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STRATEGY OF SUBMITTING JOURNAL INDEXATION TO SCOPUS: A STUDY ON ASEAN JOURNAL ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Journal indexing is a key indicator of scientific quality, enhancing the visibility, credibility, and dissemination of academic publications. This study presents a case analysis of the Asian Journal of Science and Technology Development (AJSTD) and its successful indexing in the Scopus database, offering strategic insights and potential best practices for other scholarly journals. Using a qualitative case study approach through observation and documentation, the findings reveal that AJSTD's initial submission on 17 March 2020 was rejected by the Scopus Content Selection & Advisory Board (CSAB) due to several shortcomings. However, after a comprehensive revision based on reviewer feedback, the journal reapplied and was officially accepted on 17 October 2020. This process underscores the importance of meeting Scopus selection criteria, including content quality, citation performance, international diversity, and publishing ethics. Minor deficiencies, if left unaddressed, can become critical obstacles when combined with other weaknesses. AJSTD's experience demonstrates that strategic editorial improvement, transparent communication, and a commitment to continuous quality enhancement can transform initial rejection into success. More importantly, this study contributes a practical framework that can serve as a reference or model for journals, particularly those from developing countries, seeking international recognition through global indexing. The lessons drawn from AJSTD's experience are expected to guide journal managers and editorial teams in navigating the complex and competitive landscape of academic indexing more effectively.

Keywords: *academic publishing; indexing; publishing; scholarly journal; Scopus*

INTRODUCTION

In the scientific publication landscape, journal indexing is an important indicator in assessing the quality, visibility, and integrity of a publication. Indexing refers to the inclusion of a journal in reputable databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, or DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals). These databases function not only as validation tools, but also as bridges for global scientific communication that expand the reach and influence of publications. Indexed journals generally demonstrate professional editorial management, consistent publications, and good manuscript quality. Thus, indexing is often associated with increased citation rates, which are important benchmarks in measuring the scientific impact of a journal (Lukman et al., 2017).

Lukman et al. (2017) stated that there is a correlation between an effective indexing strategy and the acceleration of journal recognition in the global scientific ecosystem. Therefore, indexing should not be viewed only as an administrative achievement, but as a strategy to improve journal quality and global competitiveness. Through indexing, research findings become more accessible to the international scientific community, thus supporting wider dissemination of knowledge.

Journals that have been indexed in reputable databases tend to have a higher chance of citation because they are easily found by researchers from various countries. Lukman et al. (2017) group indexing databases into three levels of reputation: highly reputable (e.g. Scopus and Web of Science), medium (such as DOAJ, PubMed, EBSCO, ProQuest, ACI), and low level (such as Google Scholar, Moraref, Portal Garuda). Journals that have successfully entered highly reputable international indexers demonstrate capabilities in editorial management, manuscript selection, and broader scientific collaboration. Therefore, many authors are encouraged to choose indexed journals as a publication medium, both for scientific recognition and to meet institutional and funding demands (Roberts, 2023). Although indexing is an important agenda, a critical review of indexing standards and systems is still needed. Balhara (2012) and Elizabeth (2020) highlight the differences in selection criteria between indexing institutions and the importance of transparency in the process. In Indonesia, the urgency of indexing is reinforced by academic policies that encourage students to publish scientific papers at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels (Kemenristekdikti, 2019).

In addition, the digitalization process in journal management has accelerated the distribution and availability of scientific manuscripts online. Technologies such as the OJS system, DOI management, and real-time citation monitoring are now an integral part of modern journal management (DIKTI, 2014; Nashihuddin & Aulianto, 2016). Each indexing institution has its own selection criteria. Calver (2021) summarizes the main aspects of concern in the journal evaluation process: clarity of the journal's scope and objectives, a transparent and objective peer-review process, a strong publication ethics policy, geographic diversity of the editorial board and authors, completeness of article metadata, and DOI ownership. Some databases also require technical conformity such as XML format and integration with metadata tracking systems. Non-compliance with any of these aspects can lead to rejection, although most indexers still provide opportunities for improvement and re-submission (Gasparyan & Kitas, 2021).

Although the urgency of indexing has been widely recognized, studies that explicitly discuss strategies towards indexing, especially in the context of journals from developing countries, are still limited. Doss (2020) offers a conceptual and historical review of indexing, while Abalkina (2023) raises the phenomenon of indexjacking—a manipulative practice to portray a journal as if it has been indexed. Both studies demonstrate the importance of integrity and transparency in the indexing submission process.

Several studies provide more applicable insights. For example, Erfanmanesh et al. (2017) showed a positive correlation between the number of journals indexed by Scopus and national publication performance during 2005–2014. Jang (2020) explored common reasons for journal rejection by Scopus, emphasizing the need for editorial quality improvement and increased internationalization.

The success story of the journal Media Peternakan (Faculty of Animal Husbandry, Bogor Agricultural University) is a real example of a successful indexing process. Starting from internal improvements since 2000, continuing to full translation into English and OJS management training in 2012, this journal met the minimum requirements and was finally indexed by Scopus in 2016. The process included strengthening the journal's substance and policies, involving international reviewers, and developing digital infrastructure (Lukman et al., 2017).

