Taylor & Francis Group
an **informa** business

Peer review in 2015
A global view

Key survey data from Taylor & Francis

OCTOBER 2015

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Introduction

Within the academic community, peer review is widely recognized as being at the heart of scholarly research. However, faith in peer review's integrity is of ongoing and increasing concern to many. It is imperative that publishers (and academic editors) of peer-reviewed scholarly research learn from each other, working together to improve practices in areas such as ethical issues, training, and data transparency.

The survey data included here forms part of the research conducted by Taylor & Francis in early 2015, which is presented in the white paper '*Peer Review in 2015: A global view*' (available on authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com). The white paper was researched and compiled to assist in the goal outlined above, presenting survey results and focus group findings from one of the largest international research studies on peer review in recent years.

Survey methodology, responses and notes

The research presented here forms part of an online survey, with responses from researchers who have published in Taylor & Francis or Routledge journals.

We contacted researchers who published with Taylor & Francis in 2013, so that many would also be able to offer recent experiences ranging across many different publishers, reflecting the diverse publishing experience of today's research community. Their responses were then compared to a smaller sample of researchers from lists provided by Thomson Reuters, to ensure the results were truly representative.

Wherever technical terminology was used in the survey relating to peer review models, definition boxes were given alongside. Multiple item list order was randomized for each respondent, in order to avoid the effect of order-bias.

Survey data key

The sections colored blue were answered by all respondents.

The sections colored pink were answered by those who identified themselves as authors on the screening question (Q12).

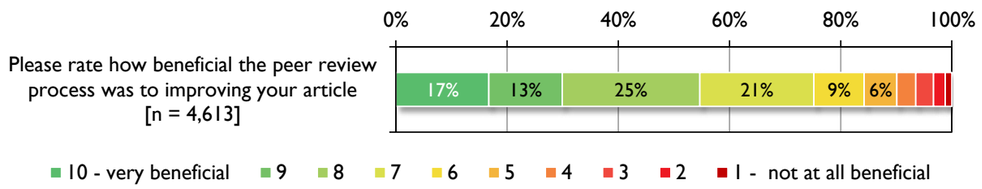
The sections colored orange were answered by those who identified themselves as reviewers and authors on the screening question (Q12).

The sections colored yellow were answered by those who identified themselves as journal editors, reviewers and authors on the screening question (Q12).

1 Purpose of peer review

Q1 “As an author, thinking about your most recently published article, please rate how beneficial the peer review process was to improving your article”

HSS



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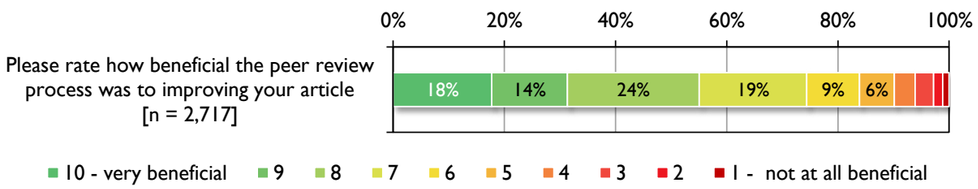
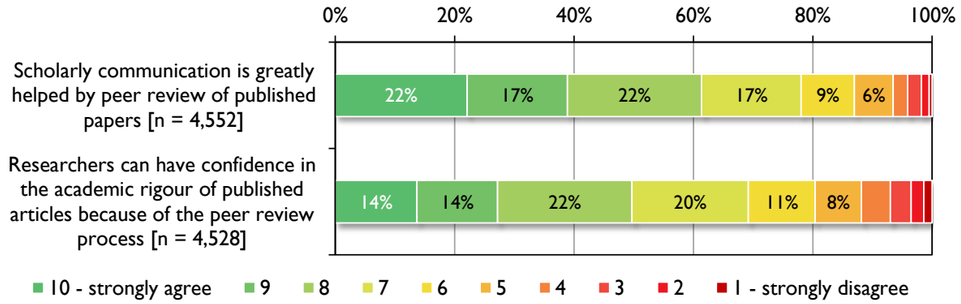


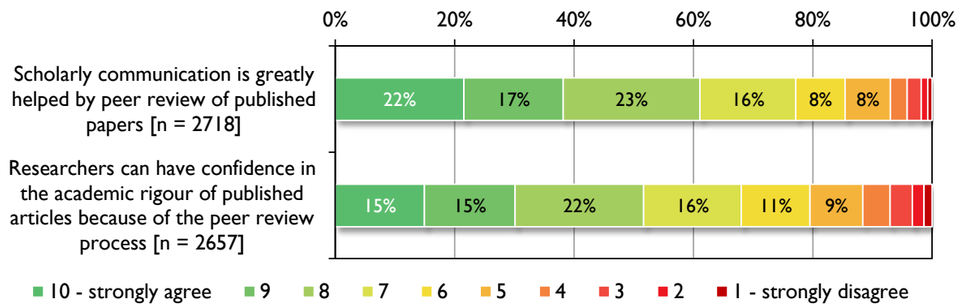
1 Purpose of peer review

Q2 “Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements”



SSH

STM

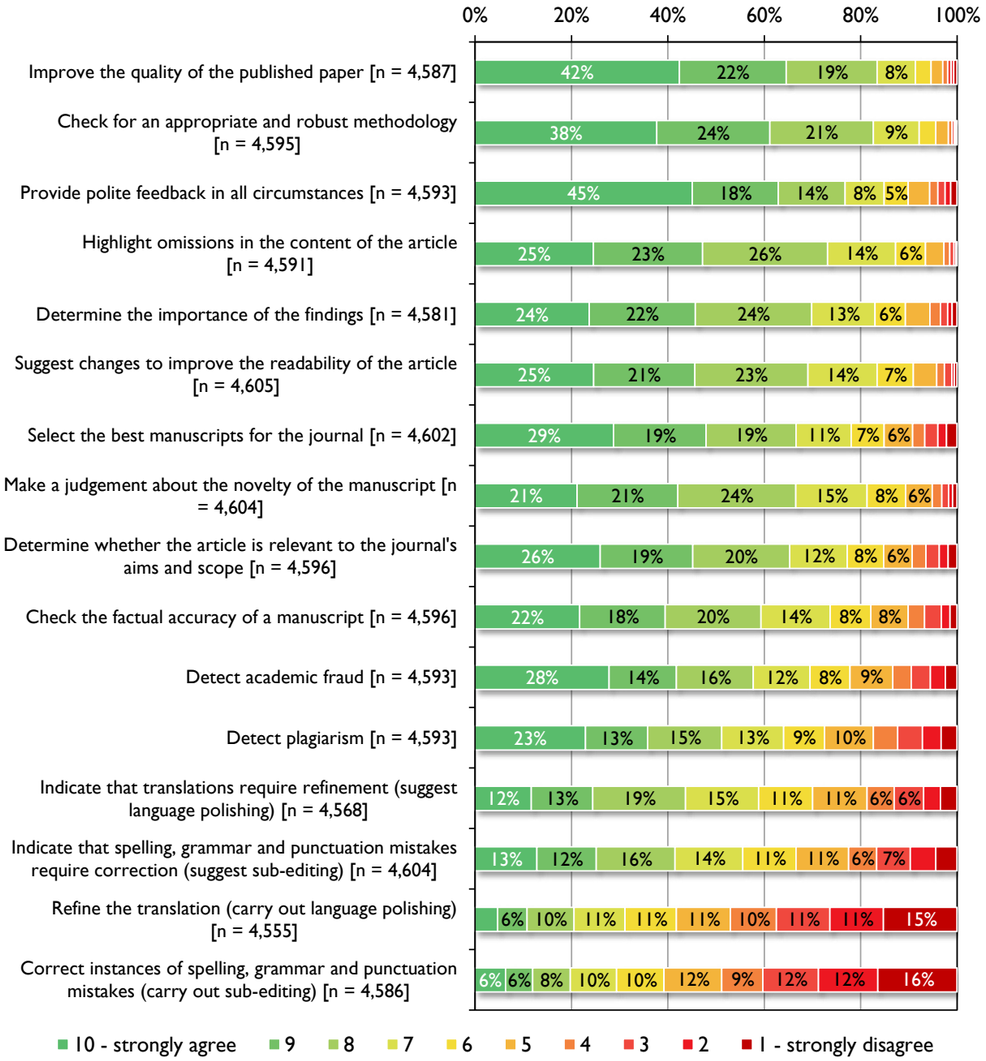


1 Purpose of peer review

The function of peer review in an ideal world.

Q3 “To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following objectives should be the purpose of peer review”

HSS

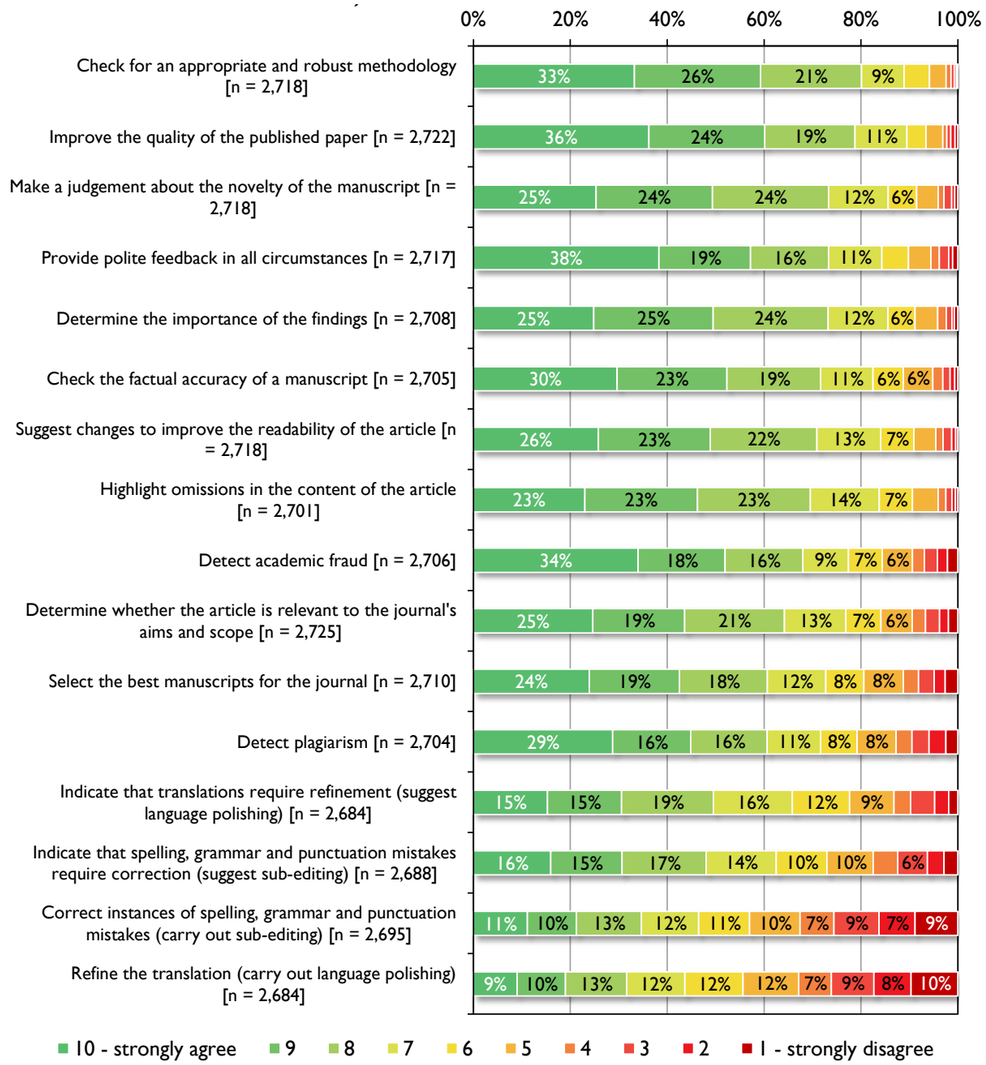


1 Purpose of peer review

The function of peer review in an ideal world.

Q3 “To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following objectives should be the purpose of peer review”

STM

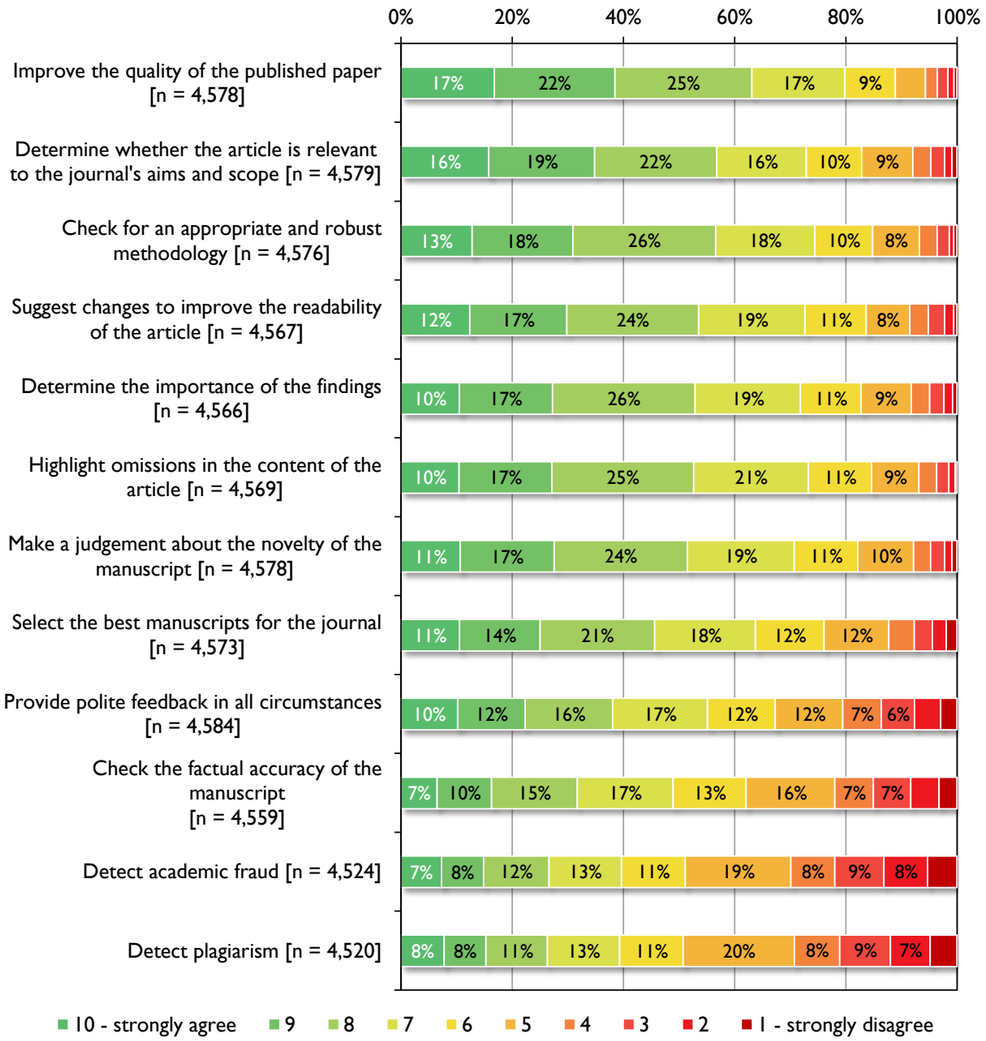


1 Purpose of peer review

The function of peer review in the real world.

