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Publication lag and early view effects in information science journals

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Abstract

Purpose – A major problem in today's scholarly publishing process is the long tails for the assignment of volume and issue numbers for approved articles. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the extent to which information science journals offer early view features and the effects of these features.

Design/methodology/approach – The study addresses three basic questions: Do the articles approved for publication in information science journals appear in the online platforms of these journals before the assignment of volume and issue numbers? How long do the articles wait in the online platforms before they get the volume and issue numbers? Is there a statistically significant relationship between the online accessing numbers of the articles before they are published and bibliometric indicators?

Findings – More than half of the information science journals complete the editorial process in reasonable durations and share new articles with their readers before publishing them. In some journals, there are articles that wait for more than a year to be assigned volume and issue numbers after the completion of the editorial process. There are statistically significant differences, in terms of both their impact factor and immediacy index values, between the journals that offer early view features and those that do not. Both the impact factor and the immediacy index values of the journals that provide early view are higher than the others.

Practical implications – Adopting the early view policy may significantly help increase the impact factor and immediacy index values of the journals, as well as the visibility of their contents

Originality/value – The answers to this study's research questions offer a new perspective to overcome the challenges in the processes through which scientific products meet with their users.

Keywords Scholarly communication, Editorial process, Information science, Bibliometric indicators, Early view articles, Peer-review process

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The scholarly publishing phenomenon has been shaped over time and has been influenced by many different factors. Until recently, scholarly publishing was limited to the conditions of print, whereas today it is highly influenced by the advantages of electronic media. For instance, the quick and easy sharing and exchanging of information with colleagues using computers and the internet has changed and accelerated the scholarly communication processes. As vital scholarly communication tools, journals developed online systems through which applications can be submitted, the peer-review processes can be managed, and the author-editor-reviewer communication can be realized through a single interface. Apart from these, some journals use the electronic systems to gain temporal flexibility and publish their issues earlier. It is also known that there are some journals that share the articles without assigning them any volume and issue numbers. Although the names can vary among journals or databases[1] (such as "early view," "articles in press," etc.), the objective is to make visible the content for which the editorial processes are completed. Under the circumstances of contemporary scholarly communication, extending the duration of the visibility of content is extremely important and without doubt, it gets positive reactions from different actors (such as users, authors, etc.) that are involved in this communication process.

The authors express their gratitude to Dr Sinan Akilli and Dr Umut Sezen for their feedback and valuable suggestions.



The time period between the emergence of an idea in the author(s) mind(s) and the publication of that idea as an article is a lengthy one. One factor that may sometimes prolong this period even further is the peer-review process which is an essential part of healthy scholarly communication. Although there are various criticisms about the peer-reviewing process in the literature (Frey, 2005; Smith, 2006), we think that until an alternative structure is found, this process will continue to be an essential part of scholarly communication. On this background, the early view feature is introduced as a result of the efforts to speed up the process of getting the articles to meet with their users. Over time, there seems to be an increase in the number of journals with early view features, even though most of them still continue to work in conventional ways.

Despite its several advantages, early view may cause some problems, such as publication lag. In this study, publication lag is defined as the time between the online availability date of an article and the date when the article gets a volume and issue number[2]. Although online availability of an article has several positive effects in terms of the visibility of the work, if this feature detains the process of assigning volume and issue numbers for that particular work then it would affect, e.g., the calculation of the impact factor values, since the work would not be indexed. In addition, in some cases having an indexed work may be required for academic promotions or rewards. For such conditions, this sort of publication lag should be considered carefully. In this context, this study addresses early view issues in scholarly communication in terms of information science journals.

Literature review

Scientific communication is quite a labor-intensive process that brings together different actors such as writers, editors, referees, publishers, and users to serve a specific purpose. In this process, accessing the new information sooner than later makes everyone's work easier. Consequently, both users and authors lean toward the early view concept during the publishing process of articles. Findings of some studies (Hallmark, 2004; Zha *et al.*, 2012) show that users find accessing the articles that are still in the publishing process quite functional and time efficient.

