

Publication Guideline

“You know how to write an excellent paper – do you know how to plan your publication strategy?”


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1. Rationale for Publication Strategies

Publications are an essential criterion for the evaluation of scientific performance in every academic field. When planning a publication strategy, the following aspects should be considered:

- 1) **Disciplines differ in their publication cultures:** While there is no way around scientific journals in the natural sciences, for example, monographs and contributions in anthologies have a high value in the humanities.
- 2) **Interdisciplinary research** might be more difficult to label and review (e.g., success rates of interdisciplinary proposals for ERC Grants were lower, Shapiro, 2014).
- 3) **Native English speakers** have a higher likelihood to be published in high-ranking medical journals (Paiva et.al, 2017).
- 4) **Women tend to publish less** (cf. Rørstad & Aksnes, 2015), especially in research areas that require an expensive infrastructure; they cooperate more regionally than internationally (cf. Larivière et al, 2013)
- 5) Women are more likely to be asked to add **honorary authors** (Fong & Wilhite 2017).

This document provides guidance on how to draw attention to the differences and support others in developing a publication strategy suitable for the specific scientific discipline at hand.

1.1 Short note on publication biases

As indicated above, several aspects, which are rooted in societal, historical, and cultural stereotypes, can influence publications. These biases primarily disadvantage women, young researchers, and members of minority groups. This effect is even reinforced when these diversity traits intersect (Brink/Benschop, 2011).

Concerning publications, the h-index is a well-established measure for scholarly productivity and easily available via publication platforms such as Google scholar, Scopus, or Web of Science (WoS). It measures the number of publications which have been cited at least h-times. An author with many, but rarely cited papers can thereby have the same h-index as an author with few, highly cited papers (Besselaar/Sandstroem, 2017).

Scientific productivity is thus measured with the number of citations (based on the number of publications). This discriminates scientists who work part-time due to caring obligations for family members (e.g. children, elderly people) as they do not have the same amount of time to produce papers (Brink/Benschop, 2011). Additionally, it is beneficial for women and men alike to consider productivity gaps which can be based on military services, serious illness, or family obligations, whereas the latter is distributed unequally between women and men in many cultures and nations. For this reason, on average, women publish less which leads to a vicious cycle as less productivity leads to lower academic position and thus to gender stereotypes (Besselaar/Sandstroem, 2017).

In addition to such structural factors leading to severe disadvantages, research has shown that even when publishing in high impact journals and demonstrating the same productivity, women will be cited less often than men with comparable

achievements. If women are cited, they are more often cited by other women than by men and they are cited ten times more often as if they were male. Additionally, publications from male authors are associated with greater scientific quality, especially concerning male-typed topics, e.g. in STEM (Criado-Perez, 2019).

Also the peer review system of publications is not as “neutral” as it claims to be because gender and affiliation with one of the reviewers plays an important role (Brink/Benschop, 2011). Although several studies, have proven that double-blind reviewing helps reducing the bias against female authors, this kind of reviews is still not the norm (Criado-Perez, 2019).

It is essential to consider these aspects concerning (gendered) publication biases when planning your publication strategies to keep scientists, who do not fulfill the expectation of a white, male, full-time researcher without productivity gaps, motivated and encouraged to keep on working on their publications despite all these drawbacks. Furthermore, bearing this information in mind, they can reflect their own timeframe for productivity and their own citation practices to support other female researchers.

2. Five strategic focal points for your publication strategy

The following questions serve to develop a personal publication strategy by reflecting research interests and their fit with the broader community, carefully considering requirements for career development, aligning them with publication practices and understanding the importance of beneficial networks.

Conclusions derived should prevent contributions to fake journals and conferences.



2.1 Know your research interests - and those of your colleagues or supervisor

- What are the research interests of my **supervisor** and/or my **colleagues**?
- What research questions are discussed in my **field of research**?
- Are there research questions that are more **regional** and others that are discussed **internationally**? (e.g. law and history have a stronger regional context)
- Which **methods** are used in my field of research?
Which methods currently receive particular attention?
- What **research gaps** are addressed in the current literature?
- What **research questions** have been neglected? How do these research questions *contribute to the further development of the research field* or discipline?

Conclusions	
These potential scientific contributions therefore, seem particularly relevant:	
A particularly innovative scientific contribution might be:	
My supervisor/my colleagues will most likely support the following development:	

2.2 Locate your research topic in the broader scientific community

- Which scientists, research institutions and communities are **particularly visible** in my field of research (e.g. who is quoted very frequently, who holds keynote speeches at important conferences)?
- How should I **cooperate** in my field of research?
- Is there disciplinary as well as interdisciplinary cooperation?
- Which persons/institutions/subjects cooperate frequently?