HSS

Q4 “Based on your experience with peer review, to what extent do you agree or disagree that peer review is currently achieving the following objectives effectively”

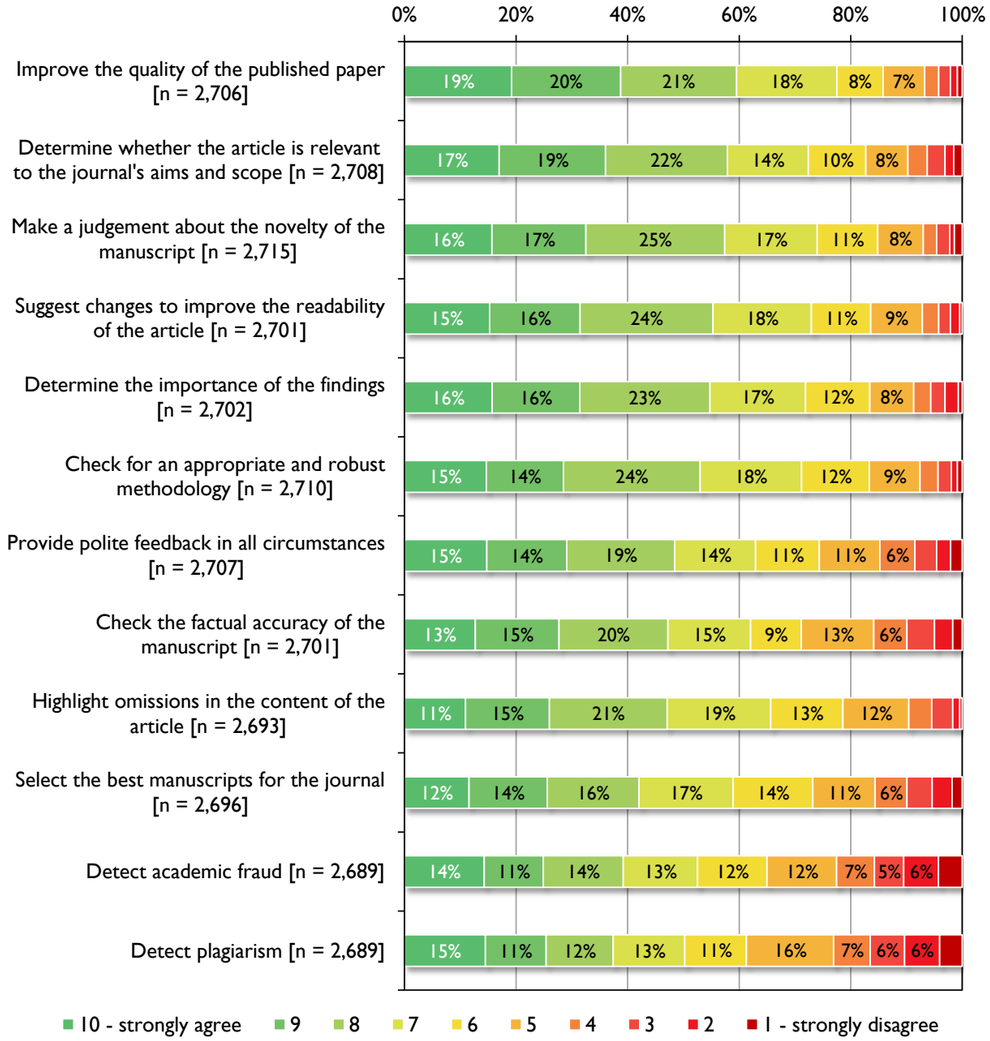


1 Purpose of peer review

The function of peer review in the real world.

STM

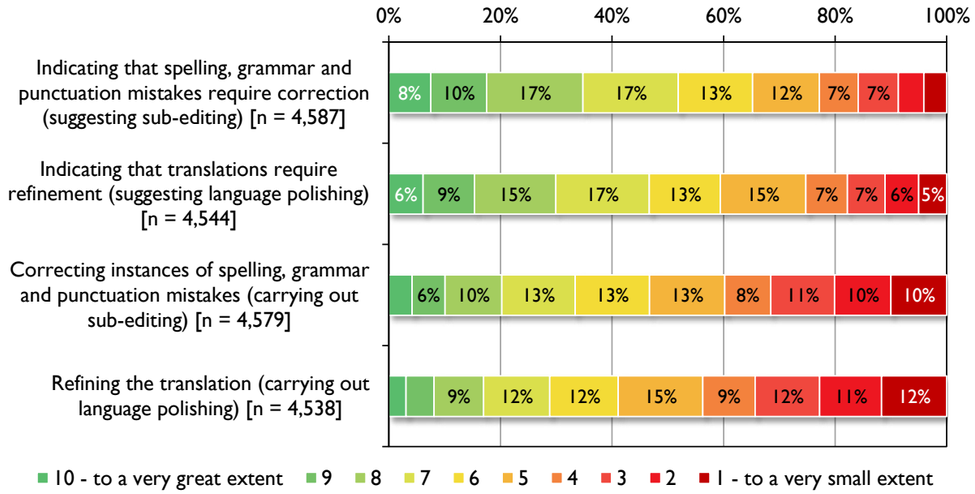
Q4 “Based on your experience with peer review, to what extent do you agree or disagree that peer review is currently achieving the following objectives effectively”



1 Purpose of peer review

HSS

Q5 “To what extent does peer review currently involve the following”



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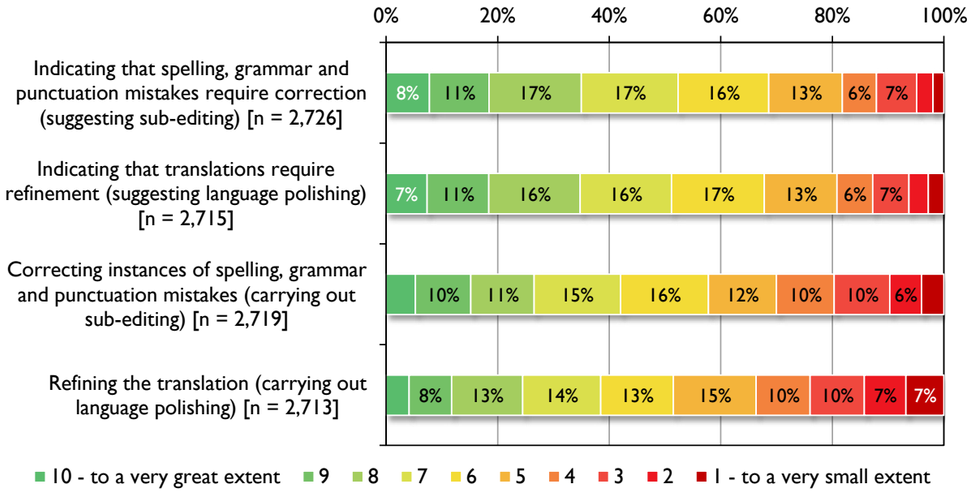
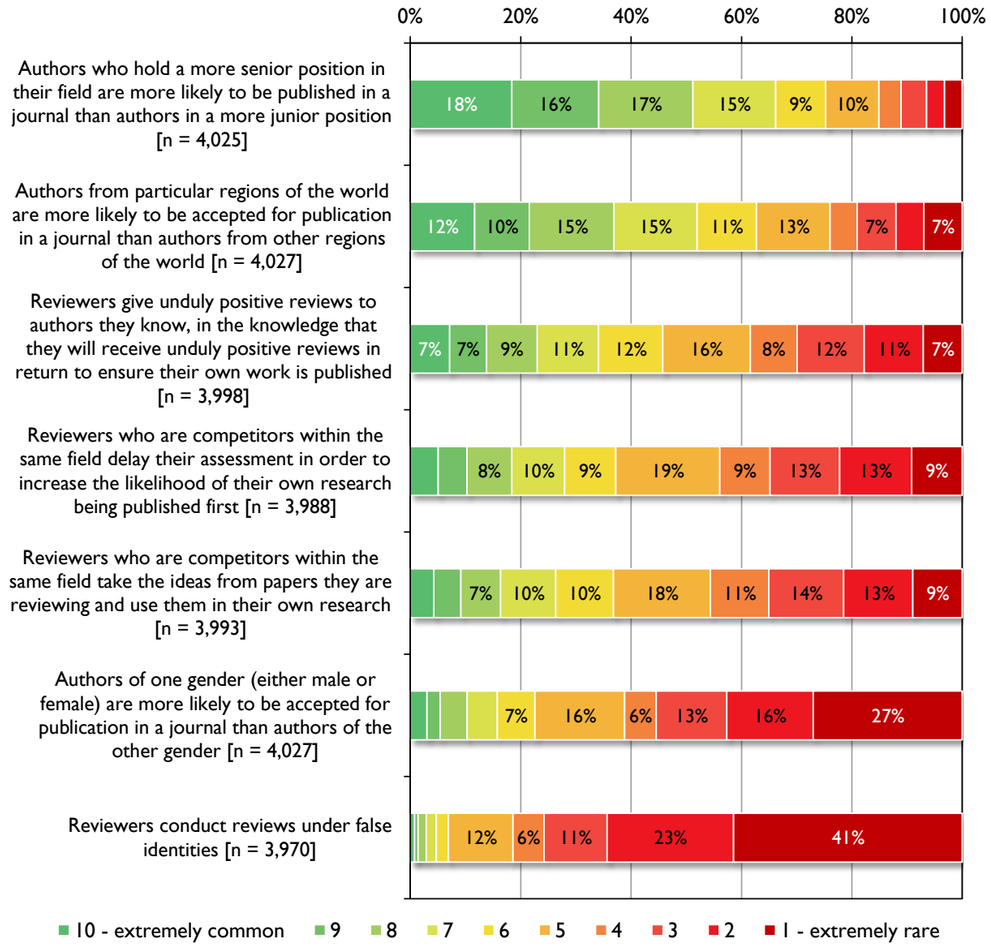


1 Purpose of peer review

SSH

Q6 “In your opinion, how common do you think the following situations are in the peer review process?”

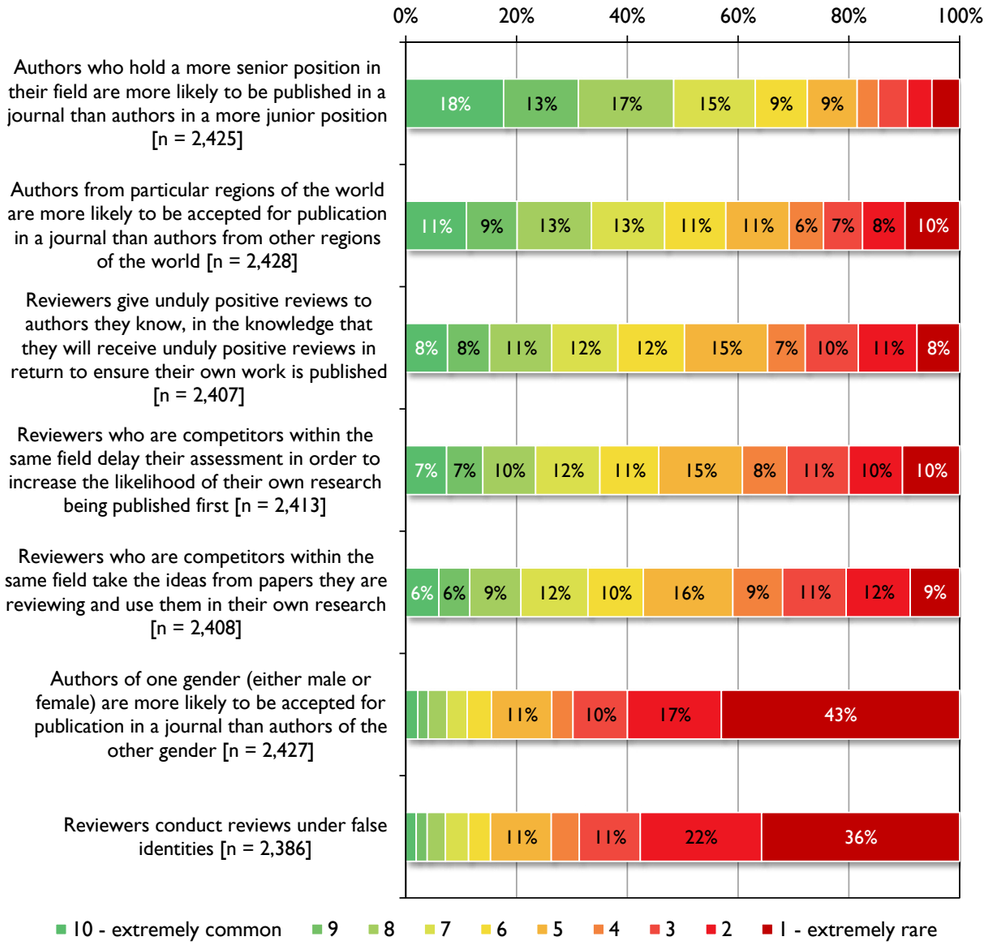


1 Purpose of peer review

Q6

"In your opinion, how common do you think the following situations are in the peer review process?"

STM

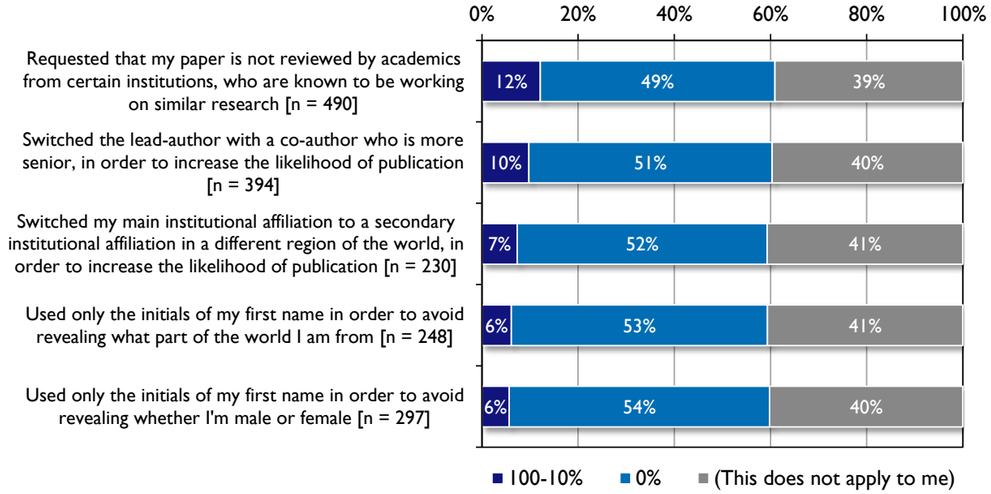


2 Ethics in peer review

Q7

"Approximately, on what proportion of papers that you have submitted to single blind peer reviewed journals have you taken the following actions?"

SSH



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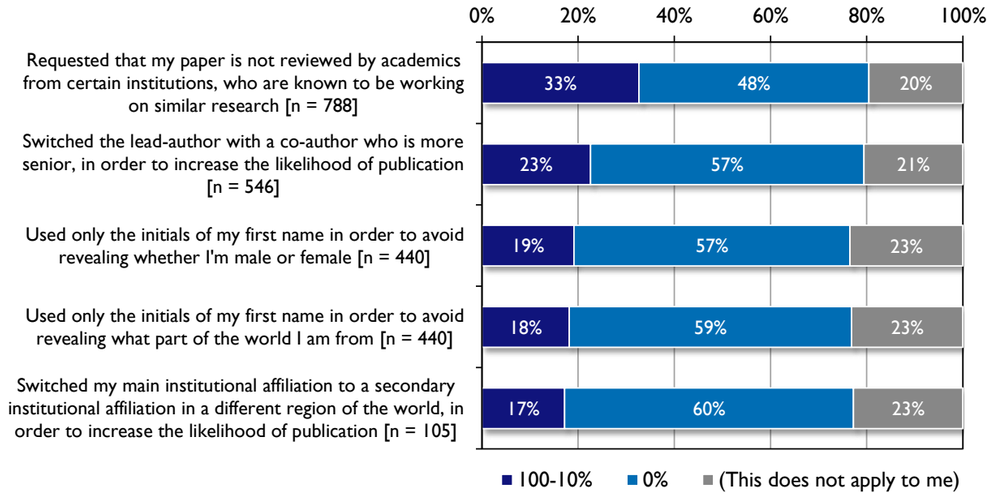
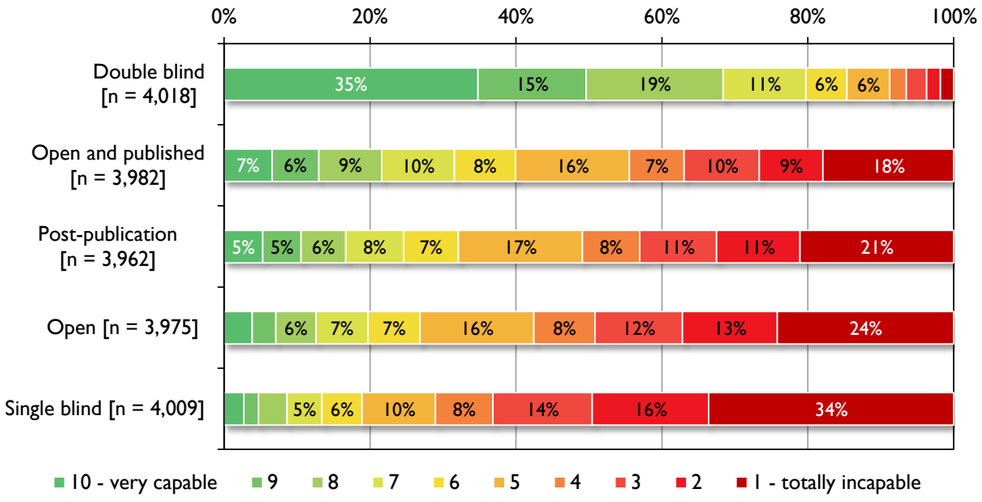


HSS

Q8 In your opinion, how capable are each of the following types of peer review of preventing discrimination based on aspects of the author's identity (such as gender, nationality or seniority)?



