

ATTITUDES OF NOVICE RESEARCHERS TOWARDS JOURNAL REVIEWERS: EXPLORING RECOMMENDATIONS ON ACADEMIC WRITING

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Abstract

Background:

Journal reviewers play a crucial role in disseminating research findings, but novice researchers often struggle with their feedback. This study explores how novice researchers engage with journal reviewer feedback.

Methodology:

This study is part of a larger research project examining novice researchers' publishing attitudes and practices in an English as a foreign language (EFL) setting. A case study approach was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of how novice researchers engage with journal reviewer feedback. Interviews, conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, were the primary data source, supplemented with textual data, including manuscripts and response letters.

Findings:

Novice researchers engage with feedback behaviorally, affectively, and cognitively. Affective responses vary based on feedback nature and prior experience. They appreciate positive feedback but find rejections frustrating. Personal judgment influences how they value feedback.

Conclusion:

Novice researchers diligently address all feedback despite emotional fluctuations. This reveals a disconnect between their affective and behavioral domains. The study emphasizes the importance of active engagement with reviewer feedback in the scholarly publication process.

Originality:

This research fills a gap in understanding novice researchers' interactions with journal reviewer feedback, emphasizing the role of experience and personal judgment. It contributes to the literature on student engagement with feedback in academic writing.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Journal reviewers play a critical role in the dissemination of research findings within the academic community by facilitating the accessibility of these findings. In addition, their feedback is instrumental in fostering researchers' growth and refining their academic writing skills ([Adams, 2019](#)). While experienced scholars are usually adept at handling such comments, novice researchers, including graduate students, may face challenges in this regard. This challenge is particularly pronounced when reviewers' comments are critical. Despite this, there is a notable gap in exploring the experiences, emotions, and perceptions of novice researchers when it comes to dealing with journal reviewer feedback. The distinctiveness of journal reviewer feedback compared to peer input in academic writing classrooms lies in two core aspects. First, it remains anonymous, so that the reviewer's identity is not revealed to the author. Secondly, reviewer feedback has a significant impact on the acceptance or rejection of submitted papers ([Adams, 2019](#); [Tillema et al., 2011](#)).

Engaging with journal reviewer feedback is an integral part of the learning journey for novice researchers. This engagement contributes to their development as established scholars and competent academic writers. Xu & Grant ([2020](#)) argue that doctoral students can shape their academic identities through active participation in academic writing and publishing. In the field of academic writing research, the study of students' interaction with feedback reveals a multifaceted nature that spans affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions along a dynamic continuum ([Gunuc & Kuzu, 2015](#); [Yin & Wang, 2016](#)). In numerous countries, the act of publishing is of great importance for aspiring researchers, especially those pursuing a philosopher doctor or Ph.D. degree. This requirement serves not only as a prerequisite for the degree, but also as a means of securing career opportunities and fostering engagement within academic circles ([Lei & Hu, 2019](#); [Maher et al., 2013](#)). Consequently, it is of paramount importance to examine how novice researchers engage with journal reviewer feedback in their pursuit of scholarly publication.

While previous studies have examined student engagement with various feedback types in different contexts, including feedback from teachers ([Han & Hyland, 2015](#)), peers ([Sun & Yuan, 2018](#)), and automated systems ([Zhang & Hyland, 2018](#)), there is a significant research gap in investigating how novice researchers interact with feedback from journal reviewers. The research gap in this study is the lack of understanding of how novice researchers engage with reviewers on their English writing in an authentic context. The study aims to fill this gap by investigating the differences aspects of affective, behavioral and cognitive in engagement with feedback from reviewers. The research holds importance in enhancing comprehension of

novice researchers' scholarly practices, experiences, and efforts in the scholarly publishing domain. The study is guided by the research question:

1. How do novice researchers engage effectively, behaviorally, and cognitively with journal reviewer comments on their manuscripts?

