

Research Writing Blog

How do you convert a thesis or dissertation into a journal paper?

Many dissertations and theses generated in academic institutions are read and used by a small number of researchers, and their content often goes unnoticed, never appearing in the literature. Thus, the efforts of the researchers are not recognized except to a degree. Theses contain original data, which often goes unnoticed because they do not appear in print form and do not reach users. A few theses contain valuable insights and scholarly knowledge which should reach a large audience.

Crafting content for publication involves distinct abilities compared to those acquired when writing a thesis or dissertation. Most importantly, it requires the skill to recognise and satisfy the expectations of the audience of a specific journal. A thesis is intended for a small group of two or three specialists, whereas a published article is accessible to numerous practitioners and researchers. The focus of any manuscript must resonate with the audience of a particular journal and maintain a style that aligns with other pieces published within it (McConnell 2010). This often necessitates a significant revision of various sections of the thesis to create a unified paper that tackles a specific topic.

This conversion of ‘theses’ to journal papers is not just the production of a summary of the theses. Many authors have struggled to publish papers that took more time than generating a new journal paper. An orientation on how to develop publications from postgraduate theses and dissertations should offer insights to the authors.

The thesis-style papers are often rejected in journals due to lengthy reviews, review essays, and review summaries, which render them less valuable for disseminating new knowledge. The theses are characterised by the absence of the brevity character of journal papers, the lack of the article structure, and a lengthy introduction (less semantic value). The introduction in the theses mainly contains too elementary and lengthy content. – They need minimal introduction, using more summative statements.

The aim of the journal papers should be definite.

Focus the content on the specific title of the paper. Avoid peripheral issues.

Avoid borrowing tables or figures from already published work

Avoid quotes from early literature.

It is possible to organize a training workshop for the faculty and researchers on how to translate theses into journal papers. This workshop includes many illustrations and live examples.

A child needs a straightforward example to learn and understand.



This is a cat.



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