Jerome's (2022) study on the Journal of Hand and Microsurgery also showed successful indexing through editorial commitment and consistent citation growth. Meanwhile, Adilović (2022) examined the challenges of three journals in the Southeastern European region that have not been successfully indexed, and highlighted five main criteria for Scopus: publication consistency, academic quality, peer review transparency, editor/author diversity, and bibliometric relevance. These studies provide important lessons for journal managers in developing regions.

Although the urgency of indexing has been widely discussed, there are still few studies that document empirical indexing submission strategies, especially from the perspective of journals originating from developing countries. Most of the literature only presents conceptual studies or national statistics, without providing tactical guidance based on real-life experiences of the submission process to reputable indexes.

This article aims to fill this gap by presenting a case study of the ASEAN Journal on Science & Technology for Development (AJSTD) indexing submission process to Scopus. By examining the developments, challenges, and strategies taken, this article is expected to be a practical reference for other journals that are trying to achieve similar indexing.

This research contributes to the field of publication studies and journal management by presenting a case study based on real-life experiences. In addition to enriching scientific studies on indexing, this article also provides technical and strategic recommendations for journal managers, publishing institutions, and academic policy makers. The findings in this article are expected to support planning, resource allocation, and improving journal readiness for indexing criteria, especially Scopus. By documenting the AJSTD indexing process, this study also encourages a deeper understanding of how journals from developing country academic communities can achieve international recognition, while contributing to increasing national publication output and global research collaboration.

Theories and Concepts

According to Elizabeth (2020); Thomas (2020); Erfanmanesh, et al., (2017); and Gupta (2021) there are various types of indexing used by various organizations. Some common types of journal indexing include: PubMed, Google Scholar, DOAJ, Web of Science, and Scopus.

PubMed

PubMed is an indexing database managed by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) under the National Library of Medicine (NLM), United States, specifically for journals in the biomedical and life sciences fields. This database includes more than 35 million citations from MEDLINE, PubMed Central (PMC), and NCBI Bookshelf, and is updated daily to ensure the availability of the latest information. PubMed uses the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)-based indexing system that facilitates structured topic searches, equipped with advanced search features, specific filters (e.g. article type, year of publication, and language), and the option to export citations to various reference management software. Researchers, clinicians, and health professionals use PubMed as a primary source for searching literature, conducting systematic reviews, and supporting evidence-based practice. Journals indexed in PubMed—through MEDLINE's rigorous selection or open publishing in PMC—are considered reliable and credible by the biomedical and life sciences community, because they meet high standards of editorial quality, publication ethics, and completeness of metadata.

Google Scholar

Google Scholar is a scientific literature search engine developed by Google, which automatically indexes various types of academic publications from various sources, including journals, books, conference proceedings, theses, and institutional repositories. Unlike reputable indexing databases such as Scopus or Web of Science, Google Scholar does not apply a strict selection or evaluation process to the sources indexed. This allows for a broader coverage, including publications from journals that are not accredited or not officially indexed. Although it does not have a quality assessment mechanism like reputable indexers, Google Scholar remains a very useful tool for researchers because of its ability to reach a wide variety of publications in various disciplines. Its search feature supports sorting by relevance or citation count, and provides simple bibliometric information such as citation count, h-index, and i10-index which are often used to measure researchers' productivity and scientific impact. Therefore, Google Scholar still has an important role in the process of searching and disseminating scientific literature widely.

Directory of Open Access Journals

The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) is an international online directory that indexes and provides access to high-quality open access (OA) journals across a range of disciplines. Journals listed in DOAJ must meet a number of strict criteria, including a peer-review process, transparency in editorial policies, clarity of publication licenses, and a commitment to the principle of open access without barriers. This evaluation is carried out thoroughly to ensure that only journals that are credible, ethical, and of high standards can be indexed in it.

DOAJ is not only an important tool for researchers in finding trusted open access journals, but also a benchmark for publishers in improving the governance and quality of their journals. In addition to DOAJ, there are also more specific indexing databases, both by

discipline—such as PubMed for biomedicine, or AGRIS for agricultural sciences—and by region, such as the ASEAN Citation Index (ACI) or SciELO in Latin America.

For researchers, choosing a journal that suits the scope of their knowledge and the quality of their research is very important. Publication in journals indexed in reputable databases will increase the visibility, credibility, and scientific impact of the work. This indirectly also supports academic career development, expands collaboration networks, and increases funding opportunities and recognition at national and international levels.

Web of Science

Web of Science (WoS) is one of the most prestigious and internationally recognized scientific indexing databases, managed by Clarivate. WoS covers journals from a wide range of disciplines—science, social sciences, humanities, and arts—and is widely used by researchers, academic institutions, and policymakers to assess the quality and impact of research.

Journals indexed in WoS are considered to be of high reputation because they have to go through a rigorous selection process. The evaluation is carried out based on a number of indicators, such as the quality of scientific content, the integrity of the peer-review process, editorial standards and publication ethics, international editor involvement, and citation impact. WoS also publishes influential bibliometric metrics, such as the Journal Impact Factor (JIF), which is often used as a reference in journal rankings.