2. METHODOLOGY

The present study is a component of a broader research program that examines the attitudes and practices of novice researchers in an English as a foreign language (EFL) environment. Two main rationales can be delineated for utilizing a case study as the research methodology in this investigation. Firstly, this study enables us to concentrate on the experiences of novice researchers with reviewer feedback within the context of academic publishing, particularly in real-life and authentic situations ([Adams, 2019](#); [Yin, 2003](#)). A case study approach offers a thorough, all-encompassing, and contextual comprehension of how novice researchers interact with feedback from reviewers on manuscripts submitted for publication.

2.1 Context and Participants

The individuals involved in this research were novice researchers enrolled in a language education program at universities in Indonesia. Novice researchers are defined as individuals who possess limited or no prior experience in the research field, particularly in terms of past publications ([Shah et al., 2009](#)). Novice researchers demonstrate a strong inclination towards utilizing institutional repositories and typically prioritize expeditious information retrieval with minimal exertion ([Agosto, 2002](#); [Ismail et al., 2011](#)). The selection of participants was conducted with deliberate intention, based on three distinct criteria: (1) possessing prior experience in addressing reviewer feedback; (2) having submitted between one and three manuscripts to indexed English journals, thus qualifying as novice researchers; and (3) demonstrating a willingness to share their experiences and perceptions openly. There were ten novice researchers who met the above criteria however only five were willing to become the participants for this research.

2.2 Data Collection

Several sources of data were gathered. Initially, a series of semi-structured interviews were administered to each participant, primarily performed in Bahasa, the native language of the participants. Each interview had a duration of 15 to 25 minutes. During the course of these interviews, the participants were extended an invitation to provide a narrative account of their emotional responses upon getting feedback from reviewers, the subsequent activities they

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undertook in response, and the level of comprehension they achieved regarding the comments provided by the reviewers. Additional follow-up questions were posed in situ, when deemed necessary, in order to obtain more comprehensive and elaborate explanations. The researchers requested that the participants present the reviewers' comments they had received, along with their response letters and updated articles. Subsequently, the participants were extended an invitation to recollect their emotions, interpretations, and behaviors while engaging with the reviewer input throughout the process of revising their work. In addition, we gathered all textual data, encompassing first and amended article versions, drafts of response letters addressing reviewer criticisms from both the editor and reviewer, as well as the final version of the paper. The purpose of this comprehensive data collection was to enable a more in-depth examination of how authors engage with the feedback provided by the reviewers, with a specific focus on their behavioral responses and their cognitive processes, ultimately allowing for a better understanding of the authors' reactions to reviewer input.

2.3 Data Analysis

The research was guided by the qualitative interpretative paradigm outlined in ([Miles & Saldana, 2014](#)) work. All recorded audio material was transcribed verbatim. The comprehensive analysis involved examining transcripts of interviews and stimulated recollections to profile participants' interactions with reviewer input in affect, behavior, and cognition. Utilizing the conceptual framework and relevant literature, we have identified three overarching themes that surfaced from the open coding process. The first theme explores emotional reactions and assessments towards reviewer feedback; the second theme delves into observable actions and approaches in response to feedback; and the third theme analyzes cognitive efforts in comprehending and managing the perceived issues within reviewer comments.

A cross-case comparison was conducted to evaluate similarities and differences in how novice researchers engage with reviewer feedback regarding affective, behavioral, and cognitive aspects. Additionally, factors aiding the explanation of contrasts and similarities in both participants' experiences were coded, allowing us to comprehend not only the manner in which they engaged with reviewer input, but also why. Textual data, along with dialogical data, was analyzed. To determine the editing behaviors of the two participants, we compared their original and revised manuscripts as well as their final papers. This analysis facilitated a deeper investigation into their behavioral and cognitive engagement. Additionally, we

reviewed the feedback provided by journal reviewers and the response letters from both participants to gain further insight into their affective and behavioral engagement.

3. FINDINGS

Five novice researchers participated in this research and shared their experiences and attitudes towards the reviewers' feedback.

