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Lecturers' Lived Experiences of Publication Challenges in Scopus-Indexed Journals: A Qualitative Descriptive Study

M. Rais Ridwan
Corresponding author, Study Program of Mathematics Education, STKIP YPUP Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, *mraisridw4n@gmail.com*

Samsul Hadi
Department of Electrical Engineering Education, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, *samsul_hd@uny.ac.id*

Faihatuz Zuhairoh
Study Program of Mathematics Education, STKIP YPUP Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, *fzuhairoh@gmail.com*

Abdul Rahim
Department of Computer Education, Universitas Musamus, South Papua, Indonesia, *abdul.rahim@unmus.ac.id*

Publication in reputable international journals is a key indicator of a lecturer's scientific productivity and contributes to career development within their field of expertise. However, achieving this productivity still faces various obstacles. This study has used a descriptive qualitative approach to identify lecturers' difficulties in publishing research in Scopus-indexed journals. Data were collected via an online survey using Google Forms, with 106 lecturer respondents from three universities in Indonesia. This study used a modified Colaizzi method for data analysis, comprising seven principal steps. The results showed that lecturers had difficulty publishing research results in Scopus-indexed journals due to internal and external factors. Internal factors include a lack of language skills, limited experience in writing research results, limited information in finding a match between journals and article manuscripts, lack of time to write research results, and the ability of lecturers to explore research ideas. Then, external factors include the high cost of processing articles and the relatively long publication time. The findings of this study contribute to a comprehensive mapping of barriers to lecturer publication, accounting for both internal and external factors. In practice, the findings provide a basis for institutions to design more targeted writing assistance policies, optimize publication funding incentives, and manage lecturer workloads more equitably.

Keywords: colaizzi method, internal and external factors, lectures' publication difficulties, phenomenological, qualitative study

INTRODUCTION

The number of journals indexed in the citation database from 1999 to 2021 has increased significantly in several countries. Although it varies greatly between countries, the number of journals for Indonesia on the ScimagoJR page has increased from 4 in 1999 to 97 in 2021. The United States will have the most journals in 2021, with 5021. In addition, the United States has the number 1 ranking in terms of the number of documents produced by scientific works and the number of documents cited (Leydesdorff & Wagner, 2009; Qu et al., 2019). The number of papers cited in a journal is an

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indicator of journal ranking based on a comparison of numerical values that represent the average number of weighted citations received during a particular year with the number of documents published in the journal during the previous three years (Giri & Chaudhuri, 2020; Shanahan, 2016). The relationship between the success of publications in 102 countries and the quality and quantity of state journals indexed by Scopus from 2005 to 2014 was measured using indicators of scientific work productivity, collaboration, and impact (Erfanmanesh, Tahira, & Abrizah, 2017). n 2014, there were 22,581 Scopus-indexed country journals, with dominance from Western European countries (48.90%), North America (27.70%), and the United States and Britain, each with 51.00% (Erfanmanesh et al., 2017).

Indexation status is important for prestige and trust in scientific journals, as well as for journal performance at the international level, with assessment measures based on a global citation database. Journals indexed by Elsevier's Scopus and Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (WoS) databases are considered to have a certain level of quality and authority (Erfanmanesh et al., 2017). Journals with indexers in these two databases are ranked highest in achieving "international visibility" (Abrizah, Zainab, Edzan, & Koh, 2013). The increase in the number of reputable international, indexed journals makes a country a provider of publication outlets for researchers, academics, and students. It can be accessed by other researchers worldwide. The more a country's scientific publications are accessed internationally, the more citations they receive. Selection of journals to publish research results by considering the number of documents cited in the journal (He, Geng, & Campbell-Hunt, 2009; Persson, Glänzel, & Danell, 2004). In the current period, activities to increase journal publications in global scientometric databases, namely the Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus, have become very important for university rankings. However, publishing research papers in reputable international journals is not easy for lecturers due to the many obstacles encountered during the submission and review process. The journal's editorial board has set specific rules and guidelines, including language standards that mostly require English (Duracinsky et al., 2017; Montgomery, 2004).

Lecturers are human resources with the obligation to fulfill the tri dharma of higher education, namely education, research, and community service. Lecturers are professional educators and scientists whose main task is to transform, develop, and disseminate science, technology, and art through education, research, and community service (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2021; Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2005). In the same decision, it is also explained that research is an activity carried out systematically, according to scientific principles and methods, to obtain information, data, and knowledge related to understanding and testing a branch of knowledge and technology (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2021; Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2005). At the same time, community service is the activity of the academic community that utilizes science and technology to advance public welfare and educate the nation (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2021; Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia, 2005). Lecturer activities do not only involve teaching students but also research and community service, as an obligation to fulfill the workload in one semester. The research activities and community service results are considered to have contributed to the development in accordance with the lecturer's field of knowledge. A method for communicating research findings, assessing academic performance, and examining lecturers' career progression is through the composition of scientific publications (Abbott et al., 2010; Lippi & Mattiuzzi, 2017). The research results can be published in scientific journals or presented at seminars to support career paths and serve as a measure of lecturer research productivity.

