



## Writing for publication: Strategies and challenges for academic staff in higher education

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### Abstract

Publication is a key step for researchers in disseminating research results to the scientific community and the general public. An effective publication strategy can help researchers or academic staff ensure maximum impactful research. The current study succeeded in exploring the strategies of academic staff in writing for publication in reputable international journals. A descriptive qualitative approach using the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) technique has been used in this study to answer the research issue. 20 academic staff of public universities in Indonesia participated in this research. This study found three strategies used by the participants; (1) browsing relevant articles for references, (2) Selecting one relevant article as a model, (3) Matching the quality of the original article with some articles in targeted journals, (4) Choosing the relevant journal for publication, and (5) preparing a publication-worthy manuscript according to the journal template. Additionally, there were several crucial factors that hindered the improvement of staff in higher education's publication abilities in international journals. Such consisted of; uneven allocation of incentive fund distribution, administrative burden, and inconsistent university policy as a facilitator. Suggestions and recommendations were also discussed further in the current study.

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## Introduction

The publication of scientific articles is very important in the academic and research world. For staff in higher education, the publication of scientific articles has become a vital thing in an effort to support the development of science, academics, intellectuals and their careers as academics as well as researchers. Through research and publications, they can spread knowledge of scientific interests in the wider community. Bakan and Jansen (2015) said that the urgency of research on the publication of scientific articles for staff in higher education is a crucial issue still being discussed today.

Recently, there has been a growing concern about the urgency of research in developing countries. Until now, the culture of writing and conducting scientific studies is still really lacking in several developing countries, especially in Indonesia. This has led to the low level of research publications produced by Indonesia at the international level, particularly in reputable international scientific journal citations. According to Salih et al. (2020), a challenge brought on by this dilemma is the difficulties publishers have in identifying high-quality manuscripts. Bozeman and Gauhan (2011) stated one of the problems caused by this issue is the difficulty of finding quality manuscripts for publishers.

Besides, according to Husin and Nurbayani (2017), one of the toughest problems experienced by academics in conducting research and writing research results in developing countries is the lack of proper training provided by the campus. The lack of understanding of academics regarding strategies in writing articles in international journals is something that experts are still discussing. A study conducted by Pho and Tran (2016) also explained that there are main barriers felt by academics in carrying out publications, namely; (1) lack of funding and long-term time requirements for publication, (2) lack of experience in carrying out publication activities, and (3) lack of proper information to fulfill the lack of knowledge about publications. In response to this matter, increasing the quality and amount of research in various developing countries needs to be developed. Besides, Amoako et al. (2021) also demonstrated that the obstacles to college academic staff regularly publishing their research products were inadequate information technology abilities, lack of writing experience, inadequate basic knowledge and skills in research techniques, and a lack of mentorship.

Given the importance of the benefits of conducting research and publications among academics and the

development of science regularly, it seems to inform the public of the importance of research. However, there is still little attention from previous studies that examine and explore the ability of staff in higher education especially at the public universities in developing countries to publish their research results in reputable international journals.

Furthermore, from the results of analyzing the mini observations, the researchers found that Jambi University, which was the target of the study, has an increasing number of research outputs. As released in the performance report of Jambi University in 2023, academic staff's performance and research output increased from 2021 to 2023. This identifies the productivity of academic staff in the field of research. Obviously from these results, there are several strategies owned by academic staff to achieve these achievements. In another mini study, researchers also found that academic staff faced several problems in implementing the publication process. One of the difficulties often encountered by academic staff is the lack of access to navigation of scientific publications related to publishing regulations, journal requirements and administrative publishing guidelines/rules that often hinder the smooth publication process. Several obstacles related to publication costs were also identified as one of the sources of problems in the publication process. Therefore, identification and further in-depth understanding of these challenges are important.

In response to the results of the mini observation, the researchers felt it was important to carry out further investigations related to the strategies of academic staff in writing and publishing their scientific papers in reputable international journals. Besides, the researchers will also dig deeper into the problems they face when carrying out publication activities. Therefore, the present study has several purposes; (1) to explore the strategies and abilities of staff in higher education in writing articles to reputable international journals, (2) to investigate inhibiting factors in improving the ability to publish a reputable international journal passed by staff in higher education at one of the universities in Indonesia.

