International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies
ISSN: 2202-9478
www.ijels.aiac.org.au

Reasons for Manuscript Rejection at Internal and Peer-review Stages

Souhail Adib[1,2], Vahid Nimehchisalem[1,2]*

[1]*Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia*
[2]*IJELS Editorial Office, Melbourne, Australia*

Corresponding author: Vahid Nimehchisalem, E-mail: editor.ijels@aiac.org.au

ARTICLE INFO

Article history
Received: January 1, 2021
Accepted: June 22, 2021
Published: July 31, 2021
Volume: 9 Issue: 3

Conflicts of interest: None
Funding: None

Publication Note:
In this Featured Article, IJELS editors share the results of their analysis of IJELS editors and reviewers' rejection notes.

ABSTRACT

The noble aim of publishing an article is to drive the wheel of scientific research forward; pragmatically speaking, though, and that is the case of many authors, a publication is a set criterion for their graduation or promotion. When publishing an article is mentioned, authors tend to contemplate rejection. Some fear rejection to the point of refraining from drafting the manuscript. To identify the most common reasons why submissions are rejected, internally by the journal editors (also referred to as preview or screening stage), and externally by the blind reviewers, we analysed the preview and review comments of 100 rejected submissions to the *International Journal of Education and literacy Studies* (*IJELS*) in the period between 2018 and 2020. The results of inductive thematic analysis indicated that the main reasons why submissions were rejected at the preview stage were problems with originality, poor language, scope, format, and organization. At the review stage, the main reasons were methodology, organization, language, insignificance, and literature review. Additionally, other less common reasons why manuscripts were rejected were that they lacked clear and conventional result reports, in-depth discussions, and thick conclusions, relevant, current, and impactful references among others to be discussed in this article. Many of these issues are, of course, fixable and future authors are highly encouraged to go through this paper and treat it as a guideline that will improve the quality of their manuscripts, and therefore, they will stand higher chances of acceptance.

Key words: Manuscript Submission Guidelines, Publication, Reasons, Rejection, Review

INTRODUCTION

We publish journal articles for a variety of reasons. Some publish out of necessity. It is part of the requirements for an academic degree attainment. Others want to advance their professional careers. Promotion may be a serious driving incentive behind publishing articles. In addition, there are those who publish to add to the existing body of knowledge, to fill in a gap in the literature, or to solve a scientific problem. Regardless of the motivation behind publishing an article, authors hope that their publications achieve a considerable impact in their respective area of expertise.

An important aspect which affects the publishing process of a paper is the choice of the publication venue. Authors should cater their works to the criteria set by the desired journal's editorial board and reviewers in order to prevent their submissions from being rejected. The *International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies (IJELS)*, a platform which this study was based on, is a peer-reviewed journal that has been running for a decade now. Papers of different qualities and scopes are constantly submitted to *IJELS*. To our experience, rarely is a paper submitted and accepted without requiring further revisions. The authors of these manuscripts are always informed about the reason(s) why their submissions were rejected. What the present article is aiming to do is to help the future contributors of *IJELS* self-assess and decide if their works are ready before they submit them. The identification of the common reasons that result in rejection was the motivation behind this study, in which we investigated the rejected submissions alongside their respective preview or review comments to determine the most common reasons of rejection.

Objective

Our aim was to identify the typical reasons why submissions to a scientific double blind peer reviewed journal (*IJELS*) are rejected at the preview stage as compared with the peer-review stage. We expect that this paper will serve as a guideline and a preventive measure against possible rejection for our future contributors. It indicates what is considered by editors and reviewers problematic and thus leads to rejection.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Upon drafting an article, the idea of rejection or rather avoiding it is always at the back of the author's mind. Some

Published by Australian International Academic Centre PTY.LTD.

http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.9n.3p.2

authors are so crippled by the idea of rejection that they do not engage in writing the article and dismiss the idea of publishing in the first place (Pierson, 2004). Different journal editorial boards and reviewers in order to help and encourage authors with this daunting task do carry out investigations to identify the reasons of rejection and outlining what can be done to improve the quality of submissions. Several studies have been conducted using data from submissions to variety of journals that belong to different fields from medicine to social sciences. These investigations aim to identify the factors that make a submission worthy of publication.

