

CASE – Annual Conference

Promotion of Asian journals to international levels



Helping publishers get closer to authors:
Perspectives from a global survey of academic authors

Presented by:

Basil D'Souza
VP Publisher and Academic Relations,
Editage / Cactus Communications

EDITAGE: Helping authors get published



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Publication Buzzwords

Guidelines for analytical method validation: How to avoid irreproducible results and retractions
Is there a way to ensure that your results do not end up being irreproducible and you do not face retraction as a result? In this post, Ira Krull discusses all aspects of analytical method validation...

Featured Interview

Science is important for policymaking - UNESCO laureate Zabta Khan Shinwari
UNESCO laureate Zabta Khan Shinwari, Secretary General, Pakistan Academy of Sciences
May 11, 2017

Prof. Zabta Khan Shinwari is the Secretary-General of the Pakistan Academy of Sciences and Chair of the Biotechnology Department of the Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, Pakistan. Following a hard-earned graduation degree from Pakistan, Prof. Shinwari went on to obtain a PhD and multiple postdoctoral

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INDUSTRY SURVEY

ed/tage Insights™
Resources for authors and journals

Author perspectives on the academic publishing process

- ✓ First of its kind in the industry
- ✓ Target of 20,000 respondents
- ✓ Global distribution in 5 languages

SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: <http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD>

We've all seen the headlines

SCIENCE

Is the Peer Review Process for Scientific Papers Broken?

NATURE | RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS: SOCIAL SELECTION

Online debate erupts to ask: is science broken?

Panel discussion about the shortcomings of science sparks chatter about possible remedies.

LSE THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE

LSE Impact Blog

Scholarly publishing is broken: Is it time to consider guerrilla self-publishing?

The Scientist » News & Opinion

Opinion: Academic Publishing Is Broken

THE CONVERSATION

The scientific publishing culture is broken - can it be rescued?

Academic research publishing is a broken system that needs to be fixed

NOVEMBER 1, 2015 ~ DIGITALBIOLOGIST

Let's begin with some facts for perspective...

EVERY YEAR



ABOUT **8 MILLION** RESEARCHERS
8,000,000

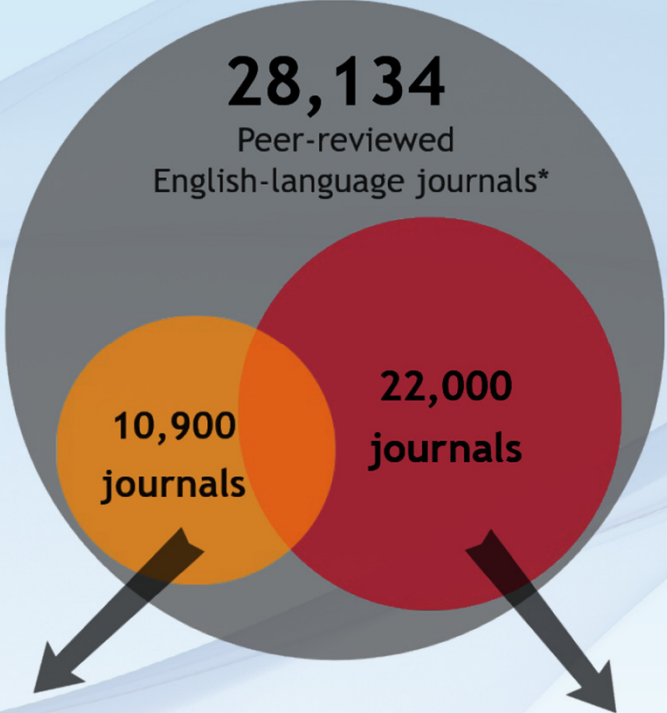


PUBLISH 
2,500,000

2.5 MILLION ARTICLES

Let's begin with some facts for perspective...

2.5 MILLION ARTICLES
IN



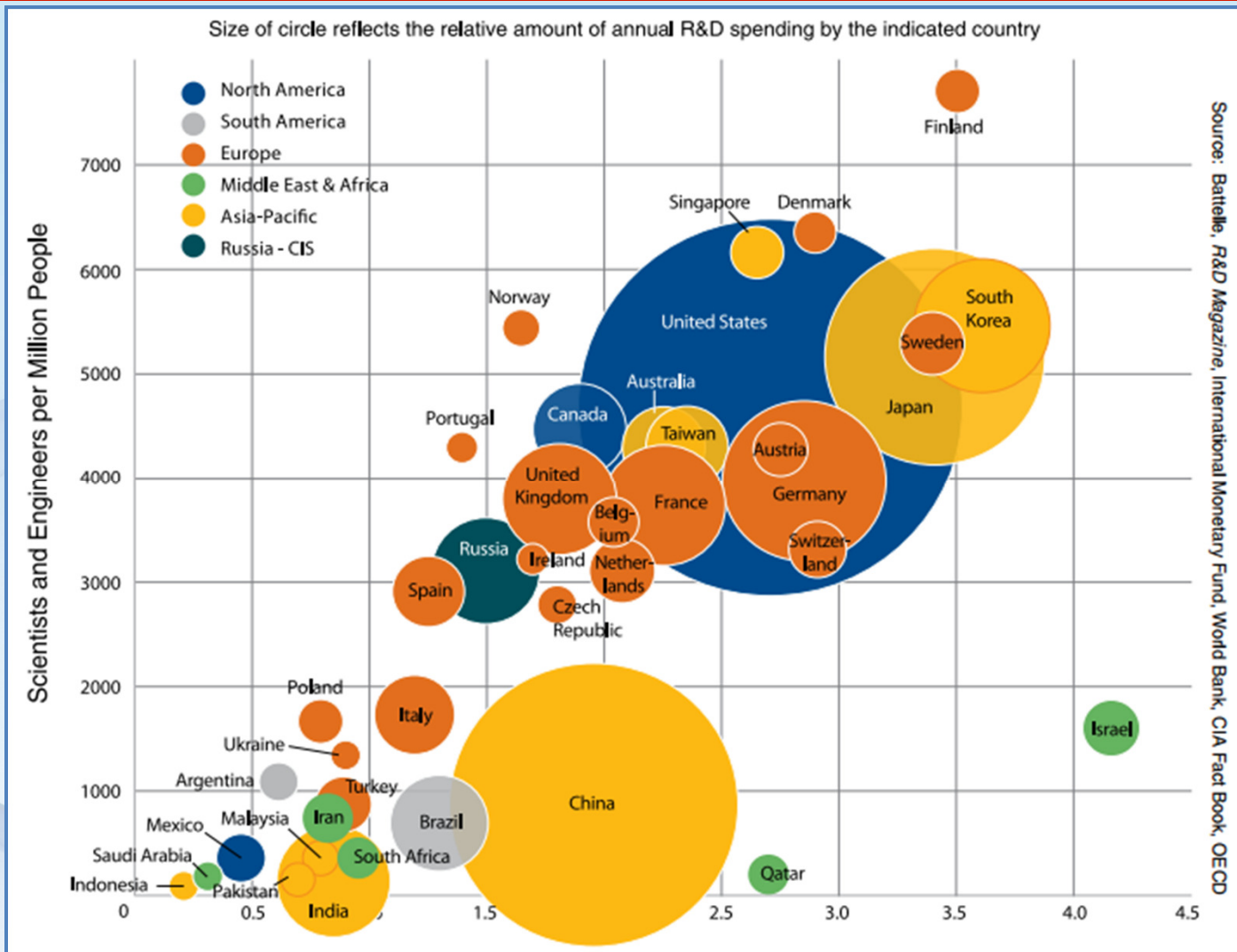
Included in Thomson Reuters' Journal Citation Reports

Included in Scopus

* As of 2014 - Ulrich's database

Note: Venn diagram not to scale

More research output from ESL countries



This causes a lot of pressure...

For authors



And for journal editors



Previously identified gap in perspectives between authors and editors

Authors think...

- They understand publication ethics and do the best they can to adhere to standard guidelines
- They address and respond carefully to all peer reviewer comments
- Journal instructions for authors are often incomplete and unclear

Editors think...

- Authors don't realize the importance of publication ethics
- Authors only address the peer reviewer comments they find agreeable
- Journal instructions for authors are generally clear and complete

Previous survey of ~300 East Asian authors and ~100 international journal editors



SOURCE: C. Cerejo. International journal editors and East Asian authors: two surveys. *Learned Publishing* 27(1) 63-75.

Please mind the gap!



So we asked authors globally for their opinions

- Ongoing survey by **Editage Insights**, a global learning and resource platform for researchers
- Survey being run in English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Portuguese

Seeking authors' opinions on all aspects of the journal publication process



Manuscript preparation
Journal selection
Journal processes
Peer review
Open access
Publication ethics