WoS consists of several collections, including the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE), the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (AHCI), and the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) which is the initial pathway for new journals to enter the WoS Core Collection. With its global coverage and high selection standards, WoS not only enhances the visibility and credibility of the journal, but also becomes an important indicator in assessing research quality at national and international levels.

Scopus

Scopus is one of the world's largest indexing and bibliographic databases developed and managed by Elsevier. This database includes more than 21,000 scientific journal titles from more than 5,000 publishers worldwide, and covers various types of scientific publications such as journal articles, books, and conference proceedings. Scopus's multidisciplinary coverage includes the fields of science, technology, medicine, social sciences, arts, and humanities, making it one of the main sources for researchers, academics, and institutions to access, review, and evaluate scientific literature comprehensively.

Journals indexed in Scopus have gone through a rigorous selection process by Scopus CSAB, which assesses based on various criteria, including content quality, clarity of scope, transparent peer review system, high editorial standards, publishing consistency, and relevance of citations and contributions to the global academic community. In addition, Scopus provides various bibliometric metrics, such as CiteScore, h-index, and SNIP (Source Normalized Impact per Paper), which are used to assess scientific impact and productivity at both the author, journal, and institutional levels.

Due to its high visibility and credibility, journals indexed in Scopus are often used as a benchmark for reputation in academic assessment, institutional accreditation, and research performance evaluation. Scopus also plays an important role in researchers' publication strategies and scientific journal development policies, especially in developing countries, including Indonesia.

Journal Selection Stages in Scopus

The journal indexing process in Scopus is a very strict and gradual selection process, designed to ensure that only high-quality journals can enter this database. Journals that wish to be indexed must first submit an official application through the Scopus online system, including detailed information about the journal profile, including publication frequency, topic coverage, editorial structure, and a link to the journal website.

The first stage in this process is an initial evaluation, where the Scopus editorial and technical teams will conduct an administrative review of the completeness of the journal data. This initial assessment includes the validity of the ISSN number, consistency of publication, availability of content online, and clarity of basic journal information such as description, focus and scope, and editorial practices applied.

If the journal is declared to have passed the initial evaluation, it will proceed to an in-depth review stage by Scopus CSAB. At this stage, CSAB makes an assessment based on quantitative and qualitative criteria, including: (1) clarity of the journal's mission and scope, (2) quality of content and scientific relevance, (3) transparent and fair peer-review process, (4) ethical and publication standards, (5) geographic diversity of editors and authors, (6) citations and impact of articles, (7) international readability (abstract/keywords in English), and (8) availability of DOI and metadata.

If the journal meets all of these criteria, it will be accepted for indexing in Scopus and will be officially displayed in the database. Conversely, if the journal does not meet the standards, CSAB will provide rejection feedback along with evaluative reasons, and the journal will be given the opportunity to correct deficiencies and resubmit after a certain period.

This process stage emphasizes that Scopus indexing is not just an administrative formality, but part of the scientific curation process that ensures the integrity and quality of scientific publications globally (Table 1).

Table 1. Presubmission and Self-Evaluation Stages

No.	Minimum Criteria and Additional Criteria	Application Preparation
1.	Peer-reviewed with a clear process.	Upload the last three issues or 9 latest published articles plus a sample table of contents in pdf format.
2.	Published regularly.	Determine the main handling editor who is really involved in managing the journal.
3.	International relevance and readability (Abstract, keywords, and title in English).	Prepare a URL for the professional handling editor information. For example: CV, personal homepage.
4.	Has a statement of publication ethics and malpractice.	
5.	Has been published for at least 2 years.	
6.	The journal name is unique and not indexed. Check the journal name at the following link: https://www.scopus.com/sources	

Source: Processed secondary data (2024)

As shown in Table 2, the Scopus evaluation team is tasked with ensuring that each submitted journal meets the basic criteria that have been set. This evaluation includes a number of important indicators, including the quality of scientific content, the existence and consistency of the implementation of a strict peer-review process, regularity of publication, and clarity of the journal's focus and scope of science. Assessment of these aspects is a crucial initial stage in determining the eligibility of a journal in the next selection process (Roy, 2024; Discovery, 2024).

Journals that do not meet one or more of these basic criteria may be rejected at the initial evaluation stage. Therefore, it is important for journal managers to ensure that all minimum requirements have been met in full before submitting an indexing application to Scopus.

Table 2. Criteria Evaluation Stage by the Scopus CSAB Team

No.	Journal Policy	Content	Journal Reputation	Regularity of Issue	Online Availability
1	Convincing editorial policy	Academic contribution	Journal article citation rate in Scopus	No delay in publishing schedule	Full contents of the journal are available online
2	Type of peer-review	Quality and conformity to Aims & Scope	Editor reputation/qualification level		Homepage in English
3	Diversity of geographical distribution (origin) of editors and authors/contributors	Clarity of abstract			Quality of the journal homepage
4		Readability of article content			

Source: Processed secondary data (2024)

Figure 1. Journal Selection Stages in Scopus
Source: Screenshot on October 4, 2024

Roy (2024) and Vidyapeeth (2024) explained that the journal indexing process in Scopus involves strict evaluation and selection stages. Journals that wish to be indexed must go through a series of comprehensive submission and evaluation procedures. The stages in this process include: (1) initial evaluation, (2) content analysis, (3) review by editorial board members, (4) examination of the peer-review process, (5) assessment of impact and citation level, and (6) final decision to accept or reject the journal from the indexing process (Figure 1).