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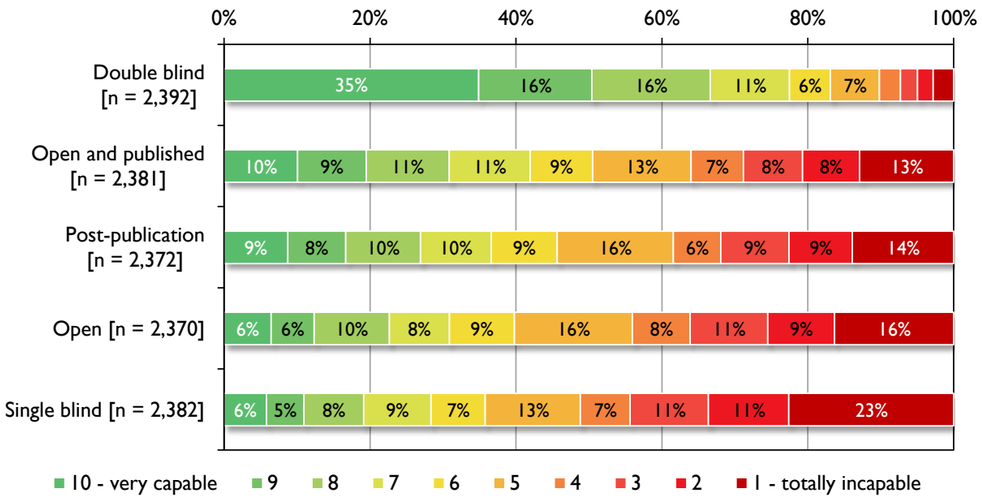
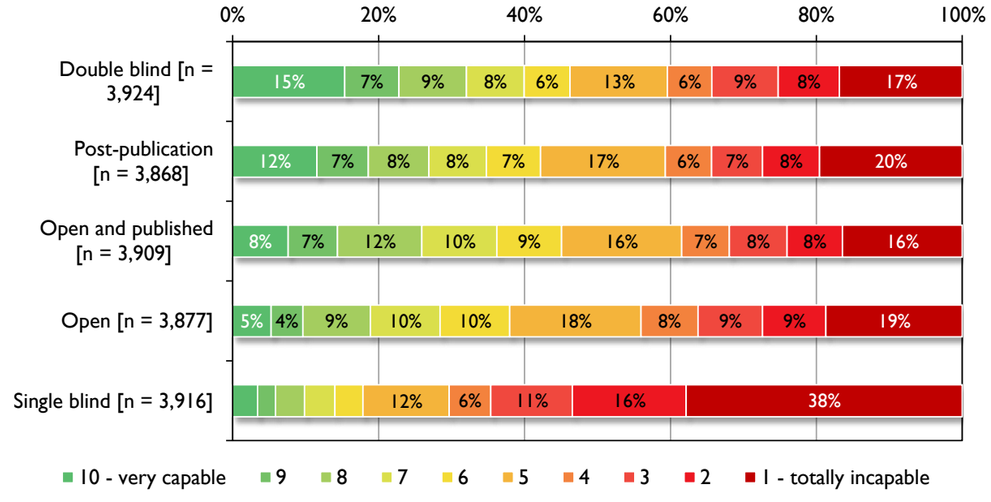


Q9 How capable are each of the following types of peer review of preventing reviewers from delaying their assessment of a competitor's research?

SSH



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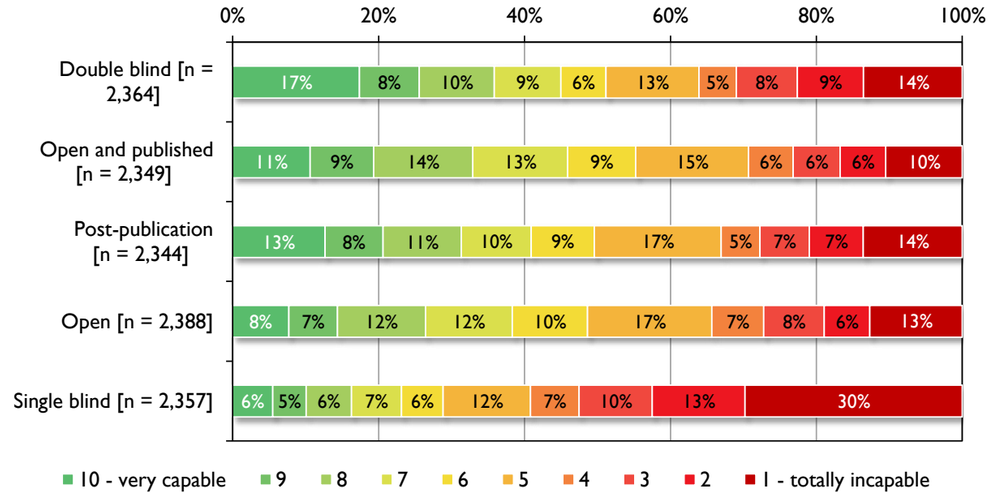
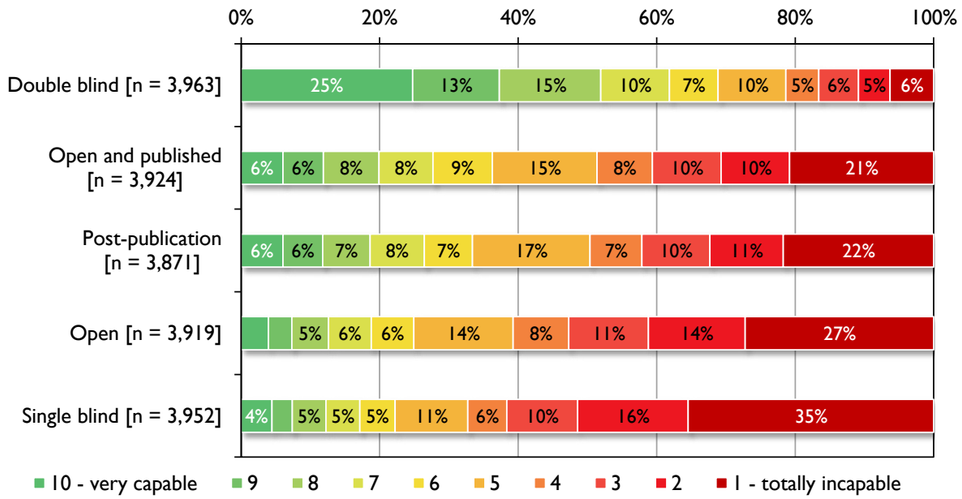


HSS

Q10 How capable are each of the following types of peer review of preventing reviewers from giving overly positive reviews to authors they know in order to guarantee their own work is treated favourably



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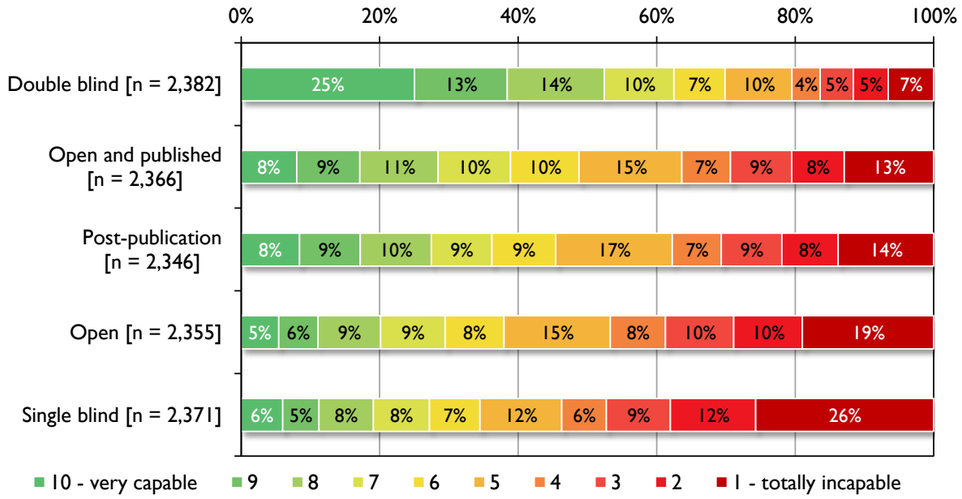
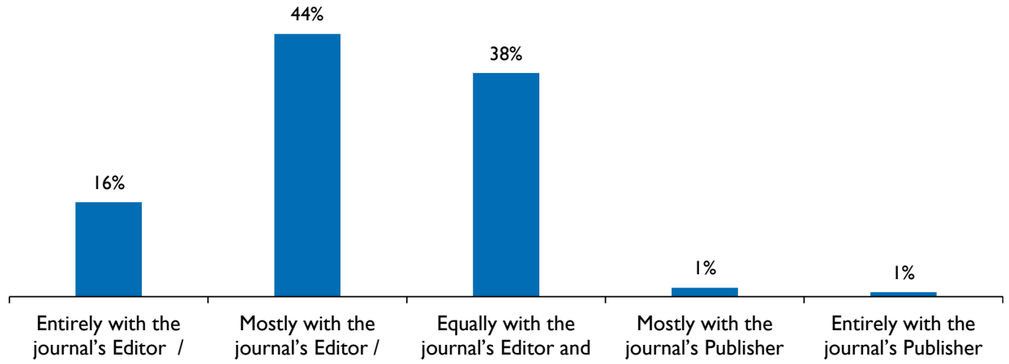


Q11 With whom does responsibility lie for managing ethical issues?

HSS



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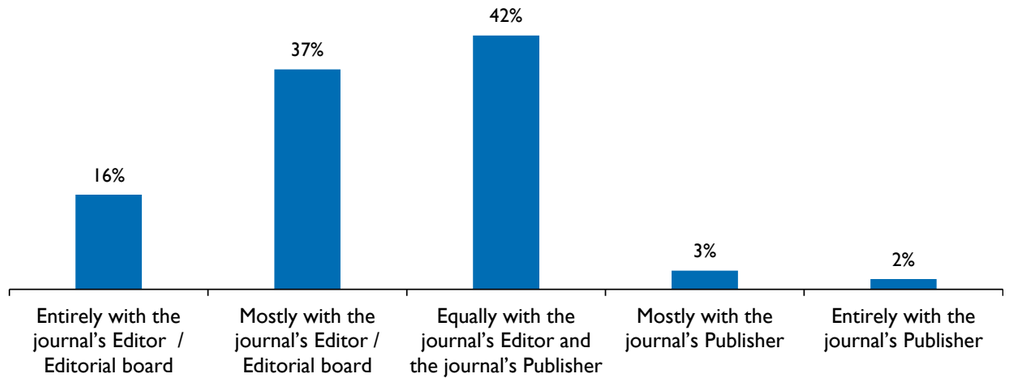


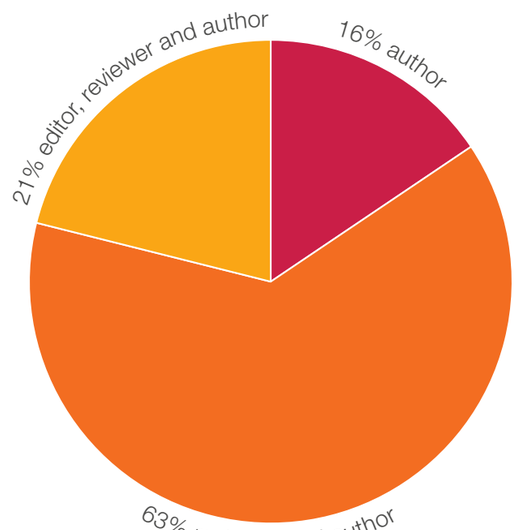
2 Screening question

Please select the option which best describes you:

Q12

- **Author** – I have written scholarly papers published in academic journals, but not yet reviewed manuscripts
- Author & **Reviewer** – I have also peer reviewed manuscripts for a journal, but I am not an editor
- Author, Reviewer & **Editor** – I have also received submissions or made acceptance decisions for a journal

HSS



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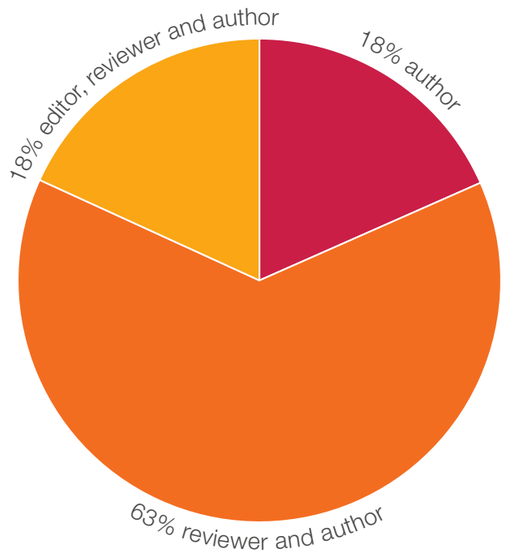
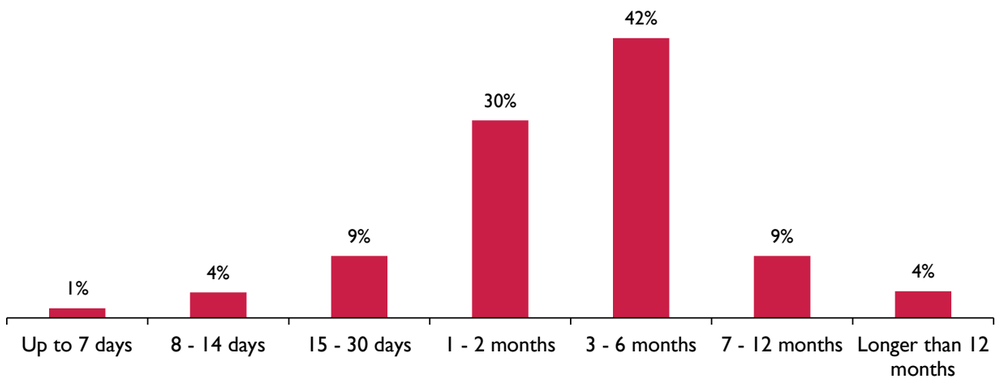


Responses from authors

Q13 "As an author: thinking about your most recent article that underwent peer review – how long did you wait after you submitted your manuscript for peer review before you received the peer reviewers' initial comments?"