There are several methods for measuring lecturers' research productivity. Higher education institutions measure the productivity of lecturers' research based on the number of documents published within and beyond the institution, funded grants, and the number of citations to published documents (Chiemeka, Longe, Longe, & Shaib, 2009). The frequency of citations to published research results shows the authority of lecturers' academic expertise in specific fields (Bowman &

Kinnan, 2018). Published research results can take the form of journal articles, books, monographs, conference papers, and research proposals submitted to and pending external and internal grants (Adkins & Budd, 2006; Ito & Brotheridge, 2007; Okiki & Mabawonku, 2013). Research productivity includes publishing and disseminating research findings in international and national journals, presenting at conferences, serving as an editor on journals, and obtaining patents (Nafukho, Wekullo, & Muyia, 2019; Zainab, 1999). According to Williams (2003), research productivity is an endeavor in knowledge or scientific study to develop new ideas and contribute to current, widely accepted information. Furthermore, the publication is an essential measure of the productivity of academics or lecturers in research. It is used to rank faculty and higher education institutions within a specific system (Norhazwani & Zainab, 2007).

Academics, researchers, or students have conducted empirical investigations to determine the factors that hinder researchers or lecturers from publishing their findings in respected worldwide journals indexed by Scopus. Several research studies use qualitative, quantitative, and both sequential approaches to identify the inhibiting factors that affect the productivity of publication of research results in international journals (Duracinsky et al., 2017; Garnet & Mahomed, 2012; Hanief, Haqiyah, Winarno, Pratama, & Sinulingga, 2021; Karabchuk, Shomotova, & Chmel, 2021; Paiva et al., 2017; Scherer, Ugarte-Gil, Schmucker, & Meerpohl, 2015). The study by Hanief et al. (2021) used a sequential quantitative and qualitative design to determine the role of inhibiting factors in the productivity of publishing research results in international journals. The research sample uses several lecturers in Indonesia with an educational background in sports study programs. A qualitative study of researchers in France also identified barriers to publishing research results in biomedical journals (Duracinsky et al., 2017). Another qualitative research study uses a case study approach to identify the challenges lecturers in South Africa face when publishing on the female gender (Garnet & Mahomed, 2012). The literature study approach to several research results uses case studies to identify research productivity in the United Arab Emirates (Karabchuk et al., 2021). Another study to identify both groups of researchers, with personal and professional status, used a cross-sectional design and a web-based questionnaire (Paiva et al., 2017). They identified the difficulties researchers face in publishing scientific papers in high-impact journals. Other research studies use a systematic literature review to know researchers' barriers to publishing and presenting research results at biomedical seminars or conferences (Scherer et al., 2015).

Another empirical research study uses research samples consisting of doctoral program students in Malaysia (Prasojo et al., 2019) and Indonesia (Purwanto, Ardiyanto, & Sudargini, 2021), as well as Master's program students in Iran (Yousefi, Tahriri, & Tous, 2019) to identify barriers to publishing research results in reputable international journals. The study conducted by Prasojo et al. (2019) used a sequential qualitative and quantitative approach to identify the challenges faced by PhD program students in publishing research findings in international publications. The qualitative technique uses a case study with a research sample consisting of 7 students from three universities in Malaysia. The quantitative approach uses a survey administered to a research sample of 125 participants from 12 universities in Malaysia. Purwanto et al. (2021) used the same research approach, with qualitative data collected from as many as 7 doctoral program students, and quantitative data collected from 250 respondents using an online questionnaire. Then, Yousefi et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative study with a research sample of 20 Master's students in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). The characteristics of the research sample selection are based on the research title and student teaching experience.

Previous research has identified various barriers to publication in reputable international journals for both lecturers and students, using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method approaches. However, most of these studies have focused on descriptively mapping the inhibiting factors and strategies, without delving deeply into lecturers' lived experiences when faced with the demands of publishing in

Scopus-indexed journals, with attention to the personal, emotional, and existential meanings of the publication process. Furthermore, many studies in Indonesia focus on doctoral/master's students or lecturers in the general context of international publication, rather than specifically on lecturers as the primary role with the responsibilities of the tridharma (three pillars of academic responsibility) and the pressures of academic promotion that require administrative requirements for manuscripts published in Scopus-indexed international journals. A deeper understanding of how lecturers interpret and manage the challenges of Scopus publication is crucial for designing institutional interventions that focus not only on technical skills but also on psychological well-being, professional identity, and scientific ethos.