Indexing of scientific journals in leading databases such as Scopus is important to increase visibility and recognition of research work. This process not only expands access for researchers and academics but also improves the quality and reputation of the journal. Journals that apply will go through a strict evaluation of the minimum and additional criteria set by Scopus, which include the peer-review process, editor standing, publishing regularity, publication standards and scientific ethics, and the journal's publishing business model.

Journal Policy - Peer-Review Process

The peer-review process aims to ensure the quality and substance of articles published in scientific journals. This process is objective and is the standard for all scientific journals. In general, quality peer-reviews are usually conducted in a closed manner (blind review), so that the confidentiality of article evaluations is well maintained. This ensures that published articles truly meet quality standards.

Important stages in the peer-review process include: (1) manuscripts submitted to the journal are first screened by the editorial team, (2) manuscripts that pass the initial examination are sent to at least two peer reviewers for review, (3) peer reviewers independently provide recommendations to the journal editor, whether the manuscript should be rejected, accepted, or revised, and (4) the journal editor reviews all feedback from peer reviewers before making a final decision regarding acceptance or rejection of the manuscript.

A clear peer-review policy reflects the management of a quality journal. This process not only maintains the originality of the article, but also identifies important findings, detects potential fraud or plagiarism, and ensures that published articles meet high scientific standards. The peer-review process is the main method to ensure the quality and credibility of academic publications (Marotti de Mello & de Sandes-Guimarães, 2019; Elizabeth, 2020; Thomas, 2020; Maulana, 2022; Discovery, 2024). This view is also supported by Nazroelwathoni (2017) and Mukherjee et al. (2023), who stated that one of the most important stages in journal publishing is the review process by experts, commonly known as bestari partners, reviewers, or peer reviewers.

This review focuses on substantial aspects of the scientific field being studied, including the novelty of the research, the findings produced, and the research's compliance with scientific principles. In the process of selecting peer reviewers, the editorial board usually considers the following criteria: (a) expertise in the relevant field, (b) openness of insight, (c) professionalism, including timeliness in providing evaluations, and (d) reputation or track record as an author.

Editor Standing

According to Webb and Kammerlander (2016) and Lukman et al. (2017), effective editors generally have a track record of publication in reputable scientific journals, especially those indexed in databases such as Scopus or WoS. This experience provides an in-depth understanding of the editorial process, including the mechanism of manuscript editing and the implementation of peer review. Therefore, an editor is required to have broad insight and follow

the latest developments in the world of scientific publishing, in order to support the management and development of the journal being managed. For newly developing journals, increasing the capacity and competence of editors must be done gradually through ongoing training and mentoring. This is important considering that the quality of a journal is often assessed from the composition and reputation of its editorial team members. The organizational structure in managing scientific journals generally includes several key positions, namely: (1) Editor-in-Chief, who is responsible for editorial direction and policies; (2) Managing Editor or Executive Editor, who handles the day-to-day managerial process; (3) Editorial Board Members, which consists of experts in their fields and plays a role in peer review; and (4) Editorial Assistants, who support the technical and administrative aspects of publishing.

Regularity of Publication

Regular publication is one of the fundamental aspects in the dissemination of scientific research results (Roy, 2024). Scientific journals indexed in reputable databases such as Scopus play a strategic role in disseminating knowledge and innovation in various disciplines. This is because the published articles have gone through a strict selection process and peer-review, so that their quality and credibility can be accounted for.

One indicator of consistent and legitimate publication is the existence of an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). ISSN functions as a unique identity that is internationally recognized and given to periodic publications, such as scientific journals (Marotti de Mello & de Sandes-Guimarães, 2019; Thomas, 2020). The existence of an ISSN that has been confirmed by the ISSN International Center is proof that the journal has met the basic administrative standards to be published and distributed globally.

The verification process by the ISSN International Center is crucial, because it ensures that the ISSN number used has been officially registered, is valid, and can be tracked in the international bibliographic system. The validity of the ISSN simplifies the process of indexing journals into various scientific databases, such as Scopus and Google Scholar, while increasing the accessibility and visibility of publications among the global academic community (Nashihuddin & Aulianto, 2018; Roberts, 2023). In addition to having a confirmed ISSN, a journal must also have a publication history of at least two years before it can be submitted to Scopus. This requirement aims to demonstrate consistency of publication and commitment to editorial quality. A stable publication history for two years provides evidence that the journal has a well-functioning peer-review mechanism and is able to publish scientific articles regularly. This is very important to demonstrate the credibility and relevance of the journal in the academic community.

