

Journal Selection Criteria: 40 Key Questions

Recommendation Level and Reasons

1. Recommendation level

We will evaluate how relevant your article is to the target journal and provide a “recommendation level” for your information.

2. Reasons for recommendation

We will explain why we recommended the aforementioned journal by informing you whether the journal focuses on a specific area of research and/or whether it is particularly focused on your research topic.

Journal Quality

3. Is the target journal a part of the Science Citation Index [SCI] or the Social Science Citation Index [SSCI]?

After identifying the journal to which you will submit your paper, the first question to ask is “can this journal help you graduate or get a promotion?” In most cases, this means that the journal has to be listed in the Science Citation Index (SCI) or the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). The answer to the aforementioned question is thus available in the SCI and SSCI databases.

4. Abstracting and indexing

All domains have their own list of approved journals. In general, journals that are included in index databases and lists are more renowned and respected.

5. Journal type

Does the publishing organization have an excellent, favorable, average, poor, or unknown reputation? How large is the publishing organization? Does the publishing organization have a high or low status within the industry? How do researchers rate the publishing organization? Some journals are not worth considering because they are not respected in the industry. We have thus removed such journals from the recommended list. The following is a list of the journal types to which we do not recommend submitting your manuscript:

- Journals that publish papers created by compiling together sections/chapters from different papers. Many university press reviewers do not consider this type of publication as a journal. Retrieving data from this type of publication is difficult online; thus, this type of journal is rarely cited.
- Academic journals that do not undergo peer review: Academic journals that do not undergo peer review are generally less respected and possess low academic value.
- Graduate student journals: The quality of this type of journal is determined by the quality of the journal editors. Thus, submitting your manuscript to this type of journal involves a great deal of risk.
- Short journals: This type of journal publishes short papers because of the lack of long, complete papers. The short papers are typically considered incomplete.
- Review journals: Because current authors for this type of journal are usually renowned and well-respected individuals who are often invited to publish papers, new authors may experience difficulty in having their papers published by this type of journal.
- Domestic journals: Domestic journals that are TSSCI journals are favorable for manuscript submission. However, those that are not TSSCI journals usually are of poor quality; therefore,

many universities recommend against submitting your manuscript to this type of journal.

- **New journals:** An increasing number of journals and journal publishing groups are being established each year. Therefore, submitting your papers to such new journals is risky, particularly when the selection criterion of the SCI and SSCI is that journals should have published papers for at least 2 years before they are selected as SCI and SSCI journals.
- **Electronic journals:** Many universities have debated the credibility of this type of journal and prefer that electronic journals be published together with printed journals.
- **Non-SCI journals:** This type of journal is generally not recognized by universities and cannot be used to help people graduate or get a promotion.

The following is a list of the journal types to which we recommend submitting your manuscripts. The journals are ranked according to the difficulty of having your papers published by them (listed from the easiest to the most difficult).

- **Regional journals:** Journals that accept papers from a small, specific geographical region are subject to less competition.
- **Relatively new journals:** Journals that are relatively new usually need to publish a substantial number of papers and have the qualifications and potential to become SCI or SSCI journals. However, we recommend selecting journals that are at least 2 years old.
- **Interdisciplinary journals:** This type of journal covers two or more domains and is thus an excellent choice if you are considering working with researchers from different domains.
- **Professional journals:** This type of journal publishes papers submitted for specific disciplines and domains. This type of journal is subject to less competition and caters to a more concentrated target audience group than the discipline-based journals.
- **Discipline-based journals:** This is the largest and most prestigious journal type. For new authors, it is remarkably difficult to have their papers published by this type of journal.

6. Year of issue

Journals with a long publication history are better equipped than new journals for long-term operation; several new journals disappear shortly after being established. Therefore, submitting authors who wish to have their studies circulated for a long time and be of great influence are recommended not to submit their manuscripts to this type of journal. Additionally, most citation indices (e.g., the SCI and the SSCI) do not consider using journals that have not been publishing papers for at least 2 years.

7. Affiliated publishing organization and country

Name and location (i.e., country) of the publishing organization.

8. Publishing organization type

Journals are generally published by three types of organizations: associations or specific organizations, universities or academic organizations, and commercial organizations.

- The editors of association journals are replaced every few years, and these journals are generally more lenient toward accepting papers submitted by their peers or acquaintances. Because the editors-in-chief are mostly chosen from major organizations, papers accepted by them are more likely to be published. Funding for association journals comes from the associations themselves, and examples of association journals include the AER, *Econometrica*, IEEE, and ACM.
- For the protection of their own interests, some university journals will indicate that they prefer

papers submitted by their own teachers or students. Funding for university journals comes exclusively from the universities themselves, and examples of university journals include the HBR and MIT Sloan.

- For-profit journals are least likely to be biased or exhibit preference. Because this journal type relies on a considerable number of readers to maintain its operations, it will usually publish papers featuring popular topics to attract readers. Examples of for-profit journals include Blackwell, North-Holland, and Elsevier.