This qualitative research study seeks to uncover the factors contributing to the challenges lecturers in Indonesia face in publishing research findings in reputable international journals indexed in Scopus. The research sample consisted of lecturers from three universities in Indonesia, with the sample selected based on gender, marital status, highest level of education, and academic position. The data analysis technique employs the Colaizzi method, which comprises seven principal processes. The results of this qualitative research study are expected to contribute to the development of instruments for assessing lecturers' performance. The development of the instrument requires a literature review of the construct, including the observed variables and the indicators supporting them. The results of a literature review can inform the design of the constructs for the observed variables and the item indicators that support them. Other contributions can provide information for strategic planning to increase the productivity of publications of research results by academics or lecturers in Indonesia or other Asian countries.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore lecturers' experiences with the challenges of publishing research results in reputable international journals indexed in Scopus. This qualitative approach yields comprehensive narratives from individuals experiencing a common phenomenon, offering insights into the development of appropriate interventions in the future (Bradshaw, Atkinson, & Doody, 2017). Unlike other qualitative research approaches, such as phenomenology or grounded theory, a descriptive qualitative approach is not tied to a specific philosophical or theoretical framework, thus allowing for methodological flexibility (Colorafi & Evans, 2016; Doyle, McCabe, Keogh, Brady, & McCann, 2020; Stanley, 2023). According to Christensen et al. (2017), a descriptive qualitative study is a research design in which the researcher's responsibility is to explore and describe participants' experiences. The description of the questions involves understanding the words and meanings that underlie the text through interaction with respondents to gain their life experiences (Culver, Gilbert, & Sparkes, 2012; Englander, 2012). The terminology used in this research is based on questions about the life experiences of individual lecturers, describing the routines that must be carried out in one semester. Qualitative research design uses a descriptive approach to understand the life experiences of individuals who experience certain phenomena by studying the essence of the phenomenon itself (Ellis, 2019; Qutoshi, 2018; Ridwan et al., 2022). The qualitative research design is well-suited to identifying the difficulties lecturers face in publishing, as the data collection process can explore complex needs arising from individual life experiences (Qutoshi, 2018).

Data Collection

This study's primary data collection instrument was an online questionnaire with open-ended questions distributed via Google Forms. Data collection strategies using online questionnaires include data such as text from email messages, short messages, or multimedia. This data collection strategy collects text from emails, short messages, multimedia, life stories, metaphorical visual narratives,

digital archives, autobiographies, journals, field notes, letters, conversations, and personal and family social artifacts (Creswell, 2007). Other forms of data include poetry, music, sounds, ritual objects (Creswell & Poth, 2017), and posts from social media (Patton, 2015). The researcher conducted a literature review focused on the problem indicators to create the instrument. The instrument consists of two parts. The first part contains the lecturer's demographic information. Information related to optional and completed questions includes gender, marital status, most recent education, academic position of lecturers, workplace institutions, experience in training, and experience publishing research results and community service in national and international journals. The second part consists of questions related to obstacles to publishing research results and community service in reputable national and international journals, difficulties in finding business and industrial partners, obstacles to cooperating with lecturers from domestic or foreign universities, and difficulties in collaborating on joint scientific publications. The research data was collected from July 2 to August 18, 2022. The procedure for collecting data was to send respondents a Google Form link via an official invitation letter. The link was also sent via WhatsApp, along with the lecturer's academic background, based on criteria for gender, marital status, education level, and academic position. Sample size determination is based on the principle of flexibility in the information obtained from respondents. A sample size of one respondent may be justified in certain cases, particularly when exploring new or highly specific phenomena (Boddy, 2016). Conversely, larger samples are possible for research aimed at generalizing findings or exploring multiple perspectives (Boddy, 2016; Sarfo, Debrah, Gbordzoe, Afful, & Obeng, 2021). The sample selection in this study used a cluster sampling technique across three universities, combined with stratified random sampling that accounted for lecturers' functional positions. For each university cluster, lecturers were randomly selected for each functional position level. The number of respondents who responded to the online questionnaire was 106 lecturers. Demographic data of research respondents responding to online questionnaires are given in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic data of research respondents

Variabel moderator	Characteristics	Number of Lecturers	%
Institution	Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta	51	48.11
	Universitas Negeri Jakarta	40	37.74
	Universitas Negeri Gorontalo	15	14.15
Total		106	100
Education level	Magister	46	43.40
	Doctoral	60	56.60
Total		106	100
Gender	Male	60	56.60
	Female	46	43.40
Total		106	100
Marriage status	Not marriage	7	6.60
	Marriage	99	93.40
Total		106	100
Academic position	Lecturer	11	10.38
	Instructor	21	19.81
	Assistant Professor	44	41.51
	Associate Professor	22	20.75
	Professor	8	7.55
Total		106	100