These two requirements, namely an ISSN confirmed by the ISSN international center and a publication history of at least two years, are key elements that must be met by a journal in order to be indexed by Scopus. By meeting these criteria, the journal not only increases its chances of being recognized internationally but also strengthens its reputation as a credible and high-quality publication. This process ensures that the journal is worthy of being part of a global scientific platform that can have a significant impact on the development of science (Sumintono, 2017; Discovery, 2024).

Publication Standards and Scientific Ethics

Scopus applies strict standards in terms of publication and scientific ethics as part of the journal selection process for indexing in its database. Every journal that wants to be indexed in

Scopus is required to comply with good academic writing guidelines, including the presentation of information that is clear, systematic, and easy to understand by readers from various scientific backgrounds. These high standards aim to ensure that research results are not only scientifically credible, but also widely accessible and utilized by the global academic community. In addition to the technical aspects of writing, Scopus also emphasizes the importance of compliance with internationally applicable scientific ethics principles. These ethics include the moral and professional responsibilities of all actors in the publishing process, namely authors, editors, and peer reviewers. These principles include upholding academic integrity, preventing plagiarism, maintaining objectivity in the review process, and complying with the established research code of ethics.

Compliance with publication ethics is not only an administrative requirement in the indexing process, but also an important foundation in building journal trust and credibility in the eyes of the global scientific community (Lukman et al., 2017; Nashihuddin & Aulianto, 2018; Discovery, 2024).

Journal Publishing Business Model

Journal publishers mostly choose one of three main business models for journal publishing, namely: Open Access, Closed Access, and Hybrid Access. Leading journal publishers generally use a subscription-based model (Closed Access) or Open Access. The Open Access model is relatively new compared to Closed Access and began to develop in the early 2000s in response to concerns about the sustainability of scientific communication, given the increasing cost of scientific journal subscriptions that continue to increase every year. In its implementation, Open Access is divided into two main forms introduced by Steven Harnard, namely Green Open Access and Gold Open Access (Heriyanto & Al Fauzan, 2022; Wibowo, 2019).

Green Open Access is a model where authors publish articles in journals, both OA and subscription-based, while archiving them on the author's home university website or institutional repository. Authors must ensure compliance with two main conditions, namely maintaining copyright over the article and obtaining permission from the publisher to distribute the printed version of the article in accordance with applicable provisions (Phillips, 2014; Heriyanto & Al Fauzan, 2022; Adipraja, 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The case study method was chosen because it allows for in-depth exploration of a specific phenomenon in a real context and at a certain time. This study aims to comprehensively understand the process of submitting scientific journal indexing to Scopus, through a study of AJSTD as the main case.

Data collection was carried out through two main techniques, namely participatory observation and document analysis. Researchers were directly involved in the AJSTD journal management process during the 2022–2024 period, especially in the preparation stage for submission to Scopus. Observations were carried out in a participatory manner through participation in editorial meetings, article evaluations, metadata curation processes, and communication with system managers and reviewer partners. Field notes and activity logbooks were used as instruments for recording observation data.

The documents analyzed included internal journal archives (article templates, editorial policies, minutes of meetings, Scopus submission correspondence letters, evaluator review

results, and journal responses), as well as article statistical data from the OJS system. In addition, the Scopus submission form, as well as the results of responses from the CSAB (Content Selection & Advisory Board) team were also studied as primary sources. To ensure data validity, this study applies source and method triangulation techniques. Data obtained through observation are compared and confirmed with data from related documents. In addition, validation of findings is carried out through member checking by confirming the results of the analysis to the Managing Editor of AJSTD as a key informant in this study.

The data in this study are secondary, obtained through observation and documentation techniques. Observations are carried out to obtain a factual picture and understand the dynamics of the situation that occurs in the object of study. Meanwhile, documentation techniques are used to collect information from relevant documents, in order to complement and strengthen the data obtained through observation. According to Sugiyono (2021), documentation is an important method in qualitative research because it functions as a complement to observation in an effort to obtain holistic data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

ASEAN Journal on Science & Technology for Development (AJSTD) is a journal that plays an important role in documenting and disseminating scientific research results that are relevant to the development of science and technology in the ASEAN region. This journal has strategic value in supporting the integration of science and technology among ASEAN member countries, as well as being a platform for sharing research results that can support the development of socio-economic development in Southeast Asia.

With a leadership rotation system between ASEAN countries, AJSTD strives to maintain sustainability and equality in the management of this journal. This system allows each member country to take turns acting as the main manager (focal point) of the journal, which also increases active participation and sharing of responsibilities between countries.

As you mentioned, Indonesia managed AJSTD from 2018 to 2022, after Malaysia was previously responsible until 2017. During this leadership period, Indonesia through the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education (Kemenristekdikti) in collaboration with Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), has implemented various strategic initiatives to improve the quality of AJSTD. These efforts include improving editorial management, improving the quality of articles, and adjusting the objectives and scope of the journal to be more aligned with ASEAN's main mission in advancing science and technology in the Southeast Asian region.

AJSTD is an open access (OA) journal that implements a strict peer-review process. This journal focuses on the publication of scientific articles that have significant contributions to the advancement of science and technology in the ASEAN region. The main objective of AJSTD is to encourage the discovery, development, and application of innovations in the fields of science and technology that can provide real impacts on the welfare of the people of Southeast Asia.

