

Survey on European psychology publication issues

MARTIN UHL¹

Abstract

Open access, open review, language diversity and online publishing are the new paradigms and challenges in scientific communication. In order to collect data on these European Psychology publication issues, to raise awareness and to find co-operation partners, an online survey was designed. Data were collected from 11th of February till 30th of May 2008. The survey was answered by 493 persons from 24 European countries.

It was possible to show that international journals play an important role to obtain information and to foster careers. European language diversity and time delay are important aspects, which should be given more consideration. Open access still lacks awareness, especially in terms of support by authors. But we found many interested in contributing to open access journals and a journal that would ease the language barrier with a broad European focus would be very welcome.

Key words: scientific communication; psychology; Europe; information; survey; open access; open review; language; online publishing; journal; time delay

¹ Martin Uhl, University of Trier, ZPID • Leibniz-Institute, D-54286 Trier, Germany; e-mail: uhl@zpid.de

1. Introduction

Scientific communication changed dramatically in the past years. New paradigms like open access and open review have sprung up and developed very successfully in some areas of science, e.g. Physics (Morrison, 2006). Additionally the merging of Europe, including its linguistic diversity and expansion of online services put new challenges on the agenda of science and scientific exchange. Until now these issues lacked awareness, discussion and management in the psychologists' community. Only when actively managed and conceived as opportunities will these paradigms and challenges lead Psychology to prosperity as a science. For this reason we at ZPID², the Institute for Psychology Information for the German-speaking countries, decided to start a European initiative on Psychology publication issues. Following this decision, we faced three different kinds of tasks. First we wanted to know the European scientist's attitudes towards these issues. Second we wanted to raise awareness for the publication process and its implications for science, considering the mentioned paradigms and challenges. Third we wanted to find European co-operation partners, who would join the initiative. To deal with this variety of aspects, we designed an online survey with the possibility to leave an E-mail address for further contact. To disseminate the survey, we consulted the "Psychology in Europe"³ online directory for the addresses of all European national Psychology associations and asked them to direct their members' attention to the survey.

2. Demographic data

Data were collected from 11th of February till 30th of May 2008. The survey was answered by 493 people from 24 European countries. In each country, the reception of the survey was very different. In the end, we got the most answers (45,4%) from Germany, followed by Russia (19,7%), France (7,7%), Switzerland (5,7%), Austria (3,9%) and the Czech Republic (2%). From various other countries we got less than 10 replies. Due to the response dynamics, we cannot consider the survey's results as representative of European Psychology as a whole, but we can deduce a general opinion.

Table 1: Participants' Countries

<i>N</i> = 493	<i>frequency</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Germany	224	45,4%
Russia	97	19,7%
France	38	7,7%
Switzerland	28	5,7%
Austria	19	3,9%

² <http://www.zpid.de>

³ <http://www.zpid.de/PsychologyInEurope>

Czech Republic	10	2,0%
Bulgaria	7	1,4%
Netherlands	7	1,4%
United Kingdom	7	1,4%
Luxemburg	6	1,2%
Cyprus	6	1,2%
Norway	5	1,0%
Latvia	4	0,8%
Denmark, Poland & Portugal	2	0,4%
Greek, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia & Spain	1	0,2%
<i>Unknown</i>	21	4,3%

Most of the participants (95%) held an academic title in Psychology, 70% at the level of PhD and Professor.

Table 2: Participants' Highest Academic Title

<i>N = 493</i>	<i>frequency</i>	<i>percentage</i>
None	23	4,7%
BA	5	1,0%
MA/Diploma	117	23,7%
PhD	176	35,7%
Professor	169	34,3%
<i>Unknown</i>	3	0,6%

All areas of psychological research were covered. Most answers came from scientists from the areas of social Psychology, educational Psychology and human experimental Psychology.

Table 3: Participants' Highest Academic Title

<i>N = 493</i>	<i>frequency</i>	<i>percent- age</i>
Statistics/Methodology	14	2,8%
Human Experimental Psychology	65	13,2%

Physiological Psychology / Neuroscience	38	7,7%
Developmental Psychology	46	9,3%
Social Psychology	67	13,6%
Personality Psychology	41	8,3%
Clinical Psychology	60	12,2%
Educational Psychology	65	13,2%
Industrial and Organizational Psychology	50	10,1%
Other	47	9,5%
<i>Unknown</i>	0	0%

3. Results

3.1 Local and international journals

In the field of scientific journals, a difference can be made between local journals, mostly publishing in local languages and international journals, mostly publishing in English (Krampen, Montada, Müller, & Schui, 2005). To stay informed international journals (64%) are consulted more often, than local journals (30%). This finding implies that the majority of articles read are not in local languages. Following that implication, 52% of participants wish more information in their local language. Even more important than the article as a whole is its abstract. The abstract is often used to find and classify an article. According to the data, an abstract or an extended abstract in the readers' language of an article written in a language foreign to them would not be or is of little helpful for 52% and helpful or very helpful for 48% of respondents. Another implication of publishing locally or internationally is the time delay between submission and publication. Because of their organizational structure, local journals are often faster, than international journals. Asked if quicker and local publishing would be preferred to international and time delayed publishing, 51% voted for the local and 49% for the international variant.

