



Title: The Promise of Publication: Reflections from a PhD Student

Author: Zhanna Jumabayeva

Page numbers: 44-45

Citation: Jumabayeva, Z. (2017). The promise of publication: Reflections from a PhD student. *NUGSE Research in Education*, 2(1), 44-45. Retrieved from nugserie.nu.edu.kz

Full issue available from nugserie.nu.edu.kz

NUGSE Research in Education is a free, open source publication.

All work in this issue carries the Creative Commons Copyright license BY-NC-SA 4.0

Any future publication or reference to this work should include attribution to this publication.

The Promise of Publication: Reflections from a PhD Student

ZHANNA JUMABAYEVA

Publishing can be useful in a wide range of ways, including the professional growth, worldwide recognition, knowledge acquirement and self-learning that is involved in the process. I would like now to share my experience of having been published in the first and second issues of the journal, established by Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education (NUGSE) in 2016. The requirements for the journal are very rigorous, but the journal is certainly worthwhile for researchers, especially for junior ones like me. When I first heard about the release of the journal, I was so glad to have such an opportunity to get published. I certainly had a previous experience of getting published when I was an undergraduate student. This experience was positive, but rather limited, as it was only published in Kazakh and Russian languages. On the one hand, this is good at a certain level, as it is more likely to reach interested readers. On the other hand, as you go up the academic ladder, you need to be able to publish in English. As the NUGSE journal focuses on English-written publications, it is more connected to the scope and audience of the discourse that comes with being a PhD student. Furthermore, it is more likely that English-speaking academia will become familiar with some aspects of the system of education in Kazakhstan just by means of publications we have. Personally, I think that this journal has a good potential for bright future and can be further expanded to a wider community of readers.

As you go up the academic ladder, you need to be able to publish in English.

I should confirm that it is not as easy as it can initially seem to be published in any journal. I submitted two of my articles for the inaugural issue. After some time, I got an email saying that I needed to make major revisions, which I thought was just a polite way to decline my submission. I spent some time before I decided to make the revisions. I chose one article from the two I sent, as the revision process took more time than I initially expected. Nevertheless, I succeeded in doing revisions and in a few weeks' time I got publishing approval. This small gain served as a bridge to my professional gain. For example, publishing the very first article in English language increased my audience in Research Gate, a large multidisciplinary academic social website. This experience has also led to further fruitful discussions and collaboration with other researchers. As a result, I can share my ideas and exchange them with other researchers, which ultimately can benefit both of us.

After half a year, I decided to have a second try and submitted another article for the second issue. Again, the process was not easy, and the revisions took almost a month. Ultimately, my paper was again accepted and now I have two published articles. As you can expect, I was overjoyed to have my work published. However, this feeling is only a small part of the benefits gained through this process. The article you gradually produce is like your reflection. You write your ideas and argue with different authors you have reviewed while writing. This makes you think deeper and deeper. In this sense, the writing is a process of constant thinking: whether you are agreeing or disagreeing with multiple authors. Therefore, I believe that publications are very important as they help you grow as a researcher and be in a constant search whatever field you choose. I am always in a search of something new in education: new trends, new policies and emerging issues happening in education. Participating in a journal gives me the chance to join in discussions about these new ideas.

Publishing also has gains specific to PhD students and young researchers. Emerging scholars must understand the certain issue under investigation, and generally be knowledgeable about different issues, which may further lead to academic identity. Dowling, Gorman-Murray, Power, and Luzia (2012) stated that, "Writing is central to the performance and demonstration of an academic identity, and to the doctorate; it is through writing that scholarly identities are formed" (p. 300). Indeed, writing is the focus of any research which motivates scholars to share their ideas with a wider community and, therefore, create their identity. Therefore, writing is important, but more important is publishing.

The article you gradually produce is like your reflection.

Reading papers play also an important role in publishing. It is probably fair to say that reading papers is hard work, and getting useful information from reading is a challenge. When creating my published pieces, for example, I faced a number of challenges in managing my reading. My drawback was that I worked with much literature, sometimes not related to the topic being researched. At times, I also did not immediately pay much attention to the key ideas while reading, which resulted in forgetting the important message of the author. However, by writing for publication, I improved my own way of reading as well as developed my scanning and skimming techniques. I started making electronic notes while reading so that I can later return to main ideas. One of my favorite quotes “The greatest part of a writer’s time is spent in reading, in order to write: a man will turn over half a library,” as stated by Samuel Johnson, expresses this difficulty and shows a stressful challenge for every writer.

Writing for publication also helps researchers effectively manage the literature review process. This means that the researcher uses his critical eye and is able to construct arguments while investigating a particular issue. In other words, writing helps us critically think, analyze, read, reread, write, edit writing and, most importantly, construct arguments. At the beginning of my writing process, I was always too broad in my ideas, whereas I needed to choose a narrower topic to investigate. It usually took significant time before I could shape and reshape ideas to be both clear and critical in my writing. But as times goes by, I can do it much faster and more effectively than before. Over time, I made fewer grammar as well as vocabulary mistakes while writing.

Summing up, the implications of writing for publication are quite positive, especially for those who are interested in research and its further development. Writing for publication can also contribute in different spheres, including education, by providing valuable suggestions and recommendations for policy makers like the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which tries to improve the education sphere for the better. For example, in my second paper, I wrote about the key drivers of the UNT in Kazakhstan and its impact on school leavers, where I concluded with future test changes which by now have been introduced all schools (Atoyants, 2017, para. 1). Writing for publication makes it possible to become part of the community of scholars, policy makers and practitioners who are discussing and making decisions about these important issues. Finally, writing for publication may also benefit others who may be embarking on a similar study by revealing what has occurred previously. Writing for publication is very important for a researcher, who can use the obtained knowledge and become a truly professional, despite some difficulties that arise during the reading and writing process.

*Writing for
publication makes it
possible to become part
of the community of
scholars, policy
makers and
practitioners who are
discussing and making
decisions about these
important issues.*

References

- Atoyants, V. (2017, January 1). Chto izmenitsya v zhizni Kazakhstantsev v 2017 godu? [What will change in the life of Kazakhstani people in 2017?] Retrieved from https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/chto-izmenitsya-v-jizni-kazahstantsev-v-2017-godu-309178/
- Dowling, R., Gorman-Murray, A., Power, E. & Luzia, K. (2012). Critical reflections on doctoral research and supervision in human geography: The ‘PhD by publication’. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 36(2), 293-305.