Data Analysis

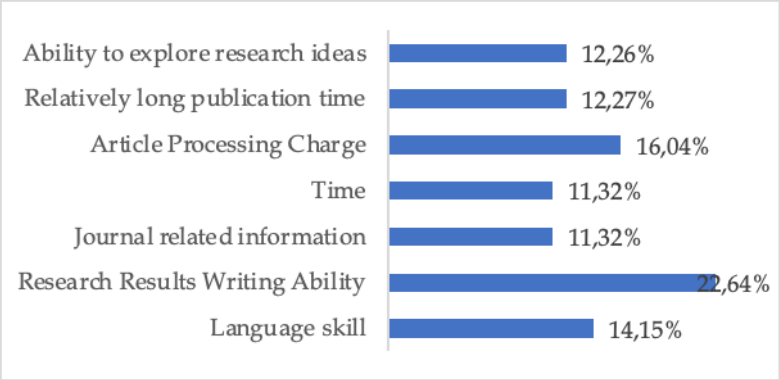
The principal researcher transcribed the open-ended question responses from Microsoft Excel into Microsoft Word. This study used a modified version of the Colaizzi method (1978) for data analysis, comprising seven primary components. In the first step, the data transcript is read repeatedly to

understand the overall response. Activities at this stage, for each thought, feeling, or idea that emerged from the researchers, were bracketed (Colaizzi, 1978; Polgar & Thomas, 2019; Speziale, Streubert, & Carpenter, 2011) or shaded for grouping based on category identification. The second step is to identify the dominant statement in the transcript that relates to the individual experiences of the lecturers regarding the difficulties they have faced. The third step is the formulation of meaning based on the dominant statement, and comparisons are made to the statement. They categorize relevant statements and formulate themes based on several statements that have the same meaning (Beck, 2019; Speziale et al., 2011). The fourth step is sequencing activities from forming meaning into categories, groups of themes, and relationships between themes (Beck, 2019). The emphasis in this study is on narrative responses, not on obtaining the full phenomenological essence. The fifth step is the activity that defines all the themes that appear to constitute a complete description of the phenomenon under study (Maher, Hadfield, Hutchings, & de Eyto, 2018). The sixth step is an explanation of the fundamental structure based on the results of the phenomena obtained. The last step is to validate the study findings using the "member checking" technique to explore the credibility of the research results (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016).

FINDINGS

The results of a survey conducted from July 2 to August 18, 2022, indicated that 106 lecturers responded to online questionnaires via Google Forms. The demographic data for 106 respondents are presented in Table 1, with proportions based on the institution variables, gender, marital status, education level, and academic position of lecturers. The identification of factors contributing to lecturers' challenges in publishing research findings in reputable international journals indexed by Scopus reveals several issues: a lack of language skills in translating and communicating (N = 15 lecturers, 14.15%), limited experience in writing research results (N = 24 lecturers, 22.64%), limited information in finding journals (N = 12 lecturers, 11.32%), lack of time to conduct research (N = 12 lecturers, 11.32%), the cost of processing articles is too expensive (N = 17 lecturers, 16.04%), publication time is too long (N = 13 lecturers, 12.27%), and also the ability of lecturers to explore research ideas (N = 13 lecturers, 12.26%). The results of the seven-factor identification are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
The response results of lecturers' difficulties in publishing (%, N = 106 lecturers, the data can be more than one response)



The results of the following study used an adaptation of the Colaizzi method for qualitative data analysis. The data analysis procedure stage identified seven main factors that make it difficult for lecturers to publish research results in reputable international journals indexed by Scopus, by reducing responses, grouping responses by themes, and identifying the relationship between themes and online

questionnaire data. The seven inhibiting factors include lecturers' limitations in language skills, difficulty writing research results, difficulty finding relevant journal articles, lack of time to write research results, and lecturers' ability to explore research ideas. Other factors include overly expensive article processing costs and overly long publication times. The results of the qualitative data analysis for the seven factors are described in Tables 2-8.

Language Ability Limitations

The qualitative analysis of responses to online questionnaires revealed that lecturers face challenges publishing research findings in Scopus-indexed journals due to inadequate language proficiency for journal communication and for articulating research results in English. Another difficulty is lecturers' ability to transfer Indonesian into English, using official rules that require excellent, correct language structures. Table 2 summarizes the analytical results based on the lecturer's responses to online surveys administered via Google Forms.

Table 2
Language ability limitations

Data source	Response results	Theme	Relationship between themes
Online questionnaire	Foreign language.	Language skill.	The limitations of lecturers are the ability to communicate, write, and translate.
	Difficulty in language.		
	My English skills are not good.		
	Foreign language mastery is limited.		
	Communicating with parties there is difficult.	Communication skills.	
	Write in good English.	Ability to write in English.	
	Problems with English writing.		
	Translate the article into English.	The ability to transfer language.	
	Translation barriers.		
	Translating articles were rejected several times due to language and depth of discussion.		
	United Nations required Indonesian to foreign language translation.		

Lecturers' limited foreign-language skills, particularly English, are a major obstacle to optimal academic performance and international collaboration. Some lecturers still struggle to understand and use foreign languages, with inadequate English proficiency and limited language skills used in global academic communication. This situation creates various obstacles, including difficulty communicating with international partners, difficulty writing high-quality scientific articles in English, and challenges translating articles from Indonesian into other languages. Articles submitted to international journals are often rejected due to perceived substandard language quality and depth of discussion, highlighting the urgency of improving communication, academic writing, and translation competencies among lecturers.