The scope of AJSTD covers various fields related to technology in the ASEAN context, including biotechnology, non-conventional energy research, materials science and technology, marine science, meteorology and geophysics, food science and technology, microelectronics and information technology, space applications, science and technology policy, and infrastructure and resource development.

Currently, Universiti Brunei Darussalam has been in charge of managing AJSTD since 2022 until now. The existence of this journal's online platform, which can be accessed through

this link, makes it easier for readers and researchers to access the latest articles published in AJSTD. The management of the journal by various ASEAN member countries also reflects the spirit of collaboration in the region and the importance of supporting the development of scientific research that is relevant to regional development needs.

Along with efforts to maintain the continuity of management and improve the quality of the journal, AJSTD also continues to strive to improve its visibility and reputation in the international arena by submitting indexation to various reputable databases.

Based on the information shown in Figure 2, AJSTD has submitted an indexation application to Scopus on March 17, 2020. However, before being declared accepted on October 17, 2020 as shown in Figure 4, there were several dynamics in the evaluation process.

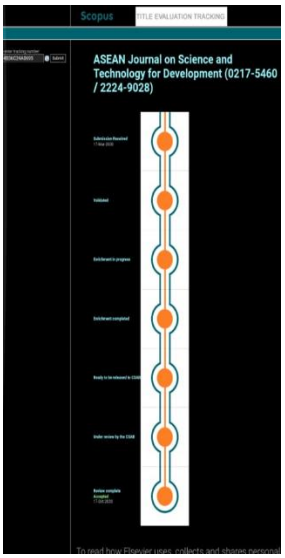


Figure 2. Stages of AJSTD Indexing Process in Scopus
Source: Screenshot on October 4, 2024

Title: ASEAN Journal on Science and Technology for Development
ISSN / E-ISSN: 0217-5460 /
Publisher: ASEAN Committee on Science and Technology

Dear Dr. Abby Tan,

The title mentioned above has been evaluated for inclusion in Scopus by the Content Selection & Advisory Board (CSAB). The review of this title is now complete and the CSAB has advised that the title has been **rejected** and will not be included in Scopus at the present time. For your information, the reviewer comments are copied below:

The editorial policy and readability of this journal does not meet the standards expected for inclusion. Also, the content of this title does not meet the standards expected to qualify for inclusion. It is not easy to access this title online.

If in the future these comments are addressed, you may decide to submit a new application at any time after the following date: December 2013.

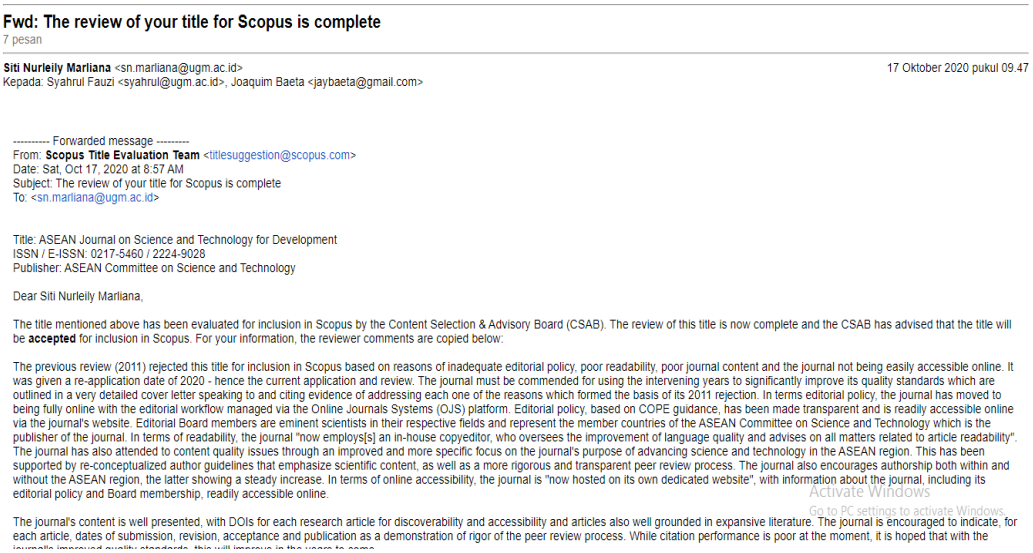
Yours sincerely,
The Scopus Team

Figure 3. AJSTD Rejection Letter in Scopus
Source: Screenshot on October 4, 2024

On June 29, 2020 (see Figure 3), AJSTD received an email from the Scopus evaluation team stating that the journal had previously been submitted for indexing and was rejected. In the correspondence, the Scopus team suggested that if AJSTD wanted to resubmit the indexing

request, the resubmission must be accompanied by a cover letter explaining the follow-up to the recommendations from the Scopus CSAB based on the results of the previous evaluation.

The AJSTD rejection letter highlighted four points of criteria that did not meet the minimum Scopus criteria, namely: (1) unclear journal policies, (2) journal content did not meet the minimum criteria, (3) article readability did not meet the established standards, and (4) the journal homepage was not easily accessible.



