

Practical Strategies for Improving the Quality of University Journals from the Perspective of Editors

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Abstract: With the deepening of academic research and exchanges, university journals, as crucial academic publishing platforms, play a significant role in the education sector, benefiting schools, teachers, and students alike. This paper delves into the quality connotation of university journals from the perspective of editors. Furthermore, it analyzes the current challenges in the publication and implementation of university journals, highlighting issues such as lack of distinctiveness and limited quality, which warrant further exploration and scrutiny. Finally, the research proposes a series of practical and effective improvement strategies. It aims to mobilize the efforts of all stakeholders, enhance team capabilities, and strengthen peer review processes to foster the advancement and enhancement of journal quality. Additionally, it aspires that the suggested methods will offer valuable insights to frontline educators and administrators.

Keywords: Editorial perspective; University journal; Quality; Practical strategy

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1. Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving society, knowledge and information are expanding at an unprecedented rate. Journals, as primary channels for information dissemination and cultural promotion, merit thorough exploration and practice. Endowed with the characteristics of academic research outcomes and scholarly exchanges, university journals shoulder the vital responsibility of advancing scientific progress and cultural diffusion ^[1]. However, amid escalating competition among university journals, establishing a high-quality journal system has emerged as a significant challenge for stakeholders. Viewed from the perspective of editors, enhancing the quality of university journals necessitates high-caliber content, well-established production and review processes, robust teams, review mechanisms, and quality control systems ^[2]. Editors, playing a pivotal role in journal management, must possess requisite professional qualifications and be backed by comprehensive support systems, as these factors profoundly influence journal quality.

2. The quality connotation requirements of university journals

The quality of university journals is intricately linked to every aspect and stage of the entire publishing process, with quality control necessitating a focus on content, editing, proofreading, printing, and other crucial elements, all of which are indispensable. Firstly, the political, academic, and innovative nature of the manuscript reflects the overall content of university journals, making quality control in this regard paramount. The author posits that the political nature of the manuscript holds primary importance, as only those aligning with China's Regulations on the Administration of Publication can garner recognition and widespread acceptance. This entails that the content must not breach the fundamental principles of the Constitution, jeopardize national unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, disclose state secrets, or endanger the nation^[3]. By ensuring the correctness of the political orientation, manuscripts can be published and disseminated widely, effectively embodying academic and innovative values, and reflecting cutting-edge trends in disciplinary development^[4].

Simultaneously, the standardization, accuracy, and readability of manuscript formats also play a pivotal role in determining final quality. The author asserts that attention and optimization are warranted for the standardization, accuracy, and clarity of document formats. Only documents embodying knowledge, logical coherence, scientific rigor, and common sense, coupled with reasonable design elements such as text, formulas, and charts, can qualify for publication and dissemination. Moreover, journal topic selection, column design, and other aspects require rational control to ensure adherence to basic manuscript norms before being deemed publishable.

Additionally, the layout design and printing conditions of the journal significantly influence quality. Only components meeting standard or superior criteria can be deemed "intentional products." Scientific layout design and printing quality serve as the core competencies of university journals, showcasing the "intellectual demeanor" of university scientific research and practice^[5].

3. The problem analysis of journal publishing practice

3.1. Lack of journal characteristics

In 2022, China convened a symposium on Social Science Journal Work in National Universities, where common issues in journal publication were elucidated and assessed. These issues were categorized as complete yet scattered, small, and weak. Comprehensive and prominent declarations in various subjects were evident, with content often appearing as simple stacks lacking distinct research characteristics. The terms "scattered," "small," and "weak" denote inadequacies in depth, effectiveness, and focus, highlighting a lack of journal distinctiveness as the fundamental problem^[6]. To address this, emphasis should be placed on enhancing journal specialization, prominence, scale, and strength. This entails continuous improvement in research professionalism, specificity, applicability, and competitiveness to deepen and expand journal quality^[7]. By doing so, university journals can increasingly exhibit unique characteristics, laying the groundwork for ongoing optimization and innovation to secure a prominent position in future scientific research.