Limitations of Research Results Writing Ability

Another obstacle is the lecturers' limited ability to write research results. These limitations include lecturers' ability to cite, write, and compile structured articles, as well as the fact that some articles do not meet the standards, making them difficult to publish in reputable international journals. The outcomes of the structured analysis, employing the Colaizzi approach, of the lecturer's comments are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Limitations of research results writing ability

Data source	Response results	Theme	Relationship between themes
Online questionnaire	The misconception in the application's use to index the manuscript will be used as a reference in the article manuscript.	Ability to do citations.	The lecturers' limited ability to cite, write, and compile research articles.
	The format is very diverse, especially in the writing of quotations. Requests to cite a journal that is sometimes irrelevant.		
	Citation.		
	Each journal has its template and style of setting.		
	Poor writing skills.	Article writing and compilation skills are required.	
	It is hard to write a Scopus journal article if Sinta (Science and Technology Index) is okay.		
	My article-writing skills were still weak. I needed to learn more about writing publishable articles.		
	He was rejected several times because of the depth of the discussion.		
	Ability to compose articles.		
	The publication experience on Scopus is still limited.		
	The capacity to produce articles needs enhancement, as completing a single article is somewhat time-consuming.		
	It takes time to compile articles and submissions from submission to acceptance.		
	It is challenging to penetrate Scopus-indexed journals.	Scopus-indexed journal manuscript acceptance difficulties.	
	Articles that are challenging to publish in Scopus-indexed journals.		
	Articles of research results and community service are often rejected.		
	Not confident.	Manuscripts that do not meet the standards.	
	I am not sure if my article is worth it.		
	Articles are not feasible, so writing training is needed to submit scopes.		

The next limitation of lecturers' abilities in writing scientific articles consists of technical constraints, academic substance, and psychological aspects. The identification results indicate that lecturers still face difficulties with reference management software and with adapting to the diversity of environmental styles and citation standards across various journals. In addition to technical factors, limited publication experience in reputable international journals, such as Scopus, results in a shallow depth of discussion of research results and a relatively long time to complete the manuscript. Another psychological barrier is low self-confidence and self-efficacy regarding the suitability of articles, which results in manuscript rejections and underscores the urgent need for comprehensive writing assistance from the drafting stage through manuscript submission.

Limited Information Regarding Journals

The next lecturer's difficulty related to the limitations of lecturers in obtaining information on journals concerned the suitability of article manuscripts to the journal's focus and scope. Another limitation is the lack of information about a journal's indexer. Table 4 presents the results of a structured qualitative analysis of online lecturer responses collected via Google Forms.

Table 4
Limitations information regarding journals

Data source	Response results	Theme	Relationship between themes
Online questionnaire	He recognized journal information.	Details on whether or not the scope and purpose of the journal are compatible with the submission of research papers.	Instructors face constraints in collecting information regarding the scope, topic, and journal indexing.
	The obstacles I feel are choosing the right journal for publication according to the article and lacking journals that accommodate Community Service articles.		
	Look for journals that match the research results.		
	The research title is not included in the focus and scope of the selected journal.		
	Scope journal in the field of fine arts.		
	The Science and Technology Index (Sinta) does not contain index sports journals.	Journal indexing information.	
	The continuity of several journals at Scopus is inconsistent. Not all journals with the SCI (Science Citation Index)/SSCI (Social Sciences Citation Index) category are recognized in Scopus.		
	Ensure quality journals will not be discontinued.		
	Variable indexed validity period, while submitting, is still indexed but changed to unindexed at issue.		
	Scopus is too often politically discontinuous. Sinta 1 and 2 indexed journals are not too many.		
	Yes, because it is difficult to find journals to find fixed positions in Scopus and Sinta are generally on-off indexed by Scopus and Sinta.		
	Subscriptions to quality international journals are also lacking.		

Another limitation faced by lecturers is the lack of access to information on the focus, scope, and indexing status of journals. Some lecturers struggle to identify journals that align with the specifics of their research findings. Furthermore, access to information related to journal indexing status in journal databases is limited. Consequently, uncertainty about journal continuity in Scopus and fluctuations in national journal rankings create a risk of disorientation for lecturers when selecting target journals. Furthermore, limited access to quality international journals and concerns about journal discontinuity make the journal selection process a crucial obstacle to the successful dissemination of research results in formally recognized journals.

Limited Time for Writing Research Results

The next obstacle for lecturers is the limited time to write research results. The limited time for writing is due to professors' involvement in campus activities and administration. Table 5 describes the structural analysis results by reducing responses from the same lecturer, grouping them by theme, and identifying the relationships between themes and online questionnaire data.

Table 5
Limited time for writing research results

Data source	Response results	Theme	Relationship between themes
Online questionnaire	I was looking for free time to write articles because of the workload as a lecturer with additional assignments.	Time constraints for writing research articles.	Time constraints for writing research findings.
	Limited time.		
	The difficulty, in my opinion, is finding time to produce full articles on the margins of other jobs.		
	She is slightly constrained by time.		
	Time and opportunity.		
	Time to write, as well as motivation and determination.		
	It takes time to prepare articles and submit them to be accepted.		
	Concentration/focus and total time to make articles from research results because publishing to Scopus/Sinta takes time, focus, and energy, to adjust themes, templates, and submit until published.		
	Bustle.	Busy with campus activities and administration.	
	Time allocation to assist students in research in the lab, as well as time allocation in writing articles.		
	Administrative duties and other responsibilities.		
	The focus is still divided into other activities, both academic and non-academic activities.		
	There is a lot more work to be done.		
	Time management is a challenge in preparing and implementing teaching and other activities.		