Supported by the industry

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by CACTUS

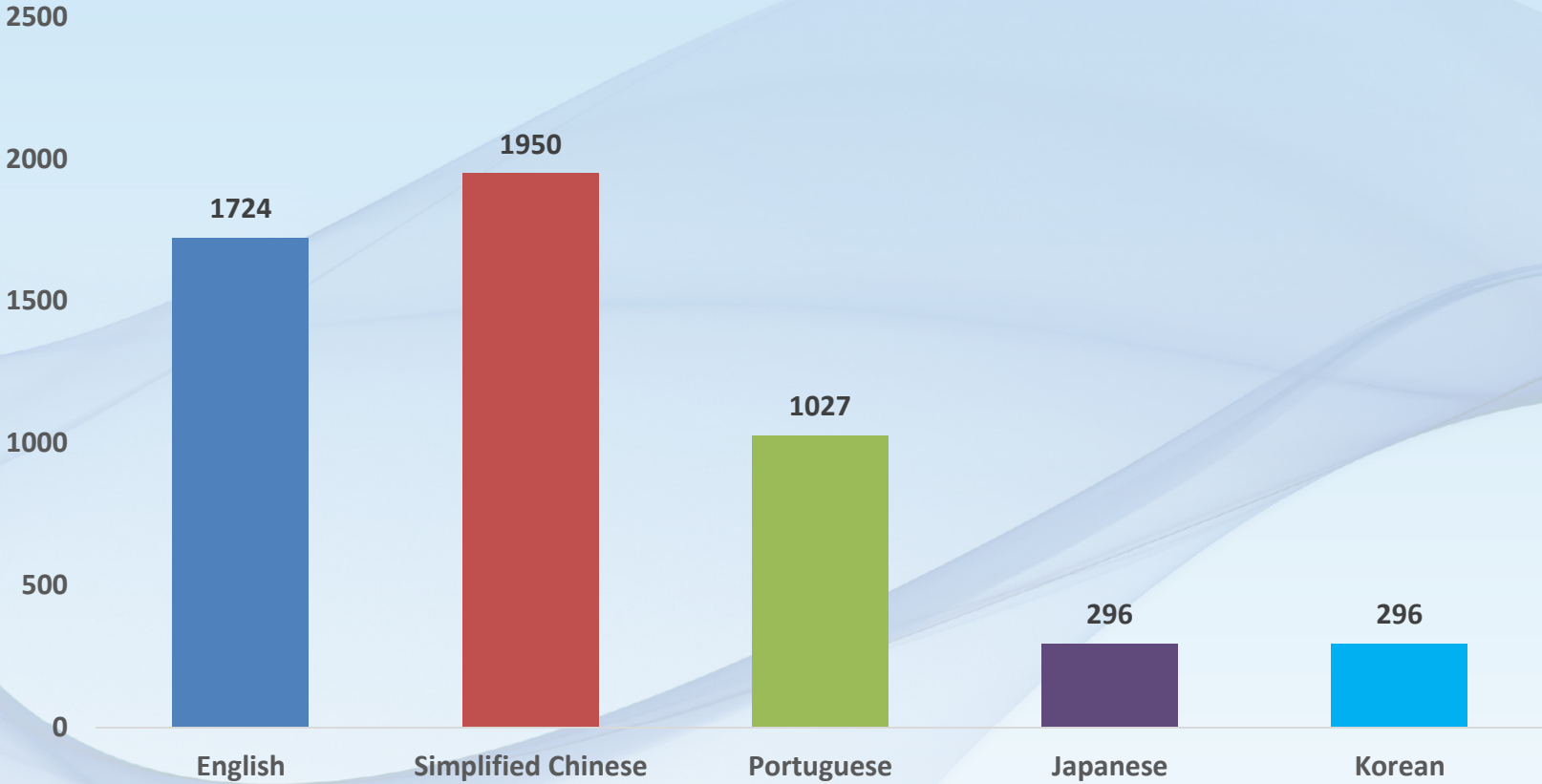
Interim results: 5293 respondents

Respondent demographics



SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: <http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD>

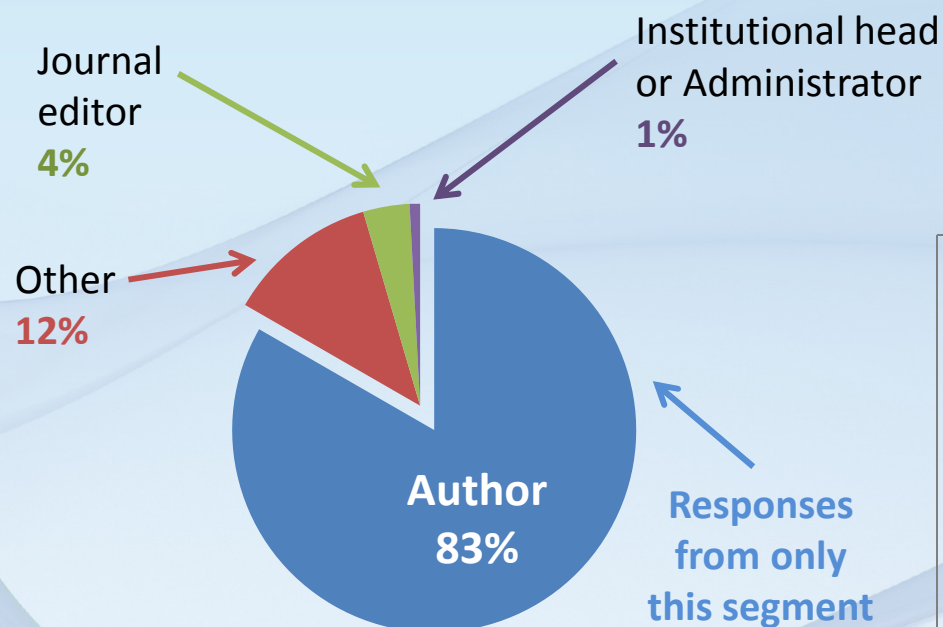
Total number of respondents for each survey language



n = 5293

Respondent profile

Which of these primary roles do you identify yourself with as a researcher?



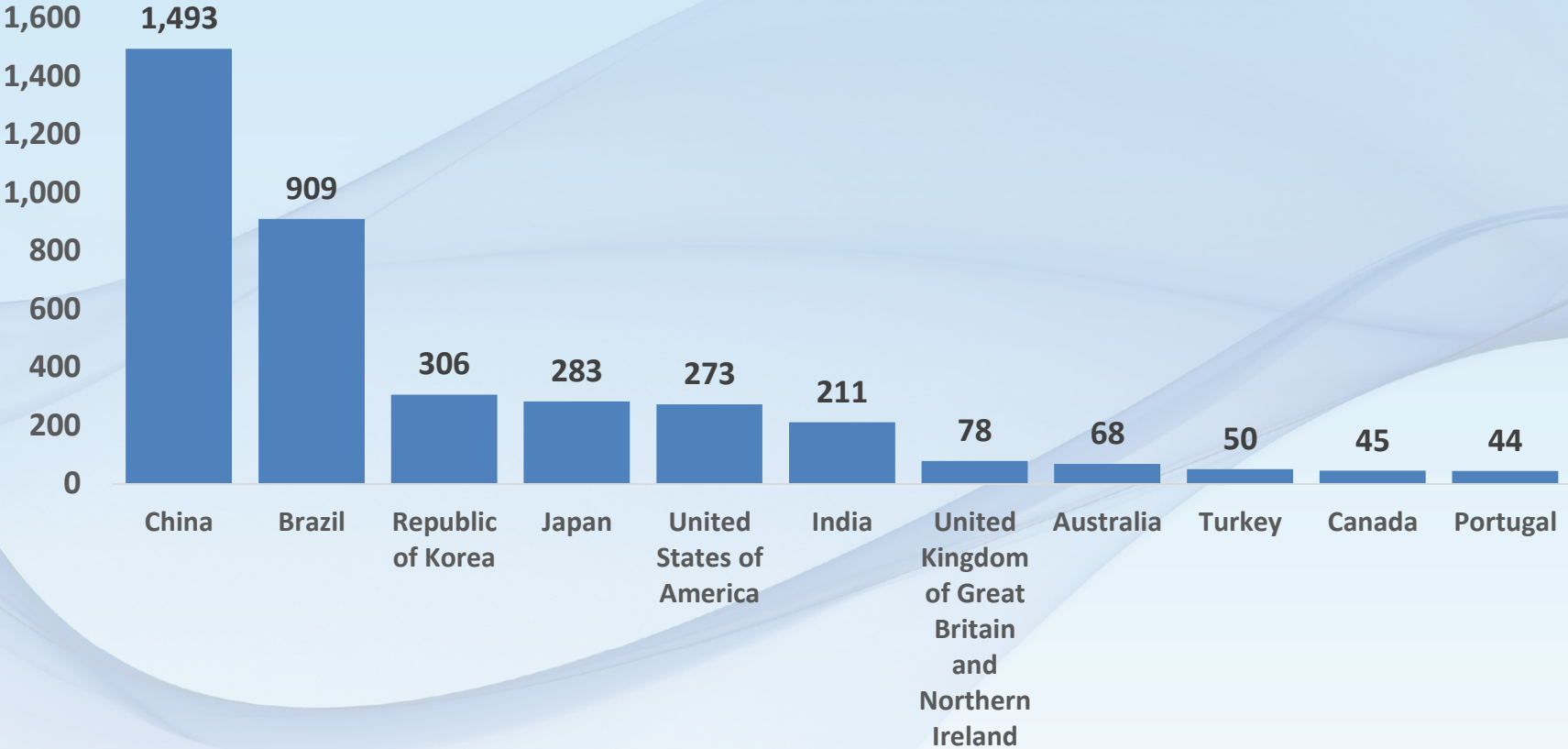
Roles identified when selecting "other"

Consultant^{Writing} Professor^{Fellow}
Independent^{Lead} Scholar^{Science}
Student Researcher
Medical Writer Editor^{Published} Author
Academician and Clinician Librarian^{Doctor}
Lecturer^{Content} Reviewer^{Assistant} Retired
Postdoctoral Teacher

$n = 5259$

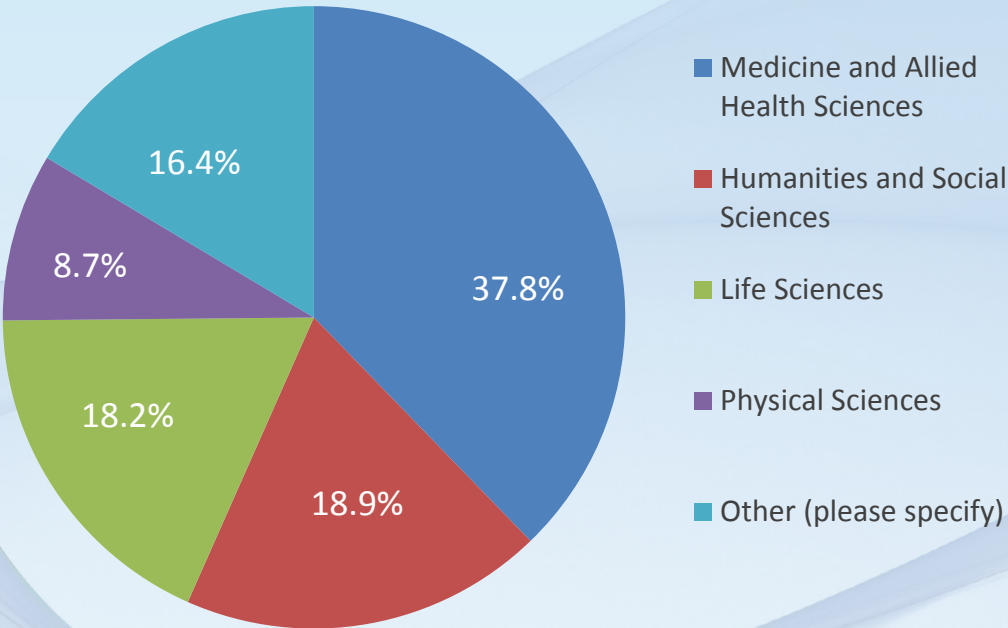
Top 10 countries represented (current location)

Number of authors currently working in these countries



n = 4299

Author respondents by field of study



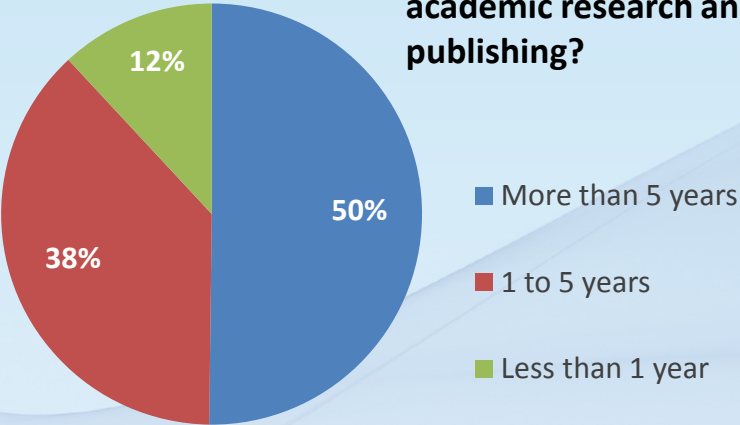
Fields identified when selecting "other"