3.1 Surya's Path to Academic Excellence

Surya, a dedicated researcher, set out on a life-changing trip through the complex world of academic publishing and reviewer response. She was caught up in a rush of emotions when the long-awaited email with the journal reviewers' judgement on her paper arrived. Her veins tingled with excitement as she realized her essay had made it past the editor's thorough selection process. It was a moment of validation for her unrelenting dedication and hard work.

Emailing my manuscript reviewers' feedback was an emotional rollercoaster. My field specialists and my work passed the editor's tough selection process, which thrilled me. Recognition for hard work. It was great that they recognized my research. Reading the remarks frightened me. Each comment and suggestion improved, so I responded quickly and appropriately. (Interview)

Surya felt elation as she realized that her research had been deemed worthy of the attention of professionals in her field. It was an acknowledgement of her tireless efforts and the significance of her contributions to the academic community. This accomplishment was undeniably exhilarating, igniting a spark of inspiration that fueled her enthusiasm for scholarly pursuits. Surya's narrative reflected the emotional ups and downs that accompanied the engagement with reviewer feedback. It was a journey that was both exciting and scary, and every comment, no matter how hard it was, held the promise of growth and improvement. Because of this emotional ups and downs, dedicated academics like Surya were driven to learn more and always strive for excellence.

Surya methodically approached the obstacle. She would organize feedback into notes according to whether multiple improvements could be implemented simultaneously. Despite the numerous reviewer suggestions, she was able to maintain focus by employing this strategy. Surya, however, was cognizant of the difficulty of this endeavour. The unpredictability of the feedback necessitated a flexible approach. Her busy schedule and daily activities had to account for revision. Unlike the initial draft of the article, these revisions had to be completed during random periods of free time.

Journal reviews were carefully reviewed. Detailed feedback enhanced my manuscript. I prepared. I would carefully organize input by simultaneous improvements in different notes. Unpredictable feedback made juggling. I changed my schedule and routine. Initial article drafting had time slots, however, modifications were made as time

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allowed. Sometimes, this involved examining earlier research, data, and analysis. Full manuscript polish. (Interview)

Surya's strategy was well-structured. She initiated her revisions by addressing the technical and structural aspects, focusing on issues that were relatively straightforward to resolve. This strategic approach allowed her to build momentum and a sense of progress early in the process.

It was hard to think about feedback. I methodically revised it because reviewers would scrutinize every detail. Start with simple technical and structural issues. I have accelerated my progress. I tackled more complex cognitive processing issues. In this phase, colleagues and I often talked. Methodology, interpretation, and research significance will be discussed. Considering reviewers' concerns and perspectives made these discussions invaluable. (Interview)

She knew reviewers' feedback often covered deeper issues that required extensive cognitive processing. For these, Surya relied on collaboration. She discussed methodology, interpretation, and the significance of her research findings with her collaborators. They gained many perspectives from these collaborative discussions that improved their response to the reviewers' concerns. Surya's dedication to improving her manuscript and learning more about the scholarly process through dialogue and shared insights was evident.

Collaboration was needed for revisions. Reading reviewer feedback with colleagues helped. Group sessions produced the finest revising strategies. Brainstorming and talking coincided. Our broad group's opinions helped us rapidly and comprehensively address comments in these sessions. Revision issues were resolved jointly. Working together helped us overcome challenges and produce more exact adjustments that matched observation. It showed academic excellence through teamwork.

Actively responding to reviewers has transformed my view of academic publishing and scholarship. Reviews revealed great works. After careful study and revisions based on comments, I learned essay writing conventions and how they match the target magazine's expectations. This trip illuminated publishing experts' intelligent conversation. The encounter boosted my confidence and sense of belonging in a scholarly community, boosting my major. Reviewer comments improve work and intellectual discourse, advancing academic and personal goals. (Interview)

3.2 Syarief: "A Doctoral Student's Odyssey through Rejection and Resilience"

Syarief, an aspiring and enthusiastic doctoral candidate, embarked on a transformative journey that deeply influenced his understanding of scholarly inquiry, written communication, and resilience in the dynamic realm of academia. He wanted to leave a lasting mark on his field, but along the way, he was turned down several times, which ultimately shaped his personal growth and achievements.