Moreover, in some log analysis studies (Huntington *et al.*, 2007; Nicholas *et al.*, 2008), it has been found that there is a high demand for new articles even before they are assigned volume and issue numbers. In one of these studies, the users of ScienceDirect, one of the biggest scholarly databases in the world, were investigated in an 18-month-long log analysis study and it was found that the demand for the early view features varies among different fields. For example, while 36 percent of the social sciences sessions were composed of articles that were pending for volume and issue number, for the field of chemistry, this ratio was 14 percent (Nicholas *et al.*, 2008, p. 29). Although these figures are significantly different, it is obvious that users from every discipline are interested in early view articles.

In another study, the early view articles were investigated in terms of their download statistics. Even though the study's scope covered a limited time period (2007-2011), it was found that the download rates of early view articles increased significantly over time (Gorraiz *et al.*, 2014, pp. 1089-1090). Early view studies can also be effective on scientometric indicators. For example, Heneberg (2013) emphasized that in the calculation of journals' immediacy indexes, there might emerge some disadvantages resulting from the publication format (online-only, print-only, dual-format). In this regard, it is obvious that when compared to the articles that are published in print-only journals, the articles published on online platforms even prior to the assignment of volume and issue numbers will gain some advantage in terms of receiving citations. As a matter of fact, regardless of the early view feature, the use of the online environment itself provides citation advantage to the articles published in dual-format or online-only journals.

On the other hand, the time lapse between the online and printed publishing of the articles can affect the impact factors of the journals. An inverse relationship between the publication delay and the impact factor was observed in some previous studies on publication delay (De Marchi and Rocchi, 2001, p. 399; Yu *et al.*, 2005, p. 235). Relatively, recent studies (Heneberg, 2013; Tort *et al.*, 2012) have shown that online-to-print lag (i.e. publication lag) causes a rise in the journal impact factor.

There are a number of factors (such as prestige, acceptance probability, turnaround time, target audience, fit, and impact factor) that affect authors' decisions when choosing the journal to submit their articles to (Salinas and Munch, 2015, p. 1). Some authors may choose not to submit their works to journals that have a long processing time for the publication of articles (Dong *et al.*, 2006, p. 272). Moreover, while some researchers care much about having their articles becoming accessible online as soon as possible, others attach more importance to get their articles published with volume and issue numbers, and yet some others consider the indexing date as the important issue. Some discussions related to the actual publishing date of the articles are also observed in the literature (Haustein *et al.*, 2015).

In a study from 15 years ago (Ellison, 2001) in which economy journals were investigated in terms of the differences between submission and acceptance times of the articles over the years, the results have shown that in 1970 the acceptance of an article took six to nine months after its submission, whereas in 2000 this duration increased up to an average of two years. Clearly, several factors (e.g. increase in the number of people who have the potential to publish articles in the field of economy, changing environment of scholarly communication, etc.) were influential in this regression. However, a waiting period of two years between the submission and publication of an article cannot be found acceptable by the authors. On the other hand, waiting period may differ from discipline to discipline. For example, Björk and Solomon (2013) compared articles from nine different disciplines (chemistry, engineering, biomedicine, physics, earth sciences, mathematics, social sciences, arts and humanities, and business and economics) in terms of the elapsed times between the articles were submitted and accepted, and when they were accepted and published. The study pointed out the differences among the publishing processes of the disciplines and it was found that the process for the business and economics field took about twice as long as for chemistry.

Methods

In this study, the behaviors of information science journals during the publishing process are discussed in terms of the relationship between the immediacy index and impact factor values, among the most used bibliometric indicators, and early view features. Immediacy index and impact factor are the values that are given great importance by publishers and editors, since these are accepted as quality indicators for the journals. Especially, from a marketing perspective, publishers tend to use these values to approve the quality of their journals[3]. In this context, this study aims to examine the current situation for these commonly used indicators and early view effects by addressing the following specific research questions:

- RQ1. Do the articles approved for publication in information science journals appear in the online platforms of these journals before the assignment of volume and issue numbers?
- RQ2. How long do the articles wait in the online platforms before they get the volume and issue numbers?
- RQ3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the online accessing numbers of the articles before they are published and bibliometric indicators (impact factor and immediacy index)?

