

Dear Editor!

The questionnaire below is a part of **an international survey among editors of the scientific journals** with the regard to understanding of the various **criteria that identify quality in scientific journals**.

The data, that you provide, will be anonymous (not linked to your personal data) and used solely for research purposes.

The questionnaire consists of **thirty five (35) questions**. The pilot survey confirmed, that it takes approximately **15 minutes** to answer all questions.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- If you are an **editor of multiple journals**, please answer these questions from the **viewpoint of the highest ranked journal** that you oversee as editor.
- If you **hold different editor positions** (editor-in-chief, managing editor, associate editor, assistant editor etc.) in multiple journals, please, answer these questions from the viewpoint of **the highest position**.

In this survey, there are some **open questions**. The answers to these questions will help understand your immediate reactions and insights. In some cases, **choices will be offered afterwards**.

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important and really appreciated!

mag. Katarina Krapež,  
*visiting researcher at the Max Planck Institute of Innovation and Competition (MPIIC), Munich &  
lecturer/researcher at University of Primorska, Slovenia*

## Information about the Editor

\* 1. What is your age?

☐ 18-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60 or older ☐ No answer

\* 2. Are you male or female?

☐ Male  
☐ Female

3. In what country do you currently reside?

  

\* 4. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

☐ High school degree or equivalent  
☐ Bachelor degree  
☐ Masters degree  
☐ Doctorate  
☐ No answer  
☐ Other (please specify):

\* 5. Do you hold an academic title or have an academic position?

*Multiple selections are possible.*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distinguished professor or university professor (distinguished professor emeritus, university professor emeritus)                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior fellow, senior research fellow or senior scientist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professor or full professor (research professor, professor of practice, visiting professor, adjunct professor, professor emeritus) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fellow, research fellow or scientist                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate professor (research associate professor, visiting associate professor, adjunct associate professor)                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Research supervisor or principal investigator             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant professor (research assistant professor, adjunct assistant professor)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Research associate or postdoctoral associate              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lecturer or instructor (sessional lecturer or sessional instructor)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Research assistant or teaching assistant                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):  |  |

\* 6. How many years of working experience in science (scientific research, including scholarship positions etc.) do you have?

- ☐ 1-3 years ☐ 4-6 years ☐ 7-10 years ☐ 11-20 years ☐ >20 ☐ No answer

\* 7. Are you (or have you been) a reviewer for other scientific journals?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ No Answer

\* 8. Are you a member of any professional organizations of scientific editors?

*Multiple selections are possible.*

- ☐ I am a member of the Committee of Publications Ethics (**COPE**).
- ☐ I am a member of the European Association of Science Editors (**EASE**).
- ☐ I am a member of the Association of Earth Science Editors (**AESE**).
- ☐ I am a member of the World Association of Medical Editors (**WAME**).
- ☐ I am a member of the Society for Scholarly Publishing (**SSP**).
- ☐ I am a member of the Council of Science Editors (**CSE**).
- ☐ I am **not** a member of any professional organization.
- ☐ I don't know.
- ☐ I am a member of other professional organization:

## Information about the Journal

**If you are an editor of more journals, please, think of these questions and answer from the viewpoint of the highest ranked journal that you oversee as an editor.**

**\* 9. What is the scientific field of the journal (according to the Frascati classification)?**

*Multiple selections are possible.*

- ☐ **Natural sciences**  
(mathematics and computer sciences, physical sciences, chemical sciences, earth and related environmental sciences, biological sciences)
- ☐ **Engineering and technology**  
(civil engineering, electrical engineering, electronic, other engineering sciences)
- ☐ **Medical and Health sciences**  
(basic medicine, clinical medicine, health sciences, health biotechnology, other medical sciences)
- ☐ **Agricultural sciences**  
(agriculture, forestry, fisheries and allied sciences, veterinary medicine, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, animal and dairy science, veterinary science, agricultural biotechnology, other agricultural sciences)
- ☐ **Social sciences**  
(psychology, sociology, economics, law, political and educational sciences, other social sciences)
- ☐ **Humanities**  
(history, languages and literature, philosophy, ethics and religion, art, other humanities)
- ☐ Other (please specify):

**\* 10. What is the type of publisher?**

- ☐ Commercial - Reed Elsevier, Springer, Wiley Blackwell
- ☐ Commercial - Other
- ☐ Non-Commercial
- ☐ I don't know.