The contribution was low (Interview)

Syarief's initial encounter with rejection was disheartening. The feedback he received from reviewers suggested that his contribution was insufficient. As he carefully examined the critiques, he felt a mix of frustration and disappointment. However, he recognized the valuable insights contained within these comments. Instead of succumbing to defeat, he chose to view this rejection as an opportunity for improvement. He began to re-evaluate his study, carefully rethinking his ideas and restructuring them increase impact.

He thinks that the editor just does not read the full text where he only reads the title. I am also grateful because the journal quickly responds so that it can be transferred to another journal (Interview)

A second rejection followed. The reviewer commented that the proposal seemed to lack substance. Syarief reflected on this criticism and realized that he needed to make his research more meaningful and explain the broader implications. These challenges motivated him to strengthen his writing skills. He commitment to write a compelling introduction that would encapsulate the essence of his study and inspire reviewers to delve deeper into his work. By doing so, he not only improved the quality of his paper, but also refined his approach to research and writing.

I was a little annoyed at the beginning to see the input from the reviewer. Where the author is aware that the articles that will be published will be read by many people in the world (Interview)

In the beginning, Syarief's initial reactions to the feedback he received from critics were tinged with annoyance. He put his heart and mind into his work, only to be met with criticism that seemed to undermine his efforts. Over the course of his journey, Syarief had a profound realization: the articles he was creating were not just pieces of text; they were channels of knowledge that would be accessible to countless people around the world. This realization changed his perspective. He understood that his role as a researcher was not only to contribute to his field, but also to share insights that could potentially shape the understanding of others.

Syarief's journey to understanding rejection and its implications resonated deeply with the process of academic publishing. The initial anger he felt mirrored the emotional response many researchers experience when their work is critiqued. However, his recognition of the global impact of published articles elevated his perception. He understood that rejection was not a personal setback, but rather an opportunity for growth and refinement.

Syarief's journey through the complex terrain of academic writing took an illuminating turn as he navigated the landscape of reviewer feedback. In a revealing interview, Syarief shared his adept strategies for revision.

Adding in the introduction regarding the novelty or contribution also pays attention to the dominant references not from Indonesia. (Interview)

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One strategy that stood out was Syarief's deliberate approach to enhancing the introduction of his manuscripts. Recognizing that clarity regarding the novelty and contribution of his research was vital, he meticulously crafted introductions that succinctly conveyed the significance of his work. This strategic move not only engaged readers but also addressed one of the critical concerns often raised by reviewers: the clarity of the manuscript's contribution.

Share with other authors in the revision because there is a time limit given by the journal where the revision includes as in the body text, references and the number of connections is at least 25 and book sources do not want more than 10% (Interview)

Syarief's interview also highlighted his collaborative spirit. Aware of the time constraints imposed by journals for revisions, he understood the importance of efficient use of time. Collaborating with other authors during the revision process proved to be a wise approach. By sharing the revision workload, Syarief maximized the potential for comprehensive revisions within the allotted time frame. This strategy underscored his adaptability and recognition of the collective nature of scholarly endeavours.

Syarief's journey through the complex terrain of academic writing took an enlightening turn as he navigated the landscape of reviewer feedback. His insights and strategies offer valuable lessons for researchers navigating the challenges of academia.

3.3 Yulia's Academic Odyssey: Navigating the Waters of Reviewer Feedback

Yulia, an eager PhD candidate, embarked on an academic journey filled with the promise of acquiring new knowledge and the challenges inherent to scholarly discourse. Her encounters with journal reviewers' critiques of her academic work went beyond the mere revision of manuscripts; they involved navigating the complex world of emotions that often precede rejection.