A study was carried out by Kim et al. (2020) in St George's University School of Medicine to outline the most common reasons of manuscript rejection. Authors' failure to follow the journal's formatting guidelines, failure to revise the manuscript for resubmission based on reviewers' comments, and submissions being outside of the journal's scope were the main causes of rejection. Wyness et al. (2009) analysed comments left by reviewers and editors on 662 papers submitted to *Ophthalmology and Visual Science Journals* in order to come up with the most popular reasons for rejection. They resolved that the leading causes were insignificance of the submitted work in regards with existing literature, serious flaws in the methodology followed by authors, and the low quality of the language used in terms of clarity and coherence.

Pierson (2004) surveyed *Respiratory Care Journal* with the purpose of finding out the top 10 reasons why manuscripts are not accepted for publication. He reported that in general manuscripts with serious flaws in methodology receive no tolerance from reviewers and editors and they are rejected without a second thought. Poorly drafted manuscripts, outdated literature review section, and failure to address the scope of the journal are additional reasons that affect the decisions of reviewers and editors. However, in *Respiratory Care Journal*, the top 3 reasons for manuscript rejection were poor study design, failure to revise and attend the comments of editors after the review in case of resubmission, and inability to write and submit a full paper after abstract presentations. Among these, the most fatal flaw for a manuscript is to conduct a study with an inappropriate study design; while other flaws can be fixed, this one is not amendable.

Moreover, an analysis was conducted by Kibret (2017) on the reasons why manuscripts are unacceptable for publication. For this purpose, he assessed 101 manuscripts submitted to the *Ethiopian Journal of Education (EJE)* between the years of 2008 and 2013. For *EJE*, most rejections happened in the preliminary round of screening during the internal assessment by the journal editors. After this screening, the editors would decide whether a given submission is publishable material and worth to be sent to further reviewing or not. If they were in favour, they would send it to two peer-reviewers for a blind review. Kibret indicated that 39% of submissions were rejected during the peer-review process. He further stated that the most common pitfalls of submissions were inappropriate data analysis procedures and presentation, inadequacy of data to justify conclusions reached by authors, and flawed research methods.

Another study was carried out by Dogra (2011) regarding the rejection of manuscripts. He collected and analysed 655 papers from *Indian Journal of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology (IJDVL)* and 66% of these submissions were rejected. Among the most common reasons for rejection were poor study design, weak methodology, flawed interpretation of results, extremely poor writing, no contribution to the existing knowledge, duplicate submissions, and plagiarised work.

Evaluation of submissions is arguably subjective and in some cases a matter of taste which opens room for bias. However, when we examine the results of the previous empirical research in the area, we often come up with a recurring list of criteria, such as originality, scope, format, language, and methodology, novelty, and research validity, which end up in the rejection of submissions. Other most specific points or less common issues may also be added to the list of criteria, such as, outdated literature, inappropriate data analysis methods, weak design, inaccurate report and interpretation of results, and insignificant contributions. What may lead to interesting findings is an analysis of the rejection reasons at the preview stage in comparison with those at the peer-review stage which is the objective of the current study.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researchers selected the data from an archive of papers submitted to *IJELS*. The selected submissions were either rejected at the preview or peer-review stage. Then, they followed an inductive thematic analysis approach to identify the reasons for rejection for each stage separately. The researchers examined 100 rejected papers submitted to the journal in the period between July 2018 and October 2020. The data analysed was in the form of comments left on each submission by the editor-in-chief or reviewers of the journal stating the amendments and revisions that needed to be considered by authors in order to enhance the quality of their manuscripts. These comments were collected and analysed for the repeating ideas which were further analysed to induce emerging themes. Furthermore, the frequency of the central themes was calculated to identify those that occurred the most. These themes then were listed as the reasons why the submissions were rejected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is divided into three parts. The first part focuses on the reasons for rejection at the preview stage while the next section reports those at the review stage. The last section singles out reasons that were not frequent, but caused rejection, nonetheless.

Reasons for Rejection at the Preview Stage

In this section we present the most frequent reasons behind rejections at the internal review (also called preview) stage. These included issues related to originality, language, scope, format, and organization, besides some other less frequent reasons that are discussed in this section (Figure 1).