In order to answer our research questions above, we use the publication data, including early view articles as of January 5, 2016, of the information science journals in 2015. We obtained the information science journal list from the *Social Sciences Edition of the Journal Citation Reports (JCR)* of 2014. There were 85 journal titles listed under the Information Science & Library Science category of the *JCR* in 2014 (Thomson Reuters, 2015). Since all the data of the journals formerly called *Aslib Proceedings* and *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* were merged with their new titles, *Aslib Journal of Information Management* and *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, respectively, the data about these two journals were evaluated under their new titles. Moreover, although the journal called *Informacios Tarsadalom* had been listed under *JCR*, it was not indexed by the *Web of Science* in 2015. For these reasons, the total number of journals investigated in our study decreased to 82.

During the research, first the journals' (and their contents') internet accessibility features were investigated and with the help of our host institution we could reach all the required information about the journals. The required types of information for our investigation were the following:

- whether the journals make the articles accessible through their online platforms without assigning them any volume or issue numbers;
- whether these journals have any issues of 2016 already in 2015;
- if there are any volume and issue numbers for 2016, then the number of articles that were published in those issues;
- the total number of articles in 2015; and
- the number of articles that were pending for the assignment of volume and issue numbers.

Another point to be considered in our study is the notation that was used for the early view. There were journals (*Journal of Informetrics*, *Information Society*, *Journal of Documentation*, *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, *Program*, *Scientist*, *Library Quarterly*, *Journal of Organizational and End User Computing*, *Information & Culture*) which had not had early view features but had issues published in 2016. In these journals, as of January 5, 2016, there were no articles displayed as early view, because they had already published at least one of their 2016 issues already by the end of 2015.

Some document types such as book reviews and letters to the editor were excluded from the scope of the study, only the documents which were classified under the article as document type were included. The average number of articles was calculated by dividing the total number of articles that were published in a year by the number of issues they published in that year. While the average number of articles published in the journals was calculated, a few of the journals' 2015 issues were found to be incomplete. In such cases, it was calculated by dividing the total number of articles by the number of the issues published in 2015. For example, *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science* was published quarterly per annum, and while this research was conducted it had only three issues belonging to 2015. Since these three issues feature 20 articles in total, it was calculated that the average number of articles in an issue of this journal was 6.7.

One of the most important limitations of this study was the lack of the date for "early view available" data for some of the articles in the investigated journals. Moreover, to be able to reveal the "publication lag" in days, which was defined in this research as "the time between the online availability date of an article and the date when the article gets a volume and issue number" (see Figure 1), it would be necessary to monitor the articles longitudinally. It was impossible for those articles that were in the data set to get volume

and issue numbers, as of January 5, 2016. Therefore, we tried to infer the predicted time that would be needed for the articles in some journals with early view features to get the volume and issue numbers.

Findings and discussion

In 2015, a total of 3,779 articles were published in 82 information science journals. These journals published 440 different issues where the average number of articles was 8.6. While the *Library Journal* had the maximum number of issues per year with 20 issues, three journals (*African Journal of Library Archives and Information Science*, *Investigacion Bibliotecologica*, and *Library and Information Science*) published only two issues. As can be seen from Figure 2, most of the journals published four to six issues per year. Of these, 57 percent of the journals (47 journals) were published quarterly.

The average number of articles published per journal issue in 2015 was also investigated individually on journal basis. The results have shown that *Scientometrics* (28.6), *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association* (26.5), and *Journal of Informetrics* (20.0) had the highest number of articles per issue.