Reviewers commented on research questions that were irrelevant to the findings, a lack of supporting theory, and improper grammar, and I once felt that I had underestimated myself. In contrast, I believed that the calibre of my paper was relatively high. (Interview)

Getting rejected marked a significant turning point in Yulia's journey, shaking her confidence and causing her to doubt herself. The reviewer's comments were charged with emotions and pointed out several flaws in her work, including irrelevant research questions, a lack of supporting theory, and grammar issues. These comments weighed heavily on Yulia, initially leading to self-doubt and a sense of inadequacy. She had invested countless hours in her research and believed she had produced a high-quality paper. The stark contrast between her self-assessment and the reviewer's feedback was profoundly discouraging.

However, Yulia's reaction to this mental upheaval demonstrated her strength. Instead of giving in to self-doubt, she chose to see this rejection as a turning point in her life. She began

by going over her research questions again and again, methodically aligning them with her findings. She researched the literature in order to strengthen her paper with a more rigorous theoretical framework. She also went through a thorough grammar and language revision.

Yulia resubmitted her manuscript after the initial rejection, resolute to succeed. She could not help but reflect on the emotional turmoil she had experienced as she awaited the verdict. Yulia had learned that academic rejection is not only an opportunity to improve one's work but also a test of emotional fortitude. She had to confront her self-doubt, regain her confidence, and persevere. Yulia's voyage illuminates the frequently neglected emotional aspect of academic rejection. It demonstrates the profound effect that evaluator feedback can have on the psyche of a researcher. Yulia's initial reaction of self-doubt evolved into a source of inspiration over time. She understood that, although emotionally charged, the reviewer's comments were also an opportunity for development and self-improvement.

The intricacies of minor adjustments, particularly those relevant to layout and the importance of literature, highlighted the first chapter of Yulia's story. When confronted with such feedback, Yulia took an active role. She recognized the importance of improving the organization and depth of her literature review. To accomplish this, Yulia went on a quest to collect similar articles, building a treasure trove of knowledge to inform her changes. Her commitment shined through as she thoroughly researched and synthesized different sources, integrating their insights into the fabric of her essay. Yulia's dedication to progress was palpable, as she took it upon herself to better her work one sentence at a time.

When the changes are relatively minor and have to do with the organization and relevance of the literature, I make them myself by gathering relevant articles, reading them in depth, and synthesizing the results. (Interview)

Yulia encountered a significant revision request in the next chapter of her journey. The reviewers had requested extensive content, layout, and grammar modifications. This was not a simple task, and Yulia knew she could not undertake it alone. She quickly rallied her co-authors, recognizing the power of collaboration in tackling this obstacle head-on. Discussions ensued, with an emphasis on theory-related content the foundation of any scholarly work and the meticulous proofreading of grammar. Yulia's capacity to mobilize her team exemplified her leadership and comprehension of the collaborative nature of academic research.

The content, format, and grammar were all significantly revised and returned to me in a short period. I immediately consulted with my co-authors, especially about the theoretical and grammatical sections that needed repairing. (Interview)

As the narrative of Yulia's tale progressed, her manuscripts underwent a transformation from initial draughts to refined literary works. The act of making revisions, regardless of their scale, presented valuable prospects for personal development and enhancement. Through

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repeated interactions with reviewer feedback, the individual refined their abilities and enhanced their comprehension of scholarly communication.

From the beginning, Yulia recognized that the feedback provided by reviewers was not simply an obstacle to be overcome, but rather a valuable source of guidance in her academic pursuit. The individual demonstrated a sincere recognition for reviewers who dedicated their time to offer constructive feedback, acknowledging the significant contribution they made to her work.

One recurring theme observed in Yulia's interactions with reviewers was their perceptive remarks on the lack of support for specific theories. Yulia embraced this feedback with enthusiasm, recognizing it as an opportunity to strengthen the theoretical underpinnings of her research. Equipped with their suggestions, she embarked on an extensive exploration of relevant literature, diligently constructing a robust theoretical framework to serve as the foundation for her work. Additionally, Yulia prioritized the refinement of her grammatical skills. She acknowledged the significance of clear and precise communication in academic writing. Rather than perceiving reviewers' observations on inappropriate grammar as mere criticism, she regarded them as valuable opportunities to enhance her language proficiency, thereby ensuring the utmost clarity in conveying her ideas.