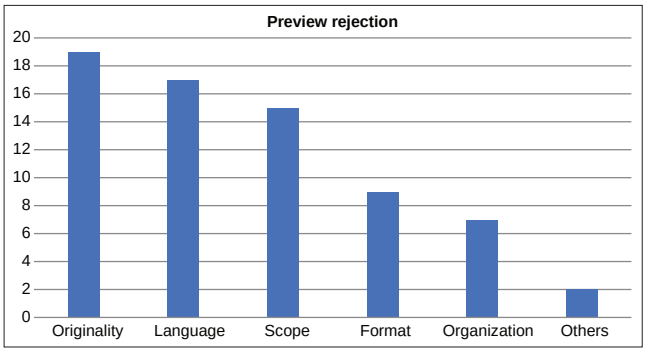

Figure 1. Reasons why submissions are rejected at the preview stage

Originality

The concept of originality is an important characteristic in the scientific conduct of research, and it is an indispensable element for the advancement of science because originality connotes additional fresh knowledge is built upon existing one (Shibayama & Wang, 2020). It is also a crucial aspect that is seriously taken into consideration by *IJELS* editorial board when deciding whether to accept or reject submitted papers. When we say originality, we mean that the submitted work should be a complete intellectual propriety of the author. The authors of the paper should incorporate their own novel ideas and draw supporting arguments from existing literature of the field.

Each submission goes through an originality check with the help of Turnitin software. If the Turnitin similarity report exceeds 24%, the paper is considered not original. It is worth to mention that in some cases, the similarity report index is high, but the work is original and belongs to the author. While in other cases, the index report may be low, but the content of the paper contains a plagiarised content. In order to avoid plagiarism, the author is advised to cite the sources of information in accordance with the referencing style acknowledged by *IJELS*. The takeaway is that the journal editorial board does not tolerate plagiarism. As indicated in Figure 1, one in five submissions, or 19% of submitted papers, is rejected because it does not conform to originality standards of *IJELS*. That makes originality the number one reason for rejection.

To illustrate the issue of originality, we will discuss two cases that are in stark difference in terms of originality. In a previous issue, we received two interesting manuscripts. Upon running the originality check, the similarity reports indicated 14% and 95%. The problematic submission was obviously the paper with a high similarity percentage. We contacted the author, she provided evidence that showed that the manuscript was her original unpublished work submitted to her university, hence the high similarity report. Contrastingly, the paper with the low similarity of 14% initially presented no originality issue. Though at closer inspection, chunks of other authors' works were copied and pasted into this submission making this paper a plagiarised work despite a low similarity report. Therefore, the focus should not be merely on the similarity index but on the highlighted content in the report; even a single highlighted sentence accounting for only one percent of similarity is considered a case of plagiarism. That single sentence is enough reason for the authors to wish their manuscript had never been published as the only thing it brings is professional shame.

Language

When it comes to manuscripts, written language is the mode of communication that connects authors and their readers. Language is a vessel that transcends authors' ideas, and its quality is of dire importance. Even if the content of the paper is original, novel, and well-thought-out, poor language skills make it difficult for previewers, reviewers, and readers to understand what is expressed throughout the paper. Accurate terminology and well-expressed ideas increase the effectiveness of language and make the information expressed in the paper get across successfully. Suitable academic style, objective tone, grammatical accuracy, clarity of language used, and word choice are some elements that contribute to the quality of manuscripts.

Accordingly, the previewer looks at the paper from a linguistic perspective. At this stage, the content of the paper is overlooked, and the decision of either accepting the paper or rejecting it is solely based on the linguistic value of the paper. In other words, the quality of language use will indicate whether the content of the paper is expressed well enough for readers to follow and comprehend. Figure 1 illustrates that 17% of papers are rejected by *IJELS* editorial board due to language problems. Poor language ranked second on the top 10 reasons behind the rejection of papers.

Authors ought to be careful about the quality of their language while drafting their manuscripts. After a quick scan, editors will easily notice the language errors. Some of the most common errors include, punctuation, capitalization, and wrong word choice, among others. Language errors cannot help but reflect on the overall quality of the study being presented in the manuscript. They will leave the impression on the reader that the whole study lacks quality. Language is the last aspect of writing that should come to the writer's mind, but it is the first aspect that the reader will notice if anything is wrong with it.