9. Average time between submission and publication

How long does it take to review a paper? Some journals release their review results in 14 working days, whereas others require a year or longer. Submitting authors may obtain the answer to this question from assistant editors. However, if the answer to the question cannot be obtained, you may deduce such information by reviewing the latest citation indicated in the latest study and calculating the difference between the citation time and the actual time of publication.

General Journal Information

10. Aims and scope

The aims and scope are formulated and compiled by the editorial board and editors-in-chief. Related information can be obtained from the journal websites. An example is given as follows:

Aims and scope of the IEEE Journal of Lightwave Technology:

Contains articles on the current research, applications, and methods used in lightwave technology and fiber optics. Topics covered include optical guided wave technologies, fiber and cable technologies, active and passive components, integrated optics and opto-electronics, and network systems and subsystems covering the entire range of this rapidly expanding field.

11. Target audience

Is the target audience academic personnel, researchers, or professional workers? Are they interested in your study results? Answers to these questions are available on journal websites or in academic databases.

12. Types of articles accepted

Does the journal accept research papers, review articles, letters to editors, or research notes? Answers to this question are often available on the journal website. You are recommended to obtain the answer to this question before submitting your article to avoid your paper being rejected because of incorrect article type.

13. Number of publications

It is difficult for submitting authors to have their papers published by journals that release papers only once or twice a year because of the limited number of papers that they accept. By contrast, journals that release papers every month may be an easier option for submitting authors as the number of papers accepted increases. Additionally, this type of journal allows readers to read about more up-to-date information.

14. Number of papers published each year

A journal that publishes a small number of papers may contain many studies waiting to be published. Thus, even if your paper is accepted, you may see the paper being published after 3 to 4 years. You may ask the journal's assistant editors regarding the number of studies waiting to be published.

15. Special issues or journal themes

Special issues display the efforts and achievements of the editors-in-chief or guest editors. Although many editors may select particular journal themes and anticipate a favorable response from contributing authors, they often receive only a few special issue-related papers (out of the considerable number of studies received). Therefore, in general, special issue-related studies are more easily accepted and more quickly published.

16. Author guidelines

What are the types of articles accepted by the journal? What are the formatting requirements (font size, line spacing, and end-list and in-text reference styles)? You are recommended against submitting to the journal if you are unable to meet the aforementioned requirements. Alternatively, you may also use our formatting services to meet the formatting guidelines of any journal.

17. Limitations on the number of words or pages

What is the word count limit and/or page number limit demanded by the editor-in-chief? You are recommended against submitting to the journal if you are unable to meet the aforementioned requirements.

18. Limitations on the number of abstract words

What is the journal's word count limit for abstracts? Does the journal use a special format? Submitting authors who fail to meet the requirements may see their papers being rejected, or they may be requested to make revisions to meet the requirements.

19. Are the figures and tables in the correct format?

Should figures and tables be placed at the end or in the appropriate locations within the article? In which format should the figure files be provided while submitting the article? Is there a special format to be followed when submitting figures and tables? Answers to these questions are available on the journal website.

20. Editorial board

"Politics" sometimes affects the journal reviewing process. Examples can be illustrated by the following questions: Do you know the people on the editorial board? Does your adviser know the editor-in-chief? Have you previously met the editor-in-chief at a seminar? Many friendly, highly influential researchers have indicated that people will accept the papers of their acquaintances. Therefore, knowing or having interacted with an editorial board member (in a study or academics-related situation) will be beneficial to publishing one's papers. When submitting papers and being asked to recommend reviewers, you are recommended to list the aforementioned individuals as your reviewer candidates.

21. Is the editorial staff in a state of transition?

Contrary to popular belief, journals do not always function in an organized and efficient manner. Editorial departments are often understaffed because of frequent personnel changes involving part-time staff. This situation worsens when the personnel changes involve editors-in-chief or other important members. These personnel changes may result in many papers being lost and/or forgotten as well as changes in the focus of editing. Occasionally, previously accepted papers are later rejected. You are recommended against submitting your article to the journals whose editorial board is in a state of transition.

22. Contact information of the Editorial Office

This information can be obtained from journal websites.

23. E-mail address for the editor-in-chief and journal website

You require the e-mail addresses of editors-in-chief and assistant editors to make inquiries. This information is available on journal websites. Alternatively, the university where the editor-in-chief is presently employed may also provide this information on its website.

24. Letter from the editor-in-chief

Letters from the editors-in-chief can usually be found inside journals and on the journal websites. The letters are used to enlighten submitting authors about the editors' attitude, the directions of the journals, and research topics and methods that submitting authors are recommended to use or not use. A detailed reading of the letters will allow you to know in advance whether your paper meets the journal requirements, saving the reviewing time (which may take months) and the paper from being rejected because of failure to meet the aforementioned requirements.

Publication Format

25. Print and/or electronic formats

The publication formats (i.e., electronic journals and printed journals) that journals have affect their reputation and the frequency with which their studies are cited. Publication format-related information can be obtained from journal websites.