Architecture Information Technology Development
 Human Business Law Mathematics Teaching
 Chemistry Research Engineering
 Interdisciplinary Science Public Health
 Education Arts Management Psychology
 Applied Test Economics Veterinary Medicine Nursing
 Energy

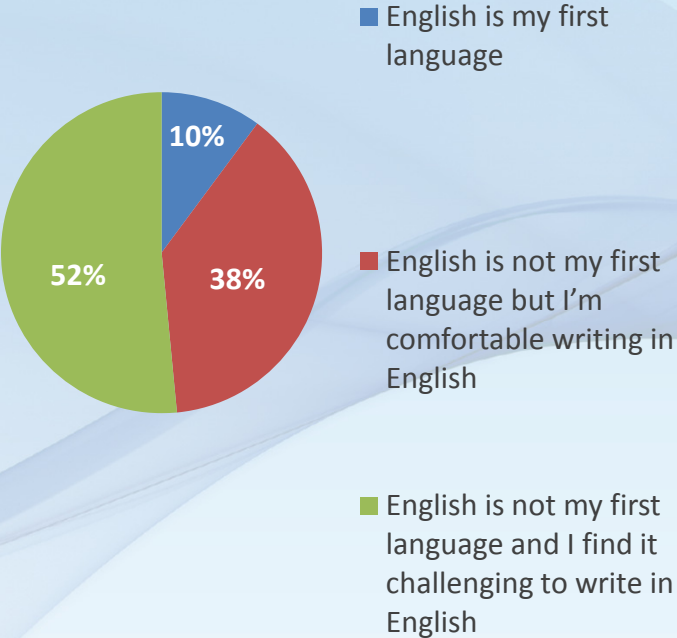
n = 4299

Experience and English proficiency of author respondents

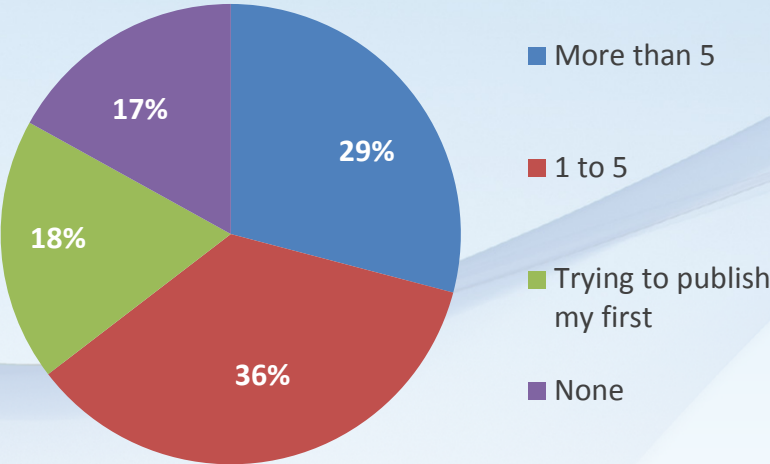
How long have you been involved in academic research and/or journal publishing?



What is your written English proficiency?



How many papers have you published in an international English-language journal?



n = 4298

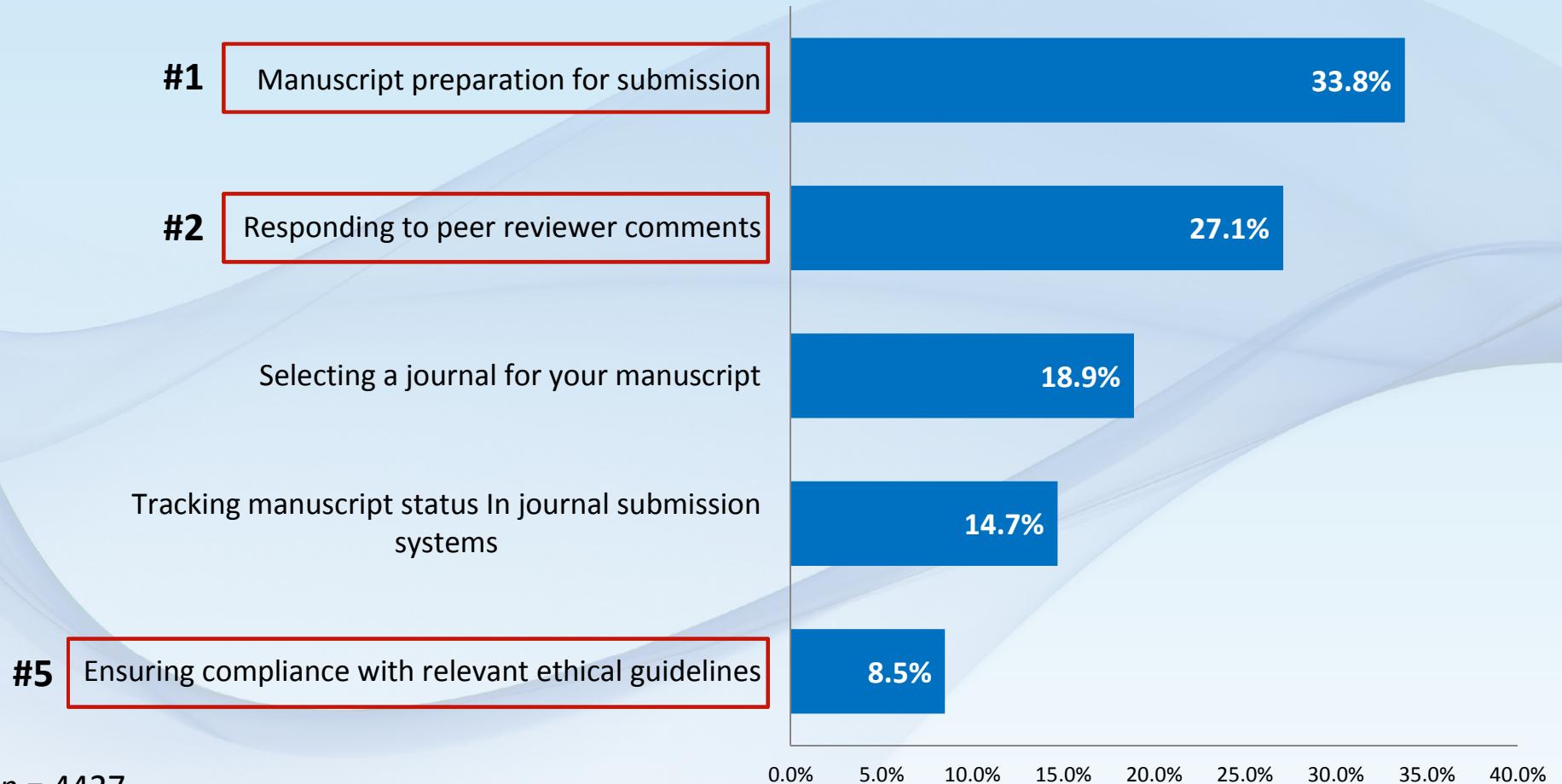
Publication-related challenges authors face



SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: <http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD>

What do authors struggle with most in the whole process?

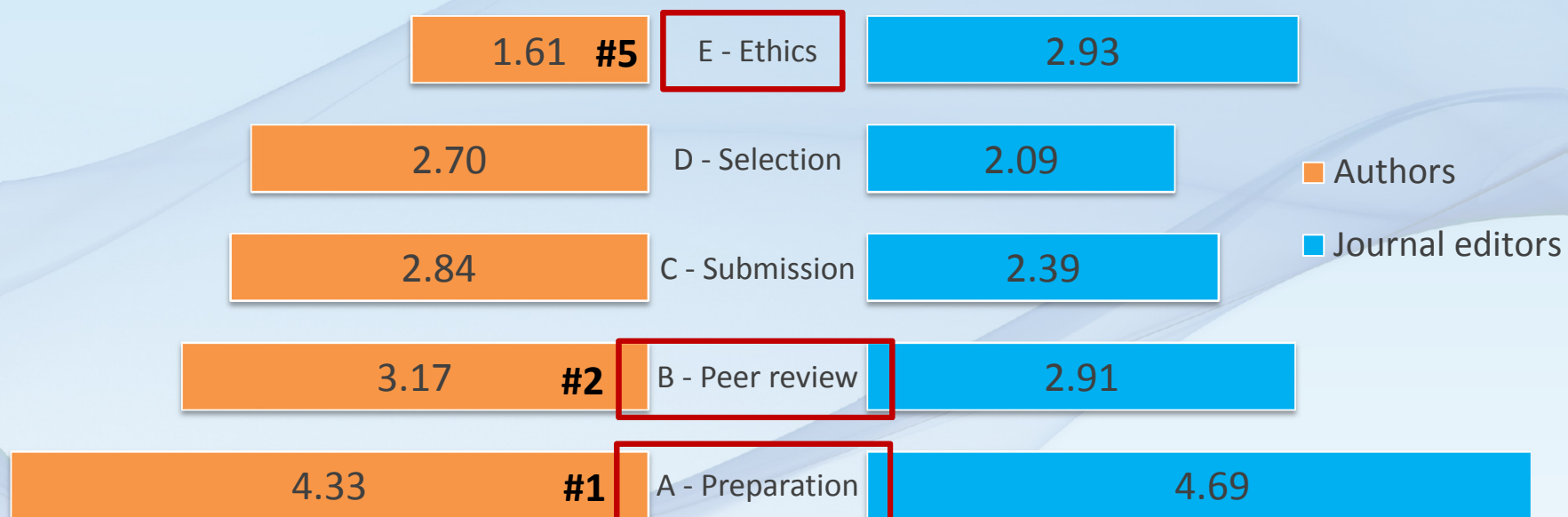
Percent authors who find specific stages of the publishing process “VERY DIFFICULT”?