Scope

Choosing a venue for publication is an important factor that goes into the decision of whether accepting or rejecting a manuscript. According to Kotsis and Chung (2014), 76 % of rejected articles by a certain journal were later accepted and published by other journals; the reason was that they were not within the scope of the journal. This shows the importance of choosing the right journal for publication. As hinted by its title, the *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies* is limited to the scientific research and practice related to education and literacy. Papers submitted to the journal that are not related to education and literacy are immediately rejected. Nevertheless, in many cases the previewer does suggest to authors to link their paper if possible, to the area of education and literacy or highlight the link. As shown in Figure 1, 15%

of submitted paper were rejected due to being outside of the journal's scope.

Format

A great emphasis is put by the editorial board of *IJELS* towards the formatting style of the submitted papers. When authors fail to format their papers in the proper academic conventions accepted by the journal, when it comes to either references or technical conventions, their paper may become rejected. Failure to follow the submission guidelines may possibly affect the credibility of the paper by decreasing its face value. As it can be seen in Figure 1, 9% of submitted papers were rejected after the internal review as they did not adhere to the formatting guidelines of the journal.

As authors, we may wonder why journals should worry about the format of the manuscripts before the review process; the manuscript may become rejected anyway. The reason is the indexing bodies' sensitivity about the consistency of the journal content format. Some indexing bodies are so stringent that they will reject journal editors' application for inclusion only due to inconsistent format of references. This makes editors extra particular about the format of the manuscripts even before they are sent for review. In the case of *IJELS*, manuscripts were not rejected at preview stage merely because of the referencing style or layout of tables as these issues are addressed during copy-editing or typesetting, respectively; however, manuscripts are returned to authors when, for example, they exceed the acceptable word limit for a full paper. In our data, there were those submissions which were rejected since they were below or over the acceptable word limit stated in the author guideline section in *IJELS* website.

Organization

According to our results, around 7% of papers are rejected by the editorial board of *IJELS* because the authors failed to portray a clear systemic description of their study (Figure 1). Organization covers aspects like how well the paper is structured and the ideas are presented, discussed, and linked together. Adequate organization could be illustrated by the way authors choose to structure their ideas. A well-organized paper is a manuscript that supplies the reader with a complete comprehensive manual on how the research was administered. Each section of research should be well-thought-out and follow a logical flow. The information regarding the problem statement, the incorporated methodology, the presentation and discussion of results, and the implementation of results should be detailed clearly. Authors are required to link their ideas coherently not only in terms of language but also in the logical order. That plays a crucial role in how the paper is judged for organization.

Other reasons for rejection at preview stage

In addition to the aspects mentioned above, there were also other reasons for rejection that emerged at the preview stage, but they had low frequency. One of these was the case of incomplete manuscripts. In these submissions an entire obligatory section, particularly the discussion or the methods sections, was missing or lacking. Other less frequent problems that also resulted in rejection included lacking criticality, depth, and scholarly rigor in some of the manuscripts especially in their introduction and literature review sections. For example, there was this submission that aimed at investigating the motivation level of a group of students at a university. Besides its insignificant objective, its literature review also lacked the criticality expected from a decent journal article.

Reasons for Rejection at the Review Stage

The review stage is the stage where submitted papers are being inspected blindly by experts in the area. As opposed to the preview stage, reviewers are often given ample time to examine the manuscripts scrupulously in search for possible flaws. Reviewers usually do leave substantive comments for authors to enhance their papers' quality before they resubmit them for re-evaluation, and in some cases they reject the paper altogether. Based on our experience, compared to the preview stage, and perhaps because of that stage, fewer manuscripts are usually rejected at this stage. This section reports the most recurring reasons for rejection at the external review (also called blinded peer review) stage. These included issues related to methodology, organization, language, significance, and literature review, alongside some other less common reasons that are presented in this section (Figure 2).

Methodology

The number one reason why submissions are rejected at the review stage by *IJELS* reviewers is when authors fail to provide an audit trail for other researchers to enable them to replicate their study or fully understand it. Thin description of the whole methodology section, flawed data analysis, wrong methodological choices, inappropriateness of the selected study design, missing important details regarding data collection and data analysis procedures, are some of the reasons among others why reviewers take the decision of rejecting papers. Figure 2 shows that 15% of papers are rejected by reviewers due to problems in the methodology section.