- Only the print format is available: Currently, journals with only the print format available have more prestige than those with only the electronic format available. However, the amount of online research has been increasing every year. Moreover, compared with print journals, citing electronic journals is easier and more convenient, especially for researchers who have no access to library resources.

- Only the electronic is format available: This type of journal is generally not recognized by the publications committees of universities. Furthermore, the academic industry usually has a bias against this journal type and thinks that it possesses low academic value.

- Both print and electronic formats are available: This is the ideal publication format because it combines the credibility of printed journals and the convenience of electronic journals.

26. Does the journal publish accepted articles as “Online First?”

Many journals will publish accepted articles on their journal websites first and in print later.

27. Is your target journal an open-access journal?

Open-access journals allow readers to read journals anywhere for free (and without any subscription fees), thereby, providing small universities with insufficient resources, organizations outside academic circles, and developing countries an opportunity to have access to journals. The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) offers open-access information. Additionally, the DOAJ provides guidelines that are unanimously accepted and used by its peers in the academic industry. The DOAJ allows readers to read, download, copy, print, and search studies as well as link studies to their papers. Once journals offer open access, readers can easily access, read, and cite studies for free. However, some journals will charge related fees.

28. Does the journal charge any publication or processing fees? If yes, how much?

Whether the journal has page charges and whether the journal has additional charges for printing figures in color, among other charges, may be specified in the journal’s website (typically in the publishing or formatting guidelines section). Some journals may even charge nonrefundable submission fees. Paying a submission fee does not necessarily guarantee acceptance. Journals that provide open-access publishing have a fixed open-access charge per article. This charge does not depend on the article length or the presence of colored figures.

Relevance of the Paper to the Journal

29. Are the published papers consistent with the editorial objectives and goals?

If the editor-in-chief and editorial board of a journal have clearly described the objectives and goals of the journal, then you should spend time to read them carefully to ensure that your study meets the journal requirements.

30. Does your paper fulfill the journal’s preferences regarding quantitative or qualitative research?

Did the Letter from the Editor or the Instructions for Authors indicate the journal’s preference for quantitative or qualitative research? What was the research method used in papers published by this journal? Answers to these questions are available on the journal website.

31. How recently were papers on topics similar to your own paper published in the journal?

If a journal has published papers featuring subjects that are identical to those of your paper, it is highly likely that the journal will publish these studies again, particularly when the studies offer

new contributions concerning current popular subjects. Citing papers on topics similar to your own paper can help your paper get published. If your paper is published by the journal to which you wish to submit, it is possible that the authors of the aforementioned papers may be selected as your reviewers. Therefore, you must ensure that you cite papers in a polite manner to avoid offending the reviewers.

If no studies with topics similar to your own paper have been published by the journal, you should investigate whether papers with similar theoretical concepts have been published by the journal and determine which papers have been published by the journal.

32. Do papers that have been published in the target journal contain the same research methods used in your paper?

If a journal has published papers with research methods that are identical to those in your paper, it is highly likely that the journal will publish these studies again. Such information can be obtained from database keyword searches.

33. If your paper proposes a novel methodology, has the target journal published similar articles?

Similarly, if a journal has published papers featuring novel methodologies that are identical to those of your paper, it is highly likely that the journal will publish these studies again. If no such papers are encountered, you are recommended to try other journals.

Submitting Authors

34. What are the academic backgrounds of the submitting authors?

What are the academic backgrounds of the submitting authors? Are they postgraduates, professors, researchers, or all of the above? Some journals have an unwritten preference for submitting authors' educational and academic backgrounds. Information pertaining to the academic backgrounds of submitting authors as well as where they work can be obtained from printed journals, some online journals, and libraries.

35. Are authors ethnically diverse?

By observing the authors of studies published by journals, you can learn about the journals' preferences or nationality bias. Although such preferences are often unspoken, it can be deduced by examining the names and affiliations of the authors in current or recent issues of the journals.

36. Does the journal publish papers from Taiwanese/Chinese authors?

How many authors of the studies published by journals are Chinese? This number differs between journals and was as high as 50% for some journals and as low as 0% for some other journals (over a 2-year period). Nevertheless, these results do not necessarily signify that the journals practice discrimination as there may be other reasons that we may not be aware of. We generally recommend journals that accept papers from Chinese-speaking regions of the world to ensure that your paper has a high probability of getting published.

37. Are the authors from different levels of universities and institutions?

Are the authors exclusively students from renowned universities or are they from universities and research institutions of all levels? The ideal situation for you would be that the recommended journal has published studies written by authors from the same institute as you.

Relevance Between Submitting Authors' Studies and Studies Cited

38. How many times have you cited the target journal in your paper?

If many references used in your paper are from the journal to which you wish to submit your paper, it indicates that you are adding information to the literature that the journal focuses on.

39. Have authors who specialize in similar research topics submitted to this journal?

Have authors who specialize in similar research topics submitted to this journal? If so, it is a good sign.

40. Other important information

Information such as review time or review speed, time between manuscript submission and first decision, backlog, and acceptance rate may be specified here. Some journal websites specifically provide this information to promote the journal, particularly when the review time is short.