A total of 41.5 percent of the information science journals (34 out of 82 journals), published the articles as early view before they were assigned volume and issue numbers. There were nine journals without early view features, but already published at least one of their 2016 issues by January 5, 2016. In other words, it seems that more than half of the journals had completed the editorial processes of the submitted articles and shared them with their readers before their publication time. Table I shows the distribution of the 82 information science journals according to publishers and whether they have journals with early view features or not. It is seen that the highest number of journals with early view features belongs to Elsevier. In Table I, “other” represents the publishers and institutions (such as American Library Association, International Society for Knowledge Organization,

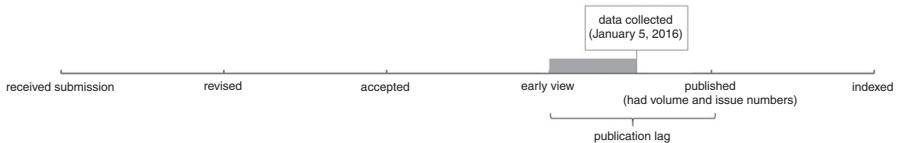


Figure 1.
Timeline of peer-reviewed article process

Notes: The rectangle represents the scope of this study. To visualize the steps better, the intervals of every stage of the process are shown as if they are equal, practically the intervals may vary from journal to journal

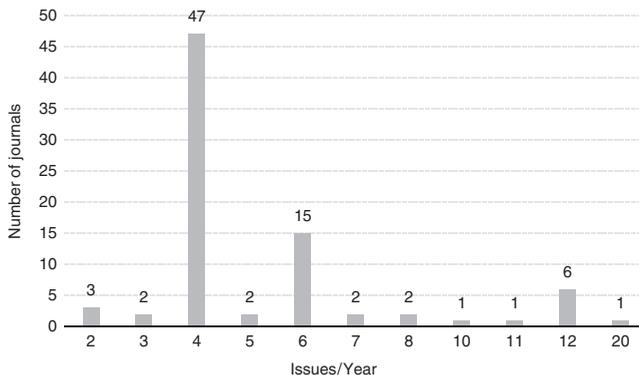


Figure 2.
Publication frequencies of information science journals

American Association of Law Libraries) with less than three information science journals. Fourteen of the 48 journals (29 percent) that belong to eight publishers and 25 of the 34 journals (74 percent) that were classified under “other” publishers do not have early view features (see Table I). This picture makes us think that the bigger (and maybe more for-profit) publishers tend to add early view features for their journals.

As of January 5, 2016, there were 1,025 articles accepted for publication but had not been assigned volume and issue numbers yet. On the other hand, there were 258 articles that had volume and issue numbers, although they were not published yet (see Figure 3). Based on the assumption that the same number of articles will be published in 2016 as in 2015, it seems like one out of each set of three seats had already been taken in information science journals for the year 2016. In view of the fact that 39 of the information science journals did not share the articles in the publication stage or already published beforehand, this ratio is actually very high (48 percent).

In 2015, 2,268 articles were published in the journals that have early view features and this shows that the articles in the early view category covered up 45 percent of the 2016 issues of the journals. Moreover, there were lots of articles that were accepted for publication in these journals. Therefore, most of the researchers seem on the off chance that they may have their works to get published in 2016.

In our research, we also examined the information science journals individually to reveal the time that will be needed to destock the articles, based on the assumption that the number of publications in 2016 reaches that of 2015. For example, there were 28 articles in the 2015

Publishers	Early view	Journals that had issue and volume numbers in 2016	No early view	Total
Elsevier	8	1	2	11
Sage	5	0	0	5
Taylor & Francis	4	1	5	10
Wiley	4	0	0	4
Springer	3	0	0	3
Palgrave	3	0	0	3
Emerald	1	3	4	8
Project Muse	0	1	3	4
Other	6	3	25	34
Total	34	9	39	82

Table I.
The distribution of journals with or without early view features according to publishers that have three or more information science journals