The main obstacle for lecturers in publishing in reputable international journals is the limited time available to write research articles, due to their high and diverse workload. They must divide their time between their primary teaching duties, additional structural/administrative duties, student mentoring in the laboratory, and various other academic and non-academic activities, making it difficult to allocate sufficient, focused, and continuous dedicated time for writing. Furthermore, the process of drafting manuscripts, including submission, revision, and publication in Scopus-indexed international or national journals, each requires significant commitment, focus, energy, and perseverance. These conditions make time management and work priorities a major challenge in converting research results into publishable scientific articles.

Publishing Costs and Research Funding Limitations

The results of the subsequent qualitative data analysis showed that the obstacles faced by lecturers in publishing in reputable international journals included publication costs and research funding. Lack of funding to conduct research and relatively expensive publication costs, so some lecturers tend to be constrained from publishing research results in reputable international journals. Table 6 describes the findings of the qualitative data analysis.

Table 6
Publishing costs and research funding limitations

Data source	Response results	Theme	Relationship between themes
Online questionnaire	The budget for publication is quite large.	Expensive journal publication fees.	Publication fees are prohibitively expensive, and inadequate research funding.
	Publication fee.		
	Article registration fee.		
	The fee that must be paid to publish in the Scopus journal.		
	Scopus publication fees are expensive.		
	Expensive international journal publication fees.		
	Publication costs are high.		
	Funding for research.	Lack of funding for research.	
	Insufficient grants received.		
	Limited funds.		
	Funding.		

The barriers lecturers cite to publication in reputable international journals primarily relate to high publication costs and limited research funding. They found that the budget required for article processing, particularly in Scopus-indexed and other international journals, is relatively large and often considered expensive, thereby imposing a financial burden on both individuals and institutions. Furthermore, funding for research, including grants received, is perceived as insufficient to cover both research needs and publication costs. This combination of high publication costs and limited research funding limits lecturers' opportunities to submit articles to reputable international journals, hinders the sustainability of their research agendas, and contributes to the low productivity of scientific publications globally.

Relatively Long Publication Time

The investigation revealed that lecturers face challenges publishing in esteemed international journals indexed in Scopus, primarily due to the protracted review process and extended publication timelines imposed by these journals. Table 7 summarizes the analysis findings using the Colaizzi adaptation to online lecturer responses via Google Forms.

Table 7
Relatively long publication time

Data source	Response results	Theme	Relationship between themes
Online questionnaire	I was waiting in line to be received.	The publication time is relatively long.	The review and publication process time is relatively long.
	The long wait for the publication of the Scopus journal, especially for Sinta 2, if you do not have acquaintances, is not a priority. I waited a long time to revise it, and finally, it was rejected. It is better for Scopus, but it takes a long time.		
	When the manuscript has been revised, waiting for publication can take months.		
	The length of time for publication and revision is done repeatedly.		
	Length of time to publish.		
	The publication of research and service outputs that must be published in the current year is very difficult for researchers.		
	The deadline for submitting articles for publication is before the final report, but the notification of the receipt of publication has passed the year.		
	A period of time or timetable that a journal will spend publishing articles.		
	I have a limited frequency and number of published articles from each journal.		
	A very considerable amount of time was spent in the journal.		
	The amount of time until the next issue of the journal is published.	The article review process is quite long.	
	Learn from the past.		
	I am queuing time for review.		
	Generally, it takes a long time for the journal to review our articles.		
	The time it takes is sometimes quite long from submission to a review.		

Another obstacle, based on lecturers' experiences publishing articles in reputable international journals, is the lengthy review and publication process. Lecturers complain of long queues from submission to review, repeated revisions, and waiting for editorial decisions and publication schedules that can take months. This phenomenon is exacerbated by limited frequency and article quotas per issue, so even after manuscripts are accepted, full publication is often delayed. For lecturers who must meet research output targets for the current year or grant reporting deadlines, delays in receiving news of article acceptance and publication create additional pressure, often exceeding budget year or reporting deadlines. Overall, this relatively lengthy review and publication process adds uncertainty, complicates performance obligations, and becomes a source of frustration in efforts to publish in reputable international journals.

Ability to Explore Research Ideas

The next obstacle for lecturers seeking to publish in reputable international journals is their limited ability to explore research ideas. The limitations of the lecturers include the ability to explore research ideas with significant contributions and to determine the current research theme. In addition, the lecturer's obstacles in conducting these explorations are influenced by the lecturer's limited experience in publishing. The results of the qualitative data analysis of lecturer response data are presented in Table 8.