## Literature Review

### *Professional Development of Staff in Higher Education Through Publication*

Scientific publications are very important for educators, especially staff in higher education around the world. Scientific publication is the process of

disseminating research results or academic work to the public through the media. In various universities, publication of scientific work is an important undertaking required by staff in higher education. In addition, through publications, staff in higher education can show their professionalism and abilities in their fields of concern.

At present, the professional development of staff in higher education around the world has become a means of evaluating the quality and contribution of staff in higher education in the academic world and the wider community. Based on the results of a study conducted by Brown et al. (2014), the publication of scientific papers can help staff in higher education deepen their understanding of the topic of study, and increase their contribution and strong reputation in their academic field. According to Clark (1998) consistent publications can increase the academic rank, promotion, and recognition of a staff in higher education for academic achievement. In addition, the publication of scientific papers is a way for staff in higher education to face the international standards of an educator and contribute to a better understanding of global research issues.

### *The Factors Inhibiting Scientific Publication*

The success of something is not be immune from small obstacles that follow. It is the same with the publication process, where there are also several obstacles. According to Purwanto et al. (2020), doctoral students mostly feel obstacles in publication activities. The first problem is the limited publication funds which are relatively expensive. The second problem refers to the limited time owned by graduate students., where the division of time for work and completion of studies is still a crucial problem for carrying out publication activities. Then, the third problem is finding credible references. The fourth problem is the relatively long publication process. The fifth problem that hinders the scientific publication process is the lack of ability to use tools or software that support technical writing such as grammarly, mendeley, and tools to check plagiarism. Finally, the last problem is the limited information on reputable international journals.

Julianto (2018) also researched factors that hinder the improvement of the publication skills of S2 and S3 postgraduate students. The study revealed that there are several main factors that constrain the process of successful scientific publication. The factors are as follows; (1) lack of writing skills and habits, (2) lack of ability to use technology such as digital libraries, search for e-journals, and academic database portals such as

Google Scholar and Moraref, (3) lack of foreign language skills, (4) lack of networks for collaboration, and (5) difficulty in finding reference sources.

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### **Methodology**

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. Therefore, in-depth interviews were employed in this study. 20 academic staff of public universities in Indonesia participated in the current study. The 20 academic staff were selected using purposive sampling technique. In the selection process, the researchers had to set some criteria. Moreover, as mentioned by Creswell (2013), it also allows the researchers to offer diverse perspectives and rich information from the selected participants. The selected criteria consisted of; (1) participants who have their own experiences and strategies in writing research articles, (2) participants who have struggles in writing scientific research articles, and (3) academic staff at Jambi University, which is one of the state universities in Indonesia.

The selection of research locations in this study was very carefully considered and adjusted to the research needs by the researchers. Therefore, during the research process, the researchers carried out several important considerations that correlated with the research objectives. The reasons for choosing Jambi University as a research location were practical considerations, namely; ease of access to research and the availability of resources that have an understanding and problems relevant to the topic of the present study.

To obtain data for this study, the researchers conducted interviews using focus group discussion (FGD) techniques. The FGD process was carried out on August 10–13, 2023. Two groups of FGD were used in the current study. Each of these groups consisted of 10 participants.

Each of the participants in the focus group was interviewed for one hour and thirty minutes. The sharing time given to each participant in the discussion activities varied whereas they delivered their point of view for mostly 2–3 minutes.

The following are the details of the number of participants in each group, as shown in **Table 1**.

**Table 1** Group FGD

FGD Group	Total Participant
FGD 1	10
FGD 2	10

**Table 1** shows the number of participants in each Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The process of data collection was carried out with the help of an interview guideline. The interview guideline contained 12 open-ended questions designed to explore information about the strategies and problems faced by academic staff in writing scientific articles. As described in Rubin and Rubin (2012), the researchers also included several practical techniques to respond to the participants' answers, research ethics, and probing techniques to explore participants' responses in depth.