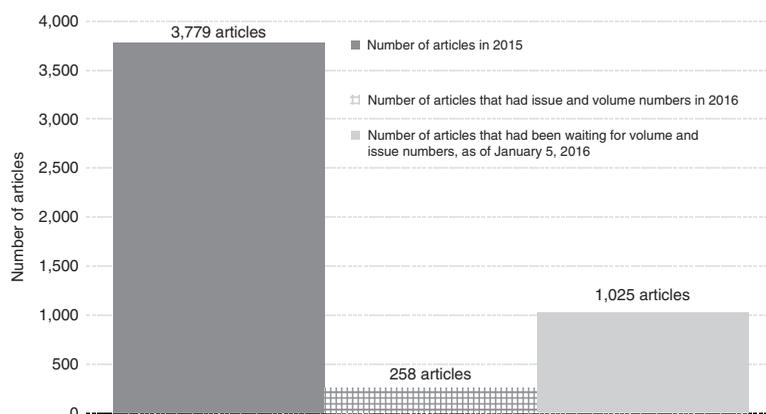


Figure 3.
Publication dates of the articles

issues of *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science (JOLIS)*. For the same journal, there were 38 articles that were waiting to get volume and issue numbers, as of January 5, 2016. In the same journal, there were articles dating from May 2014 where the editorial processing had already been completed, but which were still waiting to be assigned volume and issue numbers (see Table II).

As can be seen from Table II, there were some works for which editorial processing was completed in 2014 or even in 2013, but still had not received any volume or issue numbers as of January 5, 2016. From a broader perspective, there were six journals (*JOLIS*, *Social Science Computer Review*, *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, *Information Development*, *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, *Information Systems Journal*) that completed their processing work as of January 5, 2016, but needed more than one year to be published with their full contents. In a sense, it could be considered that the process was proper and fluid. However, in some cases (academic promotions, getting reward, etc.) it is important to get a volume and issue number for a published work or have your work published in an indexed journal. As a result, this publication lag creates some problems for the ones who have been waiting on the queue for a long time.

As of the date that the data were collected, a researcher had to wait more than one year when he/she submitted an article to *JOLIS* (which the predicted number of years for the early view articles to be published fully is the highest). We chose to conduct an in-depth analysis of *JOLIS*, since we were unable to obtain dates that the articles were accessible online for all the information science journals. It was found that the median of the articles

Journal name	Article title	Date when the online version has become accessible
<i>European Journal of Information Systems</i>	Economic decision criteria for the migration to cloud storage	September 30, 2014
<i>Health Information and Libraries Journal</i>	Engaging in research: challenges and opportunities for health library and information professionals	May 18, 2015
<i>Information Development</i>	IT outsourcing success in the public sector: lessons from e-government practices in Korea	April 10, 2014
<i>Information Systems Journal</i>	The influence of ethnicity on organizational commitment and merit pay of IT workers: the role of leader support	December 18, 2014
<i>Information Technology for Development</i>	Understanding dynamic collaboration in teleconsultation	November 15, 2013
<i>Journal of Information Technology</i>	Determinant factors of cloud-sourcing decisions: reflecting on the IT outsourcing literature in the era of cloud computing	November 11, 2014
<i>Journal of Librarianship and Information Science</i>	The state of L-schools: intellectual diversity and faculty composition	May 12, 2014
<i>Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association</i>	Effectiveness of mobile technologies delivering Ecological Momentary Interventions for stress and anxiety: a systematic review	May 21, 2015
<i>Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology</i>	Professional information disclosure on social networks: the case of Facebook and LinkedIn in Israel	November 6, 2014
<i>Knowledge Management Research & Practice</i>	Knowledge transfer and the learning process in Spanish wineries	April 14, 2014
<i>Social Science Computer Review</i>	How do online citizens persuade fellow voters? Using Twitter during the 2012 Dutch Parliamentary Election Campaign	November 11, 2014

Table II.

Some information science journals that make articles accessible without volume and issue numbers as of January 5, 2016, and the date when the online version has become accessible

waiting to be published was 323 days, as of January 5, 2016 (see Figure 4). Figure 4 shows the cumulative distribution in days for the 38 articles in *JOLIS* that were available online but had not had volume and issue numbers as of the date of this investigation. It also appears that this journal includes articles that had been waiting from 8 to 604 days.

In order to see if the early view feature causes any difference on the impact factor and the immediacy index values, the journals with and without early view features were compared in terms of their impact factors and immediacy indexes. Box plot graph and Mann-Whitney U tests were used by considering the fact that the impact factor and immediacy index data reflect right-skewed distribution by nature.