Conclusions	
These are particularly visible scientists, cooperations and topics:	
These are the first ideas on how to increase the visibility of my research:	

2.3 Know your career requirements

2.3.1 Relationship between thematic breadth and specialisation

- What is the relationship between **thematic breadth** and **specialisation** conducive to a career in my field of research?
- What **balance** of specialisation and thematic breadth might be expected of relevant institutes or renowned scientists in my field of research?
- What might I be able to contribute to these institutes?
- Do I plan to further elaborate on a specific aspect of my already published research? On the other hand, I want/need to **rethink** achieved **findings** under **different perspectives** for a new publication?
- How are **interdisciplinary approaches** in research highlighted in my research community? How can I make interdisciplinarity in my own research visible?

2.3.2 Other topics

- What other topics should I be able to cover for the next career step?
- What are the **publication requirements** for the next career step (doctoral guidelines, guidelines for habilitation / postdoctoral lecturer qualification, performance agreements)?
- Who can provide information on the requirements?

Conclusions	
The following career requirements have to be considered:	
These persons/these steps help to clarify the requirements:	

2.4 Analyse the publication culture of your discipline

- Which types of publications are most **highly rated** in my scientific discipline? (articles in journals, poster, monographs, book contributions, editorship, conference papers, conference proceedings,...)
- Which journals and conferences have the **highest priority**? What specific “journal hierarchy/priority” can I derive for the publication of my research results, considering e.g. impact factors and turnaround times?
- What role do **Open Access** publications play? Does your research programme or your institution that provides your funding request to publish your research in Open Access (such as in Horizon2020)?
- What **institutional and national requirements** do I need to consider? (e.g. the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the UK that assesses the “quality” of research according to very specific conditions and metrics)
- What role do **interdisciplinary contributions** play in the scientific discipline and for journals and conferences?
- Which **databases** may be used for further clarification? (e.g. Web of Science and Journal Citation Reports, Scopus, Google Scholar)
- Which **platforms** are helpful (e.g. researchgate, academia.edu)?
- Who publishes particularly successfully?
- What are the **publication rates** of successful **role models**? In which journals do they publish?
- How many authors are usually listed? How is the sequence of authors determined?
- What effects might **co-authorships** have on the assessment of my achievements?
- What are the **expected lead times** for “high ranking” publications? (Time spans for review, corrections and revisions of the contribution, risk of rejection)
- For **international publications**: Is proof reading by native speaker(s) necessary to increase the chances of publication? Is enough time scheduled for proof reading?
- Which **alternative publications** with shorter lead times make sense, even if they are perhaps less highly ranked?

Conclusions	
These are the most important publications for my career	
This is a ranking of relevant publishers and journals	
The following lead times must be taken into account in each case	

2.4.1 Avoid fake conferences, journals and publishers (see Beall 2012)

- **What do I know** about the conference, journal or publisher at hand?
- Are they searchable in a reliable **database**, an open access journal list or the library?
- What is known about the **editorial board**? Who are the **contact persons**? Do members of the editorial board **mention** the journal on their **own websites**?
- Who has attended the conference or published in this journal before?
- What is the **quality** of these publications?
- Did I receive an **email** that looks as though it has been randomly distributed?
- Are the **fees** transparently listed? (e.g. editorial services, conference fees, printing costs)
- Whom may I ask for **further advice**, e.g. at my university, my supervisor, my colleagues?

2.5 Build networks

- Which established scientists, editors, or conference organisers whom I share interests with **might be supportive**?
- How/where can I contact them? What might I be able to offer?
- Is there an opportunity to **become a reviewer** for a journal myself?
- **Which conferences** are particularly relevant in my field of research?
- Are there options to **chair a session**, take part in a panel discussion or organise a panel?
- Are there **further alternatives for building networks and peer groups**? (e.g. participation in summer schools, lecture in lecture series, working groups)
- Which focus does my network have? Is it rather **regional** or **international** (or both)? Might a change of focus help to improve my network?
- For highly **interdisciplinary** oriented research, are there possibilities to broaden my network beyond my main discipline?

Conclusions	
I will network with these scientists, editors:	
In this way I can get to know other colleagues and build up cooperations:	
This is my networking strategy:	

3. Summarise the conclusions for your publication strategy

- How do I refine my research topic so that I **become more visible**?
- Which **partial results** of my research may be published independently?
- How many publications, of what kind, and in what time frame am I planning?
- How can I increase the **visibility of publications**? (e.g. renowned journals, co-authorship with certain scientists)
- With whom would I want to research and **publish** and **which cooperations** are necessary? **What agreements** should be made (e.g. regarding co-authorships, and credit for providing datasets)? How will I deal with **honorary authorships**?

Conclusions	
This is how I will make my research topic more visible:	
These parts of my research outcomes may be published independently:	
For the upcoming 3-5 years, the number of publications I am planning to publish is:	
I will increase the visibility of my publications by considering following renowned journals, conferences, co-authorship, networking:	
These are the colleagues I want to research with and publish together:	
I will contact colleagues who are potential contributors at following occasions:	
We will have to discuss and mutually agree on:	
The overall strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - which publication - with whom / by when - where to publish, what journal policies to consider - estimated effort 	

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