Throwback to our previous survey study

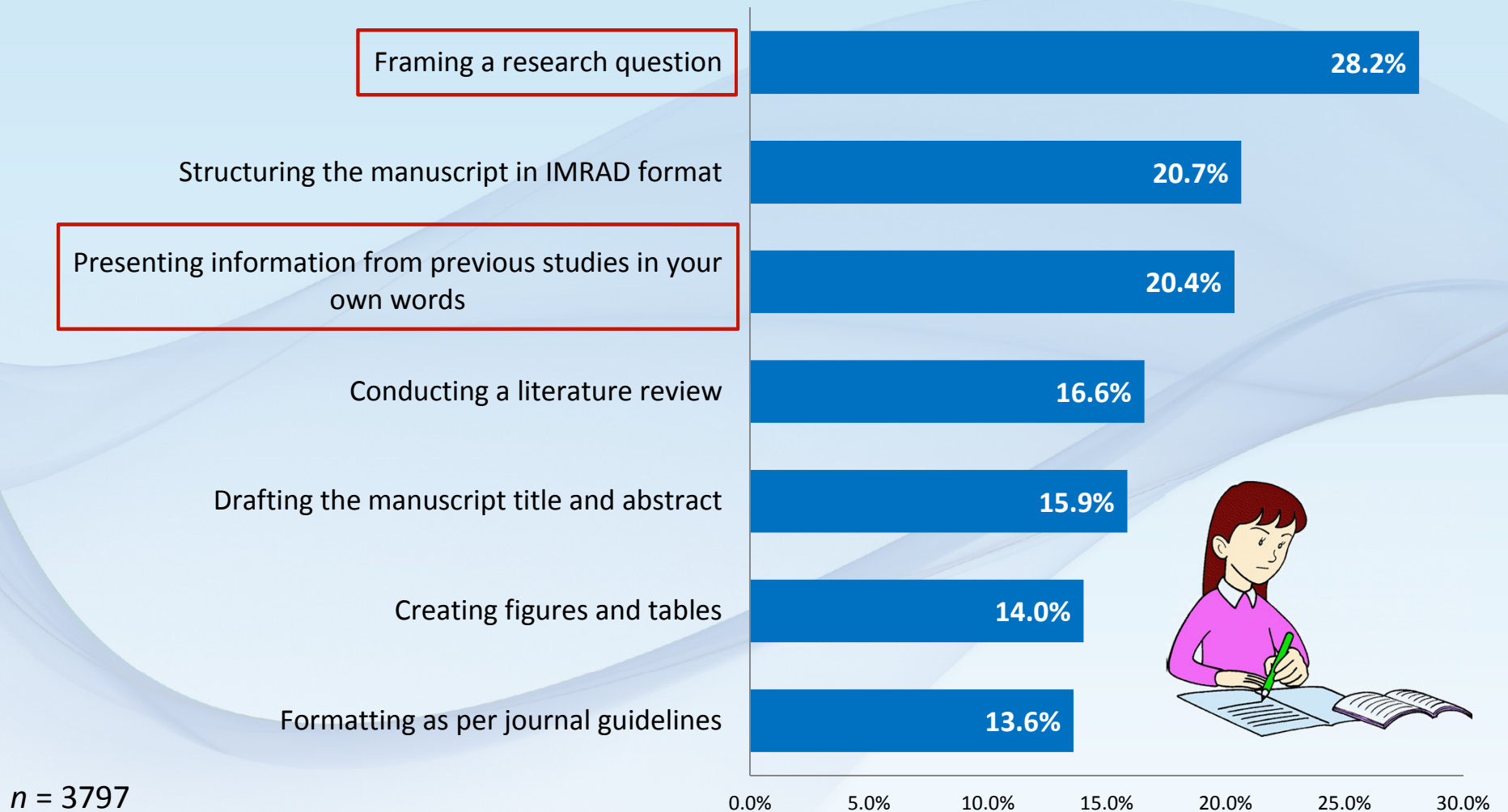
Which is the most challenging stage of the publication process?

What authors find challenging vs. what journal editors think authors find challenging

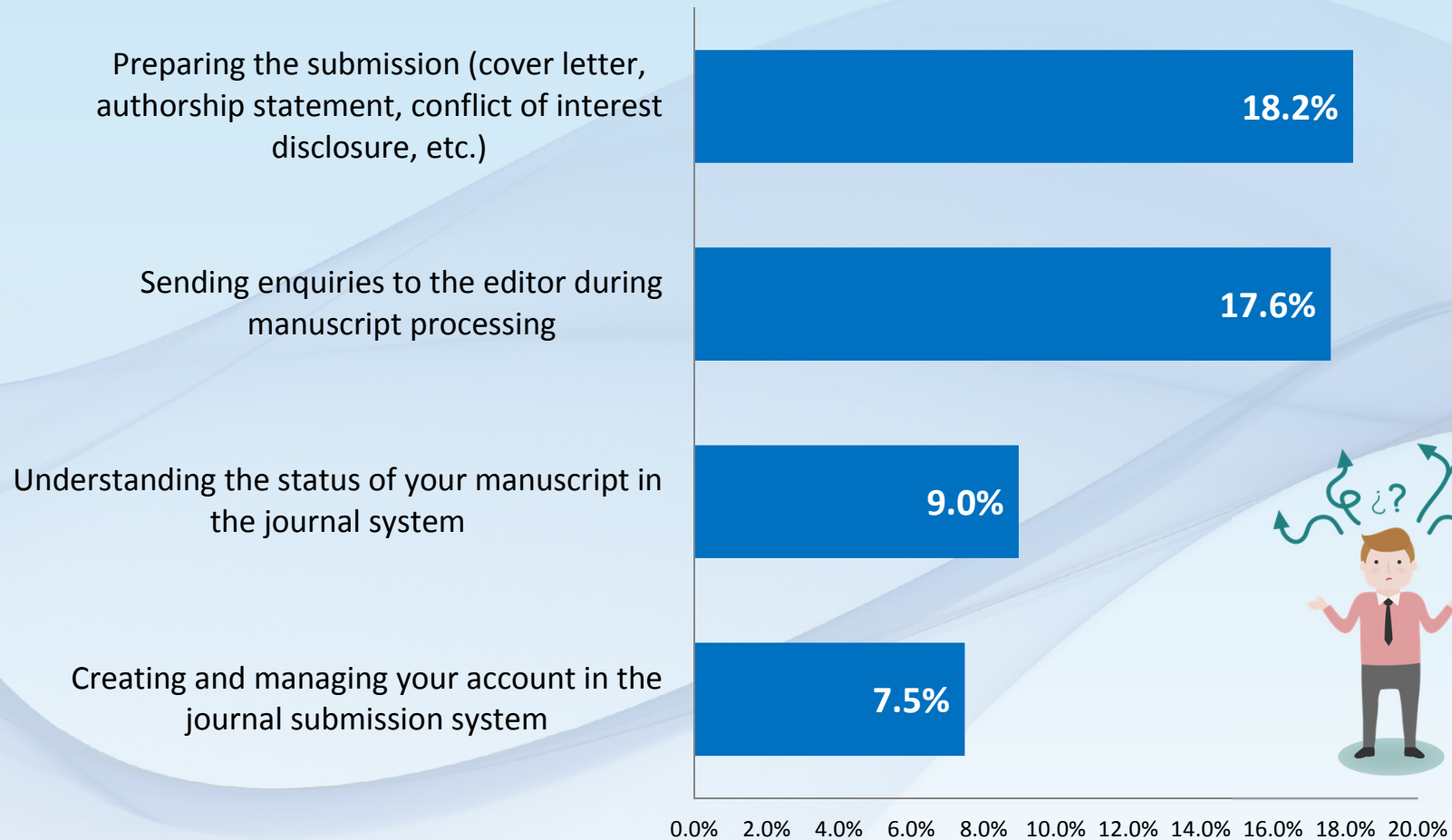


Scores indicate the average rank assigned to each parameter on a 1-to-5 scale, where 5 = most challenging

What aspects of manuscript preparation are “VERY DIFFICULT”?

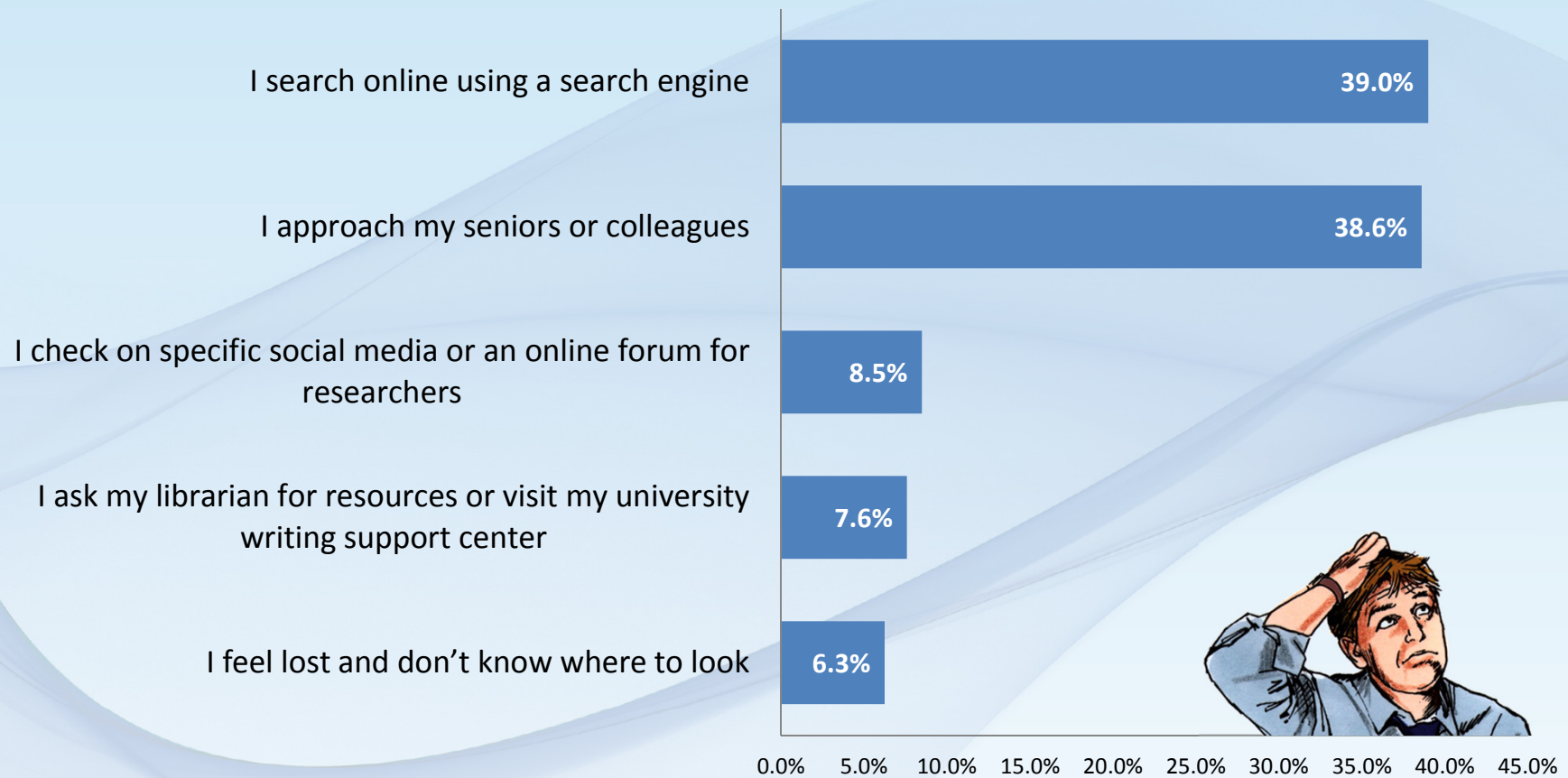


What aspects of manuscript submission are “VERY DIFFICULT”?



n = 3743

Where do authors seek help when in doubt during the publishing process?



n = 4277

*Multiple selections allowed

Perspective-based questions for authors

I think...