The methodology section is the backbone of any scientific study and it may strongly be one of the first sections that

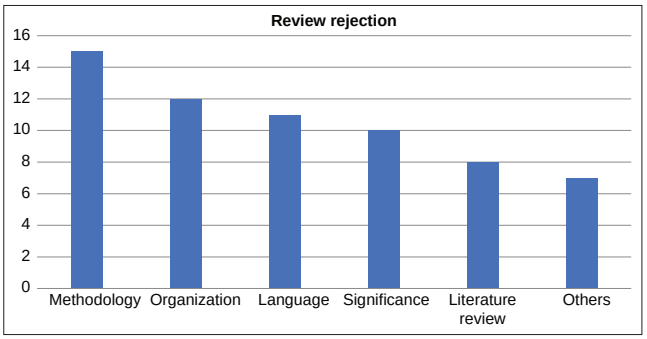

Figure 2. Reasons why submissions are rejected at the review stage

reviewers evaluate. Reviewers do reject manuscripts solely based on serious flaws encountered in this section (Pierson, 2004). It is where authors exhibit the scientific approach they follow in their studies. In the methodology section, reviewers expect authors to display clearly and in a detailed manner how they collected the data, chose the sample, and why they adopted certain frameworks and study designs, and so on. Moreover, authors are required to justify their choices of elements of methodology. In other words, they are ought to leave a coherent audit trail.

Organization

The emphasis in this part is on the overall structure of the manuscript content-wise. Reviewers are particular about how authors organize their ideas and how well they are expressed, linked, and represented in terms of following a rigorous and logical order. As Figure 2 indicates, 12% of rejected submissions are papers the authors of which fail to organize them on par with the standards of *IJELS* reviewers.

Language

Similar to the preview stage, reviewers take a linguistic approach to analysing submitted papers. Language may seem like a secondary aspect to consider and not such a remarkable aspect as the content when deciding over whether to accept or reject a paper. However, reviewers do not overlook the quality of the language used. Grammatically accurate and error-free language does play an important role in levitating the quality of submissions. While the content is of principal weight to the reviewers, poor language skills and vagueness of the language used when drafting the content are factors that decrease the likelihood for submitted papers to be accepted for publishing. A paper full of grammatical and language errors reflects a degree of carelessness of authors in drafting their manuscripts and that could make reviewers question the seriousness of authors when conducting their studies (Dogra, 2011). Figure 2 illustrates that 11% of papers submitted to the journal are rejected for language problems.

Some of the common language problems in the manuscripts submitted to *IJELS* include, punctuation errors (such as capitalization errors and wrong use of comma), grammatical errors (particularly, subject verb agreement), and wrong word choice. Inaccurate use of language is an actual red flag for most reviewers and editors. Such errors will irritate most readers, are penalised heavily, and could lead to rejection of manuscripts.

Significance

When reviewers are presented with a paper that they believe supply no additional benefit to the field, they have no choice but to reject it. One in ten review rejections in *IJELS* are due to the issue of significance (Figure 2). The main driving reason why we carry scientific studies is to bring up change, impact, and to add a valuable contribution to our field of study. A paper should add to the existing body of knowledge, solve a problem, or fill a gap in the literature. In other words, the investigation conducted in the paper should attribute meaningfully to the scientific field. Therefore, the significance of study is another remarkable factor that reviewers are commonly sensitive about.

Literature review

Figure 2 shows that about 8% of submitted papers are rejected due to problems related to the literature review section. In assessing the literature review section of papers, *IJELS* reviewers left such comments as, *The literature review is shallow; Previous studies need to be added; Recent literature must be incorporated;* and *The literature review is lacking and is unclear.*

Literature review is adopting existing knowledge and looking at it with a fresh perspective. It is the critical evaluation and synthesis of previous scholarly works (Fink, 2014). In addition, it is what gives the paper a scientific soundness, and it shows that authors are well-versed in their respective area of expertise. A well-established and well-written literature review illustrates that the author is aware and up-to-date with recent developments occurring in the field. Moreover, an articulately written literature review reflects that the authors are critical, and that they base their work on an in-depth analysis of previous existing knowledge. Insufficient or weak literature review may doom the paper to be rejected.