3.2. Limited academic standards

The limited academic standards of journals manifest in several ways. Firstly, scarce high-quality resources pose a challenge, with many institutions relying on scientific research outcomes for faculty title evaluations. Consequently, there is a shortage of core journals for recognizing such achievements, adversely impacting overall journal quality. Moreover, the prevalence of nepotism and relationship-based submissions leads to instances where articles are authored by faculty from affiliated institutions, lacking genuine academic value.

3.3. Common integration of editing and proofreading

Furthermore, the integration of editing and proofreading is common, driven by limited funds and staffing constraints. Specifically, the editing, processing, and finalization stages of journal publication, along with the “three schools and one reading” tasks, are often merged into one. This consolidated approach, managed by a single staff member, leads to prolonged delays in editing and processing, making corrections and optimizations challenging. Consequently, it significantly increases the editor’s workload and compromises the production quality ^[8]. The author contends that journal work demands the expertise of professionals, as seen in other specialized industries. Editors cannot substitute for the roles of other staff members, and the integration of editing and proofreading serves as a short-term cost-saving measure. To uphold journal quality, it is essential to rectify this situation by avoiding over-reliance on individuals or software operations. Instead, diversifying production methods and approaches can enhance the quality of college journals.

4. The practical strategies for improving the quality of university journals from the perspective of editors

4.1. Strengthening the construction of the editorial team

Establishing a professional editorial team represents the initial stride toward enhancing the quality of university journals. It is only through the engagement of specialized personnel that the core focus on journal quality improvement can be maintained. These professionals are adept at refining relevant workflows, systems, and modes progressively, thereby continuously elevating the journal’s quality standards. Recruitment efforts should prioritize attracting skilled and proficient editors to assume roles as university journal editors. These individuals will be tasked with upholding academic norms, publication ethics, and staying abreast of the latest research developments, among other responsibilities. This entails a perpetual enhancement of their cognitive acumen and continuous optimization of the journal-related workforce ^[9]. Moreover, streamlining the editorial team’s workflow, delineating each part’s responsibilities through appropriate system implementations, and directing reviews across different subject areas are imperative steps. Establishing efficient internal communication channels and review and evaluation mechanisms is essential. Implementing reasonable evaluations, encompassing both educational product evaluations and student subjective evaluations, based on a fair and robust evaluation system, can offer praise as well as serve as a pathway for spiritual and professional development ^[10]. Ultimately, improving the team’s editing prowess and comprehensive capabilities constitutes the primary step in enhancing the quality of university journals. This entails optimizing the team structure, workflow, etc., while instilling a heightened sense of social responsibility. This will motivate them to invest in the journal platform, pursue recognition, and contribute valuable insights, thus deserving of comprehensive exploration and practice.

4.2. Optimizing the peer review process

Optimizing peer review stands as a pivotal factor in enhancing journal quality. Only by overseeing the review process and bolstering quality screening can we make fundamental strides in improving journal standards. This involves several steps, including initial draft screening, expert review, revision feedback, and final publication. Specifically, increasing the involvement of professional reviewers in the expert review phase and conducting meticulous manuscript evaluations to provide effective feedback is crucial. This ensures that peer review truly adds value and enhances the effectiveness of journal management. Institutionalizing a standardized submission process, incorporating online submission and automated document generation functionalities, and maintaining comprehensive manuscript records lay a robust foundation for quality control ^[11]. Furthermore, optimizing the review team by recruiting experts and scholars from various disciplines enhances the team’s

proficiency. Professional matching, review records, and impartiality should be considered to ensure the peer review mechanism's efficacy. Utilizing a unified and standardized review process encourages experts to offer professional and actionable suggestions. This involves conducting thorough assessments of manuscript originality, methodologies, data, and conclusions, and providing constructive feedback based on evaluation criteria ^[12]. Incorporating revisions based on these suggestions or resubmitting manuscripts for review invariably enhances their quality. If feasible, engaging in third-party evaluations can further refine the manuscript control process and provide an additional layer of validation. In summary, optimizing the peer review process and elevating university journal quality hinge on implementing a standardized and integrated review mechanism.