Fwd: The review of your title for Scopus is complete
7 pesan

Siti Nurleily Marliana <sn.marliana@ugm.ac.id> 17 Oktober 2020 pukul 09.47
Kepada: Syahrul Fauzi <syahrul@ugm.ac.id>, Joaquim Baeta <jaybaeta@gmail.com>

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Scopus Title Evaluation Team** <titlesuggestion@scopus.com>
Date: Sat, Oct 17, 2020 at 8:57 AM
Subject: The review of your title for Scopus is complete
To: <sn.marliana@ugm.ac.id>

Title: ASEAN Journal on Science and Technology for Development
ISSN / E-ISSN: 0217-5460 / 2224-9028
Publisher: ASEAN Committee on Science and Technology

Dear Siti Nurleily Marliana,

The title mentioned above has been evaluated for inclusion in Scopus by the Content Selection & Advisory Board (CSAB). The review of this title is now complete and the CSAB has advised that the title will be **accepted** for inclusion in Scopus. For your information, the reviewer comments are copied below:

The previous review (2011) rejected this title for inclusion in Scopus based on reasons of inadequate editorial policy, poor readability, poor journal content and the journal not being easily accessible online. It was given a re-application date of 2020 - hence the current application and review. The journal must be commended for using the intervening years to significantly improve its quality standards which are outlined in a very detailed cover letter speaking to and citing evidence of addressing each one of the reasons which formed the basis of its 2011 rejection. In terms editorial policy, the journal has moved to being fully online with the editorial workflow managed via the Online Journals Systems (OJS) platform. Editorial policy, based on COPE guidance, has been made transparent and is readily accessible online via the journal's website. Editorial Board members are eminent scientists in their respective fields and represent the member countries of the ASEAN Committee on Science and Technology which is the publisher of the journal. In terms of readability, the journal "now employs[s] an in-house copyeditor, who oversees the improvement of language quality and advises on all matters related to article readability". The journal has also attended to content quality issues through an improved and more specific focus on the journal's purpose of advancing science and technology in the ASEAN region. This has been supported by re-conceptualized author guidelines that emphasize scientific content, as well as a more rigorous and transparent peer review process. The journal also encourages authorship both within and without the ASEAN region, the latter showing a steady increase. In terms of online accessibility, the journal is "now hosted on its own dedicated website", with information about the journal, including its editorial policy and Board membership, readily accessible online.

The journal's content is well presented, with DOIs for each research article for discoverability and accessibility and articles also well grounded in expansive literature. The journal is encouraged to indicate, for each article, dates of submission, revision, acceptance and publication as a demonstration of rigor of the peer review process. While citation performance is poor at the moment, it is hoped that with the

Figure 4. Acceptance Letter of AJSTD in Scopus
Source: Screenshot on October 4, 2024

Several points of rejection from the CSAB team are in accordance with the opinion of Risdianto (2022) who stated that there are ten reasons why a journal is rejected by Scopus. The ten reasons are: (1) poor English language and grammar in the article, (2) the content of the article does not match the scope and objectives of the journal, (3) the journal's scientific impact and contribution to the field is small, (4) Scopus citedness is still low, (5) the article has low academic quality, (6) the focus and scope are already widely owned by journals that are already indexed by Scopus, (7) the author's country of origin is still from the same country, (8) the representation/diversity of the editorial board members only comes from one/two continents, (9) the Editor in Chief and editorial board members do not have publications in Scopus, and (10) the peer-review policy is unclear.

Based on the AJSTD rejection letter from the CSAB Scopus team (Figure 3), there are four main points to note, namely: (1) the journal's editorial policy, (2) the readability of the article does not meet Scopus standards, (3) the content of this journal does not meet the standards expected to meet these criteria, and (4) online access to this journal is also not easy. Responding to the review results from the CSAB Scopus team, the AJSTD management created a description of each of these notes.

Editorial Process and Publication Ethics

Since 2018, AJSTD has fully adopted the OJS-based editorial workflow. Every stage, from submission, review, revision, final decision, editing, to galley creation, is documented online and transparently. This implementation reflects the integration of workflow-based management principles in scientific journal management (Tenopir & King, 2000), which emphasizes the

importance of digital systems in improving the efficiency, accountability, and traceability of the editorial process. A detailed explanation of the editorial and peer review process can be accessed through the following page: Editorial Process. In addition, detailed guidelines are also provided for peer reviewers to ensure consistency in the quality of review and compliance with peer-review ethics. The guidelines can be accessed on the following page: Reviewer Guidelines

AJSTD also refers to the ethical standards of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) to ensure ethical compliance throughout the publishing process. Enforcing these ethics is not only a normative obligation, but also part of an effort to build scientific trustworthiness, a key element in the theory of scientific reputation (Merton, 1973).

Transparency and Editorial Board Structure

The editorial structure of AJSTD is designed to reflect the mandate of ASEAN COST, with editorial board members drawn from each ASEAN member state. This model reinforces the principle of distributed editorial governance, which according to Merton (1988) and Bourdieu (1984), is a form of symbolic capital distribution that broadens the influence of the journal.