How do authors choose a journal for their manuscript?

Factors considered, ranked from most important (1) to least important (7)

- 1 The journal should have a high impact factor for my field
- 2 The journal should have published similar papers
- 3 The journal should offer a short time-to-publication or have a rapid publication option
- 4 My colleagues and seniors should be reading the journal regularly
- 5 The journal should have a clear and professional-looking website
- 6 The journal should be open access or have an open access publishing option
- 7 The journal's submission process and charges should be clearly mentioned on its website

$n = 3876$

Again, this broadly matches our previous survey findings

What authors consider versus what journal editors *think* authors consider

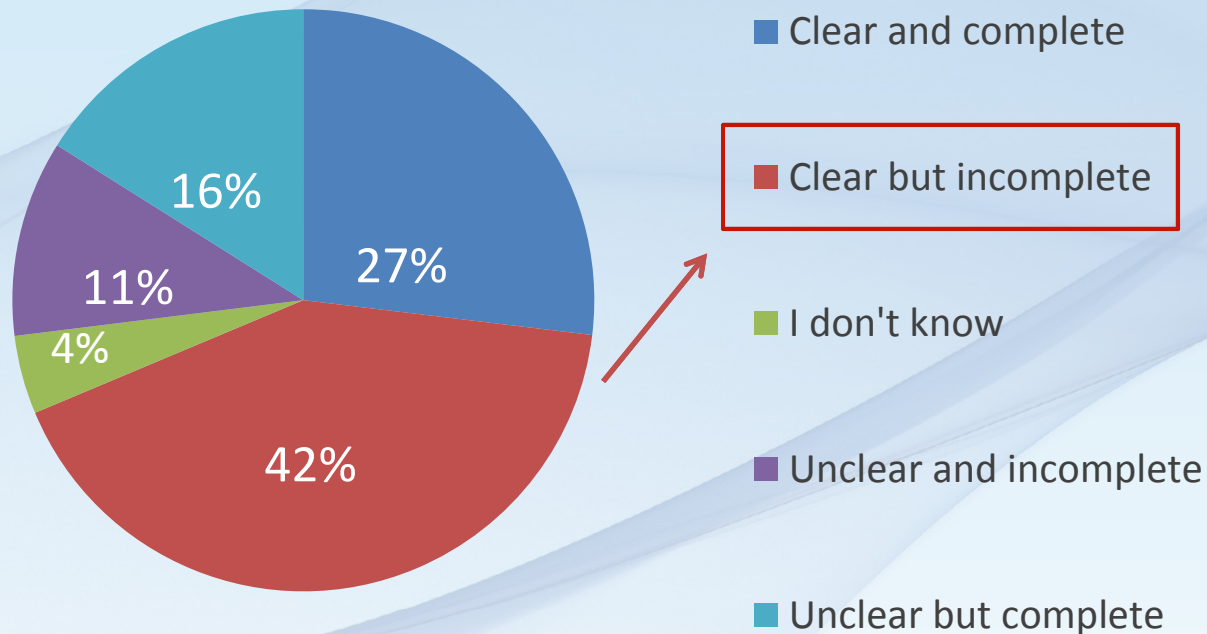
Parameters: A-topics & types of articles generally published; B-Journal impact factor or prestige; C-Target audience; D-Review time; E-Editorial board members; F-Country of origin; G-Open access status



Scores indicate the average rank assigned to each parameter on a 1-to-7 scale, where 7 = most important

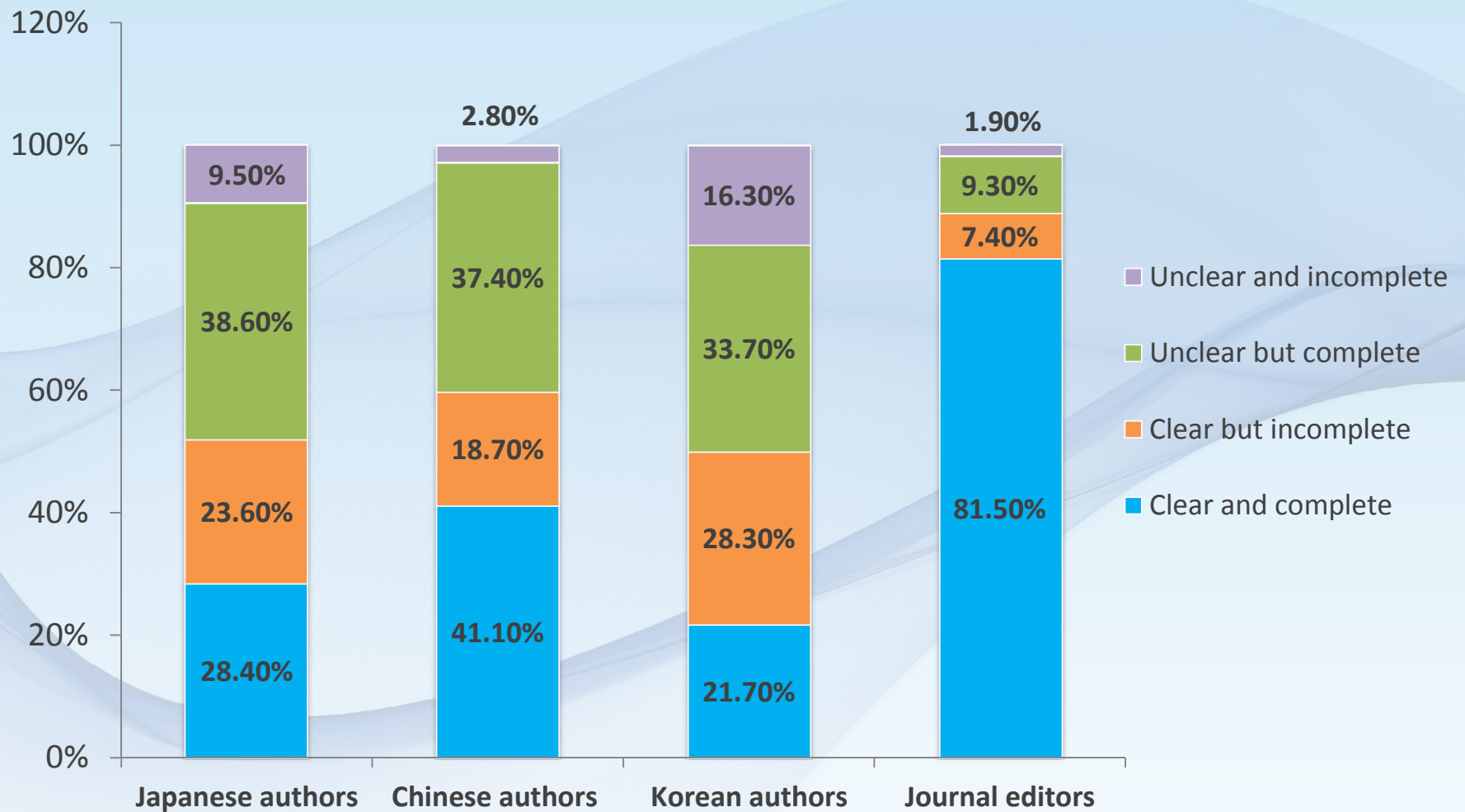
Perspectives on journal instructions for authors

In general, how well do you think journal guidelines for authors are framed?



$n = 3799$

And in our previous study...



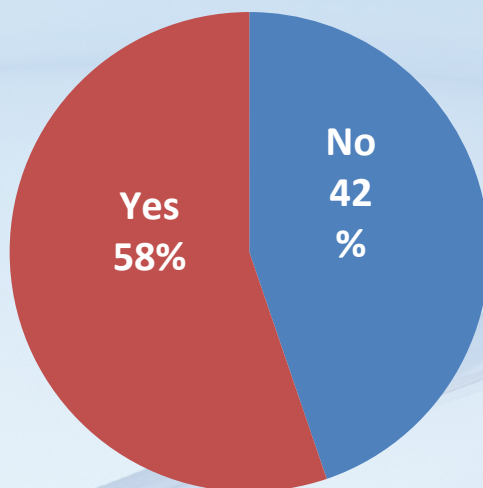
SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: <http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD>

Perspectives on open access publication

Have you ever published in an open access journal, or chosen to make your paper open access in a subscription-based journal?

Reasons for publishing open access (% respondents)*

- Increase research reach **(34.3%)**
- Coincidence **(29.5%)**
- Preference for OA **(15.3%)**
- Publication guarantee by the journal **(13.6%)**
- Institutional/funding body mandate **(7.3%)**



Reasons for not publishing open access (% respondents)*

- Coincidence **(34.3%)**
- Affordability **(29.5%)**
- Lack of understanding **(15.3%)**
- Mistrust in quality of OA journals **(13.6%)**
- No adequate benefits of OA seen **(7.3%)**

n = 3875

*Multiple selections allowed

Author-Journal communication



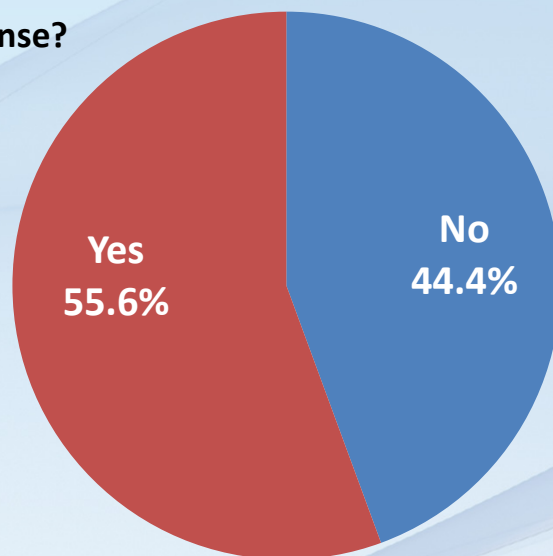
SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: <http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD>

Do authors approach journals without hesitation?

Have you ever written to the journal for queries or clarifications during the publication process?

If yes, how did you find their response?

- Prompt and clear **(42.7%)**
- Delayed but clear when it came **(28.4%)**
- Prompt but not clear **(17.7%)**
- I didn't get any reply **(7.8%)**



If no, why not?

