

Letter. Journalology: an unrecognized science for a century

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Abstract

The origin, evolution, and different meanings that various authors have given to the term "journalology," defined as the "science of publication," throughout the almost 100 years since it was coined, are discussed.

Keywords

Journalology; Science of publication; Journal editing; Academic publication; Scholarly journals; Bibliometrics.

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Some writing tools have been used to enhance the wording and readability, including *Grammarly* and *QuillBot*.

1. Origin and evolution of the concept

Johnson (1928) coined the term "journalology" to transform the journalism departments in educational institutions, and to name it as a new science. He also provided a brief definition: "publication science." Since the *Centre for Journalology* was established at the *Ottawa Hospital Research Institute* in Canada, the subject has become more well known (**Chandrakumar et al.**, 2018; **Krishan; Kanchan**, 2019).

This concept has been considered by some researchers for a variety of reasons. For instance, **Wilson** and **Moher** (2019) looked at how journalology is evolving in the field of health sciences. **Galipeau et al.** (2015) looked into the efficacy of peer review training, journal editing training, and writing for scholarly publishing in the quality of health research reporting. Poor journalology, according to **Kumar** (2013), indicates insufficient peer review training. According to **Moher** and **Ravaud** (2016), a journal research network can significantly advance the fields of journalology and meta-research.

Kumar (2015) contended that scientific publishing involves three areas: authors who want to publish their work, readers who want to read quality content, and eventually science by making the best research widely available. Concepts as diverse as metascience, predatory publishing, journal ranking, and bibliometrics are all directly linked to journalology, according to **Asgarov** (2022).

2. The need for more understanding of the science of publishing

In general, there is a lack of adequate understanding of the science of publishing. For instance, misconduct in research accounted for nearly two-thirds of retraction notices to Indian biomedical literature (**Elango**, 2021). This applies to editors, as well. For instance, a few editorial articles have been retracted (**Elango**, 2022). In addition, the *Saudi Journal of Anaesthesia* recently published an article entitled "A scoping review of retracted publications in anesthesiology"



(Fiore *et al.*, 2021). The study seemed to deal with a scoping review based solely on the title. However, it actually made no effort to support the scoping review, and further, the authors listed the reasons for retractions collected from the database without any classification or grouping. As a result, editors also require appropriate training in publication science.

According to a recent statement by Asgarov (2022), journalology is now accepted as a discipline that investigates all of the processes of academic publishing and teaches researchers how to select the best journals for publication and what the essential elements of publishing a high-quality journal article are.

In contrast, none of the following authoritative dictionaries offer any information on the word “journalology”:

- Collins Online Dictionary
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com>
- Dictionary.com
<https://www.dictionary.com>
- Wiktionary
<https://en.wiktionary.org>
- Cambridge Dictionary
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org>
- Merriam-Webster
<https://www.merriam-webster.com>
- Oxford Learner's Dictionaries
<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com>
- Encyclopedia Britannica
<https://www.britannica.com>
- Macmillan Dictionary
<https://www.macmillandictionary.com>

Online databases can be used to monitor the growth of the literature on a given subject (Lancaster; Lee, 1985). The large abstracting and indexing database *Scopus* was searched for the volume of literature published on the topic “journalology,” which returned only 64 documents (Graph 1), covering a period of 95 years. This represents less than one article per year. Compared with some recently developed topics, such as the *h*-index (Hirsch, 2005), which was only introduced in 2005 but has more than 5,000 documents in *Scopus*, the volume of literature on journalology is very small. The years of publication for articles about journalology were inconsistent. The next article was not published until 62 years after the 1928 publication of the first article on journalology, and there were some years when nothing was published; For instance, in 1991, 1993, 1995–2000, 2006, 2011–2012, and 2014, there were no publications. The peak year with the highest number of articles ($n = 8$) was 2019. There is not much published scientific literature on this topic. Scientific publications are not required to necessarily include the appropriate keywords for subjects such as biology, geology, psychology, sociology, technology, and zoology because these topics are regarded as fundamental sciences. In a similar vein, journalology—the science of publishing—is to be considered as one of the basic sciences.

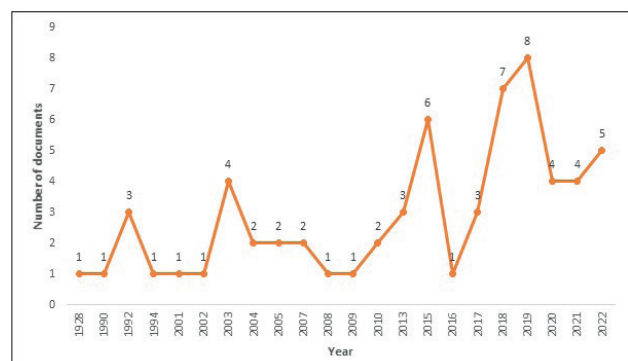
To inculcate publication science among students and scholars, many researchers have recommended that every higher education institution—especially those focused on research—establish a journalology center (Krishan; Kanchan, 2019; Asgarov, 2022). However, it also needs to be inculcated among all the stakeholders, including journal editors.

3. Concluding remarks

Journalology is the study of how scholarly research is disseminated and published. As stated by Johnson (1928), it has nothing to do with journalism because it is a combination of the word “journal,” which is a periodical that contains experiences, experiments, and observations, and the suffix “-ology,” which denotes a field of study or learning. Moreover, it is multidisciplinary in nature and covers a variety of topics, such as publication/research ethics, peer review processes, editorial policies, studies related to journals, and the use of metrics and other indicators to gauge the significance of the scientific method among the scientific community while also improving the transparency and quality of scientific research and publishing.



<https://ohri.ca/journalology>



Graph 1. Yearly trend of literature on journalology. Source: *Scopus*.

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