How well do you know your authors?

It's essential for journal editors to understand their community, and running an author survey is a great way to achieve this. A well-designed survey could help you gain valuable insight into how your authors perceive your journal, what motivates them to submit their research, and what their priorities are.

Here's what the editors of Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal (IAPA) found when they checked in with their community of authors.

1. Understanding author priorities: Why do authors choose to publish in IAPA?

- 66% of respondents said that publishing in IAPA for research impact was important.
- 30% of respondents said that publishing in IAPA had led to greater impact than publication in other journals.
- 40% of respondents said that IAPA's relevance to the research was important.
- 33% of respondents said that IAPA had an Impact Factor.
- 36% of respondents said that IAPA's authors see their articles go on to make a difference, both to future academic research and in the real world.
- 31% of respondents said that publication in IAPA led to greater impact than publication in other journals.
- 27% of respondents said that IAPA's relevance to the research was important.

2. Building a network: connecting authors with their research community

- 44% of respondents said that publication in IAPA contributed to an extent of 8 out of 10 to that promotion.
- 27% of respondents were invited to contribute to a conference.
- 18% of respondents reported being promoted to a position at another university or organization.
- 36% of respondents were approached for non-academic collaborations.
- 40% of respondents were approached for research collaborations.

3. Making an impact: the real-world effects of publishing in IAPA

- Research impact can take many forms. Authors should encourage their work to reach a range of contexts to improve the presence of their journal beyond academia.
- 33% of respondents said that their work was used in teaching.
- 44% of respondents said that their work was used in policy documents.
- 29% of respondents said that their work was used in training documents.
- 25% of respondents said that their work was used in IDA International Best Practice Principles Series.
- 18% of respondents said that their work was used in best practice documents.

KEY FINDING

For authors, IAPA's ability to reach a non-academic audience is as important as it having an Impact Factor.

KEY FINDING

Supporting the IAIA's journal is highly important to its members, with 80% of IAIA members who responded to the survey agreeing that it was important to publish in the Association's journal.

TOP TIP

Editors of society journals should look to integrate the journal as much as possible into the society's activities and increase the journal's visibility to society members.

TOP TIP

Editors should maintain good levels of author care throughout the peer review and publication process to encourage authors to submit more articles in the future.

TOP TIP

Instead of placing too much emphasis on research metrics like the Impact Factor, editors should consider how to extend their readership beyond academia. If your journal can reach the relevant industry, practitioner- and policymaker-communities too, it might be more attractive to prospective authors.

TOP TIP

Editors should use author survey results to make changes that address authors' priorities.

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TOP TIP

Encourage authors to promote their work to a range of contexts to improve the presence of your journal beyond academia.

UNDERSTANDING RESEARCH IMPACT USING AN AUTHOR SURVEY

bit.ly/IAPA_Journal