



Editorial

The State of the Journal 2021

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It has been almost 15 years ago since the inception of the first issue of the Philippine Journal of Allied Health Sciences (PJAHS). Established to “produce quality allied health science clinical practice that will enhance performance, promote wellness in the prevention of diseases and improve function among healthy and physically challenged individuals,” PJAHS has weathered challenges of modern times. With an eleven-year hiatus, PJAHS made a comeback in 2019 with a “renewed fervor in advocating for publishing scholarly articles in the field of allied health sciences.”¹ To say that it has been smooth sailing since then is an understatement. As a journal, we have tried to roll with the punches associated with our decade-long absence in the scientific community. Active programs that sought to solicit articles, develop writing programs, partnering with our internal and external networks, critically reflecting on the review process,² strengthening our editorial board, advocating for standard peer review processes,³ and innovations on article type submissions,⁴ were just some of the strategies we have taken over the past two years.

While PJAHS still has a long way to go towards attaining our envisioned place in the scientific publishing world, it is my belief that we have seen results from our efforts in the past four issues. In this article, I try to lay out the current state of PJAHS using data that we have crudely gathered based on our performance and achievements in the past two years.⁵ PJAHS reports its current state to ground itself and pave a critical reflection towards the future direction it takes on.

Journal metrics refer to a variety of analytics-based evaluations of how a journal performs. It looks into how it manages submissions and the published articles’ impact on its utilization as measured by citations. The data described herein is limited to our most current issues starting from 2019.

Acceptance Rate is the ratio of articles submitted to the number of articles published. Some journals refer to it as the rejection rate; however, PJAHS opts to frame it positively. In the past five issues, the acceptance rate of PJAHS has ranged between 38-80%, with a running average acceptance rate of 67%. The trend that we are seeing is a decline in the acceptance rate, which we attribute to an increase of submissions over the span of two years and a more stringent process of screening and reviewing submissions to PJAHS. The journal has to balance between maintaining a set of standards that ensures quality articles, fair power-review processes, resource allocation and management, pragmatic analysis of contexts, and meeting the minimum number of articles published in an issue.

In the more recent years, we find journals reporting on the number of days between submission to final decision and publication. This is useful information for the authors to consider temporal constraints. On our end, it serves as quality management practice pointers to determine how we can best allocate resources and improve our processes. On average, it takes about 71 days from submission to publication decision. This does not include decisions on articles that are rejected at the desk-review level,

during the review process, or those that are dropped due to late revision submissions. PJAHS will have to put in place mechanisms to track these data and consider them eventually as we review our performance and plan for the future. The average rate of days between acceptance to publication is at 33 days. At present, PJAHS publishes two issues within a covered volume year; hence we are limited to following this publication schedule. Due to logistics constraints, we are yet to realize the ability to publish ahead of issue or on an “as they come” basis.

Journal Impact Factors has long been the standard of scientific journal performance, having several standards of how it is computed depending on the organization analyzing it (i.e., International Scientific Indexing, Web of Science, Clarivate). A crude scientometric index calculation of the number of citations of PJAHS-published articles using Google Scholar reveals 42 citations throughout its history, with five citations coming from the last two volumes, which published 32 articles. The editorial board should develop a long-term strategic plan and its publisher to address this challenge. This may include devising a way to monitor individual article analytics, improving journal presence (i.e., website, social media sites), article promotions, and working with authors to find strategies to make their publications more visible to the general public.

While PJAHS is published by the College of Rehabilitation Sciences of the University of Santo Tomas (UST-CRS) in the Philippines, it has always maintained its processes and its editorial board to embody international standards. Forty percent of our published articles are from authors not affiliated with UST-CRS, with a total of 12% from international authors. Our editorial board is composed of academics and clinicians actively engaged in research production and utilization. The current composition of the PJAHS editorial board accounts for 61% of its members from international institutions. The remainder comes from local and national institutions, which are known to produce international publications. PJAHS continuously identifies academics in the field of allied health sciences as possible additions to our esteemed editorial board.

PJAHS understands that its editorial operations entail an iterative and continuous process of improvement. Feedback from our authors provides information on improving the publishing experience and ultimately informing our editorial process. We have been seeking this information from all published authors since 2019 and reviewing issue-specific results to improve how we run the editorial process henceforth. An overall analysis of the PJAHS Author Satisfaction Survey (2019-2021) reveals that authors were generally satisfied with our peer-review process, quality, length of time, and functions of the editorial office. Nonetheless, we recognize their suggestions on enhancing our online peer-review management system. Thus, we heed the call. Starting this year, PJAHS has partnered with Scholastica to host its online peer-review submission and management systems. In this issue, we launch the new and updated author guidelines in submitting to PJAHS. We are optimistic about this development as this change eases the manual workload of our editorial staff; enhances the peer-review experience of the editor, reviewer, and author; and automates some journal metrics.

The indexation of a scientific journal is an overall assessment of its quality. Those that are indexed in academic repositories have seen an increase in their article utilization among researchers. This year, PJAHS was accepted in the Directory of Open Access Journals. We still have a long way to attain our vision of being indexed in higher-tier academic indices such as PubMed, Web of Science, Clarivate, etc. Nevertheless, we are laying the foundations and preparing for our application in the near future. Our next steps specifically target both national, regional, and international indexing. I look forward to reporting updates related to these in future issues of PJAHS.

As we move beyond the 15 years of existence of PJAHS, we face new challenges that test our relevance, resilience, and overall existence in the scientific community. Of which we are ready to take on.

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