HSS



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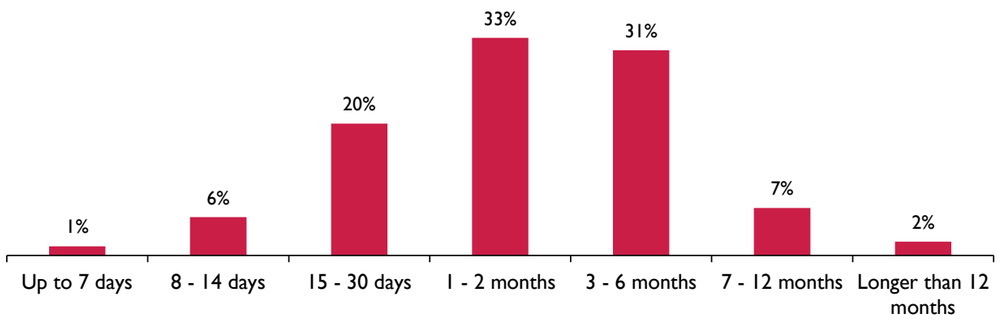
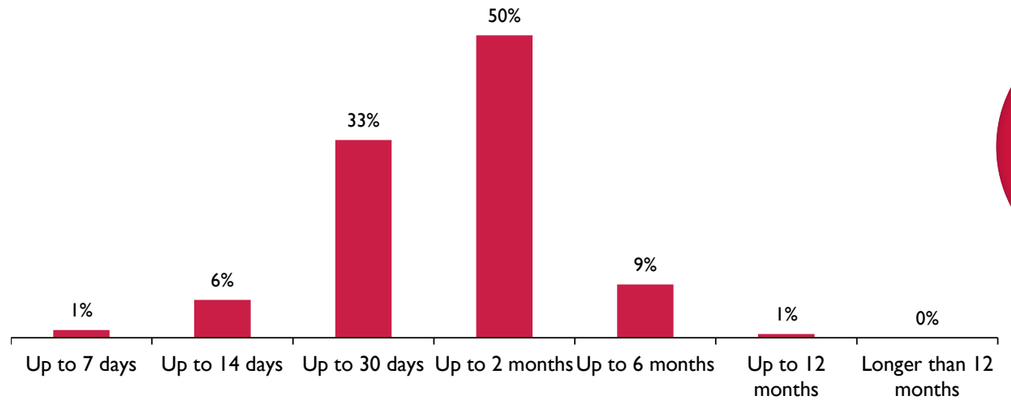


Q14 "As an author: what do you consider a reasonable amount of time to wait after submitting your manuscript for peer review before you receive feedback?"

SSH



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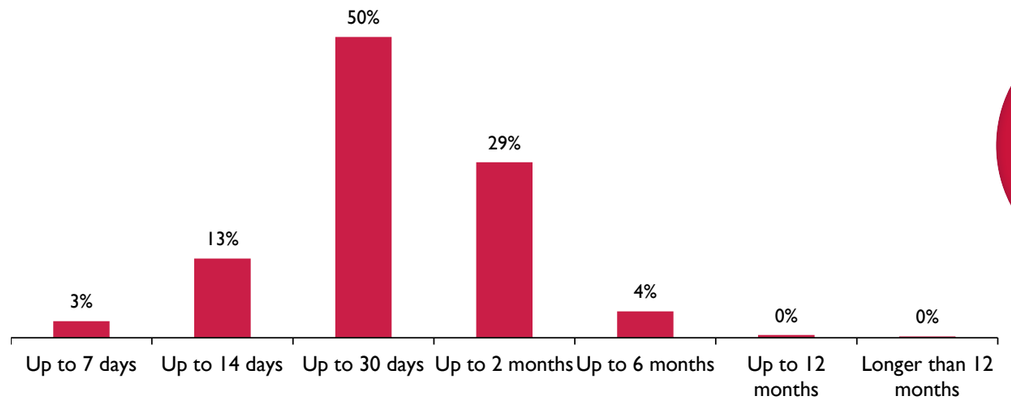
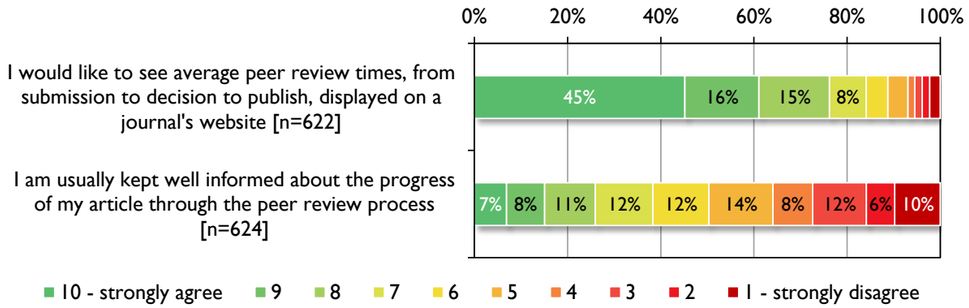


3a The process of peer review

Q15 "As an author: please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements"

HSS



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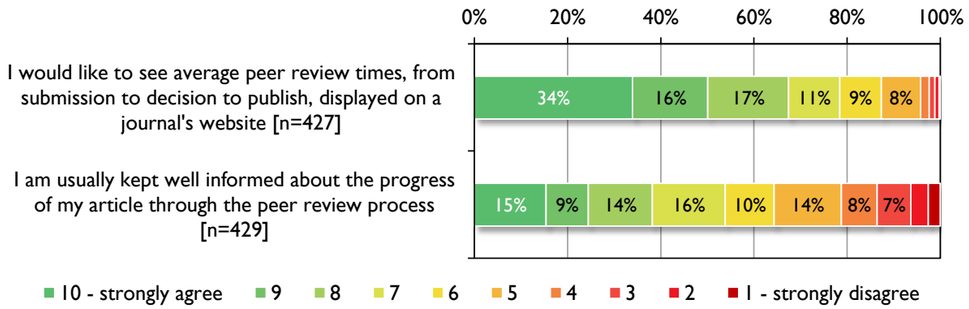
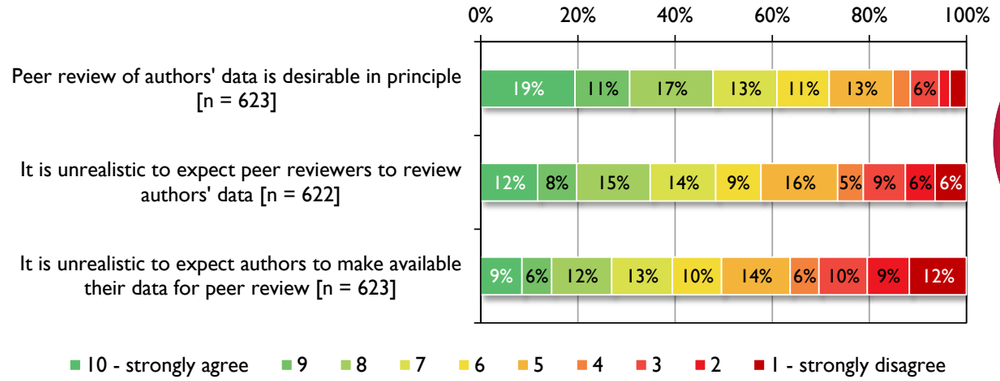


3a The process of peer review

The following questions are about the data authors gather and use during their research (e.g. experimental results, data tables, transcripts, videos etc.).

Q16 "Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements"

SSH



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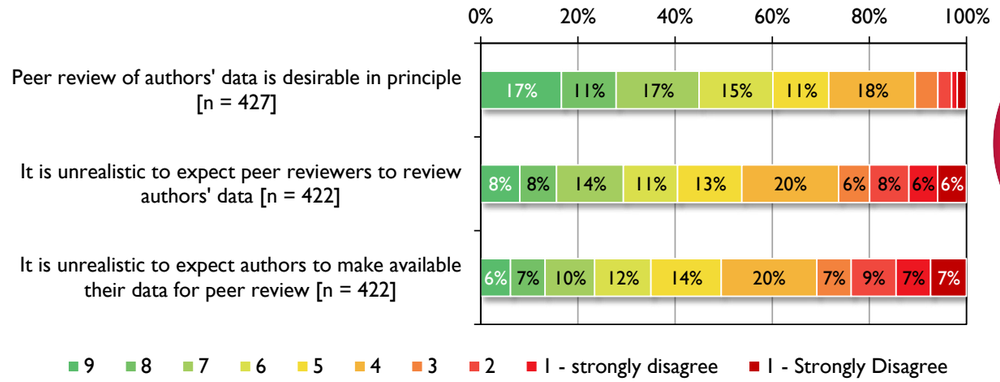
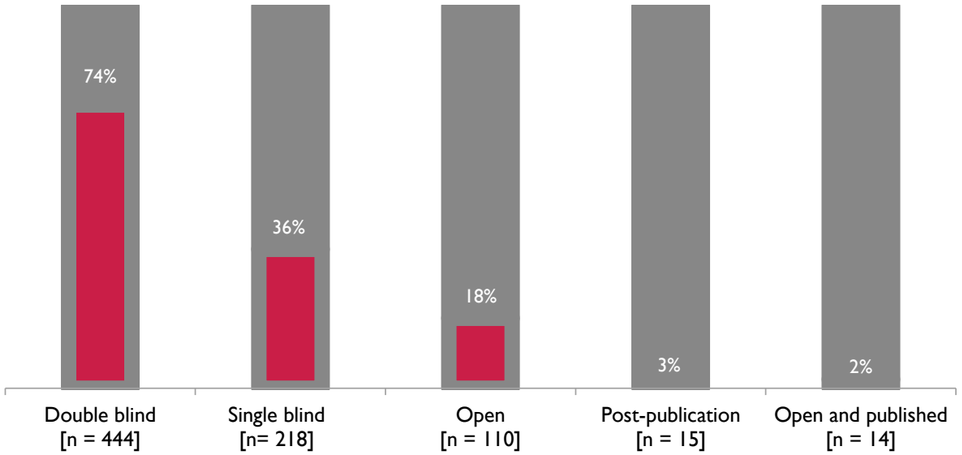


4a Different models of peer review

Q17 “As an author: which of the following types of peer review have your papers undergone? Please tick all that apply”

HSS



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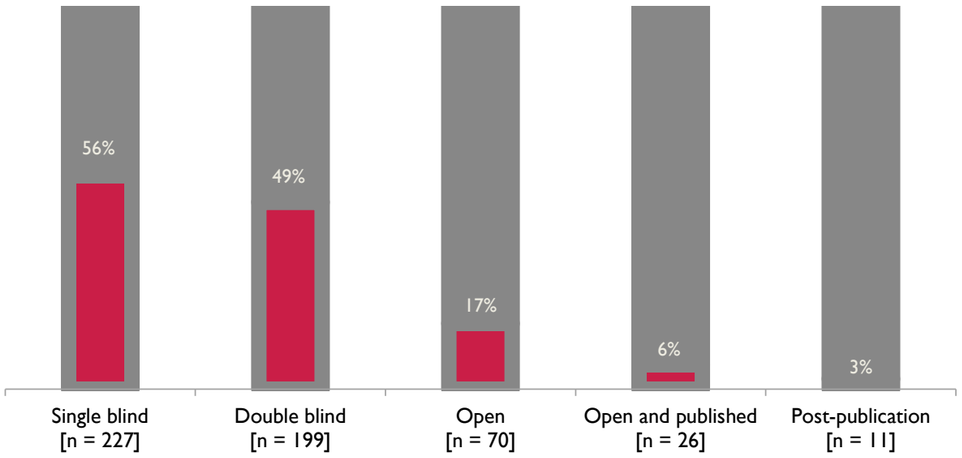
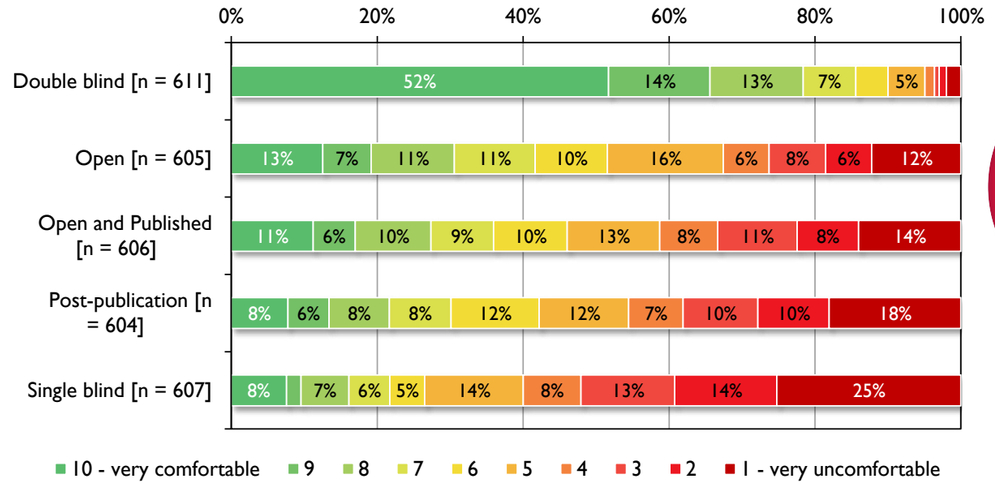


4a Different models of peer review

Q18 “As an author: suppose you could choose the method of peer review for your paper. Please rate how comfortable you are with each of the following methods”

SSH



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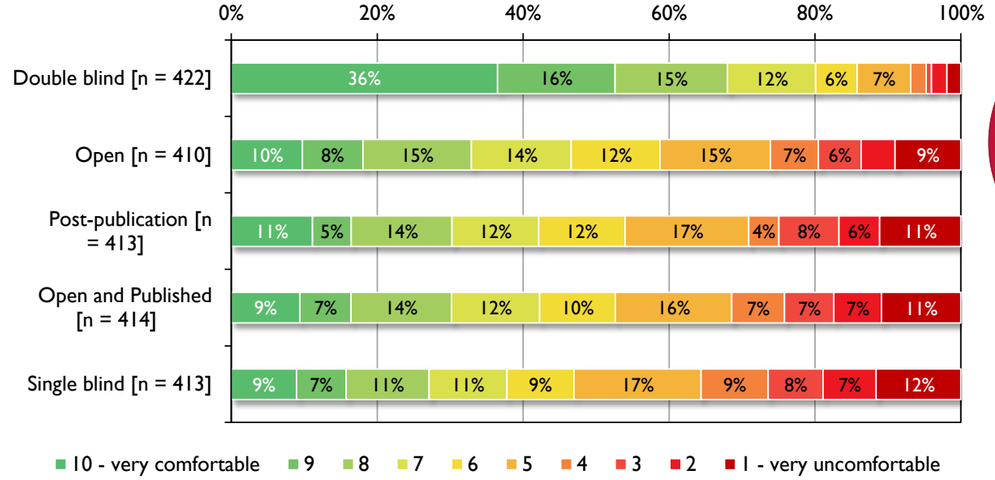


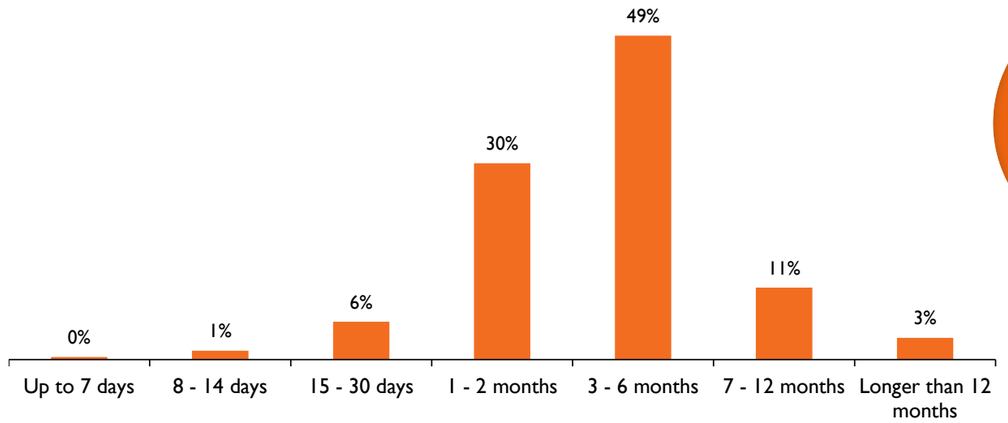
Please note the responses from authors on motivations to review and training (Q19-25) are included in a later supplement.