With the box plot graph, all the values between the minimum and the maximum impact factor values were represented by a four-parted figure formed by two lines and two boxes, and for the extreme values various figurative representations were used. Every part corresponds to one quarter and represents one of four 25 percent segments. The lengths of the box plot graphs differ according to the number of journals. The lines below and above every box plot demonstrate the 25 percent segments of journals with the minimum and maximum impact factors, respectively. The box located in the middle of the graph, between the journals with the highest and lowest impact factors in the 25 percent segments, and formed by the combination of two other boxes, corresponds to the journals with the average impact factor that form the 50 percent of all. The dark line that shows the intersection of two boxes is the median impact factor. Half of the journals have a higher impact factor than this value, where the other half have a lower. The median value separates the 50 percent segment into two parts as 25 and 25 percent. The box in the upper side represents the journal impact factors that are in the 25 percent segment located between the 25 percent segment of the highest impact factors and median impact factor, whereas the box in the lower side represents the impact factors that are in the 25 percent segment located between the 25 percent segment of the lowest impact factors and the median value.

The most remarkable finding as shown in Figure 5 was the fact that the impact factors of journals with early view features were higher than the ones without this feature. On the other hand, journals with early view features have a broader distribution and this should not be overlooked as an influential factor. The median impact factor value for the journals without early view features (48 journals) was 0.470, whereas for the others (34 journals) it was 1.480. When the impact factors of *MIS Quarterly* (5.311) and *Journal of Information Technology* (4.525) were excluded, the impact factors of the other journals with early view features differed between 0.231 and 3.504. The impact factors for the 25 percent segment of early view journals with the highest impact factor (8 journals) differed between 2.190 and 3.504, for the 25 percent segment of early view journals with the lowest impact factor

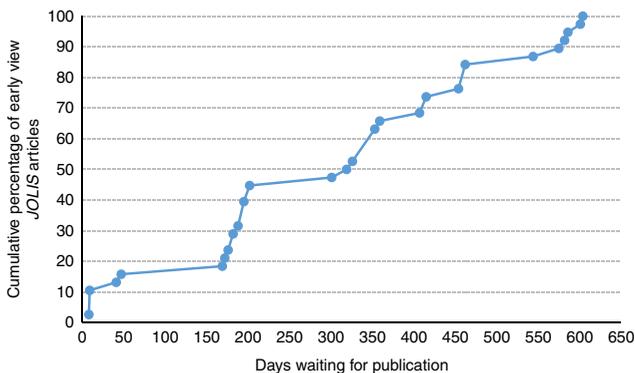


Figure 4.
Early view *JOLIS*
articles that had been
waiting to get the
volume and issue
numbers, as of
January 5, 2016