The provision of complete profiles of editorial team members, including professional photos and links, strengthens editorial transparency and facilitates public accountability. In the theory of cumulative advantage, the presence of highly reputable figures on the editorial board directly affects the credibility and competitiveness of the journal in reputable indexers such as Scopus. Each individual profile is provided with relevant information, including a profile photo and related links. This information can be accessed through the following page: Editorial Team

Improved Article Readability

AJSTD has identified readability issues as a major barrier to improving publication quality. To address this challenge, the journal employs in-house language editors to assist authors in improving the structure and quality of their papers, at no additional cost. This policy reflects an inclusive editorial policy approach, providing technical support to authors from diverse geographical and linguistic backgrounds, in line with Weller's (2001) findings on the importance of mentoring early-career researchers. This effort also strengthens the journal's function as a capacity building platform.

Editorial Design and Publication Format

The overhaul of the article layout by adopting a LaTeX template and using professional editors improves readability and visual consistency. This not only has implications for aesthetics, but also for perceived professionalism, which according to Rowlands & Nicholas (2005) influences the perception of journal credibility. The redesign also simplifies the submission guidelines, allowing authors to focus on the scientific substance of the article. This strategy implements the principle of author-centered design, which reduces the administrative burden on authors and increases the efficiency of manuscript management.

Focus and Scientific Content

The focus and scope of AJSTD have been clarified to align with the ASEAN COST mission, without compromising global appeal. This strategy reflects the principle of glocalization, which is the combination of local context (ASEAN) and global standards (Gupta, 2020).

Article selection now places greater emphasis on contributions to scientific and policy development, rather than simply adherence to format. This approach supports the content-centered peer review model, which assesses the quality of ideas, not just the writing packaging.

Strengthening the Selection and Peer Review Process

In the selection process, AJSTD emphasizes consistency in initial decisions and peer review, strengthening editorial independence. Specific guidelines for reviewers and transparency of the review process are also applied to ensure fairness and scientific integrity. This step demonstrates the application of the principle of developmental peer-review, where the review process not only serves as a selection tool, but also as a means of education and improving the quality of articles, especially for novice authors.

Accessibility and Online Systems

AJSTD is now hosted on a modern, responsive website that meets accessibility standards. The site has been redesigned to streamline communication between editors and authors, which is especially relevant in the context of the pandemic and remote scholarly publishing. This initiative is in line with the journal's digital-first publishing and user-centered management approach, which seeks to improve the user experience and expand the journal's global reach.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of AJSTD's editorial policy based on the OJS online system and the application of the principles of transparency and publication ethics demonstrate the journal's strong commitment to improving the quality and integrity of the publishing process. This systematic journal management approach is in line with the theory of editorial management that emphasizes the importance of efficiency, accountability, and reputation risk management.

The representative editorial board structure from various ASEAN countries and the openness of editorial member information strengthen the journal's credibility, which in the framework of scientific reputation theory plays a role as symbolic capital that increases competitiveness at the international level. Efforts to improve readability through the provision of internal language editing services and improvements to article layout also demonstrate the journal's attention to aspects of presentation quality that play a role in improving the experience of readers and authors. This supports the journal's function not only as a publication medium, but also as a platform for developing the capacity of young scientists. The focus of content that is in line with the ASEAN COST mission and the implementation of a strict and transparent selection and peer review process make AJSTD a credible forum for the development of science and technology in the ASEAN region.

Finally, website modernization and increased accessibility affirm AJSTD's position in the digital era, facilitating interaction between journal managers and contributors and supporting the openness of information that is essential to increase international indexing opportunities such as Scopus. Thus, all strategic steps taken by AJSTD not only strengthen the scientific quality and governance of the journal, but also directly contribute to improving the reputation and competitiveness of the journal in the international arena.

SUGGESTION

The results of the study of the ASEAN Journal on Science & Technology for Development (AJSTD) index submission process to Scopus provide several important implications for scientific journal managers. First, this process emphasizes the importance of systematic and quality-oriented editorial governance. Failure in the first submission shows that minor shortcomings that are not handled seriously can become major obstacles when combined with other weaknesses. Therefore, a comprehensive audit of all aspects of journal management is needed before submitting to a reputable indexing institution such as Scopus.

Another implication is the need for systematic documentation of the entire submission, rejection, revision, and acceptance process. This documentation is not only useful as an internal record, but can also be a reference for other journals undergoing a similar process. In addition, the AJSTD experience shows the importance of a constructive response to feedback from the Scopus Content Advisory & Selection Board (CSAB), because appropriate and comprehensive revisions are the key to successful re-submission.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that journal managers conduct a comprehensive self-audit before submitting a journal to Scopus, including reviewing the quality of the articles, regularity of publication, diversity of the editorial board and authors, and fulfillment of the required technical aspects. Strengthening the capacity of the editorial team through training, mentoring, and benchmarking with indexed journals is also highly recommended. In addition, journal management institutions need to view the indexing process as part of a medium-term quality improvement strategy, not just a short-term administrative target. With strong planning and commitment, the chances of journal indexing success will be greater.

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