Responses from reviewers

3r The process of peer review

Q26 “As an author: thinking about your most recent article that underwent peer review – how long did you wait after you submitted your manuscript for peer review before you received the peer reviewers’ initial comments?”

SSH



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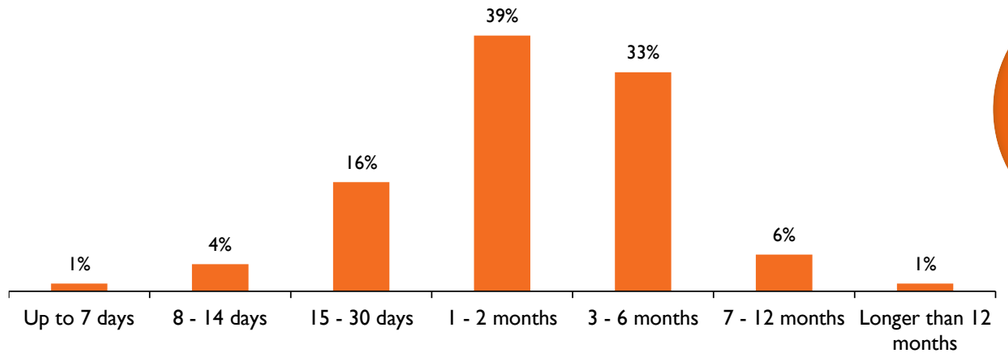
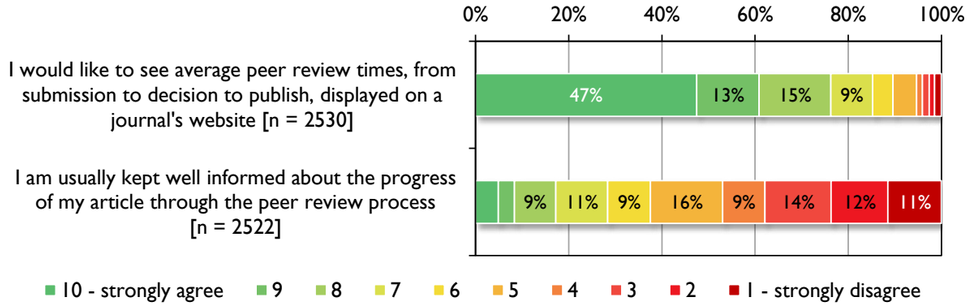


3r The process of peer review

Q27 “As an author: please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements”

HSS



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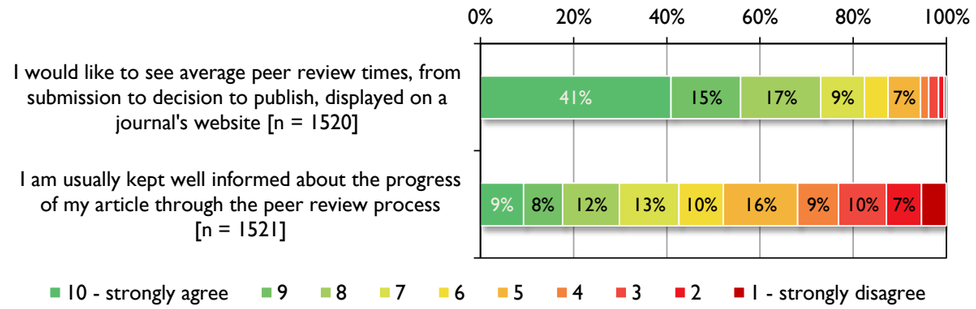
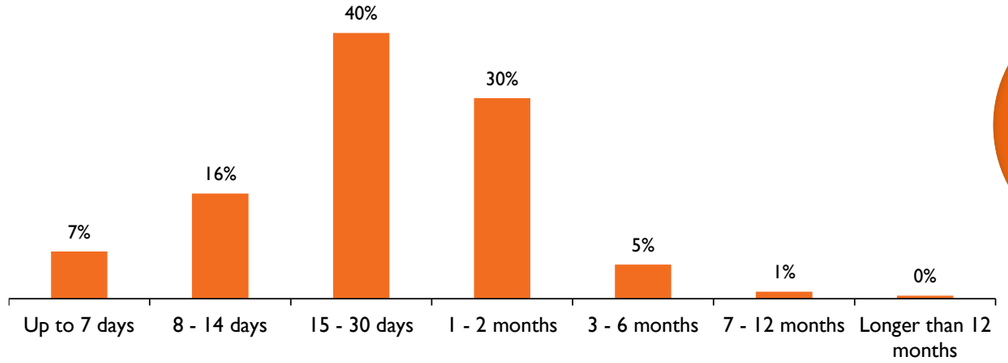


3r The process of peer review

Q28 “As a reviewer: thinking about the most recent article that you peer reviewed – how long was the duration between your acceptance of the invitation to review, and the delivery of your initial report?”

SSH



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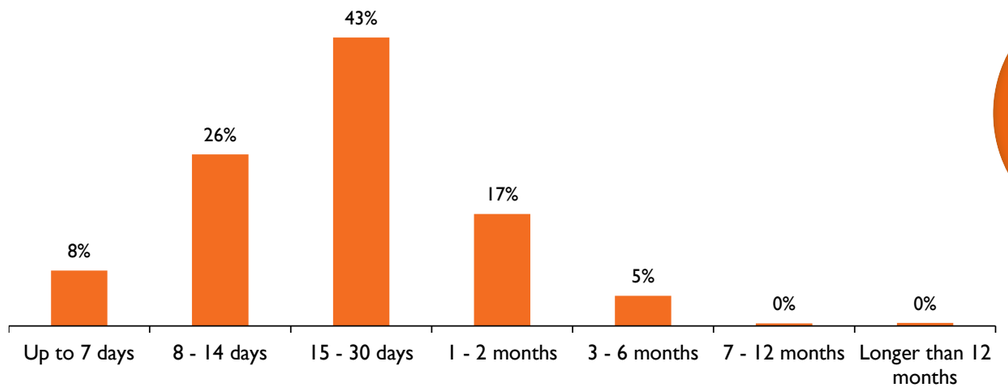
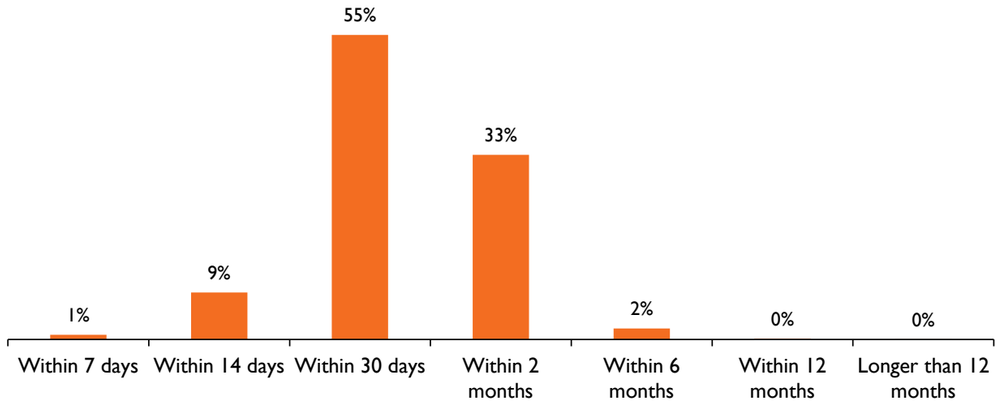


3r The process of peer review

Q29 “As a reviewer: what do you consider a reasonable amount of time to be given, after accepting the invitation to review, to deliver your initial report?”

HSS



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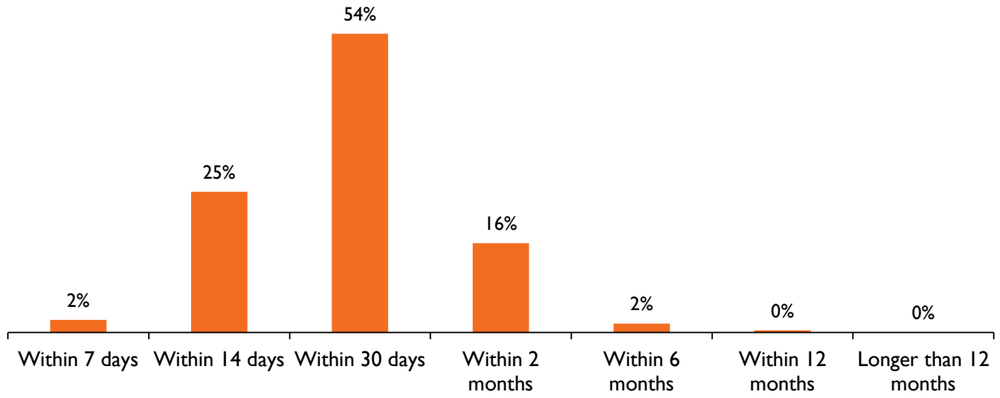
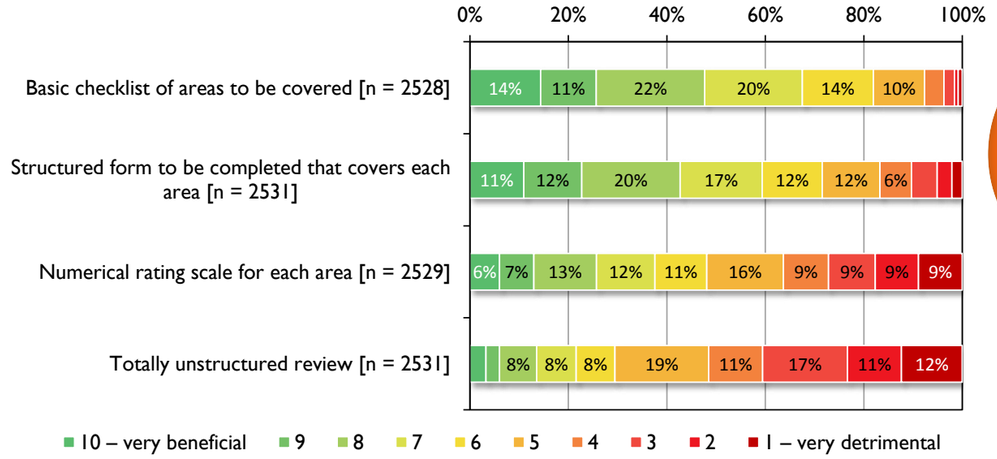


3r The process of peer review

Some journals provide reviewers with a structured format for the review, imposing a list of areas for consideration in the review, such as the manuscript's relevance, methodology, length and ethics.

Q30 “How beneficial do you think each of the following review formats are for ensuring the quality of the review?”

SSH



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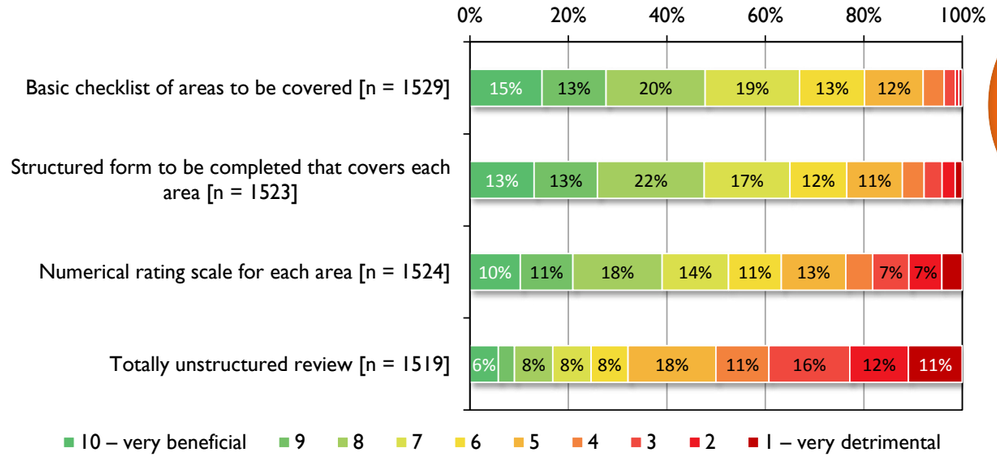


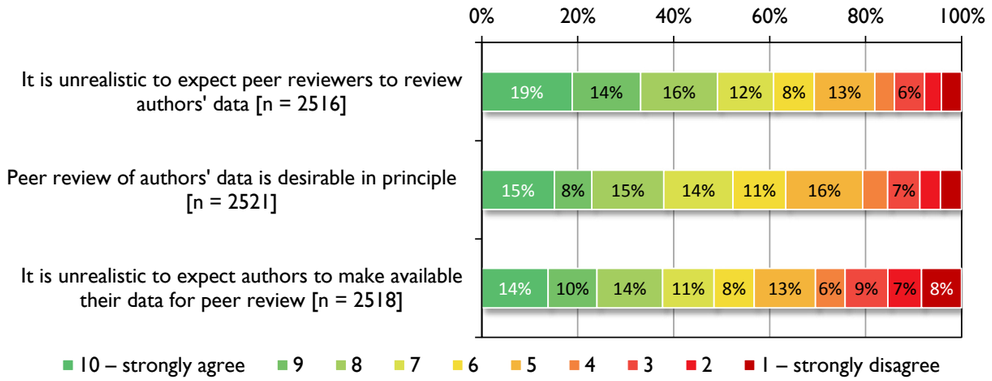
3r The process of peer review

The following questions are about the data authors gather and use during their research (e.g. experimental results, data tables, transcripts, videos etc.).

