

Relationship between journal sustainability and compliance with the principles of transparency and good practice in scholarly publishing

Tuğçe Pekçoşkun^{1,2}, Kadri Kiran^{1,2}, Didem Aydan³, Fatma Başar³, Cem Uzun^{1,2}

¹Trakya University, Edirne, Turkey, ²EASE Turkish Regional Chapter, ³TÜBİTAK-ULAKBİM, Ankara, Turkey

Correspondence: cemuzun@yahoo.com



INTRODUCTION

The majority (about 60%) of academic journals are published by higher education institutions such as universities in Turkey (Kozak 2017). Sustainability of journals depends on many factors, both in terms of editorial processes and financial expenses of the journals. The expenses of most of the university journals in Turkey are covered by the resources of the universities, and mostly the workload of the journals is carried out by the academic staff of these universities. In order to increase the quality of scientific journals and to provide a suitable environment for publishing, a platform has been established in the name of DergiPark under TÜBİTAK-ULAKBİM since 2015 (Dergipark 2021). Index studies have been started in Turkey since the 1960s, and since 2013, TR Index was established by TÜBİTAK-ULAKBİM, which also has selection committees aiming to increase the quality of academic journals (Aslan, 2019, TR Index 2021). The articles in the journals in this directory have gained advantage in academic appointments and promotions. The vast majority of Turkish university journals are open access and do not charge any fees from authors and readers.

The third version of the principles of transparency and good practice in scholarly publishing (principles of transparency), which was published by DOAJ, COPE, WAME and OASPA in 2018, and it has become easier for journals to be accepted to DOAJ if they comply with these minimum criteria (Redhead, 2018). DOAJ is seen as a safe index especially in terms of identifying Predatory journals that have been on the agenda in recent years (WAME 2016).

Because, in a previous study, it has been found that quality journals among Trakya University journals highly comply with the principles of transparency (Kiran, 2018). In this study, we planned to investigate the parameters related to journal sustainability during a certain time period and their possible relationship with the principles of transparency in terms of the sustainability of academic journals.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

We evaluated whether journal sustainability was related to compliance with the principles of transparency.

In order to minimize possible confounding factors, we chose all of the 45 peer-reviewed journals, which are hosted by the same platform (DergiPark) and published by the economics and administrative science schools in Turkey, as the study sample. All these journals are open access journals and their operations are carried out by academics within the university. The status of the journals between the years 2015 and 2020 was analysed in terms of journal sustainability such as publication status (activity-continuing publishing or stop publishing), number of issues, submissions or articles per year, rejection rate, common volume or issue if any, use of DergiPark submission system or not, and indexing in important indices (TR Index, DOAJ, Web of Science core collection or Scopus) which were available from the DergiPark database.

Regarding the journals compliance with those principles were analysed. The sixteen transparency principles and their 27 subheadings of the third edition (OASPA, 2018) were taken in to account. Finally we have analyze the relationship between the parameters of the journal sustainability of those journals and the compliance with principles of transparency. Whenever the numbers big enough we used student's t-test for the comparisons. $p < 0.05$ was accepted as significant.

RESULTS

It has been determined that two journals have terminated their publications during the study period. Generally, half of the journals published 1 or 2 issues and the other half 3 or 4 issues peer year (Fig 3). Mostly, journals received 57 to 408 submissions and published between 18 and 208 annual publications. Accordingly, the rejection rates that we calculated varied between 14% and 78%. We did not detect a common issue or a common volume in any of the journals.

The principles related to "Website", "name of journal" and the "peer review process" were the most coherent principles (%98, %100 and %100 respectively). However, there were no information on "advertising" and "direct marketing". It was important to find that the overall coherence to the "Publication Ethics" principle was only 21% with no information on "data sharing and reproducibility" in any of the journals (Table).