**\* 11. In what country is the publisher currently located?**

\* 12. What is the distribution model of the journal?

- ☐ **Closed Access Journal**  
(Journal that uses a funding model that charges readers or their institutions for access and use of the content.)
- ☐ **Open Access – Pure**  
(Journal that uses a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access.)
- ☐ **Hybrid Model - Partial OA**  
(OA is provided for the part of the journal, including only particular works or part/fragment of a paper.)
- ☐ **Hybrid Model - Retrospective/delayed OA**  
(OA is provided only in retrospective and/or OA is provided with a delay of few months after publishing date.)
- ☐ **Hybrid Model - Open Choice**  
(Author can choose to make his articles freely available upon payment of an author fee.)
- ☐ I don't know.
- ☐ Other (please specify):

\* 13. Do you apply article-processing charges to authors (do authors have to pay for publication)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Authors can choose to pay (publishing options, open choice, etc.)
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ No Answer

\* 14. Is the journal a member of any professional organizations?

*Multiple selections are possible.*

- ☐ Journal is listed in Directory of Open Access Journals (**DOAJ**)
- ☐ Journal is a Member of Committee of Publication Ethics (**COPE**)
- ☐ No Membership
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other

Other (please specify):

\* 15. Is the journal listed in the Journal Citation Report by Thomson Reuters?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure/Do not know
- ☐ Yes, current Impact factor is:

\* 16. What type of peer review is used by the journal?

- ☐ **Single-blind peer review**  
(The reviewers know who the authors are, but the authors do not know who reviewers are.)
- ☐ **Double-blind peer review**  
(The reviewers do not know who the authors are, and the authors do not know who the reviewers are.)
- ☐ **Peer review**  
(The reviewers know who the authors are and the authors know who the reviewers are.)
- ☐ **Open peer review - open-identity of the peer reviewer**  
(as opposed to anonymous peer review)
- ☐ **Open peer review - open-access of the review**  
(disclosed peer review, where the peer review content is publicized)
- ☐ **Open peer review - open-invitation or unsolicited peer review**  
(anyone interested can join and contribute to the peer review process)
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please specify):

## Quality Assessment Processes - Initial Check

17. When you receive a paper for consideration of publication in your journal, what do you generally check first?

*Help me to understand what happens to a paper when you receive it .*

\* 18. Who performs the initial check of the paper?

*Multiple selections are possible.*

- ☐ I do it myself
- ☐ My (editorial) team is responsible for that
- ☐ We have no initial check
- ☐ I do not know
- ☐ Other (please specify):

## Quality Assessment Processes - Initial Check and Criteria

\* 19. For a paper I am considering publishing in my journal, the initial check includes:

*Multiple selections are possible.*

- ☐ Confirmation of the author's identity and credentials (educational background, other writings, experience)
- ☐ Confirmation of the author's affiliation(s) (author's employer or an institution that pays the authors for his work)
- ☐ Analysis of the overall fit of the paper to the scope (or focus) of the journal
- ☐ General assessment whether paper meets basic prerequisites of a proper scientific study
- ☐ General quality of the language in the paper
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ I do not know
- ☐ Other (please specify):

20. After establishing that a paper fits the scope of my journal and meets other initial requirements, the main qualities I am seeking in a scientific paper that I want to publish are:

*I am interested in your unprompted response. Please, list the qualities.*

## Quality Assessment Processes - Criteria

\* 21. After establishing that a paper fits the scope of my journal and meets other initial requirements,<sup>3</sup> of the most important criteria for publishing are:

*Please, choose three of the most significant criteria.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Originality of overall paper                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriateness of the methodology used and conclusions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Innovativeness of the research                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Clarity of the discussion in the paper                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Added value to existing knowledge               | <input type="checkbox"/> Significance of the research                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Validity of overall paper                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Importance of the questions addressed in paper          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reliability of the research and conclusions     | <input type="checkbox"/> Up-to-date topic of the research                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Credibility of the research and conclusions     | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the listed qualities                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthiness of the research and conclusions | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not know   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):                         |  |

22. Considering the highest quality papers that you published during your career as editor, how were these papers different from other papers that you published in your journal?

*Please help me understand why these papers were special.*

## Quality Assessment Processes - Peer Review

Think of the last five papers that you considered for publication in your journal (and later accepted or rejected) and answer questions below!