Table 8
Ability to explore research ideas

Data source	Response Results	Theme	Relationship between themes
Online questionnaire	I am still having difficulty elaborating on the latest methods.	Trouble finding significant research ideas.	Research exploration by lecturers.
	Determine the things that can be turned into articles that have novelty and suitability with my expertise.		
	Up-to-date papers.	Trouble choosing a research topic.	
	The topic is outdated because we have not gotten to the issue of being up to date.		
	Current research topics.		
	Research theme.		
	Research themes in the field of historical scholarship are not given a portion.		
	The quality of research is due to limited facilities.	The publication experience is still relatively small.	
	Exploration of review results.		
	The track record of publications is still below standard.		

Based on the responses, lecturers' ability to explore research ideas still faces several significant obstacles. Some lecturers experience difficulty elaborating on the latest methods and determining which research aspects are worthy of publication as novel, relevant article topics. On the other hand, the need to publish cutting-edge articles and address current research topics has not been fully met, resulting in some topics becoming out of date and a lack of space for topics relevant to specific scientific fields. Furthermore, research quality is affected by limited resources; the ability to explore, read critically, and revise based on reviewer input still needs improvement, and a publication track record that remains substandard, thus hampering the optimization of idea exploration into competitive research articles.

DISCUSSION

The results of the qualitative study in this research, using a descriptive qualitative approach and data analysis techniques adapted from Colaizzi method (1978), identified 7 main factors that make it difficult for lecturers in Indonesia to publish research results in reputable international journals indexed by Scopus. The seven factors consist of internal and external factors. Internal factors include a lack of language skills, limited experience in writing research results, limited information in finding a match between journals and article manuscripts, lack of time to write research results, and the ability of lecturers to explore research ideas. Then, external factors include the high cost of processing articles and the relatively long publication time. Hanief et al. (2021); Duracinsky et al. (2017); Garnet and Mahomed (2012); Karabchuk et al. (2021); Paiva et al. (2017); Scherer et al. (2015); Prasojo et al. (2019); Purwanto et al. (2021); and Yousefi et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative research study to identify the difficulty for researchers, lecturers, and students to publish in Scopus-indexed international journals.

The lack of English language skills includes limitations in lecturers' communication, in writing research results, and in translation. This qualitative research study is pertinent to the studies by Duracinsky et al. (2017), Prasojo et al. (2019); and Purwanto et al. (2021) on hurdles to publishing research results in Scopus-indexed international journals. The three studies used the following research samples: researchers in France, doctoral students in Malaysia, and students in Indonesia. Duracinsky et al. (2017) identified constraints on lecturers' publishing of research results in biomedical journals, primarily due to inadequate proficiency in English. Other research by Prasojo et

al. (2019) and Purwanto et al. (2021) showed that doctoral students and lecturers' difficulties included limited English proficiency and low English skills.

The findings identify other obstacles, including lecturers' limited ability to write research results. These limitations include lecturers' ability to cite, write, and compile structured articles, as well as the fact that some articles do not meet the standards, making them difficult to be accepted in reputable international journals. The identification results are relevant to the research study by Hanief et al. (2021), Prasojo et al. (2019), Purwanto et al. (2021), Yousefi et al. (2019), and Duracinsky et al. (2017). The research study by Hanief et al. (2021) using a sample of lecturers in Indonesia in the field of sports science shows that one of the difficulties in publishing in international journals is the ability to write research results. The same result was obtained by Prasojo et al. (2019), Purwanto et al. (2021), and Yousefi et al. (2019). They used research samples consisting of doctoral program students in Malaysia and Indonesia, and master's program students in Iran, to identify difficulties in publishing and specifically limited writing skills. Then, for the research study by Duracinsky et al. (2017), 60% of the total respondents (1191) reported difficulty writing research results in the discussion section. Writing in the discussion section requires thinking, reading the literature, and comparing existing and previously published results (Kallestinova, 2011).

The next difficulty for lecturers is the limitations they face in obtaining information on journals. Limitations consist of the article manuscript's suitability with the journal's focus and scope, and the lack of information regarding the indexer of a journal. The findings of this study are pertinent to the research conducted by Garnet and Mahomed (2012) and Yousefi et al. (2019). The research study by Garnet and Mahomed (2012) used a case study approach to identify the difficulties faced by lecturers in South Africa, focusing on female lecturers. The difficulties faced by students in the TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) master's program in Iran include limitations in finding journal information from a research article's manuscript.

