

Chapter 4

Association Between Reviewer Engagement and Publication Success in Psychiatry

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ABSTRACT

The peer-review process stands as a pivotal mechanism for impartially assessing articles. Nevertheless, mounting concerns arise regarding waning interest among potential reviewers in appraising manuscripts. This phenomenon arises partly from academic institutions neglecting review engagement as an evaluative criterion for professional advancement. Furthermore, journals offer no monetary incentives for reviewing articles, compounding the disincentive. Methods: To investigate the association between reviewer activity and publication success in psychiatry, we analyzed data from the top 100 reviewers using publicly available data from Publons, retrieved as of May 20th. We conducted a Pearson correlation analysis to examine the relationship between the number of reviews and the total number of published articles. Results: Our analysis revealed a statistically significant, albeit weak, correlation between reviewer activity and total published articles in psychiatry ($r=0.25$).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Peer review plays a crucial role in the scientific community and is widely recognized as an essential component of the scholarly publishing process (Parsons & Baglini, 2021). The primary responsibilities of peer reviewers involve (1) aiding in the prevention of avoidable errors in published articles and (2) evaluating the suitability of the manuscript for publication in the journal that facilitates the review process (Velterop, 2015). The process of choosing the right reviewer can be a complicated endeavor, especially when considering that reviewers have a significant influence on the future of academic journals.

Peer review holds a pivotal position in the decision-making processes concerning grant selection, academic publishing, and the advancement of scientists' careers (Scott, 2007). The act of reviewing articles is of utmost importance in enhancing academic output and ensuring the quality of manuscripts. Engaging in manuscript reviews allows reviewers to contribute to the improvement of manuscript quality (Lovejoy, Revenson, & France, 2011). In addition, mastering the reviewing will help to make publication easier (Dhillon, 2021). Reviews should be conducted with the aim of promoting the motivation and professional development of colleagues (Kotsis & Chung, 2014). Encouraging open dialogue and active listening promotes trust and enables constructive discussions that lead to meaningful outcomes. However, it is unfortunate that some researchers hold the misconception that reviewing articles is a waste of time and does not contribute to their academic success. This perspective fails to acknowledge the significant benefits and opportunities that peer review offers to researchers. Enhancing the appeal of the reviewing process for reviewers has the potential to enhance the efficiency of scholarly publishing. (Kumar, 2010). Hence, Publons has been acknowledged as an academic ranking platform aimed at promoting and popularizing the peer-review process (Smith, 2016). Moreover, the challenge lies in locating suitable reviewers who can effectively evaluate papers, which unfortunately leads to certain reviewers attempting to manipulate the process. In some cases, reviewers specifically request to be assigned to papers in order to provide favorable reviews, indicating prearranged agreements (Jecmen et al., 2020). The presence of prearranged agreements with reviewers has a detrimental impact on the quality of publications, leading to a decline in overall publication quality. Due to the lack of objectivity among arranged reviewers, their potential to genuinely enhance the manuscript is compromised. Furthermore, this situation can lead to a lack of trust in the peer review process, which can demotivate other researchers.

Moreover, it is disheartening that certain researchers may resort to unethical practices, pressuring authors to cite their articles solely to enhance their own academic achievements. This behavior not only compromises the integrity of the peer review process but also contradicts the principles of impartial evaluation and merit-

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