Compliance with the transparency principles increased with the rise of the rejection rate and the number of published issues per year (Fig. 1). There was a direct correlation between getting indexed in important indices and the compliance to the transparency principles (indexed: 63% vs non-indexed: 48%; $p < 0.001$) (Fig 2), especially the recently indexed journals had a high compliance rate (70%) (Table). 21 of the journals were covered by TR Index and/or DOAJ, none of them were indexed in Web of Science core collection or Scopus. Fourty of them were using DergiPark submission system (Fig. 4),

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this study, economics and administrative science journals in Turkey were studied in order to constitute a homogeneous sample. We found that compliance of the journals with transparency principles should be increased, especially for the ethical issues, compliance with the transparency principles increased with the rise of the rejection rate and the number of published issues per year. There was a direct correlation between getting indexed in important indices and the compliance to the transparency principles (indexed: 63% vs non-indexed: 48%; $p < 0.001$), especially the recently indexed journals had a high compliance rate (70%). (Figs 1-3) It has also been detected that compliance with the principles of transparency has increased with the duration of using the DergiPark platform, which has made a significant contribution to journal sustainability (Fig 4). We also found that the newly accepted journals to the TR Index showed a high level of compliance. We think that this result may be the reason of the recent strict acceptance criteria of the index selection (Fig 2). The data of the journals before 2020 were available for 23 journals. Another limitation of the study was that it was carried out only among university economics and administrative science journals, and none of them were in the WoS core index.

We planned to search the course of compatibility of these journals with the transparency principles from their web sites in the previous years. However, we couldn't find data on their old pages in the DergiPark platform including <https://web.archive.org/>. Therefore, a comparison could only be made by considering the data in 2020. Therefore, we plan to analyse advancement of journals and their compliance to the transparency principles by studying their printed versions.

In conclusion the compatibility of the Turkish economics and administrative science journals with the transparency principles should be increased. Besides its use as quality criteria, the compliance to the transparency principles may also be related to journal sustainability.

Table. Compliance of journals published by Trakya University to the 16 principles and 27 subprinciples of "Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing".

Principles	Subprinciples	All journals (n=45)	Rejection rate (n= 23)		Issues per year (n=43)		Indexing (n=45)		DergiPark (n=45)	
