

How to Increase Your Citation Rates

Thirteen simple tips to increase your citation number

In the past, publishing in well-known international journals was enough. Not any more, the new metric that is being used to measure the status of a researcher is the number of citations of their journal articles.

The number and quality of citations of your papers is increasingly being used as an index for promotions, grant review and funding, and tenure. Although this practice is somewhat controversial, having your work cited remains an important aspect of a scientist's career. Consider these simple tips to increase the number of your citations and stand out among your peers.

1. Title

The title is without doubt the part of a paper that is read the most, and it is usually read first. If the title is too long it usually contains too many unnecessary words, e.g. "A study to investigate the ..."

On the other hand, a title which is too short often uses words which are too general, e.g. "Kurdistan Religions" could be the title of a book, but it does not provide any information on the focus of a research paper.

The effective titles in academic research papers have several characteristics:

- A. Indicate accurately the subject and scope of the study.
- B. Avoid using abbreviations.
- C. Use words that create a positive impression and stimulate reader interest.
- D. Use current nomenclature from the field of study.

A good research paper title:

- Condenses the paper's content in a few words
- Captures the readers' attention
- Differentiates the paper from other papers of the same subject area
- So here are three basic tips to keep in mind while writing a title:
 - **1] Keep it simple, brief and attractive:** The primary function of a title is to provide a precise summary of the paper's content. So keep the title brief and clear. Use active verbs instead of complex noun-based phrases, and avoid unnecessary details. Moreover, a good title for a research paper is typically around 10 to 12 words long. A lengthy title may seem unfocused and take the readers' attention away from an important point.
 - *Avoid: Drug XYZ has an effect of muscular contraction for an hour in snails of Achatina fulcia species*
 - *Better: Drug XYZ induces muscular contraction in Achatina fulcia snails*
- **2] Use appropriate descriptive words:** A good research paper title should contain key words used in the manuscript and should define the nature of the study. Think about terms people would use to search for your study and include them in your title.
- *Avoid: Effects of drug A on schizophrenia patients: study of a multicenter mixed group*

- *Better: Psychosocial effects of drug A on schizophrenia patients: a multicenter randomized controlled trial*
- **3] Avoid abbreviations and jargon:** Known abbreviations such as AIDS, NATO, and so on can be used in the title. However, other lesser-known or specific abbreviations and jargon that would not be immediately familiar to the readers should be left out.

2. Abstract

- I. An abstract is like a movie trailer. People will only consider reading the rest of the manuscript if they find your abstract interesting.
- II. Write the abstract after you have finished writing your whole paper.
- III. Pick out key statements from your introduction, methods, results, and discussion sections to frame your abstract with a logical flow.
- IV. Edit your abstract carefully to make it cohesive and meet the word count requirements of the journal.

An abstract is like a movie trailer. It offers a preview, highlights key points, and helps the audience decide whether to view the entire work. Abstracts are the pivot of a research paper because many journal editorial boards screen manuscripts only on the basis of the abstract.

If your abstract doesn't grab their attention and make a good first impression, there's a good chance your research paper will be rejected at the outset. Moreover, even after your research paper is published, your abstract will be the first, and possibly only, thing readers will access through electronic searches. They will only consider reading the rest of the manuscript if they find your abstract interesting.

Now how do you go about fitting the essential points from your entire paper— why the research was conducted, what the aims were, how these were met, and what the main findings were—into a paragraph of just 200-300 words? It's not an easy task, but here's a 10-step guide that should make it easier:

1. Begin writing the abstract after you have finished writing your paper.
2. Pick out the major objectives / hypotheses and conclusions from your *Introduction* and *Conclusion* sections.
3. Select key sentences and phrases from your *Methods* section.
4. Identify the major results from your *Results* section.
5. Now, arrange the sentences and phrases selected in steps 2, 3, and 4 into a single paragraph in the following sequence: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Conclusions.
6. Make sure that this paragraph does not contain
 - new information that is not present in the paper
 - undefined abbreviations or group names
 - a discussion of previous literature or reference citations
 - unnecessary details about the methods used
7. Remove all extra information (see step 6) and then link your sentences to ensure that the information flows well, preferably in the following order: purpose; basic study design, methodology and techniques used; major findings; summary of your interpretations, conclusions, and implications.
8. Confirm that there is consistency between the information presented in the abstract and in the paper.

9. Ask a colleague to review your abstract and check if the purpose, aim, methods, and conclusions of the study are clearly stated.
10. Check to see if the final abstract meets the guidelines of the target journal (word limit, type of abstract, recommended subheadings, etc.).

3. Cite your own work

Cite your past work when it is relevant to a new manuscript. However, do not reference every paper you have written just to increase your citation count.

No more than 20% of the citations should be of your own work.

4. Cite the leader of your field

Citing the pertinent leaders of your field gives out an impression that you are well aware of the significant researchers in the field, and thus possess a vital knowledge of the contemporary works of the eminent names in the field.

5. Cite your peers

Citing your colleagues is a well-known practice to maximize your citation count as well as to boost your impression on others of possessing a great deal of information about the contemporary works and effects. Also include in your citation, those colleagues too, whose results are absolutely contrary to yours.

Cite liberally but remain within the limits of the journal guidelines; papers that contain more citations tend to be cited more.

6. Keywords are the key

Carefully choose your keywords. Choose keywords that researchers in your field will be searching for so that your paper will appear in database search. Repeating keywords will increase the likelihood your paper will be at the top of a search engine list, making it more likely to be read.

7. Choose a wide field

Choose a field that is large enough or has very significant external applications. You will get a considerably high number of sources to cite as well as a broad audience to cite you. Otherwise, your citation will be limited to people or papers in a small community.

8. Stich to a consistent name

Use a consistent form of your name on all of your papers, will make it easier for others to find all of your published work. And thus, it births more chances of others to cite you.

9. Underline the significant of your research

Explain to your audience why your research matters. Conduct and take part in conferences, participate in meetings, this will make your research more visible to the academic and research communities.

Check out these tips for making the most of your next research conference.

10. Unique and New

One thing to be kept in mind is the exclusivity of the paper. Informative and unique papers, often seem to go long way and create a firm impact on the field.

11. Share your data

There is some evidence that sharing your data can increase your citations. Consider posting to data sharing websites, such as Figshare or Slideshare, or contributing to Wikipedia and providing links to your published manuscripts, which helps academic researchers store, share and manage all of their research outputs.

12. Review

A review exhibits thought-leadership within your field as well as the simultaneous idea of revolutionary work regarding a certain research. It has been broadly observed that good reviews are often rewarded in the form of good citation rate

13. Activity promote your work

Promote your work, wherever you can. Talk to other researchers about your paper, even ones not in your field, and email copies of your paper to researchers who may interested. Use social media, provide links to your paper on social media (e.g. Research Gate) and your university profile page.