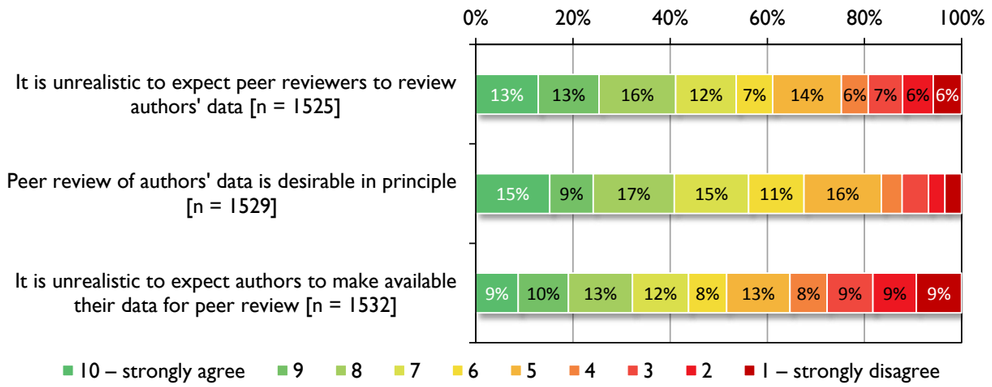
Q31

"Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements"

HSS



STM

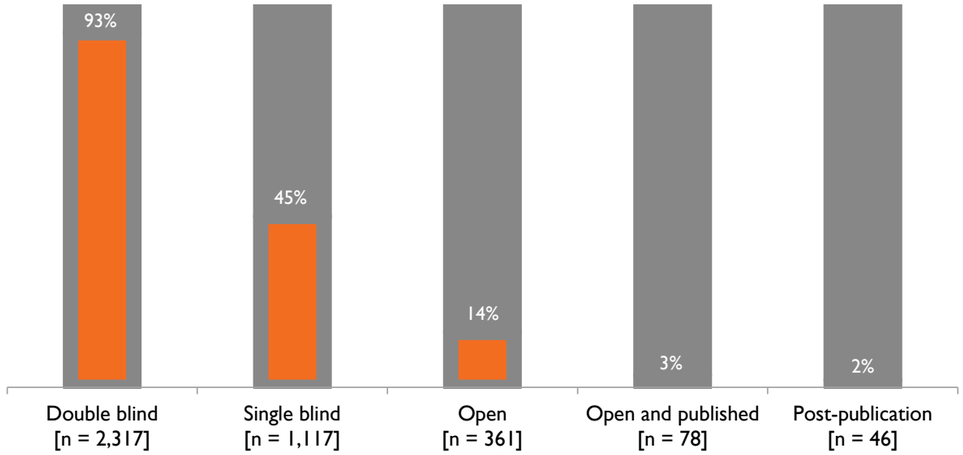


4r Different models of peer review

Q32

"As an author: which of the following types of peer review have your papers undergone? Please tick all that apply"

SSH



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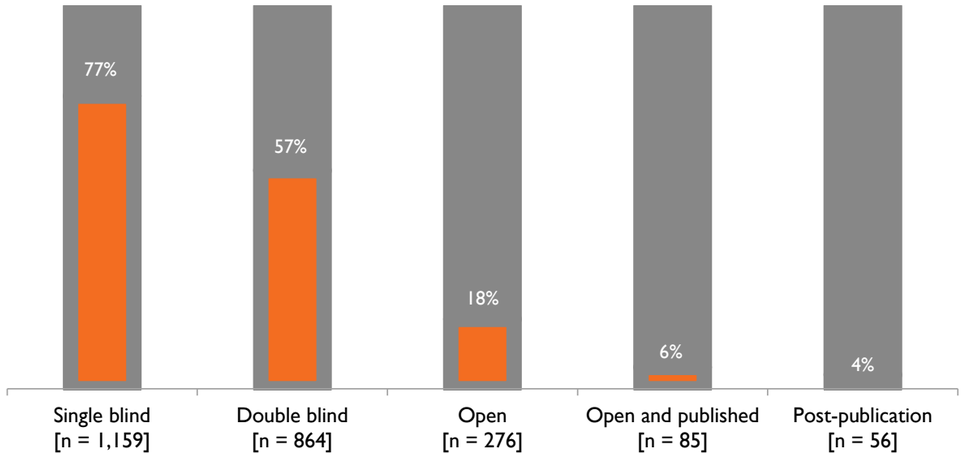
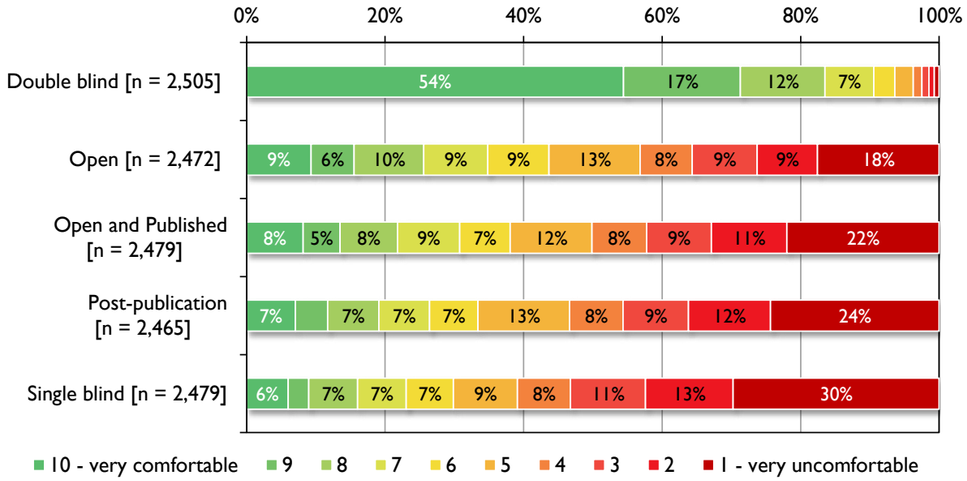


4r Different models of peer review

Q33 “As an author: suppose you could choose the method of peer review for your paper. Please rate how comfortable you are with each of the following methods”

HSS



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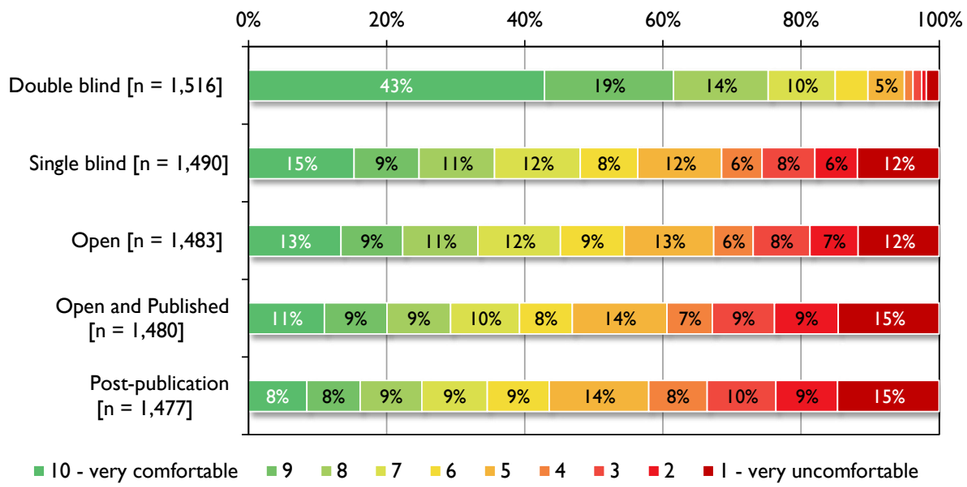
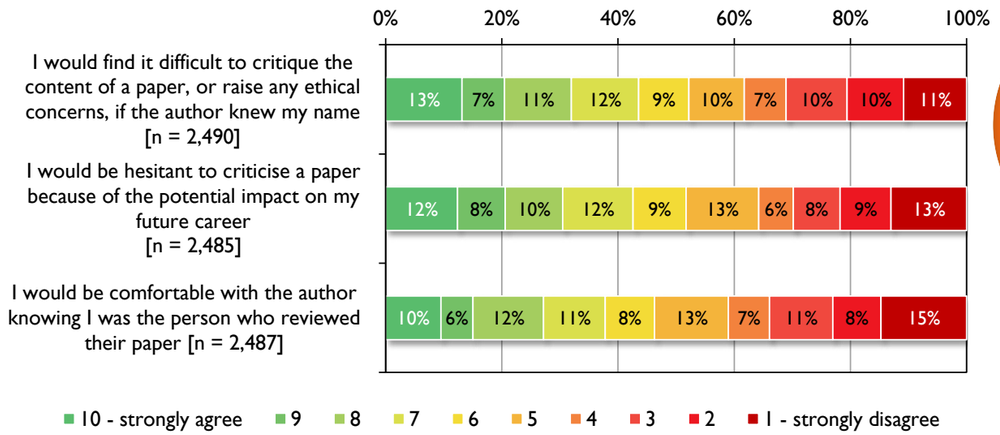


4r Different models of peer review

Q35 “The following questions are about Open Peer Review, where both the author’s and reviewers’ names are known to each other. Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements”

SSH



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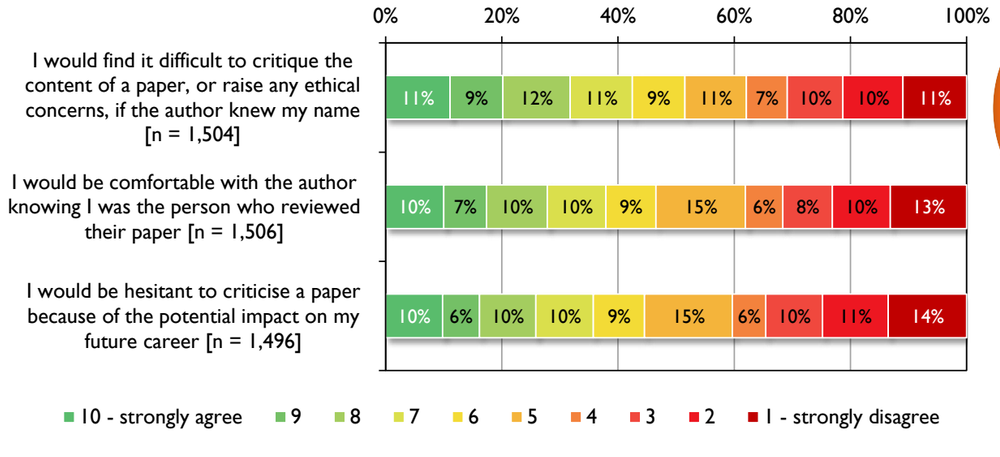


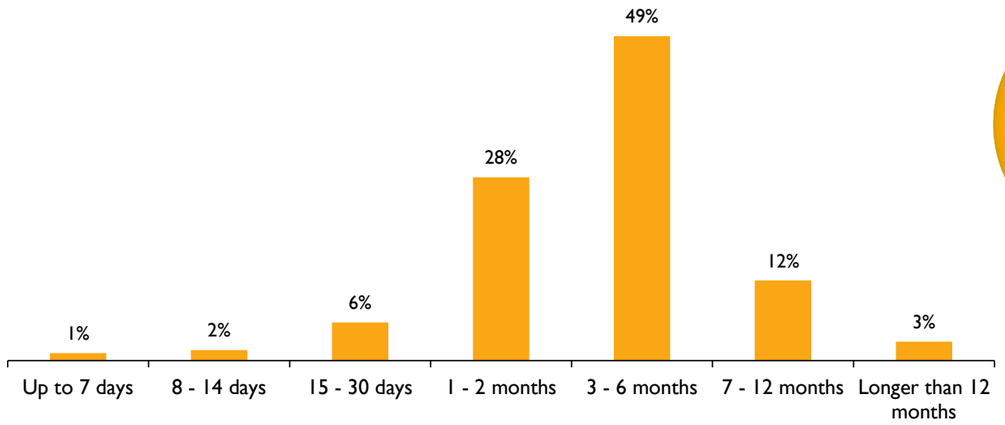
Please note the responses from reviewers on motivations to review and training (Q36-43) are included in a later supplement.

Responses from editors

3e The process of peer review

Q44 “As an author: thinking about your most recent article that underwent peer review – how long did you wait after you submitted your manuscript for peer review before you received the peer reviewers’ initial comments?”

SSH



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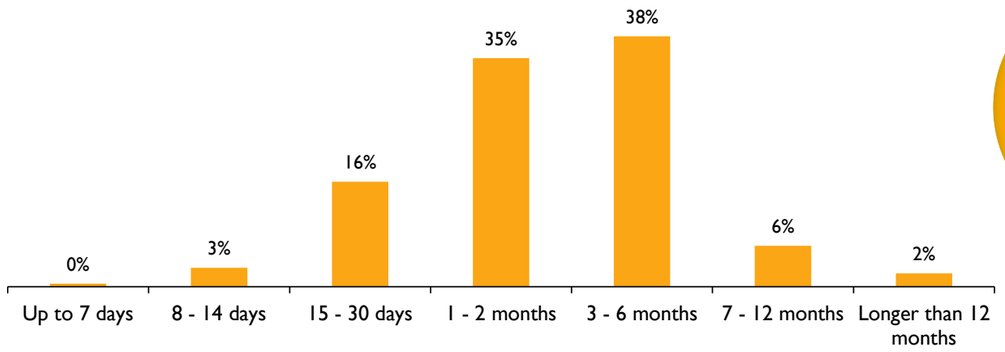
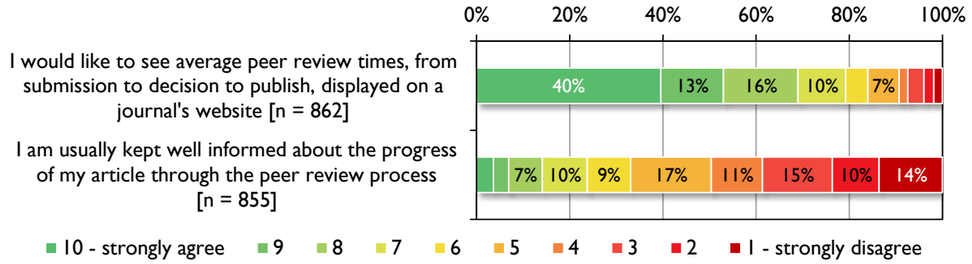


3e The process of peer review

Q45 "As an author: please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements"

HSS



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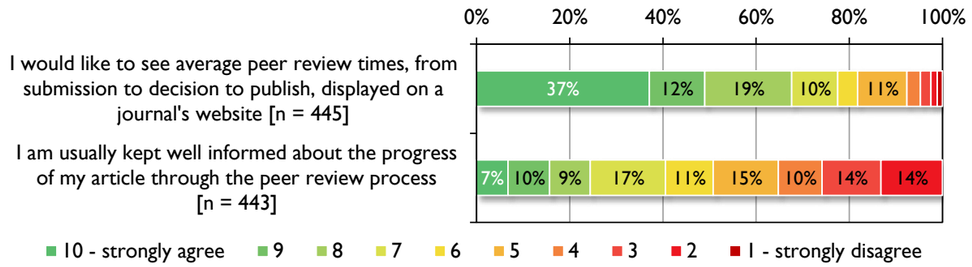
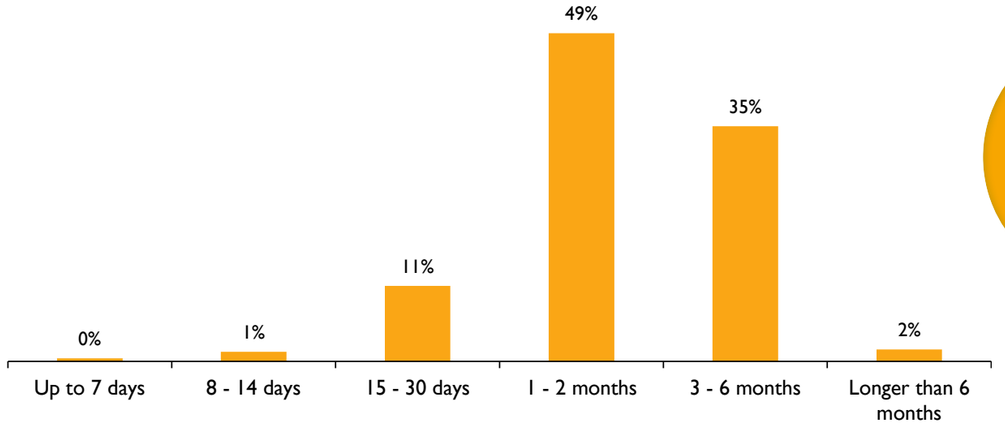


3e The process of peer review

Q46 "As an editor: thinking about your own journal – on average, how long does it take, after an author submits an article for peer review, before they receive the peer reviewers' initial comments?"

