



The evolution of a research journal

La evolución de una revista de investigación

Edison Timbe Castro

Assistant editor of Maskana
University of Cuenca, Ecuador
edison.timbe@ucuenca.edu.ec

In this edition, Maskana celebrates 13 years of uninterrupted publication, 27 editions with a total of 226 published works, mostly original research articles in various areas of knowledge. Since its inception in 2010, our mission has been to train new researchers in scientific writing. To achieve this, our editorial team conducts a thorough review of each work received so that, prior to the external peer review phase, the work can be improved, if necessary, and thus have a better chance of being accepted. This founding objective has also ensured that a large proportion of the works published are highly cited. In this regard, in the last five years alone, the number of citations of articles published in Maskana, according to Google Scholar, is 2,650 (December 2023), of which around 20% correspond to citations in papers published in high-impact journals, i.e., those listed in databases such as Scopus or Web of Science. Today, this indicator is by far the highest obtained by a scientific journal at the University of Cuenca.

Maintaining the pace of publication over time has not been easy. The number of alternatives for authors to publish their research is constantly growing. Today, in Scopus alone, the number of active journals exceeds 26,000, whereas in 2010, when Maskana began, that number was around 20,000. It should also be noted that the growth rate of academic journals that have not yet reached, or are not considering, high-level indexing databases is much higher. This is partly due to the diversity of alternatives, which largely arise from academic demands related to the urgent need for evidence for scientific publications, necessary for institutional or personal promotion. However, an editor should never lose sight of the factors that determine an author's choice of a particular journal, which can be summarized as follows: 1) the journal is listed in a prestigious database of articles, 2) the type of access to the published work, which varies between access paid for by the author or paid for by the reader, 3) the degree of impact of the journal, considered in quartiles based on the number of citations the articles receive on average, and 4) the time elapsed between receipt, review, and publication.

Faced with the already difficult challenge of keeping a journal active over time by receiving submissions with potential for acceptance and publication, it is unthinkable that this could happen without evolution. For this reason, the editorial board of Maskana is investing a great deal of effort in making the journal increasingly attractive to authors and readers, based on the basic parameters mentioned above, while maintaining the primary objective for which it was created. Thus, each manuscript we receive commits us to a swift, systematic, and meticulous search for expert reviewers in the subject area of the work, a process that undoubtedly improves both the quality of the published document and the speed of publication. Another attractive factor is that there is no charge associated with the publication process: publishing in Maskana is free of charge for authors and readers, as we firmly believe in free access to knowledge. Aware of the challenge of evolution, our editorial team has been given new impetus and enthusiasm through the addition of José Luis Crespo Fajardo, our new editor-in-chief, and Estefanía Chuiza, assistant editor. The baton has been passed by Jan Feyen, now editor emeritus of this journal. Jan has been instrumental in the altruistic task of disseminating knowledge; he was editor-in-chief from the journal's inception until 2017, and since then, he continued to contribute as co-editor and member of the editorial board until 2022. His tireless work and extensive experience as a researcher (author of more than 200 articles published in high-impact international scientific journals) were key to ensuring that the published works were managed efficiently and to the highest standards of the scientific world. Thank you, Jan, for your tireless work, dedication, and responsibility. These are certainly not the only lessons you left us, but also your good humor, simplicity, people skills, and patience. Perhaps the greatest challenge for those of us who continue your work will be to put all of your qualities—both professional and human—into practice in our daily work.