Table 4: Local and international journals

In order to stay informed in my field, I read ...

local journals	international journals	<i>Unknown</i>
30%	64%	6%

I wish more information would be available in my local language?

yes	no	<i>Unknown</i>
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52%	48%	0%
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For my work, an abstract or an extended abstract in my language of an article written in a language foreign to me would be ...

not helpful	little helpful	helpful	very helpful	<i>Unknown</i>
22%	30%	32%	16%	0%

It would be more useful to publish scientific results quickly locally than to delay the publication process in order to publish internationally?

yes	no	<i>Unknown</i>
51%	49%	0%

3.2 Open Access

The online availability of articles started with the rise of internet and online archives in the nineties. Open Access, discussed as a science policy, became popular with the Budapest declaration in 2002. The paradigm means free and unrestricted online availability of an article. Different ways of open access are discussed. One of them is the “golden road”, which is based on open access journals. The content of open access journals is freely available and the publishing costs are usually covered by other means. The implications of this business model are immense. It supports exchange between scientists, fosters equal access to knowledge for people all over the world and finally leads to an increase of citations and progress of science (BOAI, 2002).

In our sample 58% were aware of open access. Among this group 96% had read an open access journal and 81% read it at least once a month. In comparison 41% published in an open access journal and the majority of 59% never published in this kind of journal.

Table 5: Open Access

Are you aware of open access journals in your field?

yes	no	<i>Unknown</i>
58%	42%	0%

Among the 58% (N=272) of persons, who were aware of open access journals, we asked:

I read open access journals ...

every day	once a week	once a month	once a year	never	<i>Unknown</i>
3%	26%	52%	15%	4%	0%

I publish in open access journals ...

several times a year	once a year	once	never	<i>Unknown</i>
6%	13%	22%	59%	0%

3.3 Career and international journals

International journals play a key role in reaching the next career step. It is well known, that the number of publications, especially in internationally renowned journals, is perceived as an important criterion for the measurement of scientific success. We could show that 90% agreed with this point by stating, that publishing in renowned international journals is important for their careers. Furthermore 79% answered that to publish in these journals takes time from other important activities.

Table 6: Career and international journals

It is important for your career to publish in renowned international journals?

yes	no	<i>Unknown</i>
90%	10%	0%

Efforts to publish in these journals take time away from other important activities?

yes	no	<i>Unknown</i>
51%	49%	0%

3.4 Language, topics and European focus

The scientists asked showed their attitudes towards different features of a new open access journal. 76% would welcome a facilitation of the language barrier, 74% a focus on specific European issues and 73% a broad focus across all areas of psychology.

Table 7: Language, topics and European focus

I would welcome an open access journal which would ease the language barrier?

yes	no	Unknown
76%	24%	0%

I would welcome an open access journal which would focus on specific European issues, e.g. in Education and Practice?

yes	no	Unknown
74%	26%	0%

I would welcome an open access journal with a broad focus of topics across all areas of Psychology?

yes	no	Unknown
73%	27%	0%

3.5 Contribution

There is a big interest in contributing to an open access journal (80%). A similar number of 76% would like to serve as reviewer.

Table 8: Contribution

I would like to contribute to a European open access journal?

yes	no	Unknown
80%	20%	0%

I would like to serve as a reviewer for a European open access journal?

yes	no	Unknown
73%	27%	0%

4. Conclusion

Considering the obtained results, we come to several conclusions for the discussed issues. We could show that international journals play an important role to get research information. These journals are often in English, which leads to a need for more information in local languages. Meeting this request, translated abstracts and extended abstracts were welcomed. In international journals time delay between submission and publication is a limitation, which is insufficiently considered and gives an advantage to local and faster journals.

Together with the rise of online services, open access publishing became popular. It was found, that this paradigm still lacks awareness. Scientists read open access journals, but quite seldom contribute to them. On the other hand, there is an overwhelming interest in contributing to open access journals. This gap can be explained by lack of adequate open access journals. Most of these journals are young and lack international reputation. Likewise, reputation and career reasons were shown as very important promoters for publishing internationally, even when it takes time away from other important work. It is a big advantage to native speakers, who need less time and resources (e.g. translator) for the same work.

The attitudes towards an advanced open access infrastructure, which could close the gap between the will to contribute and real contributions, are very positive. Especially if such an infrastructure or journal could ease the language barrier, would focus on specific European issues and have a broad focus of topics.

On the basis of these conclusions we continued our European Psychology publication initiative and contacted more than 200 European scientists, who left their email address at the end of the survey. Our first meetings took place at the International Congress of Psychology 2008 in Berlin and in November 2008 in Trier. In 2009 we will hold a Suggested Symposium at the European Conference of Psychology in Oslo. For detailed information read the article from Weichselgartner in this volume, visit our website⁴ or subscribe to one of our mailing lists⁵.

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⁴ <http://www.psychprints.eu>

⁵ http://www.psychprints.eu/mailing_lists.php