After the data were collected, all conversations during the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Then the data that had been transcribed were re-read by the researchers. In this study, the researchers used member-checking and investigator triangulation techniques to check the validity of the research data before further analysis. In member-checking activities, the researchers provided the participants a pre-publication copy of research write-ups. This aims to allow the participants to solicit their feedback regarding the data's accuracy. Then afterwards, the researchers also carried out investigator triangulation activities. In this case, the researchers conducted a comparative analysis of individual findings (Stahl & King, 2020). In this technique, the researchers also concluded together and conducted discussion activities on the results of the individual analysis of the findings before the data were further analyzed.

After the reliability of the data was checked, the researchers coded and analyzed the data discussed in the

interviews. The coding activity is based on the process proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), namely; (1) open coding, (2) axial coding and (3) selective coding. Based on the results of coding, the researcher then classified the findings in this study into the following themes, as shown in **Table 2**.

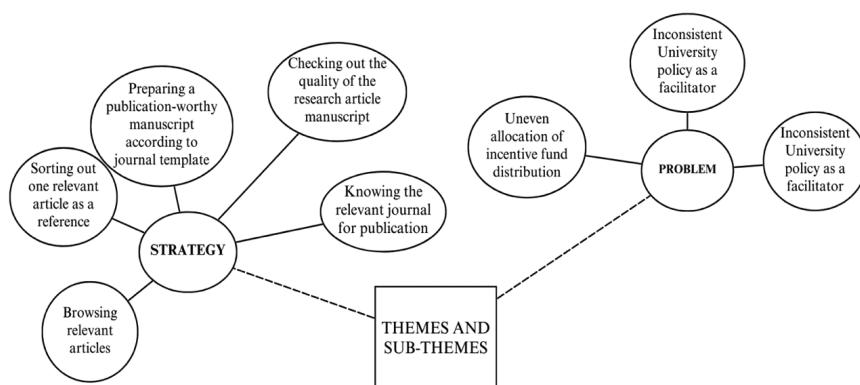
The next step is not only the coding stage but interrelating themes into description (Cresswel, 2009). In this phase, the researchers interrelated the themes that had been found in this study. Besides that, the researchers also described the themes that had been determined, which were supported by quotations from the interview results. Afterwards, the last stage was interpreting the meaning of the themes. This activity was carried out to describe and synthesize the results of research supported by several previous findings and expert opinions as answers to the questions in this study.

## Results and Discussion

Here, the researcher aims to dig deeper into the research results that have been obtained. The data in the data analysis were presented carefully and precisely to identify patterns, trends and relationships between the themes found. To present the findings in this study, the researchers presented themes and sub-themes using a figure. The figure is designed to illustrate more clearly the results of the findings in this study. The following is a description of the findings that researchers visualize with **Figure 1**.

**Table 2** Themes derived from coding process

No	Themes
1.	Strategy helps staff in higher education in developing country to write an article journal publication?
2.	Crucial Factors that hinder the improvement of staff in higher education publication ability in reputable international journals



**Figure 1** Themes and sub-themes

In response to the research results that have been specified in certain themes, the following is a further explanation of the findings in this study:

### *What Strategy helps Staff in Higher Education in Developing Country to write an Article Journal Publication?*

#### *1. Browsing relevant articles*

Browsing relevant articles before writing a research article is an important requirement for a researcher. Through searches related to current research, a researcher can find gaps in the latest research that have not been studied by previous researchers who are being studied. It can also help us read the conceptual framework, methodology, and theory used on similar themes. In line with this study, the researchers found that Participant 12 explained that looking for relevant, similar articles was important. Participant 12 further said that relevant articles can be a guide for understanding current issues that are being investigated. This is explained by Participant 12 in the following quote:

*Participant 12: "One of the ways I do publications is to look for relevant articles as examples or what I usually call shadow articles. From there I was able to find research gaps that previous researchers had not studied."*

Apart from that, using relevant articles as a guide can also be used as a strategy, it turns out this can also be used to avoid duplication of work. Based on the information provided by Participant 8, reading existing research can help researchers not to repeat research that has been carried out previously. This can help researchers avoid plagiarism. In this regard, Participant 3 explains in the following quote:

*Participant 3: "Just as explained previously, I also use relevant articles before designing and writing my research articles. I use this trick to avoid plagiarism activities. Apart from plagiarism, it can also help me avoid duplication of work."*

In response to Participant 3's statement, Participant 8 then explained that browsing relevant articles was a good thing to do. The reason is that this can help researchers update or dig deeper into research topics.