- \* 23. For each of the five papers, how easy or difficult was it on average to decide whether to accept or reject the paper for the review process ?

☐ Very Difficult ☐ Difficult ☐ Neutral / Not Sure ☐ Easy ☐ Very Easy ☐ I do not know

24. For these five papers, which are the factors that supported this decision?

*I want to understand, why this was easy or hard for you. Please, explain.*

- \* 25. For these five papers, did you consult peer-reviewer(s) to decide whether the paper should be published?

☐ No

☐ Yes and I selected peer-reviewer(s) for a particular paper using the following criteria:

## Quality Assessment Processes - Peer Review

\* 26. For these five papers, how do you know that the reviewer(s) that you consulted have the same review criteria as yourself?

*Multiple selections are possible.*

- ☐ I discussed the assessment criteria with peer reviewers of these 5 papers.
- ☐ The peer reviewers attended seminars/workshops/trainings related to the journal assessment criteria.
- ☐ The journal has (written) guidelines related to assessment of the papers that the editor and reviewers are required to follow them.
- ☐ I rely on the reviewers' expertise and trust that they have the same assessment criteria for papers as myself.
- ☐ I do not know.
- ☐ Other (please specify):

27. Imagine that reviewers assess one of these 5 papers very differently from your assessment of the paper. How do you decide whether to publish the paper or not?

*Your insights are highly appreciated. Please share your thoughts with me.*

\* 28. Are the reviewers paid (or otherwise compensated)?

*Multiple selections are possible.*

- ☐ Reviewers are paid
- ☐ Reviewers are compensated (e.g. free/discounted subscription, free/discounted copies, access to resources)
- ☐ Reviewers are not paid or compensated in any way
- ☐ No answer
- ☐ I do not know
- ☐ Other (please specify):

## Quality Assessment Processes - Final decision regarding the publication

\* 29. For these five papers, how easy or difficult was it on average to decide whether to accept or reject the paper for publication?

☐ Very Difficult ☐ Difficult ☐ Neutral/ Not Sure ☐ Easy ☐ Very Easy ☐ I do not know

\* 30. For the papers published (of these five), how certain are you that they are valid, significant and original?

	My level of certainty is: <b>Very High</b>	My level of certainty is: <b>High</b>	My level of certainty is: <b>Moderate</b>	My level of certainty is: <b>Low</b>	My level of certainty is: <b>Very Low</b>
Published papers are: <b>valid</b> (papers are in accordance with scientific standards )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Published papers are: <b>significant</b> (papers will have an impact)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Published papers are: <b>original</b> (papers are innovative and have high added value )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Quality Assessment Processes - Other Quality Indicators

31. On reflection what were the most important decisions you implemented to ensure and enhance the overall quality of the journal?

*Let me know about your achievements. I highly appreciate your input.*

\* 32. Which areas of your work or procedures would need to be changed to ensure the future quality of the journal? How severe is this need?

	Need to change is: <b>Very High</b>	Need to change is: <b>High</b>	Need to change is: <b>Moderate</b>	Need to change is: <b>Low</b>	Need to change is: <b>Very Low</b>	<b>No need to change.</b>
How we perform <b>the initial check of the papers</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Type of peer review</b> in use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Selection process of the reviewers</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Reviewers' awareness of required quality standards</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of the <b>paper reviews</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of the papers we <b>publish</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How readers <b>access the journal content</b> (the distribution model)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. If there is a need to change, what are the most relevant changes that you would have to make (in the areas listed above or other areas)?

*Help me understand your choices above.*

34. What are the biggest obstacles against relevant changes to enhance journal quality?

*Please offer insight into the challenges you face.*

35. Imagine that the distribution model of the journal would be changed (e.g. **to open/closed access**, in case of hybrid model – **to completely open access**). How would this affect your work as an editor?

*Your contribution, especially to this open question, is highly appreciated.*



## Conclusion

36. Is there anything related to quality criteria of scientific papers that you would like to add or that you feel important that I consider in this study?

*Comments and/or criticisms are welcome.*

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Thank you for answering the questions!

This is a first part of the survey, which will **continue with short qualitative interviews** to further explore the issue the criteria that identify quality in scientific journals.

**Would you consider participating in a short, 15-minute interview via phone or Skype?**

Your contribution is highly appreciated!

*Katarina Krapež*

37. If you are willing to participate in a 15-minute interview please state your contact e-mail (and phone-number, if possible):