SSH



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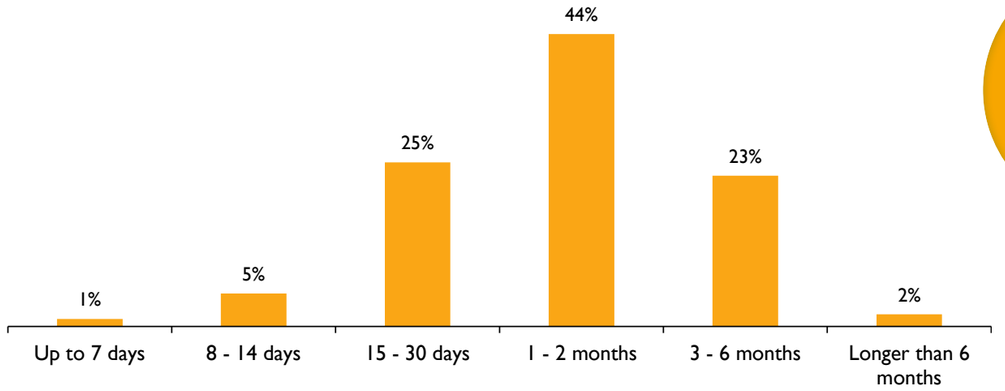
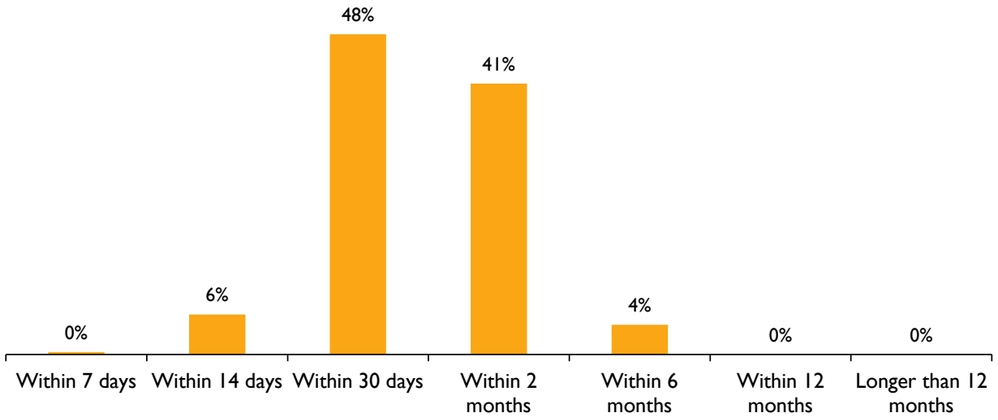


3e The process of peer review

Q47 “As an editor: what do you consider a realistic amount of time to expect reviewers to deliver their initial report, after they have accepted the invitation to review?”

HSS



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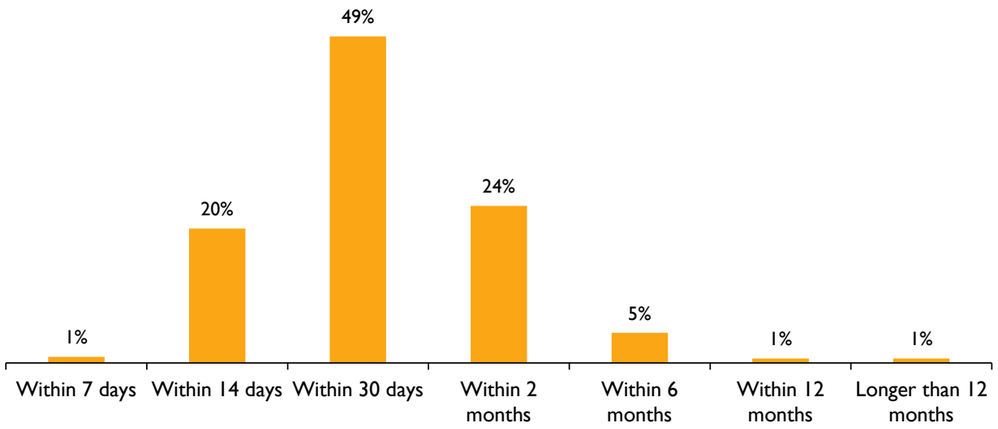
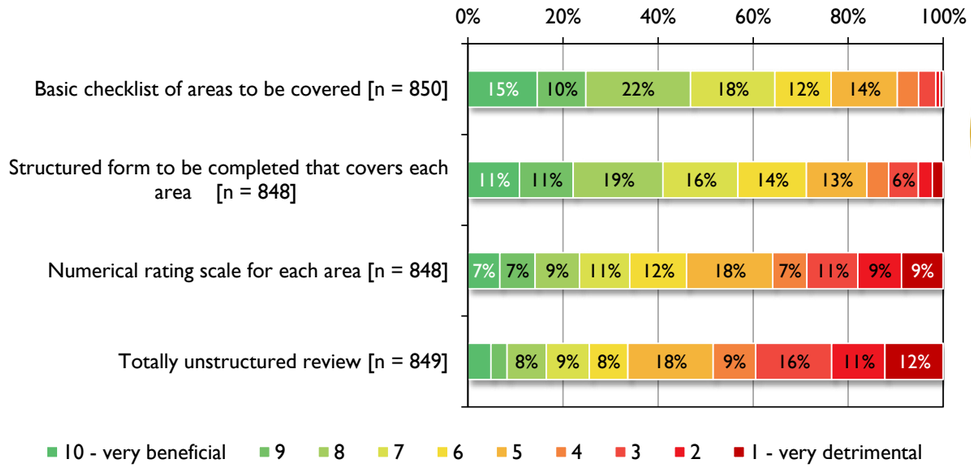


3e The process of peer review

Some journals provide reviewers with a structured format for the review, imposing a list of areas for consideration in the review, such as the manuscript's relevance, methodology, length and ethics.

Q48 “How beneficial do you think each of the following review formats are for ensuring the quality of the review?”

SSH



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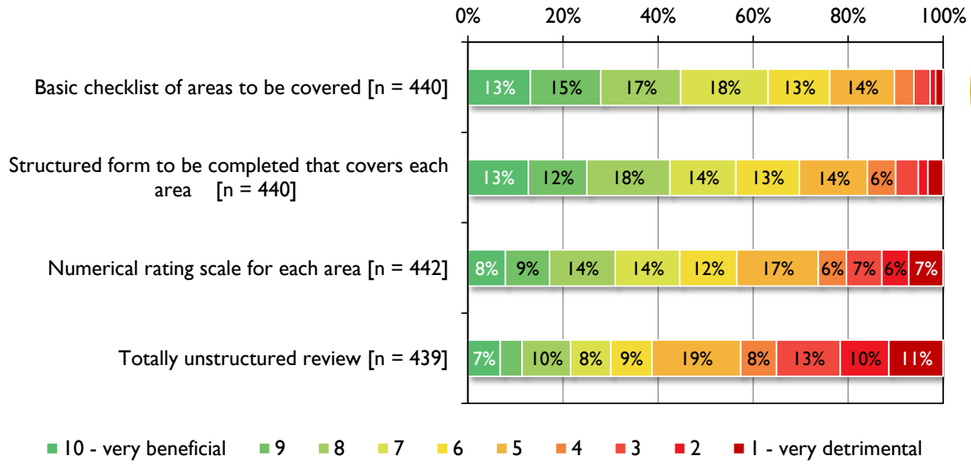


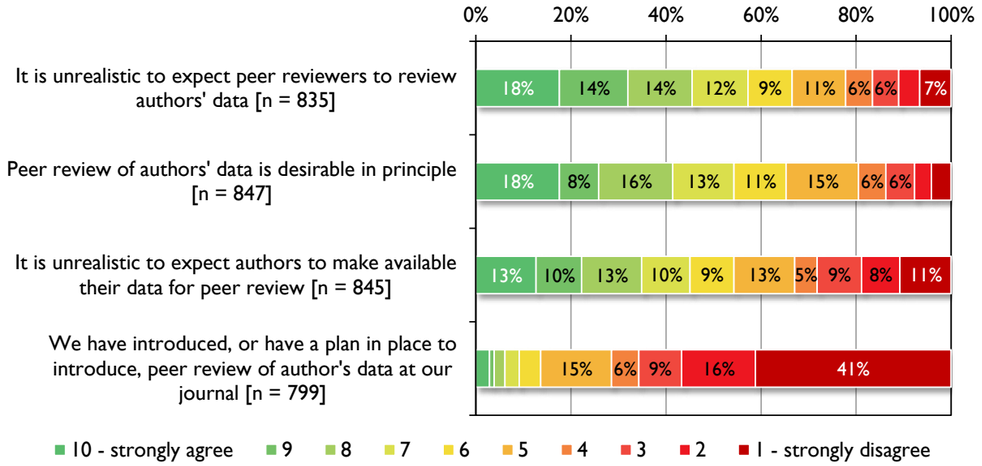
3e The process of peer review

The following questions are about the data authors gather and use during their research (e.g. experimental results, data tables, transcripts, videos etc.).

Q49

"Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements"

HSS



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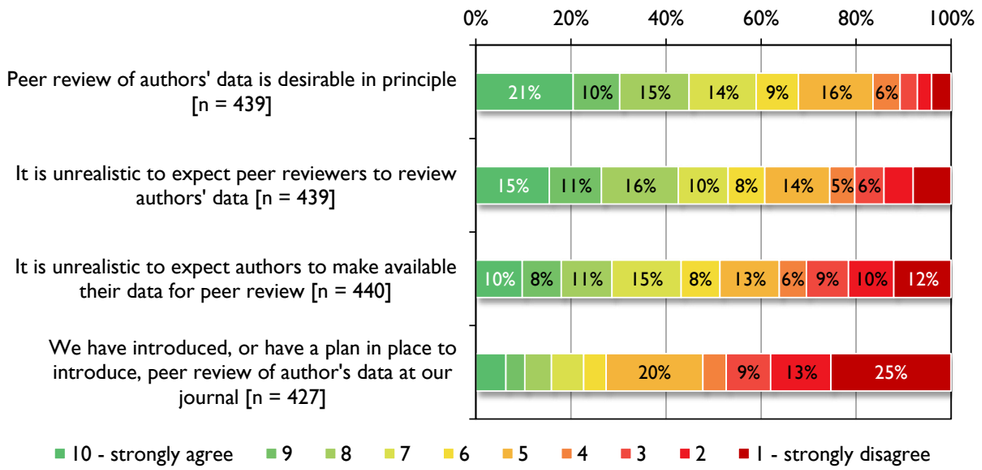
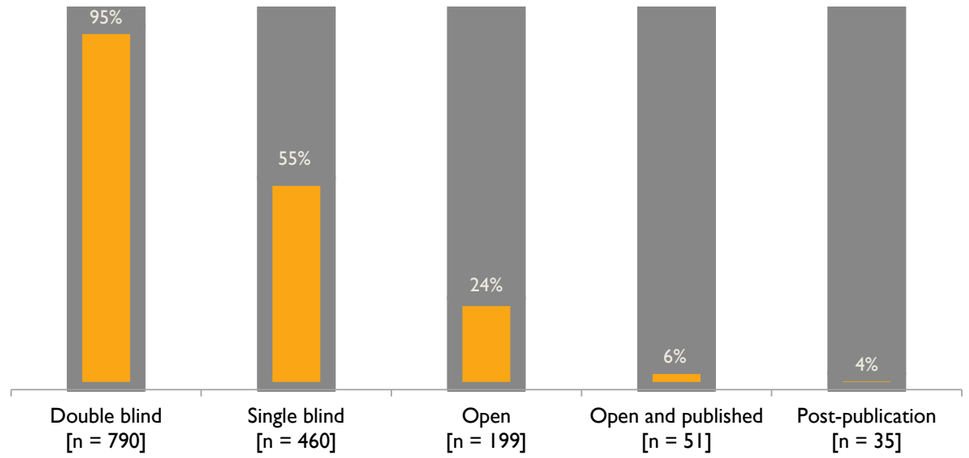


4e Different models of peer review

Q50

"As an author: which of the following types of peer review have your papers undergone? Please tick all that apply"

SSH



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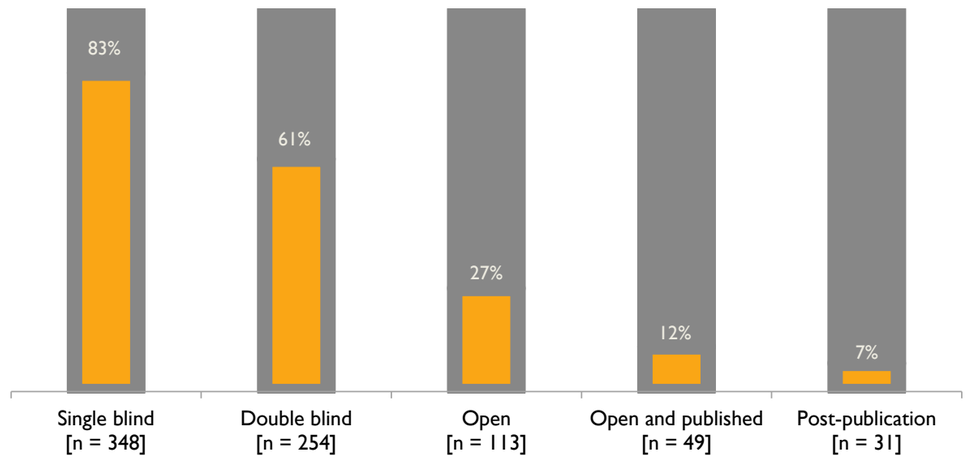
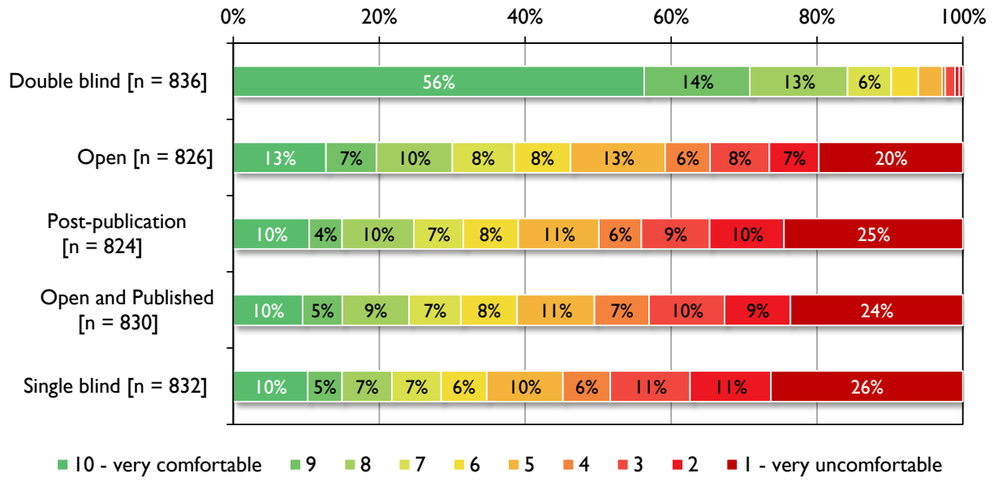


4e Different models of peer review

Q51 "As an author: suppose you could choose the method of peer review for your paper. Please rate how comfortable you are with each of the following methods"

HSS



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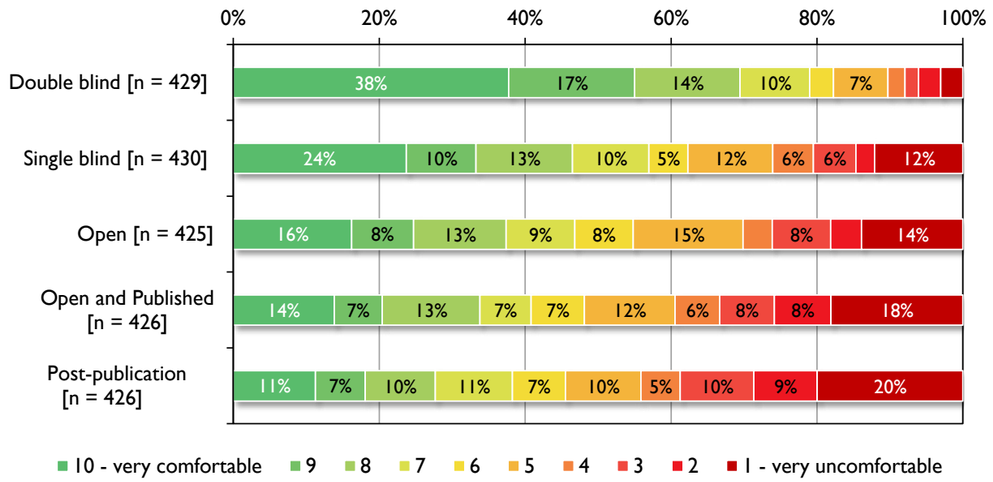
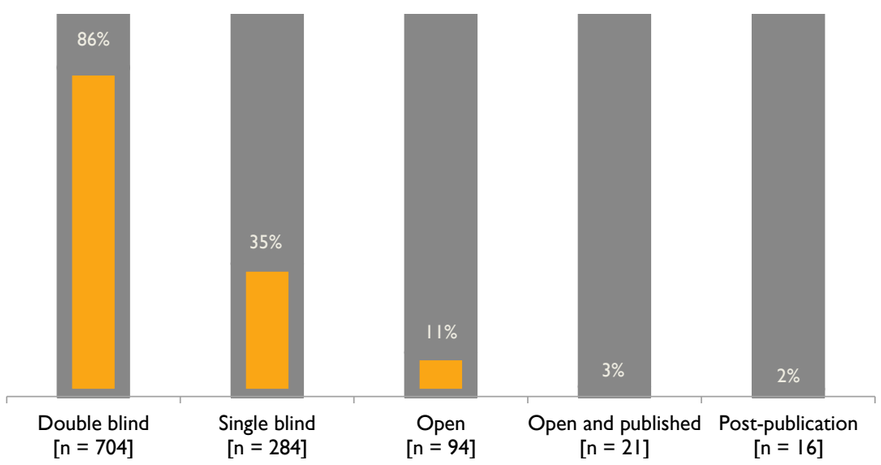