*Participant 8: "I also agree that browsing relevant articles can be a starting point for us to write research articles that will later be published in the target journal."*

Apart from that, by browsing relevant articles, researchers can also validate and support the arguments they write.

*Participant 7: "We can dig deeper into the research topic as a reference and also to validate the arguments we write."*

Besides that, another benefit of browsing relevant articles is that it helps researchers find the right research method for the research they are working on. Based on the explanation put forward by Participant 14, researchers can learn about research methods that have been used in previous research through relevant articles. For this reason, relevant articles can be a guide for writers and researchers to choose the method that best suits the research being carried out. This was expressed by Participant 14 in the following quote:

*Participant 14: "I think relevant example articles can help me when deciding which research method I will use. Through these examples I can avoid errors in using methods on the data that I will process."*

To summarize the previous explanation, the researcher can conclude that there are benefits from "article browsing" before writing a journal article. These benefits consist of; (1) serving as a guide for understanding current issues being investigated, (2) avoiding plagiarism, (3) helping researchers to update or dig deeper into research topics, (4) validating and supporting the researchers' arguments, and (5) determining appropriate research methods.

#### *2. Sorting out one relevant article as a reference*

Closely related to the previous discussion, sorting out one relevant article as a reference is also important. In this way, a researcher can get a guideline that can be followed. Based on the research results, the researchers found that several participants thought that sorting out one relevant article could help them in the writing process. According to Participant 16 and Participant 14, one relevant article that has been published as a reference can provide researchers with direct insight into the structure and format of the targeted scientific journal. Through one relevant article as a reference, researchers or writers can dissect how to organize parts of an article such as; the abstract, introduction, methods, results and discussion, and bibliography. This was explained by Participant 16 and Participant 14 in the following explanations:

*Participant 16: "From several references that have been collected, I usually make one of the most relevant articles which becomes my guide for writing the research articles that I write. From there I can see the process of arranging the parts in the article."*

*Participant 14: "Based on the examples of articles that guide me, I usually see how the author presents the abstract, methods, and so on."*

Writing guidelines in a research article have various very important benefits. Through writing guidelines, a researcher and writer can maintain the quality and integrity of the articles they write. According to the American Psychological Association (2020), writing guidelines can help writers maintain consistency in writing articles. In the writing guidelines, writers must pay attention to several things, such as; language style, numbering tables and figures, and how to cite references. These article writing guidelines can also be copied from previously published articles in target journals. In connection with this, Participant 16 explained that researchers can learn how to write correctly and effectively through one relevant article. Authors can also follow the language order, citation method and writing style in the targeted journal. This is explained by Participant 17 in the following quote:

*Participant 17: "I frequently make use of sample articles that have already appeared in the journal I'm aiming for. There, I can observe the type of writing used in earlier pieces published there.."*

On the other hand, Participant 14 explained that, in order to maintain conformity with the intended journal target, sorting out one relevant article was the most likely thing done by researchers. Articles on the same issue can help researchers understand the specific authorship standards of the targeted journal. This trick has apparently become something that is often used by staff in higher education. In response to this, the following is an explanation from Participant 15 related to the previous explanation:

*Participant 15: "In fact, we frequently utilise this technique to access target journals like Scopus and others. We can gain insight into the authorship requirements of the target journal by consulting one pertinent journal. For this reason, having a sample journal that we can refer to is equally crucial...."*

Then sorting out one relevant article can help researchers and writers understand how to organize arguments with strong explanations. Based on the findings in the research, Participant 14 explained that sorting out relevant articles could help researchers understand how to present and support the findings they had obtained. As explained in the following quote:

*Participant 14: "Through this, I can follow the process and how to present the findings in my research. Of course, the article is also related to the topic I am reviewing."*

Based on the explanation above, the researcher can conclude that one relevant article as a reference is one of the tricks widely used by higher education staff to carry out the publication process in target journals. Through an example article that is relevant to the article being worked on, the author can get several benefits such as; understanding how to write parts of an article, learning how to write correctly and effectively in the target journal, understanding the writing standards specific to the target journal, and understanding how to organize arguments with strong explanations.