When reviewing my paper, I value the feedback of reviewers who point out areas for improvement, such as unproven theories or incorrect grammar. (Interview)

Yulia's appreciation for constructive criticism went beyond mere words. It demonstrated her commitment to growth and her understanding that every comment, regardless of how negative, could be utilized as a stepping stone towards academic excellence. She approached each review process with enthusiasm rather than apprehension, knowing that the reviewers' feedback was indispensable for improving her work. As Yulia's journey progressed, her unfinished manuscripts transformed into polished contributions to her field. Once considered the gatekeepers of academic publication, the reviewers became her true mentors. Their guidance, particularly in regard to unsupported theory and grammar, moulded her into a more perceptive and accurate scholar.

3.4 Ekta's Academic Odyssey: Negotiating Journal Reviewer Response

Ekta, a dedicated and adaptive doctoral student, went on a remarkable academic journey fraught with the complexities of scientific writing and the often-surprising world of journal reviewers' opinions. Her experiences, which ranged from rejection to constructive assistance, revealed a scholar who was both resilient and resourceful, able to identify opportunities for improvement in any scenario.

When I was once rejected from a journal, I didn't feel hurt or angry about it. In spite of their criticisms, I was given the chance to make changes to my work based on their suggestions. (Interview)

In a pivotal moment of Ekta's voyage, a prestigious journal informed her that her manuscript had been rejected. Ekta's unique response to this adversity distinguished her, however. She did not wallow in annoyance or despondency, nor did she permit her emotions to cloud her judgement. Instead, she chose to focus on the positive aspect of rejection: the opportunity to improve her work. With the comments provided by the evaluators as her guiding stars, she set out on a mission to improve her manuscript, seeing rejection not as a closed door, but as an open invitation to excellence.

When a reviewer offered just broad observations in another journal, I felt frustrated. Because of this, me and other writers are unsure of how to approach edits. (Interview)

On another occasion, Ekta was faced with a distinct obstacle. This time, her patience was tested by the tenor of the feedback. The reviewers had provided only general feedback, leaving her and her co-authors in a state of perplexity. The frustration she felt was palpable as she struggled to interpret and implement ambiguous instructions. Nonetheless, Ekta's resolve shone through. She turned this irritation into a chance for communication and collaboration. Together, she and her co-authors dissected the feedback and formulated a comprehensive revision strategy. In the end, the input that was initially unclear catalyzed teamwork and a deeper comprehension of their research.

I appreciate the reviewer's suggestions to incorporate theories and references from around a decade ago, as well as the comments to highlight research gaps and techniques. (Interview)

Ekta smiled in response to valuable feedback that clarified research gaps and methodologies, while also suggesting incorporating theories and references from the previous decade. This resonated with Ekta, who understood the importance of staying current in her field. She was delighted to receive such insightful feedback that advanced her research, enriched her work, and ultimately contributed to the academic discourse.

Her unwavering commitment to responding to reviewer input, significantly as she rewrote her manuscripts, was a recurring theme throughout Ekta's journey. She understood that achieving success in academic publishing required both conducting rigorous research and presenting it in a manner that met the specific expectations of the target journal. Ekta and her colleagues were meticulous in this regard, demonstrating their dedication to achieving excellence.

To better understand the journal's style, I studied previously published papers, paying specific attention to those with similar titles, and corrected any grammatical errors before resubmitting my work. (Interview)

The researchers adopted a focused approach by examining publications published in the same academic journal, with particular emphasis on those pertaining to relevant study areas. By conducting an extensive examination of the journal's archives, the researchers were able to

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acquire a thorough comprehension of the journal's stylistic elements, subject matter coverage, and thematic inclinations. The researchers aimed to decode the distinctive genetic makeup of the journal, metaphorically speaking, and to ensure that their modifications were in line with the publication's established character.