Other reasons for rejection at review stage

The reasons discussed in this section did not recur frequently but they are noteworthy because they affected the final decision of the journal reviewers. One of these reasons was lack of research validity. This happened when the results were not aligned with the objectives stated at the beginning of the manuscript. Similarly, some of the manuscripts were rejected because of vague research objectives.

In addition, some of the manuscripts that were rejected had ill-written or missing parts in their abstracts. The abstract is the part of a manuscript that leaves the first impression on the reader as it is the first section of a paper that the reviewer reads. An abstract in a paper as important as the blurb of a book. Authors should take great care when drafting the abstract because if it fails to attract the attention of the reviewers, it will be difficult to change their decisions later. When reviewers and editors are faced with a problematic abstract, they will have reservations towards the paper as a whole.

Other reasons for rejection included missing or lacking results, discussions, or conclusions. Reviewers expect authors to follow the established conventions in reporting their results. Authors are also expected to discuss their results in the light of the previous empirical research findings and explain their results according to the related theories in the area. Finally, thin conclusions would also irritate the reviewers who would recommend the authors to relate their findings to the problem stated at the beginning of their manuscripts. The reviewers also tended to reject the manuscripts in which the conclusion was not aligned with the results. In one manuscript, anxiety was reported

Table 1. Comparison of Preview and Review Results

Preview	*f* (percent)	Peer-Review	*f* (percent)
1. Originality	19 (27%)	1. Methodology	15 (24%)
2. Language	17 (25%)	2. Organization	12 (19%)
3. Scope	15 (22%)	3. Language	11 (17%)
4. Format	9 (13%)	4. Significance	10 (16%)
5. Organization	7 (10%)	5. Literature review	8 (13%)
6. Others (completeness of submissions, criticality, depth, scholarly rigor, and article length)	2 (3%)	6. Others (research validity, quality of abstract, results, discussions, conclusions, and/or references)	7 (11%)
Total	69 (100%)		63 (100%)

to have negligible and insignificant correlation with performance and yet the author had recommended that the teachers should help their students to reduce their anxiety! The reviewers expected the authors to conclude *their own* results. Finally, another reason for rejection was related to references that were irrelevant, insufficient, outdated, and not from reputable sources.

The results reported so far corroborate the findings of previous studies. Similar to Kibret (2017) and Dogra's (2011) results, in which wrong data collection and analysis methods, and inadequate results and unjustified conclusions were reported as the reasons for rejection, our results also pointed to the importance of these important parts of manuscripts. Failing to adhere to journal's formatting guidelines was a leading cause for rejection in Kim et al.'s (2020) study which also concurs with the results of our study. Format is a principal aspect of a manuscript that is ranked fourth in reasons for rejection at the preview stage. In addition, submitting a manuscript that falls outside a journal's scope is considered a fatal flaw by Kim et al. (2020) and Pierson (2004). In a similar stream, our results showed that scope is one of the main reasons why submissions are rejected at the internal screening stage by *IJELS*. As it was the case in Wyness et al.'s (2009) findings, significance of the contributions turned out to be one of the reasons based on which manuscripts would be rejected. Almost every study that was presented in our literature review section reported poor or low quality of language used in drafting manuscripts as a central reason for rejection. Our findings also put a great emphasis on language as it was a rejection reason that ranked high at both the internal and the external review stages. However, we had some other results which are particular to the context of *IJELS* and novel to the area and will be presented in the next section.

COMPARISON OF PREVIEW AND REVIEW RESULTS

A comparison of the preview and review results that led to the rejection of submissions to *IJELS* (Table 1) shows mostly different criteria:

According to the results in Table 1, originality and methodology are at the top of the list for preview and review rejection reasons, respectively. The reason why originality is missing in the peer-review column is the journal's zero-tolerance to plagiarism. We carefully check the manuscripts for their similarity with other sources right at the beginning of the process and if there are any issues, we reject the submission, leaving no problematic case for the peer-review stage. A similar explanation can be given for scope that emerged as a result of analysing the preview but not the peer-review comments. On the contrary, methodology is one of the criteria that is considered during the peer-review only; therefore, methodology is missing at the preview stage.