- I didn't have a query **(51.1%)**
- I didn't know how to contact the journal **(14.8%)**
- I didn't know I was allowed to contact the journal **(16.6%)**
- I was scared to contact the journal **(17.4%)**

$n = 3760$

Time to publication



SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: <http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD>

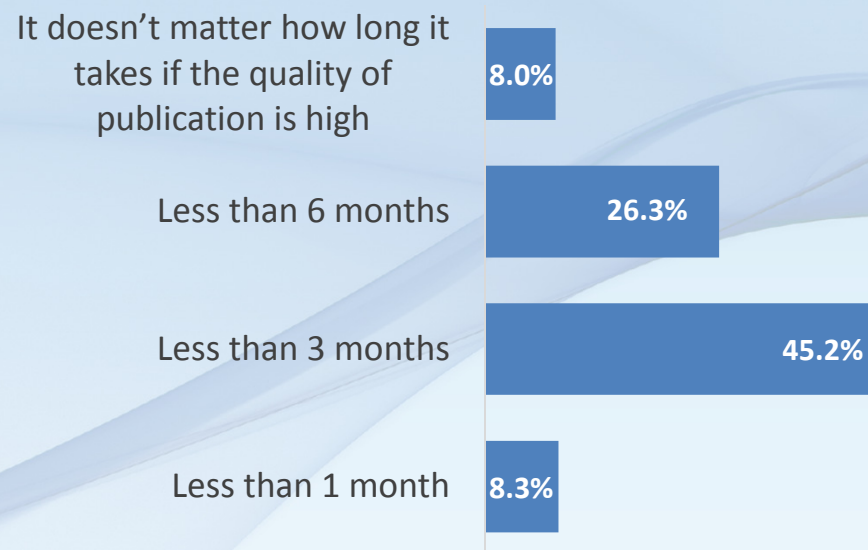
Perspectives on time to publication

What is the shortest time in which you've had a paper published (from submission)



n = 3775

How long do you think it should ideally take to publish a paper in a journal (from submission)?



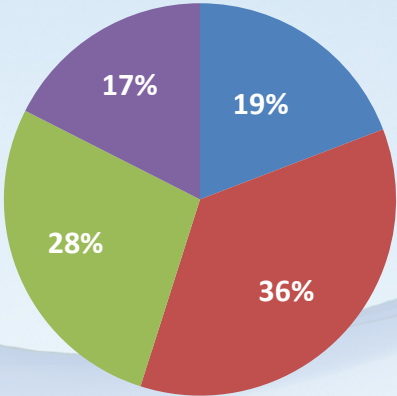
n = 3775

Duration of manuscripts at different stages in the journal workflow

“In your experience, how long does a manuscript remain at the following status points on the journal submission system?”

“WITH EDITOR”

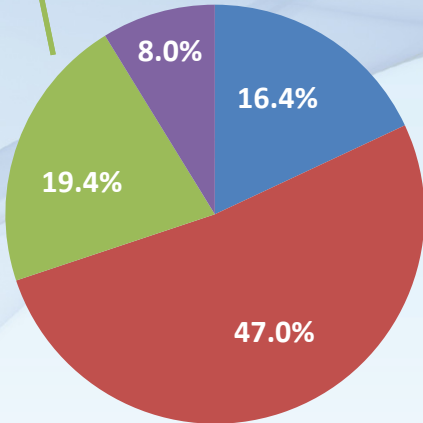
- Less than 5 days
- 5 to 10 days
- 10 to 30 days
- More than 1 month



n = 3764

“UNDER REVIEW”

- Less than 1 month
- 1 to 3 months
- 3 to 6 months
- More than 6 months

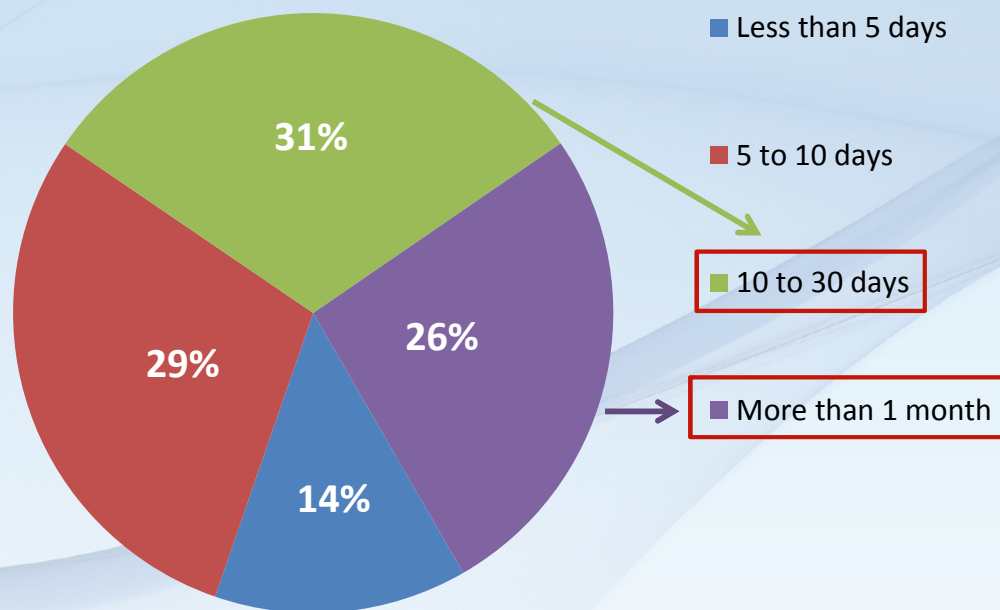


n = 3766

Duration of manuscripts at different stages in the journal workflow

“In your experience, how long does a manuscript remain at the following status points on the journal submission system?”

“DECISION IN PROCESS” OR “AWAITING DECISION”



$n = 3766$

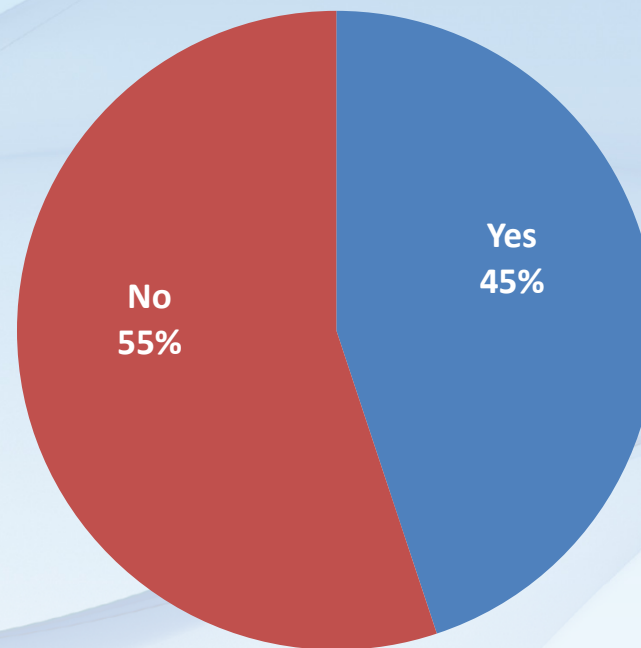
Authors' understanding of ethical issues and best publication practices



SURVEY ON AUTHOR PERSPECTIVES: <http://bit.ly/2mWpvGD>

Authors' awareness of potentially predatory journals

Has a journal ever contacted you guaranteeing publication or promising rapid publication?



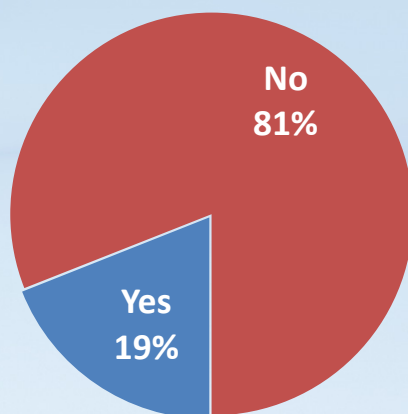
$n = 3875$

Experience with potentially predatory publishers

If yes, have you ever submitted to such a journal?

If yes, what was the outcome?

- My manuscript was accepted and published as promised **(68.3%)**
- The journal demanded unexpected article processing charges **(14.4%)**
- The journal stopped responding to my queries after I submitted my manuscript **(6.6%)**
- Other **(11.3%)**



If no, why not?*

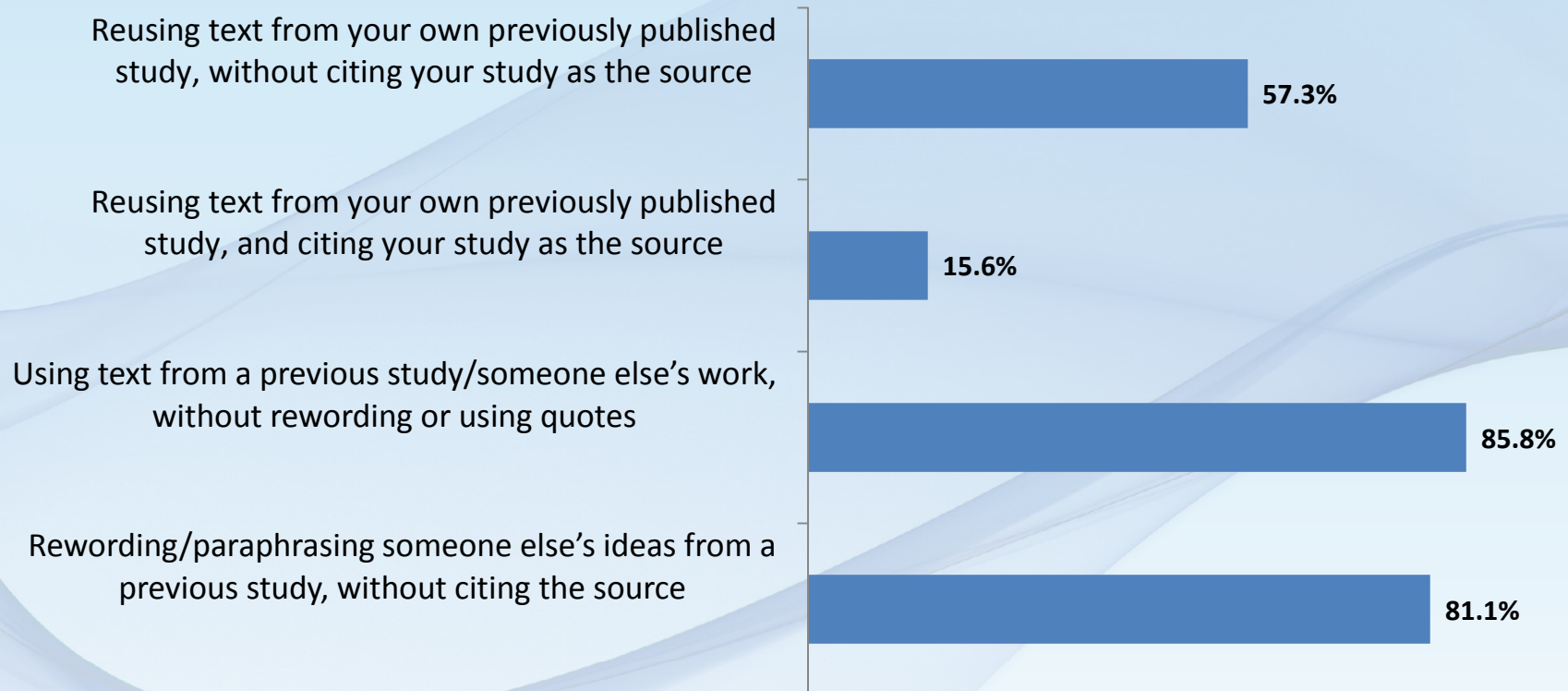
- I didn't trust the journal **(67.8%)**
- I didn't recognize the journal **(40.4%)**
- I already had another journal in mind for my paper **(21.8%)**
- I'm not sure **(4.8%)**
- Other **(0.1%)**

$n = 1726$

*Multiple selections allowed

How do authors define plagiarism?

