
EDITORIAL

RESEARCH IN BIOLOGIC SCIENCES AND ARTS: A RESTRICTED PRODUCTION

Research is essential for the human development and the dissemination of the knowledge produced by research. It is a *vita* step to justify the intellectual, technical and financial investment involved in. More than that, the non published study could be the stepping stone to complete the investigation of another researcher.

Indeed, research is a collective activity and its socialization is as important as the new knowledge it has produced. In this sense, publication is the classical media for spreading of research. However, this ascertainment includes several aspects, some of them of less relevance, but others critical to the effective socialization of the generated knowledge. For example, one of the top issues nowadays, due to the fast advances in computers and its democratization, is the decision to change periodicals into digital format or to maintain it in the traditional printed format. Another issue, quite questionable, is the charge for fees on authors that exceed a given number of pages in their articles or, in other instances, charge for any publication of approved originals – what is understandable nowadays, but that is undesirable and polemic to say the least. Last, but not least, the indexation and impact measurement systems, which is a constant issue for discussion, once the used criteria are controversial.

However, one of the main topics deserving comments is the availability of editorial space for publication in order to guarantee a continuous flow to the scientific production. It can be observed that in the area of biological and health sciences there is an ample and varied array of publications to guarantee this continuous flow.

As a matter of fact, the compartmentalization of biological and health sciences is a cause for the increasing number of new and particularized periodicals to cope with this increasing specificity.

Another aspect relevant to the availability of editorial space is the format of articles. This is particularized in the aspects of concision of information and, therefore, in the number of pages required – or allowed – to one author expose their ideas. It seems that there is a progressive decrease in the number the pages per article and an increasing number of articles per issue. As a matter of fact, editors seems to be in restrictive phase regarding lengthy discourses inducing authors to a sensible reduction in their texts without risking the quality of quantity of relevant information to spread the author's thesis. Another aspect that attests to this need is the increasing number of articles in the "waiting list" even in periodicals with no high impact index. In order to partially solve this problem, editors are modifying their publication cycle from biannual to quarterly publications and, in a few cases, to bi-monthly or even monthly issues. Another improvement attached to this increasing number of papers is the improvement in search tools such as MEDLINE and LILACS (CUENCA, 1999), which are essential to navigate among the plethora of articles in a variety of specialities and sub-specialities.

In brief, it seems that the available publishing space in the area of biological and health sciences is expressive and, if its socialization is not yet universal, it offers opportunities to all standards of credited scientific production and this is the most relevant topic in this connection, since, with the increasing accesses to internet, the search of different literature database is becoming more democratic and, therefore, not restrict to top database with their peculiar biases of language and origin.

Once this point has been made, it is interesting to discuss the same topic in connection to an area that, primarily, has no relations with biological and health sciences – Arts. Indeed, it is a distinct area and, to some extent, far from biological and health sciences.

Among the areas of Arts, music is a relevant one and some comments can be drawn from it regarding scientific production and editorial space. A brief visit to some periodicals shows that the opposite occurs in this area. It should be stressed that, in music, there is not yet a marked compartmentalization in the mentioned sciences. Of course, some specialization occurs but it is restricted to a few sub-areas. In this sense, musicology arises as one of the most generic areas in music research. Other examples of specialization could be musical theory, musical analysis, harmony and performance in the different musical periods, such as renaissance, barroque and romantism.

To go further in this discussion, it is interesting to analyze the production published in one of the most distinguished musical

periodicals of the USA. It is published three times a year on musicology in which the volume for the year 2002 published nine original articles and the volume for the year 2003 published another nine, that is, three articles per issue. The same occurs, although with an increased number of articles, in a British periodical in the same area. In the latter case, it is registered 34 original articles published in its 2001 volume and 31 in the 2002 volume. It is interesting to note that, in respect to format (page size and font size), they do not essentially differ from periodicals of the biological and health sciences areas. However, another point calls attention. For the mentioned periodicals the average number of pages is 50.7 for the first (USA) and 20.6 for the second (UK). In the medical area, original articles have an average of 8.5 pages. Regarding the periodical published in the USA, more than one article have up to 70 pages, that is, a short monography. Therefore, the editorial philosophy for periodicals of this area are quite different from that of periodicals in the biological and health science areas, in which the speed for spreading new knowledge is mandatory.

Readers not used to the area of music can, initially, be surprised with these information. However, it is necessary to stress that there is a different approach to the spread of knowledge in these areas. Indeed, in music the scientific approach is somewhat more recent. The first musicological writings with some investigative structure were done in Germany at the end of the 19 century, and in an incipient way. Only in the next century was the investigation structure and the scientific methodology more extensively and consistently used in the area of music. Another reason is that the study of music has been traditionally done in conservatories, in which the technical and performance aspects take the priority. Progressively, the program of music gained more room in the University with an increasing different pedagogical approach in contrast to those of conservatories and begin slowly to adopt the investigation issues that were consolidated in the areas of biological and health sciences and even in the areas of sociology and education. Ultimately, it is from education sciences that music uses the models to search answers to their particular questionings. Furthermore, at least in Brazil, the number of periodicals devoted to music research is minimal. Even mixing national and international publication, a brief visit to the list of periodical ranked by CAPES Qualis System reveals only 750 periodicals in the area of Arts/Music compared to more than 8,000 titles in the biological and health sciences areas (QUALIS). Of course, there is a marked difference in the number of active researchers on music if compared to those fully working in

biological and health sciences. However, the balance in term for publishing space for music remains negative.

In brief, these comments, including areas so different among themselves, intend to stimulate editors, of both areas, to a top issue in science – the need for socialization of the produced knowledge and the responsibilities of editors for setting strategies in order to guarantee publishing space to attain this goal.

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QUALIS – Classificação de Periódicos, Anais, Jornais e Revistas. Versão 1.0. Disponível em <http://qualis.capes.gov.br/>.