In contrast, two of the related criteria that recurred at both stages were language and organization. This result is also not surprising. A possible explanation for this result could be that problems related to language and organization are expected to be easily fixed by the authors or with the assistance of professional editors. In other words, it could be concluded that reviewers are less intolerant to language and organization problems than other more remarkable issues like originality and methodology. Moreover, language and organization are two highly subjective aspects to be judged. Although there are conventionalised standards about the type of language and organization when it comes to manuscript drafting, there is a considerable deal of creativity and this may be another reason why language and organization can be found as reasons in both the internal screening and the blinded review stage.

As we mentioned earlier, preview is the initial stage where a submitted paper goes through a primary check-up. That is why flaws such as scope, format, originality, and article length can be easily spotted and addressed at this stage. If it is a flawed paper, it only proceeds to be blindly reviewed after the necessary amendments have been made. On the other hand, peer-review stage is where reviewers identify rather qualitative manuscript shortcomings like significance, methodology, literature review, and research validity. The findings of our study presented in Table 1 were reasonably in accordance with the purpose of both internal and external review stages.

CONCLUSION

Rejection is a common outcome when submitting an academic article for publication. Therefore, authors should anticipate it and shift their perspective on how they look at rejection. Feeling sad is totally understandable but authors should not be impeded by the feeling; rather, they ought to

analyse reviewers and editors' comments with as openly and objectively as possible; knowing that working on their articles considering the comments is only going to make their submissions stronger and more suitable for future publication (Kim et al., 2020).

In this paper, we presented the top reasons why submissions are rejected at both preview and review stages. It should be noted that inasmuch as our data were limited to only a short period and a small sample size of only 100 submissions, these results could not be considered the only reasons for rejection. What was reported in this article was only some of the most frequent reasons for rejection. Some of the reasons mentioned in this paper overlap that means that by improving one aspect, the authors will inevitably be able to improve another.

To our experience, some of our reviewers read the manuscripts more carefully and critically than some of the authors. Likewise, in some cases, some reviewers made more efforts than some authors in the process of amending the manuscripts. Some reviewers would recommend the manuscripts be rejected after several rounds of review and revisions. Therefore, it is really important for authors to spend some quality time reading their manuscripts critically and from the reviewer's viewpoint before (re) submission.

On the other side of the continuum, there are also authors who may over-react or panic when their manuscripts are rejected or critically reviewed. Authors are advised to take rejection seriously but not personally to avoid unnecessary feelings of disappointment and unprofessional reactions. Rejection should be regarded as an opportunity to improve a manuscript before resubmission hoping that it will have better and higher impacts on the community.

REFERENCES

Dogra S. (2011). *Why your manuscript was rejected and how to prevent it*. Indian J Dermatol Venereol Leprol, *77*(2), 123-7. doi: 10.4103/0378-6323.77449. PMID: 21393939.

Fink, A. (2014). *Conducting Research Literature Reviews: From the Internet to Paper* (4th ed.). SAGE. *Retrieved* from https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/literaturereview

Kibret, B. A. (2017). *Why are manuscripts unacceptable for publication? An analysis of Ethiopian Journal of Education (EJE) rejections*. *Educational Research and Reviews*, *12*(2), 83-93.

Kim, S., Petru, M., Gielecki, J., & Loukas, M. (2020). *Causes of Manuscript Rejection and How to Handle a Rejected Manuscript.* Shoja, M., et al. *A Guide to the Scientific Career: Virtues, Communication, Research, and Academic Writing, First Edition.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Kotsis, SV & Chung, K. C. (2014). *Manuscript rejection: how to submit a revision and tips on being a good peer reviewer*. *Plast Reconstr Surg.*, *133*(4), 958-964. doi: 10.1097/PRS.0000000000000002

Pierson, D. J. (2004). *The top 10 reasons why manuscripts are not accepted for publication*. *Respir Care*, *49*(10), 1246-52.

Shibayama, S. & Wang, J. (2020). Measuring originality in science. *Scientometrics*, *122*, 409–427 https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-019-03263-0

Wyness, T., McGhee, C. N., & Patel, D. V. (2009). Manuscript rejection in ophthalmology and visual science journals: identifying and avoiding the common pitfalls. *Clin Exp Ophthalmol, 37*(9), 864-7. doi: 10.1111/j.1442-9071.2009.02190.x