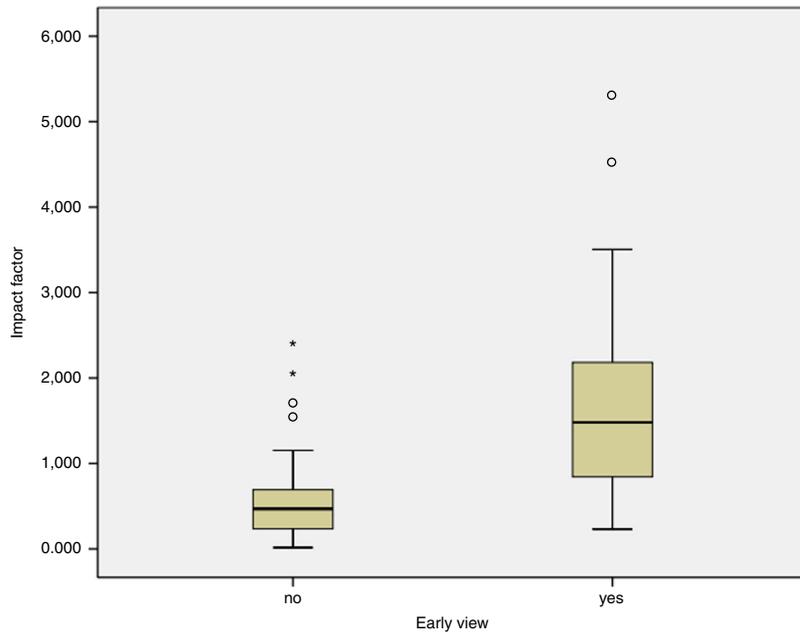


Figure 5.
Impact factors
of journals with
and without early
view features

(8 journals), the values differed between 0.231 and 0.790. The impact factors of the journals located in the middle 50 percent segment (16 journals) differed between 0.790 and 2.190. When the impact factors for the remaining 48 journals that did not have early view features are examined, 44 journals (excluding four outlier journals with impact factor values between 1.586 and 2.412) are found to have impact factors between 0.016 and 1.153. The journals in the 25 percent segment with the lowest impact factor values and without early view features (11 journals) had the impact factor values between 0.016 and 0.234. The journals in the 25 percent segment with the highest impact factor values and without early view features (11 journals) had the impact factor values between 0.700 and 1.153. The journals in the 50 percent segment with impact factor values and without early view features (22 journals) had the impact factor values between 0.234 and 0.700.

In order to see if there is any statistically significant difference between the journals with and without early view features regarding their impact factors, we applied a Mann-Whitney U test to the data presented in Figure 5. According to the test, a statistically significant difference at 0.001 confidence level was observed between the impact factors of the journals with and without early view features ($U=266.00$; $z=-5.177$; $r=-0.572$; $p<0.001$). This difference resulted from the fact that the impact factors of early view journals were higher than that of others. The same test was applied for the immediacy index values and it was also found out that the immediacy index of early view journals were higher than that of the others (see Figure 6). The results of the Mann-Whitney U test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference at 0.001 confidence level between the immediacy index values of the journals with and without early view features ($U=331.00$; $z=-4.616$; $r=-0.510$; $p<0.001$).

Conclusions

In today's scholarly publishing environment, time is among the most crucial concerns. The publication of academic studies takes lengthy periods of time. Sometimes the time needed for the publication of these studies can even be longer than the time needed for the completion

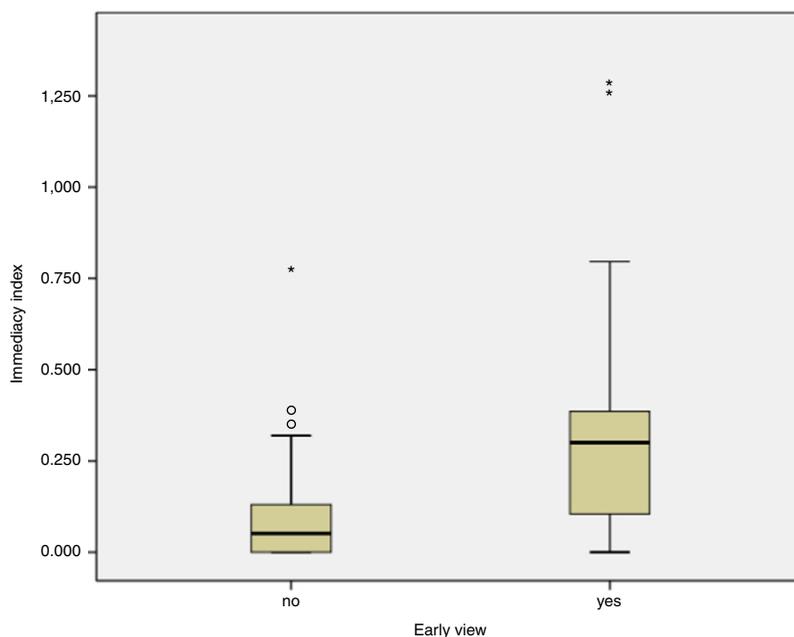


Figure 6.
Immediacy indexes
of journals with
and without early
view features

of the study. For some academics, it is enough to publish their work in their own preprint archives, while for some others, it not only has to be published, but also it is important to be indexed. Sometimes the reason for this concern about time is the wish to make the work more visible to other people, but sometimes it is the tenure or academic promotion concerns. These reasons generally increase the desire of the academics to expedite the process. Undoubtedly, having a published and/or indexed article to get promoted or tenured is not necessary in every country or institution. However, several instances where this situation is important would lead the publishers to consider requests from researchers.