Which of the following, in your opinion, constitutes plagiarism?*

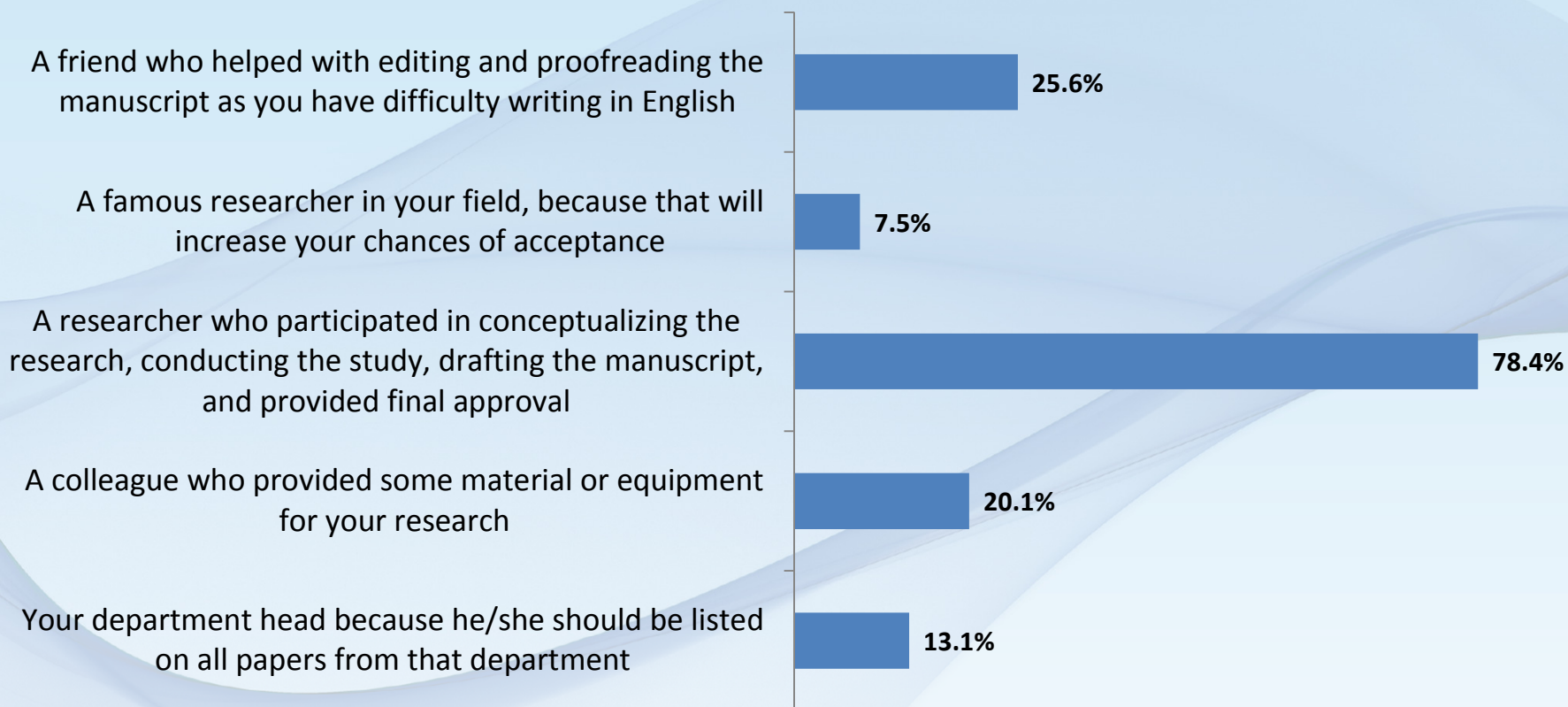


n = 3637

*Multiple selections allowed

How well do authors understand authorship criteria?

Which of the following, in your opinion, should be named a co-author on your paper?*



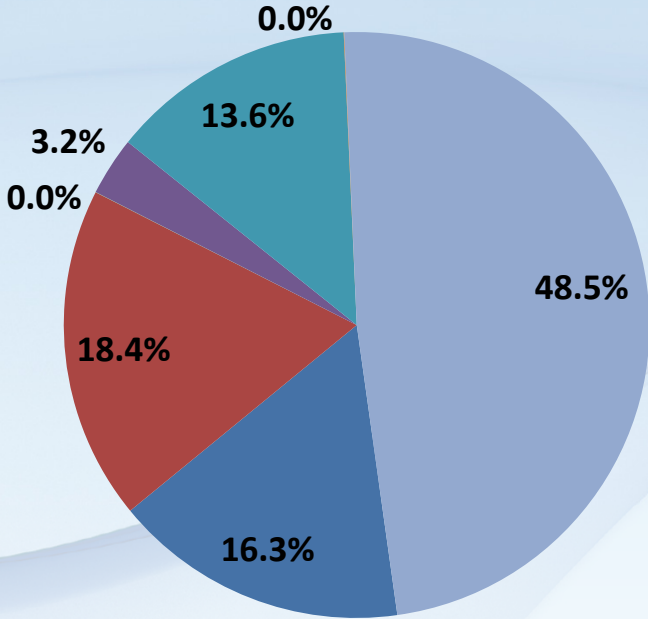
n = 2708

*Multiple selections allowed

Familiarity with good publication standards

Which of the following bodies/guidelines are you familiar with?

- COPE
- ICMJE
- Declaration of Helsinki
- GPP2
- CONSORT
- All of the above
- None of the above



n = 3733

**What would authors
like to change
in the system?**

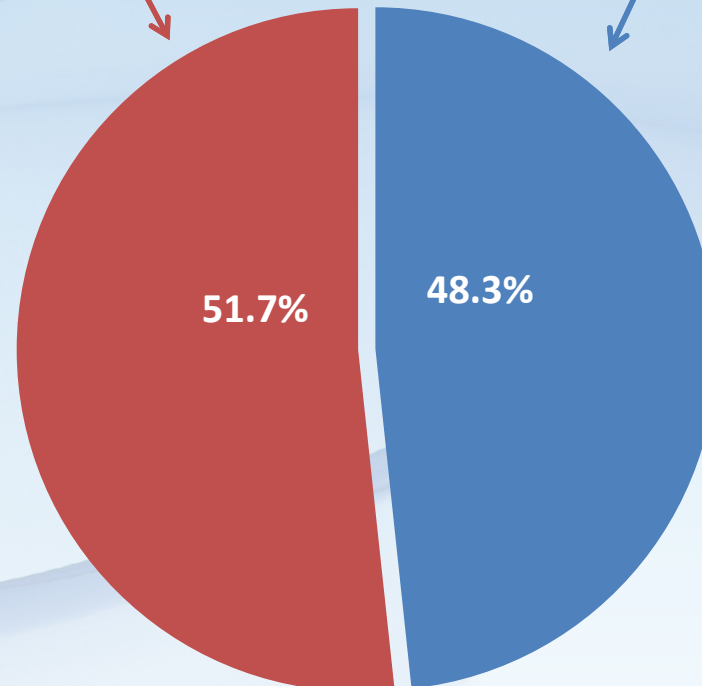


What aspects of journal publishing do authors want changed?

Would you like to change something in the publishing system?

Yes (check my comments below)

No. I am satisfied with the system



$n = 3712$

What aspects of journal publishing do authors want changed?

Main pain points and author-suggested areas of improvement



1 Time to publication

2 Peer review process/quality

3 Fairness/objectivity/bias

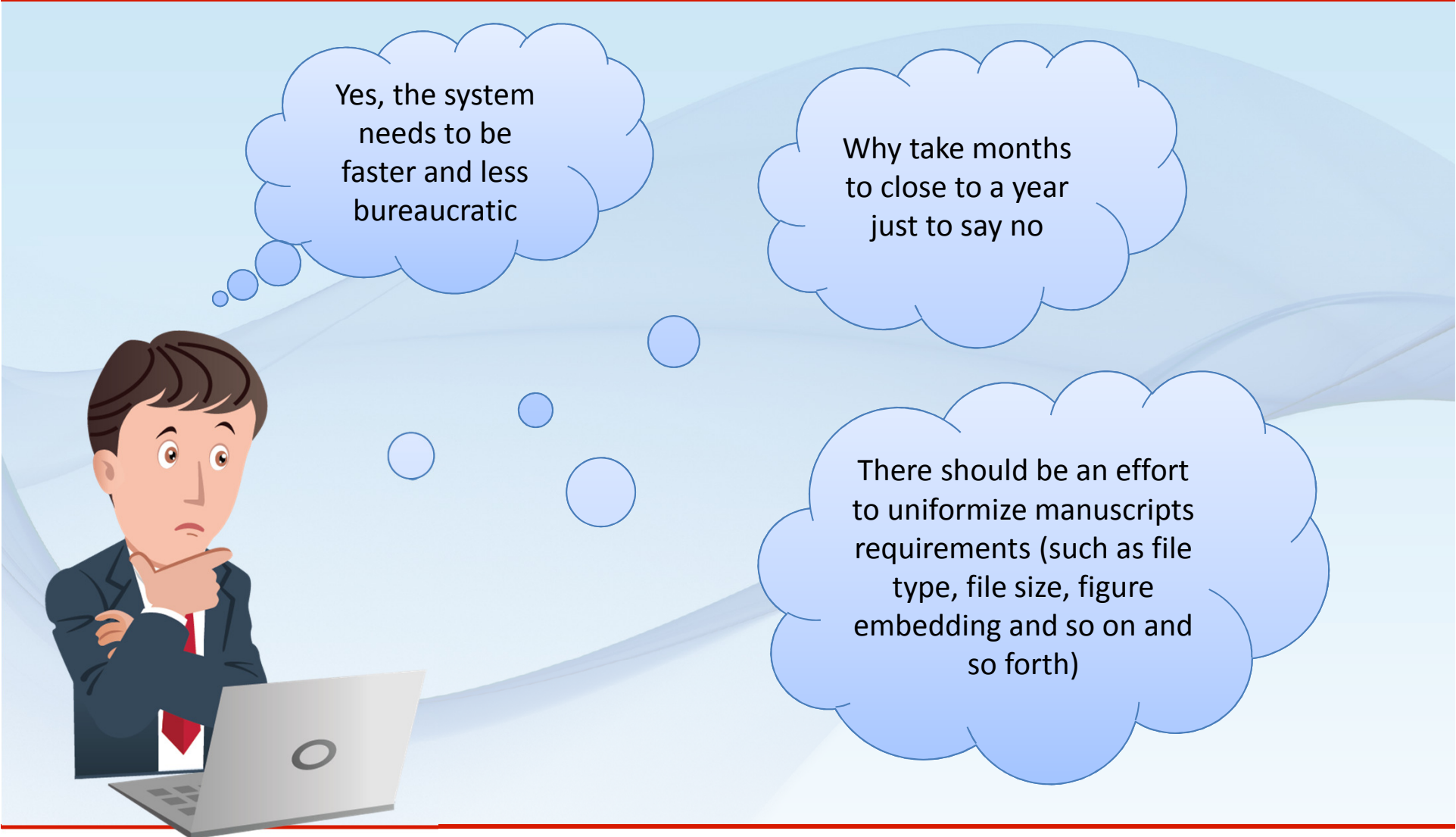
4 Affordability (costs/charges)