Ekta and her colleagues derived vital insights from their rigorous review of previously published literature. The individuals acquired knowledge on the organization of their manuscripts, the formulation of their research inquiries, and the placement of their discoveries within the framework of pre-existing academic literature, all in accordance with the journal's requirements. Nevertheless, Ekta and her colleagues were aware that effectively addressing reviewer feedback necessitated more than mere alignment of content. The aspect of grammar, which is crucial yet occasionally neglected in scholarly writing, has been appropriately addressed. The integration of proofreading into their revision process emerged as an essential component. Prior to resubmitting their manuscripts, the authors meticulously scrutinized their work, meticulously attending to any grammatical concerns in order to ensure the precision, clarity, and error-free nature of their language.

3.5 Moko's Scholarly Evolution: Navigating Reviewer Feedback with Precision

Moko, an assiduous and scrupulous PhD candidate, began on an intellectual odyssey characterized by the complexities of scholarly composition and the crucial insights derived from the critiques of journal reviewers. The individual's experiences demonstrated a knowledgeable individual who had not only a solid dedication for refining their skills but also a proficiency in formulating meticulous approaches for revising manuscripts.

There is a lack of coherence between the introduction and the conclusion, which is addressed in the reviews. (Interview)

A consistent motive observed throughout Moko's trip was the frequent feedback received from reviewers pertaining to the introductory and concluding sections of his articles. The portions above, which play a vital role in shaping the study narrative, frequently garnered favourable feedback but occasionally exhibited a lack of mutual consistency. Moko acknowledged the significance of the interplay between these segments in effectively directing the reader during his study expedition.

In order to tackle this difficulty, Moko implemented a systematic methodology. The researcher initiated the process by revisiting the fundamental ideas and goals of the study, ensuring that the introduction provided a coherent and comprehensive outline for the reader. The author revised the opening in order better to match it with the broader objectives of the study. Concurrently, the author engaged in a process of reassessing the last remarks, aligning them with the initial statements, thereby creating a parallel structure that mirrors the reader's progression and strengthens the core discoveries. Through the establishment of this

symmetrical structure, Moko effectively achieved the comprehensive completion of his academic narrative, thus providing a sense of logical consistency and lucidity.

Using the reference manager and receiving minor adjustments on non-standard templates and references was the first exciting experience. (Interview)

Moko's journey also entailed the practical aspects of manuscript revision. In one instance, he received comments on non-standard templates and references. Rather than viewing this feedback as a mere technicality, Moko recognized its significance in maintaining the professionalism and standardization of his work. Utilizing a reference manager, he streamlined and organized his references, ensuring that they adhered to the required format. This proactive approach exemplified his attention to detail and accuracy.

When making edits, I like to do so on my own, first reading all of the reviewers' remarks to acquire a new perspective on the work, and then reviewing relevant secondary sources to supplement it. (Interview)

In addition, Moko's approach to revising his manuscripts was characterised by a preference for personal involvement. He believed in obtaining an alternative viewpoint in addition to reviewer comments. He read each statement carefully to get a deeper understanding of the feedback. He then delved into supporting sources and added additional references to his manuscript to increase its depth and scope. This approach not only addressed the reviewer's comments, but it also improved the grade of his work.

Drawing on past reviewer feedback, I plan to use tools like multiple publications and extensive reading of bibliometric studies to give my research a fresh perspective. (Interview)

Moko's journey serves as a demonstration of the importance of precision in scholarly writing. His commitment to addressing reviewer feedback, embracing technology for practical improvements, and adopting a meticulous approach to manuscript revision underscore the depth of his dedication to academic excellence. His narrative highlights the fact that the scholarly growth journey is not only about content creation but also about crafting a coherent, precise, and impactful story.

4. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate how novice researchers respond to reviewer comments on their submitted manuscripts. Informed by the conceptual framework on student engagement with feedback ([Ellis, 2010](#); [Han & Hyland, 2015](#); [Zheng & Yu, 2018](#)), the findings suggest that novice researchers engaged with reviewer feedback in a behaviorally, affectively, and cognitively interrelated manner.

