

Editorial

Strategies for Enhancing Journal Quality

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The Ministry of Science and Higher Education, of Ethiopia, officially announced that 16 journals were accredited among 34 local journals submitted for accreditation. The Ethiopian Journal of Social Sciences and Language Studies (EJSSLS), a publication of Jimma University, is one of them. After the national accreditation of the Ethiopian Journal of Social Sciences and Language Studies (EJSSLS), since December 2020, the number of articles being submitted for possible publication has been quadrated!! This shows how much the journal is working in line with its vision and mission. Achieving this vision and satisfying manuscript contributors calls for strategy revision. This editorial outlines some of these strategies.

Digitalizing reviewers' bank: One of the possible strategies, to speed up the review and editorial process, is involving more committed reviewers and editors. That is to say, each contributor should suggest a minimum of five relevant reviewers with their contact address (mail and phone number) and CV. The journal's editor or managing editor should document these reviewers for potential use (review). It is also important to recruit supporting editors.

Reducing article size and publishing more articles: So far the journal has been accepting manuscripts of up to 30 pages for a single manuscript. On average an issue of five manuscripts has been released and a volume of 10 to 12 manuscripts (per a year). This is not bad as it fulfils the minimal criteria required for a journal accreditation. However, as large number of manuscripts is being submitted to the journal, increasing the number of articles per an issue and volume is mandatory. This improves the journal's visibility and accreditation weight. Put it other way, if the article size is limited to a maximum of 10 pages, 11 manuscripts (instead of five or six) can be published per an issue of 110 pages, and a double of that per a volume (two issues). This in turn improves the journal's visibility, accreditation weight, and impacts.

Increasing the number of issues per a volume. The EJSSLS has been publishing two issues per a year. However, to attract diversified and large number of manuscripts and to satisfy manuscript contributors, increasing the number of issues, for example, from two to three per annum can be considered. However, to realize this option, large number of committed reviewers is important.

Assigning manuscripts immediately for a review process: When manuscripts are submitted, it is important (1) to notifying soon contributors that their manuscripts have been received, (2) to decline immediately the manuscript which is out of the scope of the journal, and (3) to send relevant manuscripts to subject area editors for a preliminary review, and (4), to assign potentially significant manuscripts to appropriate reviewers.

Releasing issues timely: The other important strategy that has to be considered is releasing issues timely as it affects the weight given to the journal during accreditation process and contributors' benefit such as promotion.

Revising advisory and editorial board member: From my seven years' experience as an editor, I have learnt that many of advisory and editorial board members are nominal. Their contribution to the journal's quality is insignificant. Hence, it is important to revise and engage them in the journal's work. In addition to advising, they can review and submit quality manuscripts for possible publication. On top of that, the editor-in-chief must be courage enough to dismiss reluctant reviewers, editors, and manuscript contributors.

Indexing the journal: The EJSSLS has been accredited nationally; however, it is important to index it internationally, in well recognized indexing platforms so that international contributors can be attracted and its visibility can be enhanced.

If these strategies are well considered, hopefully the journal will be reaccredited nationally after two years and become one of the top journals regionally, and gradually internationally. Therefore, the dean of the College of Social Sciences, the Publication and Extension office, and above all the editors of the EJSSLS must give their outmost support to the journal.