			≥50	<50	1 to 2	3 or more	indexed	non	used	non
1. Web site	Aim & Scope	95,56%	100,00%	91,67%	96,43%	93,33%	100,00%	91,67%	95,00%	100,00%
	ISSN	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
	Overall	97,78%	100,00%	0,00%	98,21%	96,67%	100,00%	95,83%	97,50%	100,00%
2. Name of journal	Not mislead	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	71,43%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
	Unique name	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	71,43%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
	Overall	100,00%	100,00%	0,00%	71,43%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
3. Peer review process	Peer review marked	82,22%	81,82%	100,00%	78,57%	86,67%	90,48%	75,00%	82,50%	80,00%
	Peer review process description	71,11%	81,82%	83,33%	67,86%	80,00%	80,95%	62,50%	75,00%	40,00%
	Not guarantee of acceptance or short peer review times	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
	Overall	84,44%	87,88%	0,00%	82,14%	88,89%	90,48%	79,17%	85,83%	73,33%
4. Ownership and management		60,00%	63,64%	83,33%	64,29%	60,00%	57,14%	62,50%	60,00%	60,00%
5. Governing body		93,33%	100,00%	91,67%	92,86%	100,00%	95,24%	91,67%	92,50%	100,00%
6. Editorial team info		77,78%	81,82%	66,67%	78,57%	73,33%	90,48%	66,67%	75,00%	100,00%
7. Copyright and licensing	Statement in web	88,89%	81,82%	83,33%	82,14%	93,33%	95,24%	79,17%	87,50%	80,00%
	Statement in published articles	4,44%	0,00%	16,67%	0,00%	13,33%	9,52%	0,00%	5,00%	0,00%
	Overall	46,76%	40,91%	0,00%	41,07%	53,33%	52,38%	39,58%	46,25%	40,00%
8. Author fees		66,67%	72,73%	75,00%	60,71%	80,00%	85,71%	50,00%	65,00%	80,00%
9. Allegations of misconduct		26,67%	27,27%	41,67%	21,43%	33,33%	38,10%	16,67%	30,00%	0,00%
10. Publication Ethics	Authorship	8,89%	9,09%	0,00%	7,14%	13,33%	9,52%	8,33%	7,50%	20,00%
	Complains	13,33%	27,27%	16,67%	14,29%	13,33%	28,57%	0,00%	15,00%	0,00%
	Conflicts of interest	22,22%	18,18%	41,67%	17,86%	33,33%	38,10%	8,33%	25,00%	0,00%
	Data sharing and reproducibility	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
	Ethical oversight	77,78%	100,00%	75,00%	75,00%	80,00%	95,24%	62,50%	77,50%	80,00%
	Intellectual property	17,78%	18,18%	25,00%	17,86%	20,00%	28,57%	8,33%	20,00%	0,00%
	Post-publication corrections	4,44%	9,09%	0,00%	0,00%	13,33%	4,76%	4,17%	5,00%	0,00%
Overall	20,63%	25,97%	0,00%	18,88%	24,76%	29,25%	13,10%	21,43%	14,29%	
11. Schedule		84,44%	90,91%	83,33%	78,57%	100,00%	95,24%	75,00%	87,50%	60,00%
12. Access		66,67%	81,82%	58,33%	60,71%	73,33%	80,95%	54,17%	70,00%	40,00%
13. Archiving		95,56%	100,00%	91,67%	89,29%	100,00%	100,00%	87,50%	95,00%	80,00%
14. Revenue sources		4,44%	9,09%	0,00%	3,57%	6,67%	4,76%	4,17%	2,50%	20,00%
15. Advertising		0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
16. Marketing		0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%
Total complians		56,62%	59,67%	47,66%	51,93%	60,32%	62,52%	51,13%	56,98%	52,11%
student's t test			$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$		$P = 0,068$	