5 Pressure to publish

6 Process standardization

$n = 3712$

Sample author comments about the journal publishing system

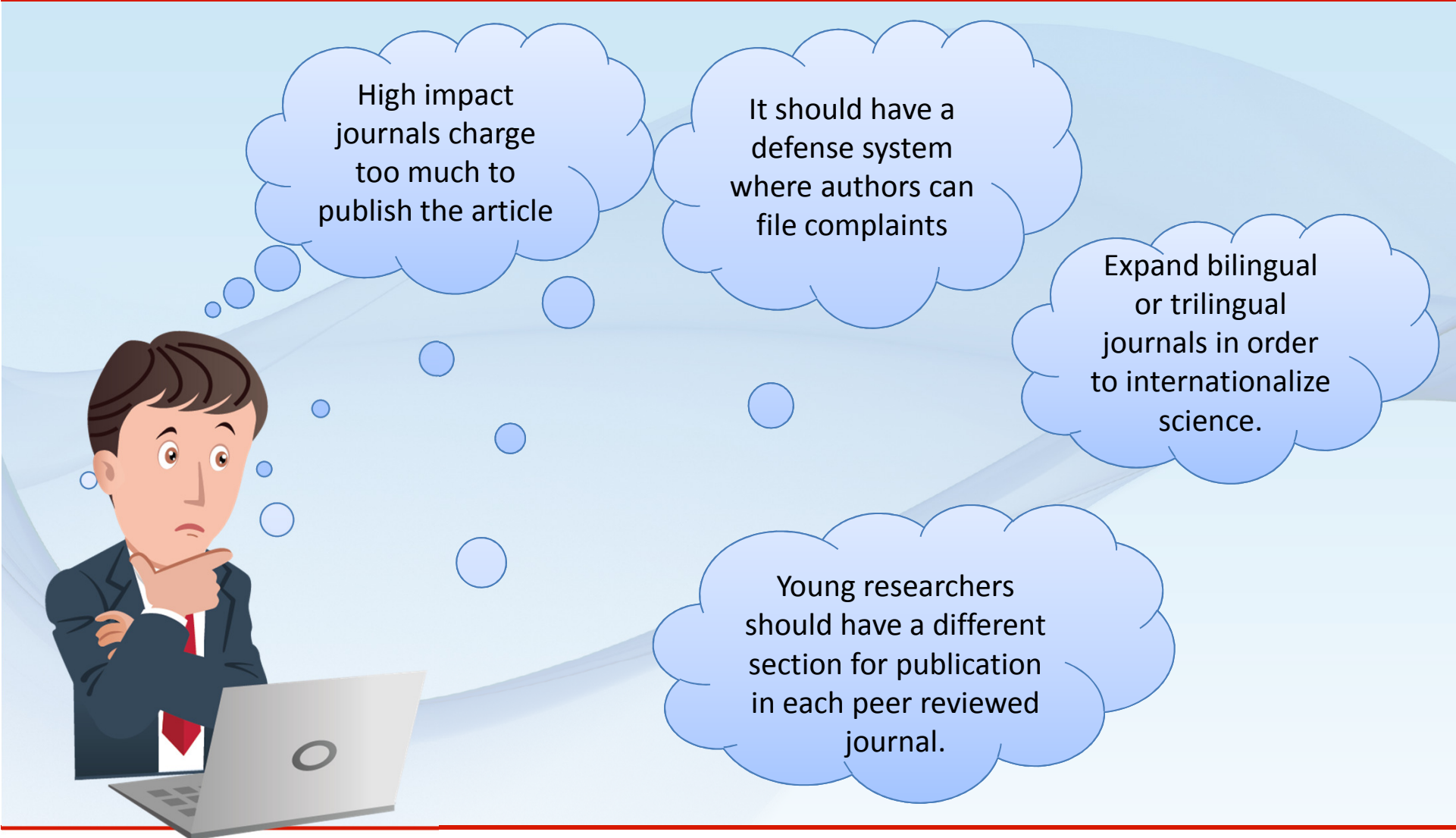


Yes, the system
needs to be
faster and less
bureaucratic

Why take months
to close to a year
just to say no

There should be an effort
to uniformize manuscripts
requirements (such as file
type, file size, figure
embedding and so on and
so forth)

Sample author comments about the journal publishing system



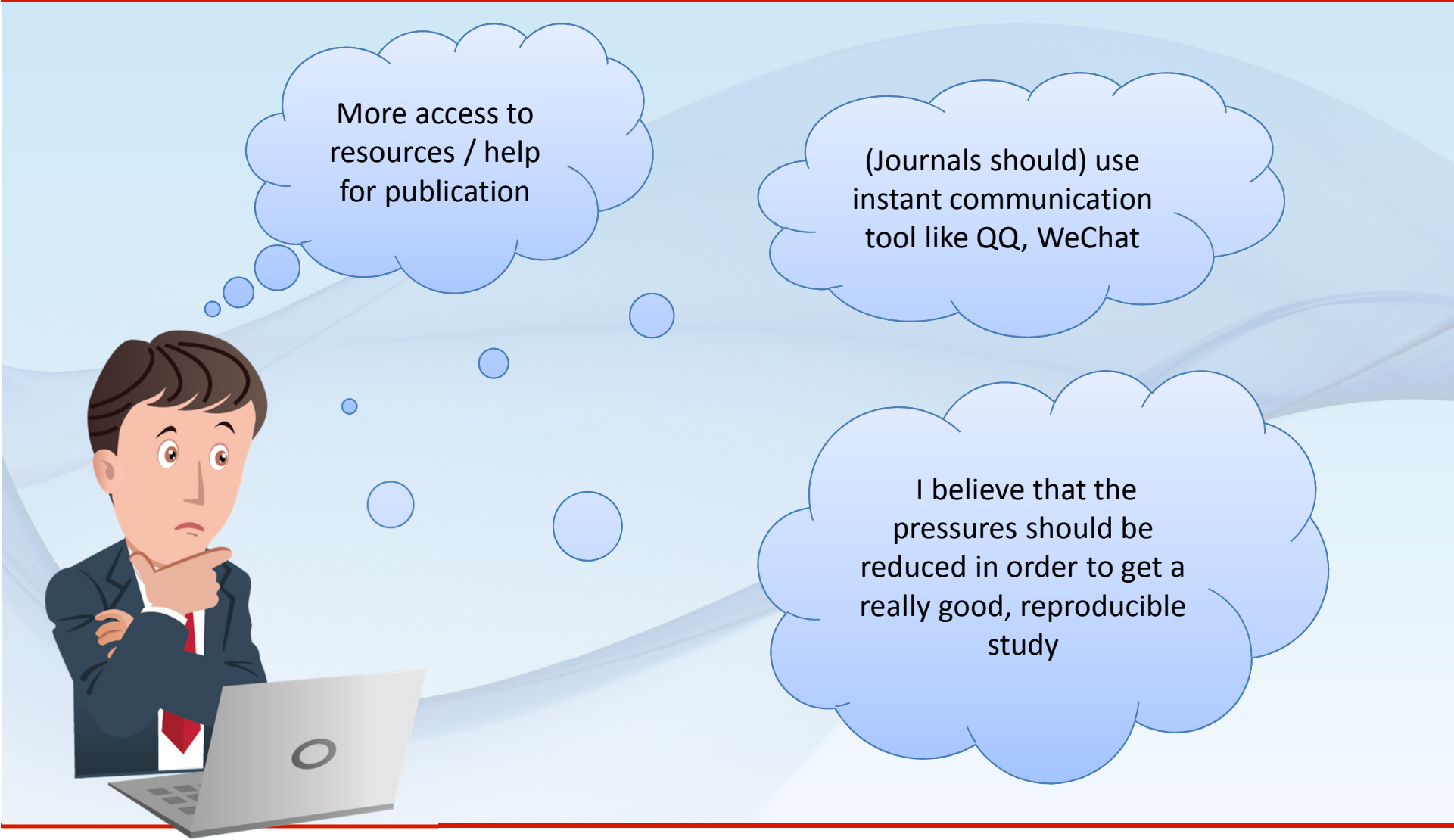
High impact journals charge too much to publish the article

It should have a defense system where authors can file complaints

Expand bilingual or trilingual journals in order to internationalize science.

Young researchers should have a different section for publication in each peer reviewed journal.

Sample author comments about the journal publishing system



More access to
resources / help
for publication

(Journals should) use
instant communication
tool like QQ, WeChat

I believe that the
pressures should be
reduced in order to get a
really good, reproducible
study

Key takeaway... There's a lot that's broken!

Let's begin by fixing the basics!

1. Understand author perspectives
2. Reduce time to publication
3. Increase transparency in peer review
4. Eliminate bias
5. Communicate effectively with authors
6. Create new opportunities for young researchers
7. Offer learning resources on good publication practices



Get involved!

Participate in the Editage Insights survey and share it with your authors!



<https://www.editage.com/survey-author-perspectives-on-academic-publishing>

Question period / Open discussion



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