4e Different models of peer review

Q52 "As an editor: which of the following types of peer review have you used on journals that you edit? Please tick all that apply"

SSH



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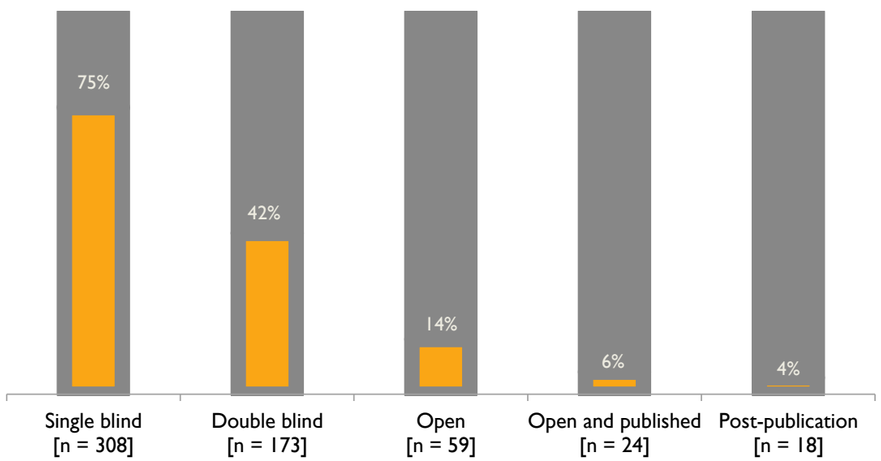
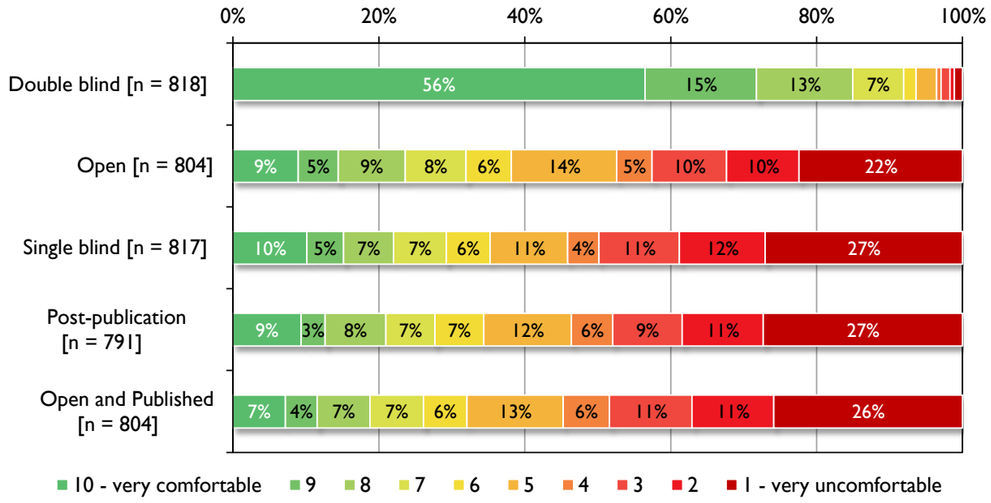


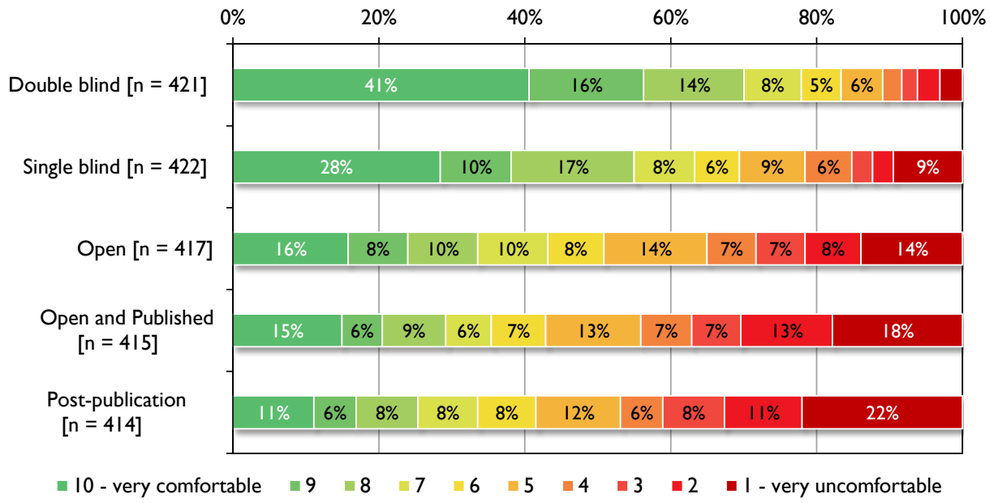
4r Different models of peer review

Q53 "As an editor: please rate how comfortable you are with each of the following methods"

HSS



STM



Demographics: authors, reviewers and editors

Demographics (authors)

D2 Please indicate from the drop-down list below your broad subject area

HSS

HSS subjects	Responses	Percentage
Behavioural Sciences	112	19%
Humanities	103	17%
Education	88	15%
Public Health & Social Care	57	10%
Sociology (Ethnicity, Race, Gender, Development)	39	7%
Library & Information Science	38	6%
Business & Economics	35	6%
Arts	30	5%
Politics & International Relations	27	5%
Cultural Studies, Media & Communication	18	3%
Law & Criminology	16	3%
Geography	13	2%
Tourism, Leisure & Sport Studies	13	2%
Area Studies	3	1%
Total	**592**	

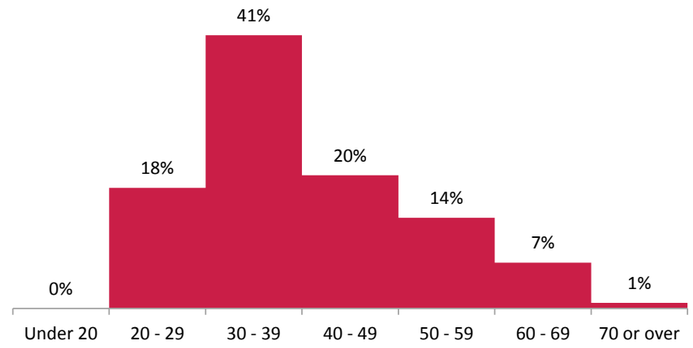
STM

STM subjects	Responses	Percentage
Medicine (Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy, Allied Heath)	125	30%
Biological Science	81	20%
Engineering & Technology	56	14%
Chemistry	42	10%
Environmental Science	29	7%
Agriculture & Food Science	28	7%
Mathematics	20	5%
Physics	11	3%
Materials Science	8	2%
Computer Science	8	2%
Geology	6	1%
Total	**414**	

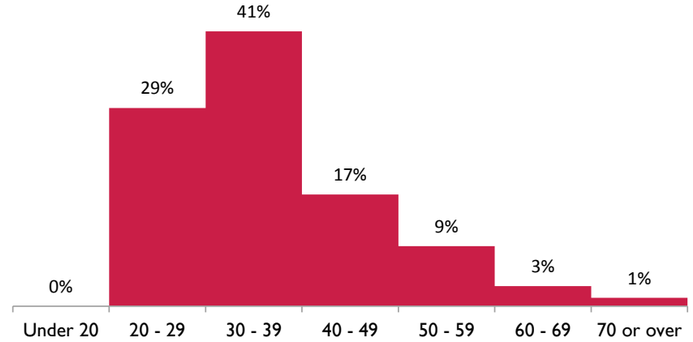
Demographics

D3 Please select an age bracket below

SSH



STM



D4 Please indicate your gender

Gender	HSS		STM	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Male	242	41%	241	58%
Female	353	59%	171	42%
Total	**595**		**412**	

Demographics (reviewers)

D2 Please indicate from the drop-down list below your broad subject area:

HSS

HSS subjects	Responses	Percentage
Behavioural Sciences	433	18%
Education	358	15%
Business & Economics	308	13%
Humanities	268	11%
Public Health & Social Care	213	9%
Politics & International Relations	203	8%
Sociology (Ethnicity, Race, Gender, Development)	200	8%
Cultural Studies, Media & Communication	144	6%
Geography	79	3%
Tourism, Leisure & Sport Studies	64	3%
Law & Criminology	53	2%
Arts	49	2%
Library & Information Science	38	2%
Area Studies	21	1%
Total	**2431**	

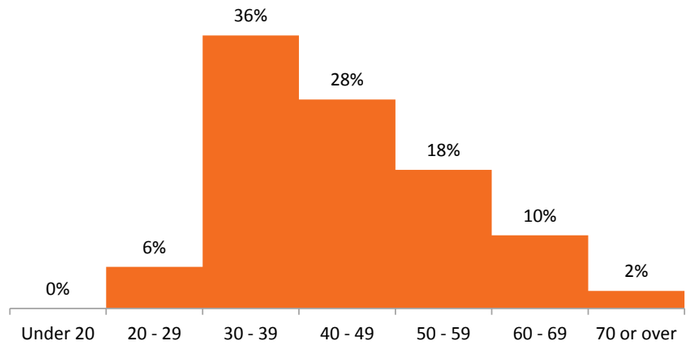
STM

STM subjects	Responses	Percentage
Medicine (Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy, Allied Heath)	489	33%
Engineering & Technology	255	17%
Biological Science	228	15%
Environmental Science	134	9%
Chemistry	105	7%
Mathematics	95	6%
Agriculture & Food Science	72	5%
Materials Science	38	3%
Physics	27	2%
Geology	26	2%
Computer Science	25	2%
Total	**1494**	

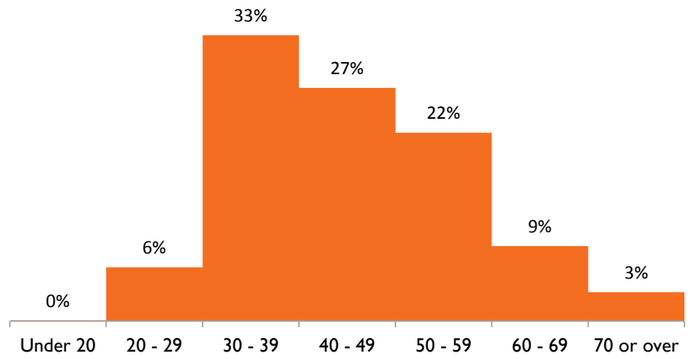
Demographics

D3 Please select an age bracket below

SSH



STM



D4 Please indicate your gender

Gender	HSS		STM	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Male	102	49%	1020	68%
Female	1241	51%	470	32%
Total	**1343**		**1490**	

Demographics (editors)

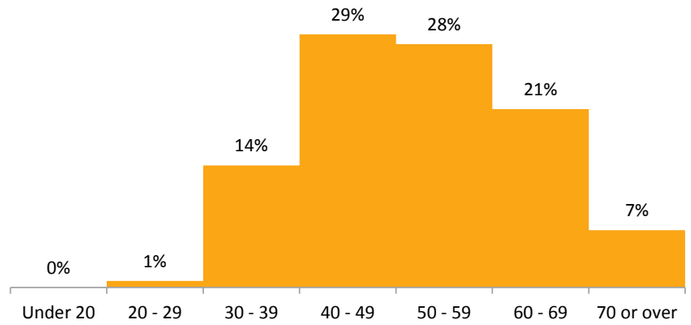
D2 Please indicate from the drop-down list below your broad subject area

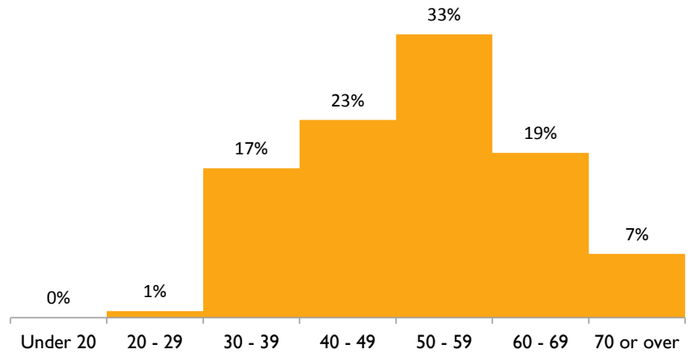
HSS subjects	Responses	Percentage
Education	143	18%
Behavioural Sciences	141	18%
Humanities	114	14%
Business & Economics	101	13%
Sociology (Ethnicity, Race, Gender, Development)	58	7%
Politics & International Relations	55	7%
Public Health & Social Care	51	6%
Cultural Studies, Media & Communication	37	5%
Tourism, Leisure & Sport Studies	24	3%
Geography	23	3%
Arts	22	3%
Law & Criminology	16	2%
Library & Information Science	7	1%
Area Studies	6	1%
Total	**798**	

STM subjects	Responses	Percentage
Medicine (Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy, Allied Heath)	136	34%
Biological Science	66	17%
Engineering & Technology	47	12%
Mathematics	36	9%
Environmental Science	33	8%
Agriculture & Food Science	26	7%
Chemistry	14	4%
Computer Science	13	3%
Materials Science	10	3%
Geology	10	3%
Physics	9	2%
Total	**400**	

Demographics

D3 Please select an age bracket below



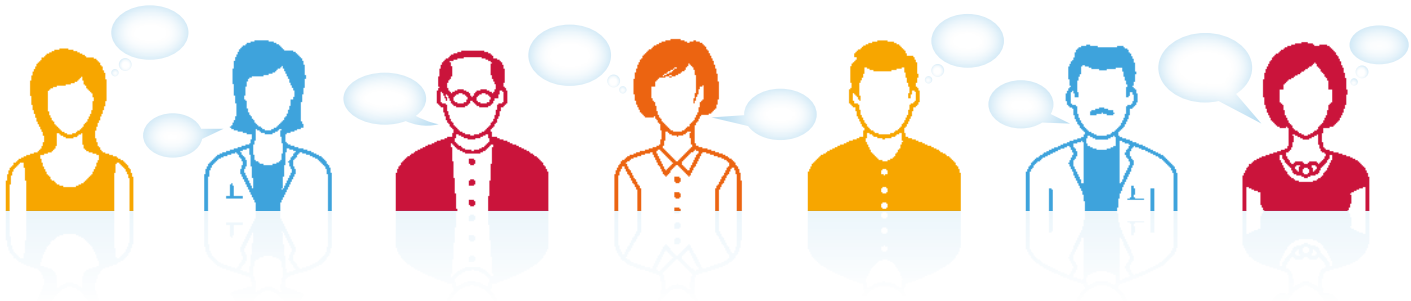


D4 Please indicate your gender

Gender	HSS		STM	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Male	457	57%	308	77%
Female	339	43%	91	23%
Total	**796**		**399**	

Peer review in 2015: a global view

Read the accompanying white paper at
authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com



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