

EDITORIAL

To Publish or To Perish: The Common Plight of Authors, Graduate Students and Journal Editors

In academia, so it seems, one of the only ways to make it to the top--or the only way to be promoted up the ladder of scholarship--is to publish frequently and in well-regarded journals. That seems to be the way to thrive and survive in the current academic world. As Murphy (2018) succinctly puts it, "*publishing frequently and in top-tiered peer reviewed journals is the ticket to advancing in academia.*"

For young researchers and new academics, this demand of the academic world may be a little overwhelming. Having to juggle between new teaching duties and supervisory roles and most likely family life, many might find it stressful and unattainable to publish frequently. For graduate students, the publication of at least one journal article based on their research has now been made a graduation requirement by numerous universities, so much so that many students have resorted to mindless copying and pasting from their theses in what they feel to be a publication feat. Thus, it is not surprising that many a time, the pressure to publish comes at the expense of originality and meaningful thought (Murphy, 2018), and this affects the quality of articles submitted for publication in journals.

For journal editors, the pressure is of a different kind. It develops from the need to adhere to deadlines and produce timely publications. At the same time, editors are torn between getting issues out on a timely basis and including in those issues quality articles--articles that truly have substance and contribute to academia and society in ways that mean something. It is the responsibility of editors to understand everything they read in every article to be published. Therefore, they need to be sufficiently knowledgeable in the relevant subject matter. There is a lot that goes on behind the scene before an issue is published. Editors need to consult with reviewers on the content, make suggestions to authors, coordinate changes to the text, and proofread the final version before printing. To achieve all this, editors sometimes must spend a tremendous amount of time with both authors and reviewers before an issue is good to go. At the end of it all, they must ensure that what gets published is truly good quality work. Such is the plight of journal editors in the world of publication.

To ease this editorial process and to uplift the quality, hence dignity, of publication material, perhaps it is not too imperious to ask authors to really sit down and think through the ideas and content they are working on, and ask themselves these questions: Are my ideas making sense? Are they clear and coherent? Is the piece I'm producing for public consumption rational and intelligible? Is my writing dignified? How will my ideas and writing benefit students, faculty and universities, locally and worldwide?

Authors and writers, be they students or faculty, should take time to think of all these factors and assess the quality of their articles before sending them to journals. The pressure to publish should not cloud the exercise of rationality and good judgment. Journal publication is a serious academic endeavor, one that should be treated with respect, responsibility and dignity.

It should not be done just to fulfill a certain requirement. Again, quoting Murphy (2018), is this (i.e. publishing merely to fulfill conditions and requirements) what the new generation of academics (and graduate students) should strive for?

The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said, "Allah likes those who, when they do something, they execute it with their best ability and are very thorough." This principle of *itqan* applies equally to article writing and journal publication.

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Note:

This editorial is partly inspired by the writing of Murphy, L. (July 23, 2018). Publish or Perish. *The Business of Society* [Online]. Accessible at <http://www.bos-cbscsr.dk/2018/07/23/publish-perish-paradox/>