The study indicates that several factors, such as the feedback content, research background, and perceived effectiveness in addressing feedback, influenced the novice

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researchers' emotional response to reviewer input. The participants expressed satisfaction when receiving feedback signaling approval, and disappointment when their work was rejected. This aligns with previous research that showed a correlation between the author's emotional gratification and the acceptance of their manuscript for publication ([Weber et al., 2002](#)). While Surya, an experienced novice researcher, expressed her gratitude for the reviewers' comments, Syarif conveyed more direct criticism and less appreciation for the feedback he received from reviewers. This finding challenges the recent study by ([Weber et al., 2002](#)), which reported no significant link between authors' previous research experiences and their positive responses to reviewer feedback. The present discovery highlights the importance of experience in producing emotional engagement.

While it is commonly assumed that responding to journal reviewer comments serves to test and legitimize research outcomes and interpretations ([Cargill, 2013](#)), this study highlights how such a process is influenced by novice researchers' judgment and beliefs regarding journal reviewer feedback. Ekta viewed this as a chance for dialogue and collaboration, prompting her and her co-authors to analyze the criticism and develop a comprehensive revision process carefully. It is interesting to note that some reviewer input was also considered unimportant and of negligible value to Syarif's writing. In Syarif's case, both individuals responded to all feedback in the subsequent round of submission, despite personal opinions of the criticism received from journal reviewers and associated emotional grievances.

This finding reveals discrepancies in engagement across affective and behavioral dimensions ([Zheng & Yu, 2018](#)). Precisely, all participants adhered to a similar manuscript revision protocol while addressing the feedback of all reviewers. This disciplined behavioral engagement confirms the 'compliance' strategy reported in prior research ([Hardre, 2013](#)). Novice authors often revise their work based on reviewer feedback when preparing for publication, despite their doubts and emotions ([Schwartz, 2022](#)). Yet, this does not necessitate uncritically accommodating journal reviewers. Demonstrably, novice researchers have learned to enhance their manuscripts by incorporating all reviewer comments while maintaining the significance and message of their research.

Similar to the approach of "sharing the burden through co-authoring" proposed in ([Gravett et al., 2020](#)) investigation of experienced academics' responses to journal reviewers' critical feedback, our research suggests that novice researchers' engagement with input from reviewers involves a social component when they seek assistance and support from supervisors and peers.

This study may have multiple outcomes due to the complex way in which novice researchers engage emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively with review feedback. First, when authors respond to criticism by editing and resubmitting articles, they engage in dialogue with the feedback providers ([Boud & Molloy, 2013](#); [Hardre, 2013](#)). Thus, the authors must actively participate in the feedback process. Through the process of revising and resubmitting

their articles, novice researchers have the potential to enhance their chances of publication and develop a deeper understanding of the publication and research processes, ultimately aiding their integration into the academic community. These findings provide evidence to support the criticism that specific feedback processes in scholarly journal publishing may possess inherent flaws (Gravett et al., 2020). Therefore, newly-minted researchers need to recognize that their submissions are not a solitary composition, but instead constitute a portion of a broader genre set, encompassing productive and receptive genres, which collectively help to ensure a paper's eventual acceptance (Han & Hyland, 2015). With this perspective, novice researchers can engage in a developmental and communicative process with journal reviewers' feedback (Gravett et al., 2020). Further research is required to explore the potential impact of this process on beginner researchers' self-perception as researchers.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study, which investigated the emotional, behavioral, and cognitive reactions of five novice researchers to feedback from article reviewers, revealed the intricate and fluid nature of the interconnections between these dimensions. However, it is important to acknowledge the study's limitations, including a small sample size, potential issues with generalizability, and a reliance on self-reported data, which could introduce bias. Future studies should consider larger and more diverse participant pools, explore feedback quality in greater detail, and incorporate alternative research methods for a more comprehensive assessment of researchers' reactions. Moreover, longitudinal and cross-cultural research, comparative analyses between novice and experienced researchers, and investigations into the impact of reviewer characteristics and interventions can further enhance our understanding of how feedback influences researchers, leading to more effective strategies for feedback reception and utilization in the academic publishing process.

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