The next obstacle for lecturers is the limited time to write research results. The limited time for writing is influenced by lecturers' busy schedules with campus activities and administration. The findings of this research study align with those of Garnet and Mahomed (2012), Paiva et al. (2017), Scherer et al. (2015), Duracinsky et al. (2017), Hanief et al. (2021), Prasojo et al. (2019), and Purwanto et al. (2021). A research study by Garnet and Mahomed (2012) using a sample of lecturers in South Africa identifies limitations to publication due to excessive workload and limited time to write. According to Paiva et al. (2017), the inhibiting factor was the time constraint on writing research results, as identified by the two groups of researchers. Similar results were also obtained by Scherer et al. (2015) and Duracinsky et al. (2017). Research by Scherer et al. (2015) uses a systematic literature review to identify the obstacles that hinder researchers from publishing and presenting research results at seminars or biomedical conferences. Some constraints or factors limit the time to write research results. While Duracinsky et al. (2017) used a sample of researchers in Francis, they found that the barriers to publishing research results in biomedical journals were due to a lack of time to write articles. Then, the research study by Hanief et al. (2021) also found that the lecturer's obstacle to publishing is limited time to write research results, as many field activities are carried out. The same is also true for doctoral program students in Malaysia and Indonesia when publishing research results in reputable international journals (Prasojo et al., 2019; Purwanto et al., 2021).

The results of the subsequent qualitative data analysis on the obstacles lecturers face in publishing are the factors of publication costs and research funding. Lack of funding to conduct research and relatively expensive publication costs, so some lecturers tend to be constrained from publishing research results in reputable international journals. The results of this study are relevant to the study by Hanief et al. (2021), which shows that the inhibiting factor for lecturers' publication productivity in international journals is the high cost of publication. The same results were also observed among researchers in France and the United Arab Emirates, doctoral program students in Malaysia and

Indonesia, and master's program students in Iran, who found that funding and publication costs constrained all. Funding includes funds for professional translators and article processing fees (Duracinsky et al., 2017; Karabchuk et al., 2021; Paiva et al., 2017; Prasojo et al., 2019; Purwanto et al., 2021; Scherer et al., 2015; Yousefi et al., 2019).

The subsequent challenge for instructors who want to publish in esteemed, Scopus-indexed journals is the protracted review process and publication timelines often associated with these journals. Another obstacle is lecturers' limited ability to explore research ideas. The limitations of the lecturers include the ability to explore research ideas with significant contributions and to determine the current research theme. In addition, the lecturer's obstacles in conducting these explorations are influenced by the lecturer's limited experience in publishing. The results of this research study are relevant to the research conducted by Scherer et al. (2015) and Prasojo et al. (2019), each using a systematic approach to the literature review and qualitative and quantitative approaches in sequence to identify the inhibiting factors for lecturers and doctoral students in conducting publications and presenting research results in journals, seminars, or conferences. Some of the obstacles experienced by lecturers were due to reviewer response times, negative reviewer results, and extended response times from journal editors.

However, the research results from all relevant studies in this study used the following approaches: case studies, qualitative and quantitative methods sequentially or vice versa, systematic literature review, and cross-sectional methods. The novelty of this research study, compared with other qualitative studies using a descriptive qualitative approach that specifically identify lecturers' experiences based on personal, emotional, and existential aspects of the difficulties encountered in publishing articles in reputable international journals indexed in Scopus. This qualitative study approach seeks to understand the life experiences of individuals who encounter certain phenomena by examining the essence of those phenomena (Ellis, 2019; Qutoshi, 2018). The novelty of the next research is the development and validation of an instrument construct as a reference for the assessment of lecturer research performance. The process of developing and validating research instruments involves the stages of construct determination, item trials, and data analysis using response data, with analyses based on classical test theory (Ridwan, Istiyono, & Widihastuti, 2021) and modern test theory (Ridwan, Hadi, & Jailani, 2023; Ridwan, Hadi, & Zuhairoh, 2025; Ridwan, Hadi, Jailani, & Retnawati, 2023).

CONCLUSION

A qualitative study of the difficulties lecturers in Indonesia face in publishing research in reputable international journals indexed by Scopus reveals a multifactorial nature, encompassing both internal and external factors. Internal factors include a lack of language skills, limited experience writing research papers, limited guidance on matching manuscripts to journals, limited time to write research papers, and the lecturer's ability to explore research ideas. External factors include high article processing costs and a relatively long publication time. The limitation of the research is the data collection method, which uses only an online questionnaire via Google Forms. Data collection can be done by taking research samples through direct interviews or via various communication applications such as WhatsApp, Zoom Cloud Meetings, Google Meet, and others. Another limitation is that the research sample consists solely of lecturers in Indonesia, so the study's results will provide only information on factors that make it difficult for lecturers to publish in reputable international journals. This information is not a global conclusion that applies to every country. Therefore, for further research, it is recommended to use samples from countries other than Indonesia. Nevertheless, the results of this research study contribute to comprehensive identification of factors that cause difficulties for lecturers in publishing scientific works. In addition, the results of this study have contributed to the development and validation of instruments for assessing lecturer performance based on observed variables and their supporting indicators. Other contributions can be used as a reference

for developing higher education strategies to improve lecturers' publication performance in Indonesia, including more specific writing assistance, optimizing publication funding incentives, and more proportional lecturer workload management. Recommendations for future research include a comparative study of publication barriers among lecturers at public and private universities to examine the influence of differences in institutional infrastructure support. Another research recommendation is a quantitative study using a survey method with a wider sample size to validate this publication barrier model nationally and determine the statistically dominant factors.

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