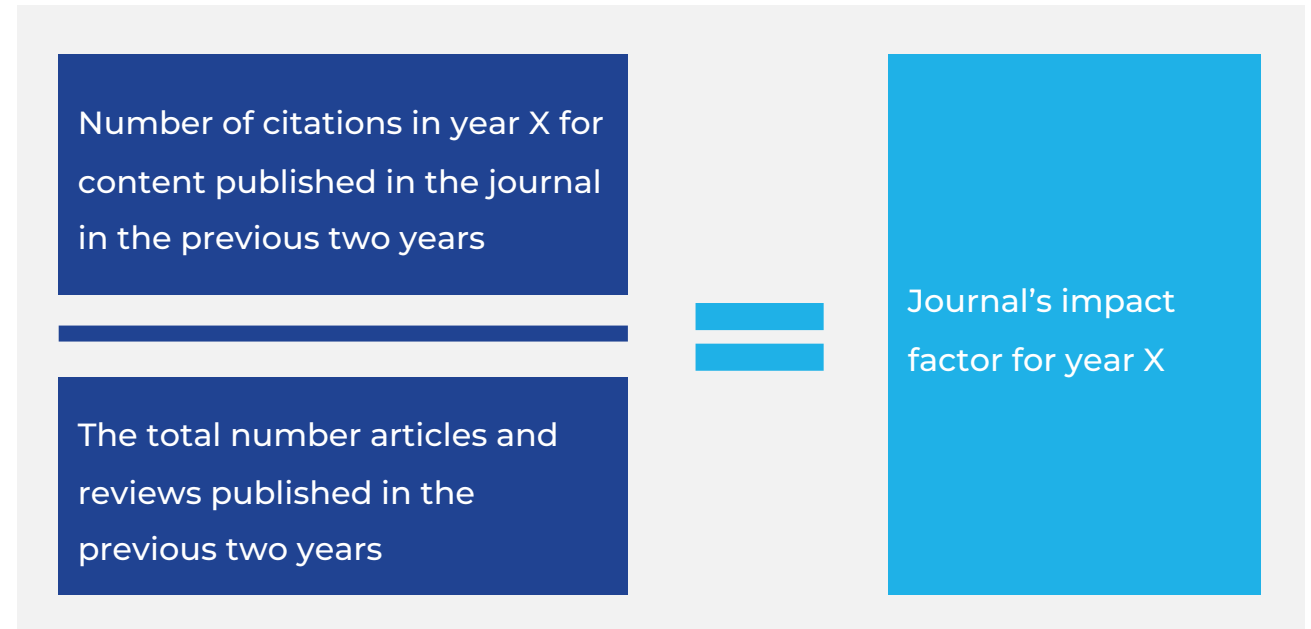
# Assess the Journal Metrics

Journal metrics tell us about the journal's quality and impact

## Impact Factor

Introduced in 1955 and the most widely known and influential

Based on the citation history of articles in the last two years, calculated as:

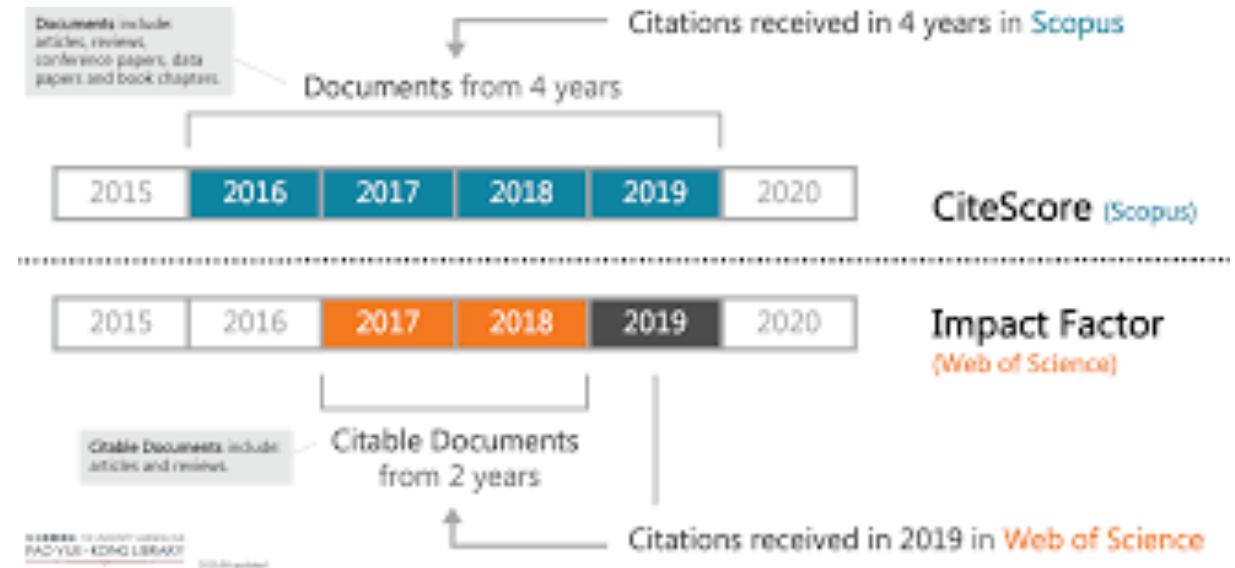


# Assess the Journal Metrics

## CiteScore

Produced by Scopus,  
this metric is similar to the IF

Defined as the average value of  
citations per item for each item  
in the journal in the previous three years



# Variations of the Impact Factor



**5-year impact factor** is the same, but uses data from the previous 5 years.

Useful in academic fields with typically low citation counts or where research dissemination tends to be slow



**Median impact factor and aggregate impact factor**, take into account large variations among academic disciplines.

## 5-Year Journal Impact Factor

|                                      |              |                               |            |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| Cites in 2014 to items published in: | 2013 = 18682 | Number of items published in: | 2013 = 348 |
|                                      | 2012 = 20876 |                               | 2012 = 360 |
|                                      | 2011 = 20265 |                               | 2011 = 349 |
|                                      | 2010 = 17847 |                               | 2010 = 345 |
|                                      | 2009 = 17730 |                               | 2009 = 352 |
|                                      | Sum: 95400   |                               | Sum: 1754  |

Calculation: 
$$\frac{\text{Cites to recent items}}{\text{Number of recent items}} = \frac{95400}{1754} = 54.39$$



## Source Normalised Impact per Paper (SNIP):

Adjusts for differences in citation patterns across disciplines.



### SOURCE NORMALIZED IMPACT PER PAPER (SNIP)

*journal's citation count per paper*

*citation potential in its subject field*

The impact of a single citation will have a higher value in subject areas where citations are less likely, and vice versa. Stability intervals indicate the reliability of the score. Smaller journals tend to have wider stability intervals than larger journals.

Calculated by CWTS based on Scopus data.  
<http://www.journalindicators.com>



## SCImago Journal Rank (SJR):

Takes into account both the number of citations received and the prestige of the journals where the citations come from.



### SCIMAGO JOURNAL RANK (SJR)

*average # of weighted citations received in a year*  
*# of documents published in previous 3 years*

Citations are weighted – worth more or less – depending on the source they come from. The subject field, quality and reputation of the journal have a direct effect on the value of a citation. Can be applied to journals, book series and conference proceedings.

Calculated by Scimago Lab (<http://www.scimagojr.com>) based on Scopus data.



# What do these indices tell us?



- + All provide information about the quality of the journal
- + The higher the IF (or other metric), the higher the journal quality, the greater its visibility, and the more competitive it is to get a paper accepted
- + Higher impact journals have more prestige - universities use IF to evaluate the quality of research outputs



- But they are not infallible: the number of citations per paper can be inflated by a few papers with a high number of citations
- Also skewed by self-citations: some metrics exclude them

# Is the Highest IF Always Best?

No!

Match the expected impact of your work with the IF of the journal

Aim too high and risk rejection

Aim too low and risk reduced impact

Other factors (e.g. journal 'fit') at least as important



# Journal Indexing

Journals need to appear in at least one indexing database to be discoverable and considered trustworthy

Non-indexed journals generally of low quality and should not be considered for submission of your paper

Indexing databases may be either general or field-specific.

The main ones include:

- Scopus
- Web of Science
- DOAJ
- EBSCO
- PubMed
- Medline
- Embase





# Affiliations

Many associations and societies produce their own affiliated journals; for example:

Good way to reach your target audience if you want your paper to be read by academics and specialists in your field



Federation of  
European  
Biochemical  
Societies



Asian Society of  
International  
Law



American Cancer  
Society



The Physiological  
Society



Association for  
Information  
Systems

# Editorial Board

The editorial board members also give us a clue about the quality of the journal.



Are members recognised as leading scholars in their field and affiliated to a reputable institution?



Is contact information for board members available on the journal website?



Do the Editor-in-Chief or other board members regularly contribute editorials?