4.3. Focusing on quality in all aspects of journal operations

From an editorial perspective, emphasizing journal quality entails not only meticulous attention to detail in the review process and quality control but also ensuring high standards across all facets of journal management, reception, and publication. Firstly, the journal should be tailored to reflect its unique characteristics and those of the institution. Upholding specific academic quality and standard requirements, such as originality, scope, direction, and practical value, demands that submitted manuscripts meet high-quality standards, thereby fundamentally enhancing the journal's content quality ^[13]. Secondly, thematic planning should be prioritized to attract manuscripts from diverse research fields and disciplines, thereby expanding the journal's influence and attracting high-quality submissions. Encouraging interdisciplinary and innovative research publications helps elevate the journal's stature. Additionally, where feasible, collaboration with sister universities and international institutions can facilitate the introduction of advanced academic resources and management expertise. This fosters global interaction and cultivates an excellent academic exchange environment, further enhancing the journal's quality. Through frequent collaboration projects and knowledge exchange, the university journal can continually elevate its quality standards and undergo high-quality development amid ongoing refinement and reform efforts. Despite the extensive application of information technology and improvements in quality evaluation systems in recent years, there remains ample room for enhancing the quality of university journals. Front-line managers, editorial teams, and staff must collaborate closely, perform their duties diligently and responsibly, and collectively ensure the overall quality of college journals ^[14]. In conclusion, centering the work of university journals around quality entails clarifying their positioning, content, and themes, expanding their influence, and enhancing interaction and communication. By doing so, we can elevate the overall standards of the journal and lay a solid foundation for future development.

4.4. Strengthening journal publicity and promotion

To enhance the publicity and promotion of the journal, professional teams, including the journal management department, the school publicity department, and the network publicity department must collaborate to accomplish this task. Firstly, it is essential to clearly define the target audience for publicity, including academia, education, student groups, and the general public. Subsequently, combining professional and social content can effectively achieve the desired impact. In addressing both the academic community and the public, it is vital to tailor content to their interests and utilize various content and mediums to broaden influence. For instance, publicity within academic and educational circles can occur through academic conferences and seminars, while expanding the reach of publicity can be achieved through relevant research topics and paper presentations. Furthermore, leveraging digital platforms such as building a digital journal website, publishing electronic journals, and utilizing social media accounts and video content can enhance the dissemination of scientific knowledge to a broader audience. Collaborations with foreign databases and indexing institutions

can further ensure the wide dissemination and application of journal articles ^[15]. To effectively enhance journal quality, establishing a feedback mechanism to selectively incorporate suggestions from readers and authors is crucial. By continuously improving the level and service quality of the journal, a comprehensive and systematic university journal system can be developed. Through this iterative process, a university journal can evolve into a prestigious symbol, showcasing the academic prowess and distinctive attributes of the institution. Consequently, it can significantly enhance the university's visibility and influence in the academic community and beyond.

5. Conclusion

Overall, enhancing the quality of university journals is a comprehensive endeavor that requires collaborative efforts from editors, scholars, school management, and other stakeholders. Strengthening the professional development of the editorial team and enhancing the standardization of editorial practices are essential steps to ensure the academic and editorial integrity of journal content. Similarly, optimizing the peer review process and upholding impartiality and professionalism in reviews contribute to elevating the academic caliber of the journal. Moreover, prioritizing quality as the focal point of journal operations and continually enhancing academic standards and influence are pivotal for improving journal quality. Lastly, through effective publicity and outreach efforts, the journal's reach can be expanded, attracting more high-quality manuscripts and fostering a virtuous cycle of improvement.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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