In our opinion, one of the major problems in scholarly communication is the “publish or perish” phenomenon. This dictum, which pushes quantity instead of quality to the forefront, also blesses the quantity of “production” in the academia and is becoming more and more dominant. In fact, publishers seem to support this phenomenon as they increase the number of issues and the number of articles that are published in these issues of the journals. In this process, it is observed that the editors of the journals take on heavier workloads than before. Under these circumstances, some journals publish the new articles as early view without assigning them an issue or volume number.

Although this study covers only information science journals, it also sheds some light on the early view articles in different disciplines. Of the 82 information science journals (52 percent), 43 complete their editorial processes for the submitted articles and share them with their readers before regular time of publication. We found out that such sharing is generally done through early view features. On the other hand, it is observed that there are articles that wait for issue and volume numbers for more than one year. It should be noted that the whole editorial procedures were completed for these articles and all of them are waiting in the queue just to get the volume and issue numbers.

Our findings about the question of “whether there are any statistically significant relations between the bibliometric indicators and early view of the articles” should be of concern for publishers, editors, and authors. In this study, a statistically significant difference was observed

in terms of both impact factor and immediacy index values of the journals with and without early view features. It was found out that the journals with early view features have higher impact factor and immediacy index values than the others. This finding has a potential to lead a change in the behaviors that govern the scholarly communication process, especially in cases where the publishers, editors, and authors attach importance to these bibliometric indicators. However, unethical behaviors, such as extending the period of articles in early view in order to increase the journal impact factor, should be avoided. In this regard, there is an important responsibility for the journal editors. If the editors wish to have higher impact factor journals they may consider offering early view features, but Shi *et al.* (2017) examined publication lag and impact factor and argued that the publication lag should not be too long, since it decreases the impact factor in some cases. Similarly, considering the calculation of the impact factor we would suggest that average publication lag for an article should not exceed one year. In our opinion, a more genuine approach for the publishers would be to increase the number of issues or average numbers of articles per issue. If these journals already have early view option, then they may tend toward shortening the publishing process (such as shorten the duration of peer-review process of articles). The possibility of authors' paying attention to the availability of early view features or their wish to have their works published as soon as possible lie as the rationale for our call for a reorientation. In other words, questions about whether a journal has early view features, how many articles are on the line that are waiting to be published, and what is the average number of articles that are published in those journals per year may radically influence the decisions of the authors who are ready to submit their works to a journal.

This study focuses on early view, which is still a limited feature of contemporary scholarly communication. Some in-depth analysis may be carried out in the future by receiving the opinions of editors, publishers, and authors. Additionally, comparative analyses of different disciplines can also be useful to take any action or make generalizations.

Notes

1. Emerald uses "Earlycite," Wiley uses, "Early View," Elsevier ScienceDirect uses "Articles in Press," and Sage uses "OnlineFirst" expressions.
2. Similarly, when we say the article is published we mean that the article already got the corresponding volume and issue number.
3. The journal impact factor is an indication of the number of average citations made to articles published in a journal. As the name suggests, it shows the impact of a journal (Garfield, 1972). Nevertheless, the journal impact factor often does not give information about the quality of every article in a journal. As the distribution of citations to published articles is skewed, the impact factor of a journal is actually shaped by the few and mostly cited articles. For this reason, the impact factor and immediacy index values should be approached carefully in bibliometric studies. Hence, whether or not these values are indicators of quality has been discussed in the literature for many years (Marx and Bornmann, 2013; Saha *et al.*, 2003; Seglen, 1997). On the other hand, since these values are evaluated as quality indicators for journals and more credit is given in academic promotions and incentives to those of which the mentioned values are higher, authors are encouraged to submit their articles to such journals.

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