# Peer Review Process

A transparent peer review process is essential for a reputable journal



Journal should disclose criteria for peer review, selection of reviewers, type of review, timeframe of reviews, and how conflicts are handled



Peer review is usually “blind” – reviewer doesn’t know the identity of the authors



However, “open review” has gained popularity

# Journal Acceptance Rate

The proportion of submitted manuscripts that are accepted for publication

High impact journals have lower acceptance rates, but still vary between 5% and 50%



Vary widely – 1% to 93.2% – with an average of 32% (Herbert, 2020)

Although high acceptance rate increases chance of success, low acceptance rate may indicate higher prestige

Beware that not all journals calculate their acceptance rates in the same way, so can be somewhat misleading

# Time from Submission to Publication



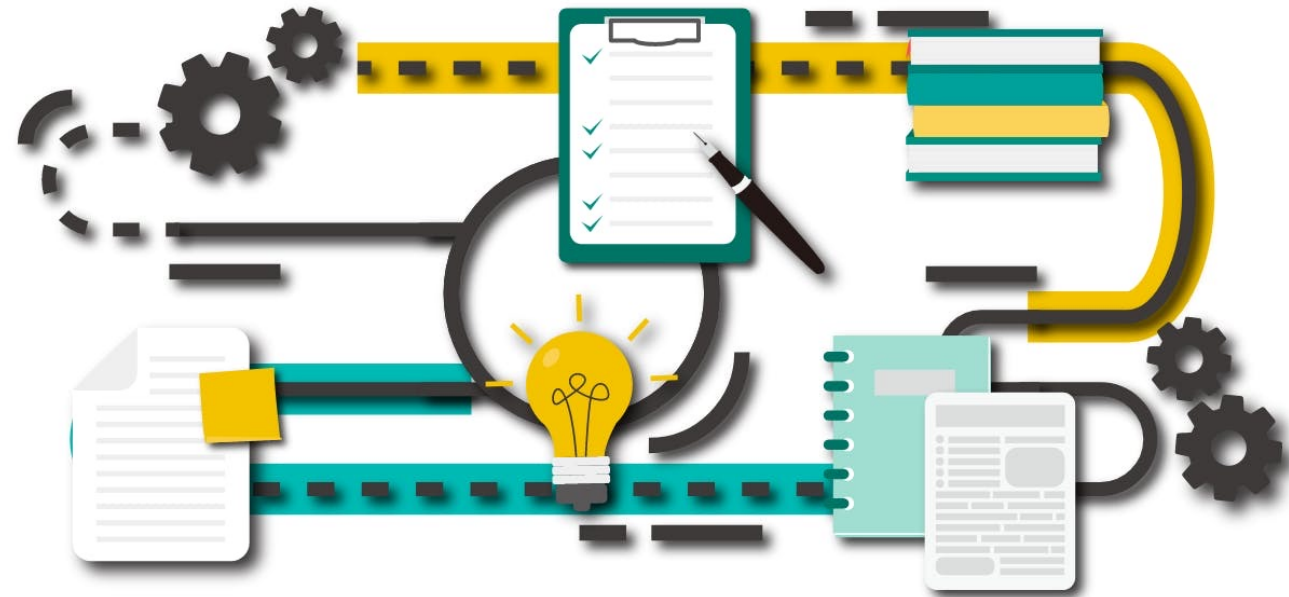
Time from paper submission to publication varies from a few weeks to more than a year



Speed influenced by how often issues are published – from weekly to monthly, quarterly, biannually or annually



Also by whether the journal offers an early view online version



# Article Processing Charge



Traditional journals based on “user pays” model: authors not charged, and journals make money through subscriptions



Open access journals charge the author for publication and users can access it for free



Fees can vary widely and may be up to around \$4000



Cost can be reduced by, e.g., institutional membership, society membership, university support and research funding grants



Even traditional subscription journals may ask for fees for printing and for processing figures, especially color figures

# Instructions for Authors

Check the guidelines to see whether there are any conditions that will be difficult to comply with:



Word limits for whole paper, each section?



Specific formatting or template needed?



Citation and referencing style?



# Rank your Shortlist

Do at least three of your initial shortlist of five journals pass the above tests?

Is there a clear favourite?

Most important factor should be the match with the journal's aims and scope

Otherwise, rank according to your priorities:

- Impact factor?
- Time to review/publication?
- Publication fee?
- Extent of re-formatting needed?



# Journal Ranking for Our Example Paper

# Thank You!

Any Questions?