### *3. Preparing a publication-worthy manuscript according to journal template*

According to Smith (2010), these things include writing details, clarity and quality. This means that comprehensive research must describe detailed and comprehensive research issues. Therefore, there are several important parts that must be included in scientific writing/research articles published by a staff in higher education or researcher. There are several things that researchers can do to prepare a manuscript that is suitable for publication in reputable international journals such as; (1) determining the gap in research, (2) designing a comprehensive abstract writing, and (3) elaborating and clarifying research methods.

#### *1) Determining the gap in research*

Determining research gaps is an activity researchers carry out to identify aspects of knowledge gaps that have not been covered by previous research. In designing research, a researcher is required to find gaps in significant research because this can be a foundation and a new contribution to the science to be developed. A researcher must indeed consider consideration of the contribution and importance of a scientific work. According to Lee and Clark (2019), researching aspects not touched by previous research can create new insights into pre-existing theoretical frameworks. This is proven by the

results of research that researchers have conducted. From the findings, the researcher found that one of the participants explained that the main way he prepares before building a study was to look for gaps in research and something new according to the context of the research to be studied. The following is his explanation:

*P8: "The main thing I do is study and look for gaps in my studies."*

Researchers can use various ways to increase significance through gaps or vacancies in research issues. One of the participants in this study explained that VOS Viewer is one software he uses to look for issue trends from the studies he wants to develop. This can be done by entering keywords or keywords from the issue to be raised. After knowing the issues that are still not widely explored, the next thing he does is look for the most relevant articles to determine the state of the art and novelty of the knowledge to be raised. This is explained in the following quote:

*P1: "Actually, we use this method all the time to acquire access to specific journals like Scopus and others. By consulting one relevant publication, we can learn more about the authorship standards of the target journal. This is why it is equally important to have a sample journal that we may use."*

*P8: "The way to find novelty is to search using vos viewer and see the webnet. That way, you will see the web of keywords appearing in the apk. then just look for the most relevant articles."*

*P2: "We usually use keywords in relevant journals and look at related articles that have discussions that are also relevant to our research paper."*

Including suggestions in research has an important role in the context of science. According to Brown et al. (2020), suggestions included in the body of scientific writing can inspire other researchers to continue studies that have not been touched upon in the scope of previous research. This can also help inspire future researchers to be able to deepen or validate the findings that have been found previously. This is also explained by Participant 8 in the following quote:

*P8: "The way is to look into the content of the findings in each up-to-date study. Then look at suggestions for future research."*

## 2) Designing a comprehensive abstract writing

The abstract is a brief summary of the entire research content. In the abstract, several things are listed including the content, objectives, methods, results and conclusions of a study. According to Simkhada et al. (2013), the abstract provides a brief overview of the content of the research. This can help readers understand the content of the topic and the findings without having to understand the entire content of the article. Therefore, it is important for researchers to make a comprehensive abstract so that the results of the research can be well represented.

Based on the explanation put forward by Simkhada et al. (2013) in writing an abstract, a researcher should provide a summary of how to carry out the research, the analysis process and the findings. In line with the findings in this study, the researchers also found the same thing. The participants explained that the main things that must be listed in the body of the abstract are explanations of research procedures, research results and conclusions. The following is Participant 14's explanation regarding this matter:

*P14: "The purpose of the research, the methodology used, the results of the research and the conclusions I think need to be included in the research abstract."*

*P13: "The research's objectives, methods, findings, also conclusion I covered in the research abstract."*

Then, paying attention to the length and style of language in an abstract is also important. Generally, the language style used in the abstract is clearer, shorter and more academic. In writing an abstract, a researcher must also pay attention to the number of words contained in the abstract. Based on the findings in this study, the participants explained that the number of words in the abstract is 150–250. This was explained by Participants 8 and 16 in the following quotes:

*P8: "So the most important thing in the abstract writing process is the use of language sir. Usually, the language we have to use is academic and clear. Don't be too wordy."*

*Participant 16: "The number of words is also important. Generally, 150–250 must be listed in the abstract."*

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that there are several things that need to be considered by researchers when writing abstracts. The first is to include

research objectives, methodology, research results and conclusions in a concise and comprehensive manner. Then the language used must also be straightforward and not wordy. In addition, the number of words used must also be limited.