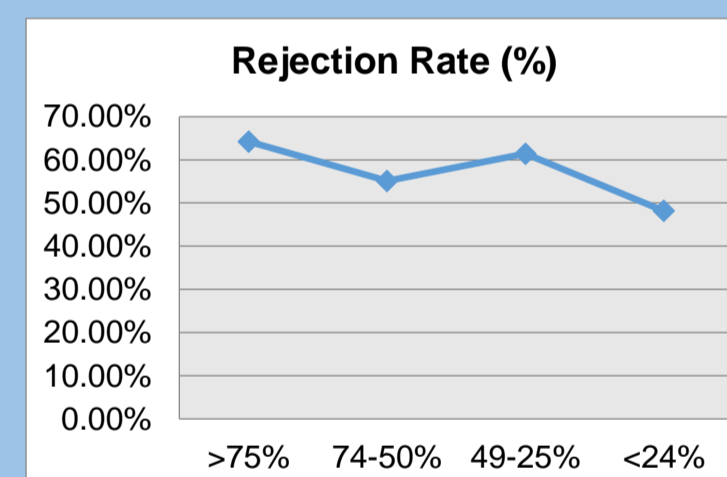


Fig. 1. Rejection Rates

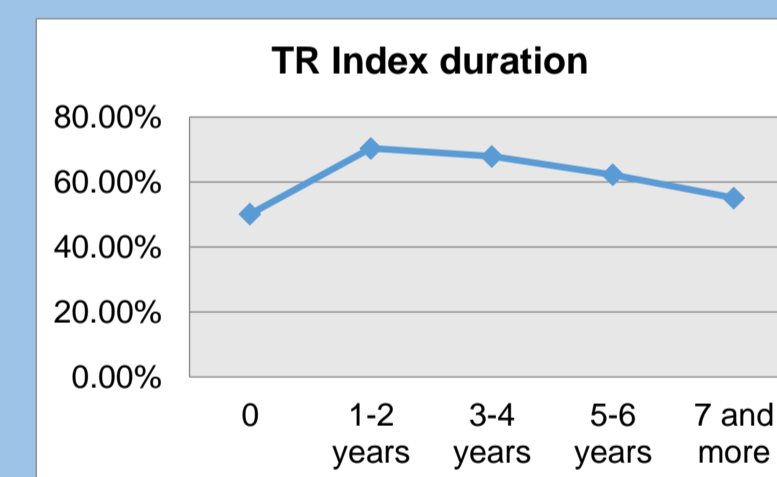


Fig. 2. TR Index duration

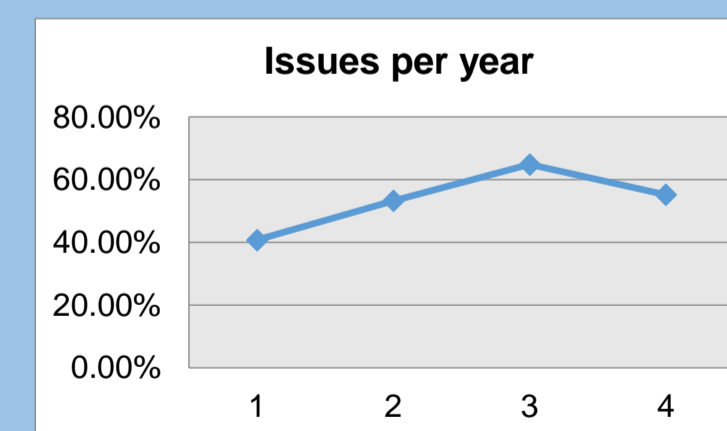


Fig. 3. Issues per year

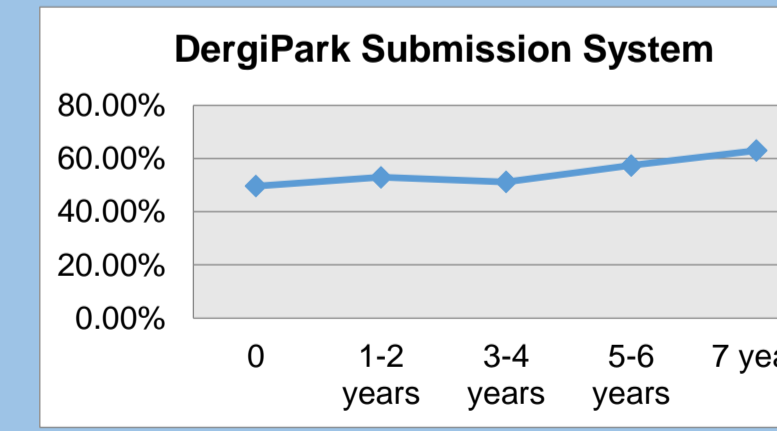


Fig. 4. DergiPark Submission System usage

REFERENCES

- Aslan, A. (2019) TR Dizin. Acta Medica Alanya, 3, 1-2.
- DergiPark (2021) <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/> (Data Access: 02.06.2021)
- DOAJ (2021) Directory of Open Access Journals, <https://doaj.org/> (Access date: 02.06.2021)
- Kiran, K. (2018) Compliance Analysis of Journals Published in Trakya University to Principles of Transparency and The Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing. In: 14th EASE General Assembly and Conference, Bucharest-Romania
- Kozak, N. (2017) Directory of scholarly journals in Turkey. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 540 pp.
- Redhead, C. 2018. Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing, Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA). <https://oaspa.org/principles-of-transparency-and-best-practice-in-scholarly-publishing-3/> (Data Access: 02.06.2021)
- TR Dizin (2021) <https://trdizin.gov.tr/en/home/> (Data Access: 02.06.2021)
- WAME (2016) Word Association of Medical Editors <http://www.wame.org/index.php> (Data Access: 02.06.2021)
- <https://web.archive.org/> Internet Archive, Wayback Machine, (Data Access: 02.06.2021)