### 3) Elaborating and clarifying research methods

Clarifying the research method in the article is very important. This can help researchers ensure transparency of research, data collection methods, validity, and analysis stages. Clarity of research methods in an article can help researchers to penetrate publications to reputable international journals. In addition, clear and detailed methods can reflect the suitability of the problem and how to solve the problem. This was expressed by Participants 20 and 12 below:

*P20: "The method should be written clearly and in detail, so that it is clear how the problem-solving process is used by researchers."*

*P12: "It is important that the methodology be written in a clear and comprehensive manner to make it evident how researchers solve problems."*

To elaborate and clarify research methods, there are several ways that must be considered by a researcher/writer so that his writing can be accepted in reputable international journals. Based on the findings, the researchers found that justifying and paying attention to the selection of appropriate research instruments can help researchers clarify existing research methods. Another way is to pay attention to appropriate data analysis techniques. In addition, explaining in a straightforward and detailed manner about sampling procedures and raising international cases and handling using methods that are appropriate and trending in the international arena is also a tip for writing good article methods. This is explained by Participant 8 in the following quote:

*P8: "Justify and pay attention to the selection of appropriate instruments for research. Pay attention to appropriate data analysis techniques. Pay attention and determine the right sample/sampling technique. Pay attention to the case that will be raised from the field to become an internationalization issue. Taking the essentials of research in the international arena."*

From the results of the study, the researchers found ways used by the participants in elaborating and clarifying research methods in the articles they wrote.

Based on the findings, one of the participants explained that paying attention and explaining how to analyze each reviewer's comments can help researchers in rebuilding and elaborating the research methods used in the submitted research articles. P1 and P6 explain this in the following quote:

*P1: "The way is to pay attention and explain how to analyze each reviewer's comments."*

*P6: "I also try to see the results of the reviewers' comments and then revise them according to the directions given."*

Based on the previous explanation, it can be concluded that there are several things that researchers can use in elaborating and clarifying research methods in articles that will be submitted to reputable international journals. These methods consist of: (1) using clear and detailed language that can reflect the suitability of the problem and how to solve the problem, (2) justifying and paying attention to the selection of appropriate instruments, (3) paying attention to appropriate data analysis techniques, (4) explaining in a straightforward and detailed manner about sampling procedures, (5) using methods that are appropriate and are trending in the international arena, and (6) paying attention and explaining how to analyze each reviewer's comments.

### 4. Checking out the quality of the research article manuscript

Before carrying out the process of publishing scientific articles in journals, authors usually have to go through several important steps. This is useful for ensuring that the scientific articles that have been written meet the quality standards required by the target journal. This step is important for the author to ensure that the research results written are acceptable and contribute to the field of knowledge being studied. Based on research results, one of the steps that researchers can take before publishing their writing in the target journal is checking out the quality of the research article. This was conveyed by Participant 5 in the following quote:

*Participant 5: "Crosschecking the quality of the article is an important step for me before submitting it to the target journal."*

Based on the explanation given by Participant 5, there are several steps that need to be carried out when checking out the quality of the research article manuscript. These steps consist of: (1) carrying out proofreading with experts or colleagues, (2) verifying data and facts, (3)

checking the suitability of the writing style in the target journal, and (4) checking the reference list. In this regard, the following is an explanation from Participant 5:

*Participant 5: "I do proofreading with colleagues who are more experts, then I also check the data and facts. Not only that, I usually check the suitability of the writing style required by the target journal. Oh yes, sometimes we also need to check the list of references we cite."*

From the analysis results, there are several benefits from checking the quality of the research article manuscript. According to Schulz and Grimes (2002), checking or reviewing before carrying out publication activities can help researchers identify where inaccuracies in research results are located. In line with the results of this research, several participants explained that checking the quality of the research manuscript articles can help researchers increase the validity of research results. This is explained by Participant 8 in the following quote:

*Participant 8: "Of course, checking the quality of the research article manuscript can increase the accuracy of the research results we have."*

Apart from that, proofreading/peer review before publication is also a form of checking the quality of the research article manuscript. According to the explanation put forward by Simisaye (2019), activities like peer review and proofreading can assist researchers in raising the caliber of their work. Based on research results, constructive and critical input from the results of proofreading or peer review activities can help researchers improve the quality of scientific articles written by researchers. For this reason, it is very important to do this, as in the following explanation:

*Participant 9: "Through peer review activities we can improve the quality of our writing, which means we know where the writing needs to be improved based on critical suggestions from colleagues..."*

##### *5. Knowing the relevant journal for publication*

Writing journal articles is one of the main tasks in the academic world of higher education. Journal articles that can be categorized as good can improve the author's reputation and contribute to scientific knowledge in the field being studied. As explained by Fueyo and Koorland (1997), writing journal articles for publication can empower staff in higher education to explore the profession as researchers and academics. In addition, this publication activity can also be an activity of critical

reflection on crucial issues. However, writing journal articles and publishing them in reputable international journals is not an easy task. Therefore, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2014), there must be a strategy used by staff in higher education in increasing the productivity and quality of their articles to be accepted in reputable international journals.

In relation to the publication interests of academics, this study successfully examined several strategies that can help staff in higher education in writing journal articles for publication in reputable international journals. From the results of the research, the researchers found two ways to carry out publication activities. The first is to make references and observe the destination journal on the website of a collection of reputable international journals. This reference activity is carried out to find out which journals have relevance to the research topic. In addition, this activity can also help academics, especially staff in higher education, to look for trending issues based on their respective fields of study. This is explained by P1 and P2 in the following quotes:

*P1: "The first strategy I use is to look for references to reputable journals on several websites."*

*P2: "We can also observe the quality of the journals and their relevance to our research themes on the website."*

Then, in response to this, researchers continued to investigate the types of websites used by academics to sort reputable international journals along with the accreditation of these journals. From the results of the research there were 3 types of websites used to carry out journal referral activities, namely; Schimago, Scopus Review, and Elsevier. This was expressed by P3 and P4 in the following quotes:

*P3: "I usually refer to Scimago"*

*P4: "Scopus, Elsevier can also help us to see the volume, quality of the journal and its relevance to the field we are studying."*

The journal websites are sites that summarize information about the destination journal. On these sites, participants can see the journal index, and the consistency of published articles. As explained by Smith and Johnson (2020), websites such as; Schimago, Scopus Review, and Elsevier provide access to thousands of reputable and high-quality scientific journals that have been tested by experts in certain fields. In addition, readers can also see the number of publications contained in the

destination journal. which according to Anugrah et al. (2020), the fewer articles published in the journal, the better the quality of the journal. Through this, it is hoped that academics can assess the quality of the destination journal.

Furthermore, preparing manuscripts that are worthy of publication is very important. However, there are several things that must be considered by a researcher so that the writing can be of quality and accepted in international journals. Determining a work that is suitable for publication is an important step in the publication process. Therefore, seeing and understanding the quality of the research written is the main step taken by Participant 5. According to Participant 5, assessing the quality of one's own writing is very important. Through this consideration, staff in higher education/researcher can consider whether their work is on target and on purpose, or can make a contribution or not. This is explained in the following quote by participant 5:

*Participant 5: "The way is to first look at the research quality to determine whether the paper is worth publishing. If you want to go to an international journal, the writing should be internationally based and raise international issues as well."*

According to the participants, crosschecking article writing before publication is an important step that must be carried out by researchers. Article eligibility activities are a way to ensure that the research used meets methodological standards and can produce valid results. In addition, according to P15, this activity can also help researchers identify and correct errors or weaknesses in the article before it is published.

*P15: "I think this can help us academics in knowing the weaknesses and strengths of the articles we write. In addition, I also feel that we can also crosscheck the suitability of the methodology we use."*

Through the activity of checking the feasibility of writing on articles before publication, a researcher or academic can maintain the integrity of the scientific writing he writes. In addition, researchers can also ensure that the research produced can contribute and be easily understood by the wider community.

## *Crucial Factors that Hinder the Improvement of Staff in Higher Education' Publication Ability in Reputable International Journals*

### *1. Uneven allocation of incentive fund distribution*

In conducting publications, of course, there are several obstacles, one of which is the obstruction of the allocation of research funds, that are unclear and uneven, which makes staff in higher education think twice about writing scientific articles because a research fund is what supports the success of research. Therefore, the allocation of good and equitable funds has an impact on the writing of scientific articles to be published in reputable international journals. If the allocation of funds is correct and equal, it will make researchers feel better and be more diligent in writing scientific articles to be published in reputable international journals. This is in line with P12 who said:

*P12: "But it doesn't have the funds to go there. And, I am now especially here, there is also no incentive to go to scopus, so it is difficult."*

*Participant 13: "Grants/incentives to refer to scopus are still lacking for new staff in higher education/assistant experts."*

What is meant by unclear research funds is that there are studies that are not published in Scopus, only in the Coperenicus index, but the funds obtained are funds in Scopus. Incentives are things that have a very good impact on researchers, which makes researchers more numerous. Especially for new staff in higher education or expert assistants, the amount that must be paid in one publication is quite large, and this is a matter of consideration for new staff in higher education when carrying out scientific publications in reputable journals.

### *2. Administrative burden*

Apart from that, the things that influence or hinder are too much administration, too much administration needed, too many things to do besides writing articles, such as for disbursement of funds, because as we know, publishing articles in reputable journals requires a lot of funds, which means researchers have to wait for funds provided by the university. This is also a big problem for researchers whose status is independent as they will find it difficult to get funds to publish the results of their research.

*P1: "A lot of administrative burdens, inconsistency of institutional leaders."*

*P17: "Too much administrative burden is placed on us as researchers."*

More than that, the slow review process is also one of the administrative problems faced by writers in publishing their research results. Sometimes writers have to wait for months to be able to publish their research results in international journals. After that, the submitted articles are not necessarily accepted without improvements, which is also what makes it difficult for researchers to publish. This can occur due to the lack of available reviewers or inefficient management systems. Furthermore, a difficulty of administration is the difficulty in choosing the right journal because researchers must understand what fields of research are covered by the journal. Researchers must also be able to choose which journals have a good reputation because, as we know, there are a lot of bad journals.

### *3. Inconsistent University policy as a facilitator*

Universities play an important role as facilitators of research. One of the main tasks of the university is the provision of resources, facilities and infrastructure needed for research. According to Amoako et al. (2021), in doing experiments and outdoor research, these facilities can be helpful to researchers. One of the facilities needed by researchers is research funding. Universities in developing countries often provide research funding in the form of grants, scholarships and internal research projects. These funds can help researchers to fund their projects in carrying out innovative research. However, the problem is that on some campuses in developing countries like Indonesia, this policy is often inconsistent. One form of administrative burden felt by staff in higher education is the inconsistency in performance evaluation policies. P6 conveyed this in the following quote:

*P6: "I am sometimes confused by the different policies, sometimes we staff in higher education who are active in research are considered unprofessional also in the field of teaching."*

Based on the findings, P6 explained that performance evaluation policies from the university are sometimes inconsistent. Policy inconsistencies related to the provision of research funding are also still a hot topic of discussion among new staff in higher education. The results of this study successfully revealed that young staff in higher education experience inequality in financial support. P19 and P3 stated that the size of the incentive is sometimes based on the rank of the staff in higher education. Some young staff in higher education who

experienced this felt that this hampered their ability and demotivated them to create quality research.

*P19: "There are many obstacles such as the provision of incentive funds that are unequal for us new staff in higher education."*

*P3: "The unequal distribution of incentive funds means that we sometimes lose our enthusiasm to produce quality articles again."*

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## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The first finding successfully examined staff in higher education's strategies for writing articles in reputable international journals. There are some ways that can be implemented by the staff before deciding to publish their research results in reputable international journals, namely; (1) browsing relevant articles, (2) sorting out one relevant article as a reference, 3) checking out the quality of the research article manuscript, (4) knowing the relevant journal for publication, and (5) preparing a publication-worthy manuscript according to journal template. Based on the results of the study, the researchers found three factors that hindered the improvement of the ability of the staff in higher education to write and publish their research results. The first is the unevenness of the incentive provided and the funds allocated not being clear. The second is the administrative burden which is too much. And the third is unclear institutional policies that contribute to administrative burdens.

The findings of the current study include finding tips or strategies for staff in higher education to write journal articles in reputable international journals. However, there are several scope findings that have not been studied by further researchers. Therefore, the researcher suggests for future research to examine the factors that support the success of staff in higher education and academics in publishing in reputable international journals.

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## **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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