

Systematic Review of User Experience (UX) and Effectiveness of Open Journal Management System

Ulasan Sistematis Pengalaman Pengguna (UX) dan Keberkesanan Sistem Pengurusan Jurnal Terbuka

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ABSTRACT

The quality of user experience (UX) significantly influences the effectiveness of an online journal management system by shaping user adoption, satisfaction, and trust. Research shows that online journal management system employs multiple UX evaluation methods but face consistent challenges in standardization, accessibility and comprehensive user testing. This systematic literature review (SLR) synthesizes research on the impact of user experience on the effectiveness of online journal management system in academic settings to address gaps in understanding usability, accessibility and user satisfaction across diverse platforms and user roles. The review also aimed to examine how specific design features of these systems influences user experience and overall usability in academic settings. A systematic analysis was conducted following Kitchenham's three-stage review process (planning, conducting, reporting), focusing on peer-reviewed studies published globally up to mid-2025. The study selection and synthesis adhered to predefined protocols to ensure methodological rigor. Findings reveal that established usability tools effectively identify interface issues but are limited by sample scope and inconsistent metrics; accessibility features improve inclusivity yet remain under-integrated across platforms; user satisfaction correlates with intuitive design and iterative user-centered development but varies by role-specific needs; and comparative analyses highlight platform-specific strengths but lack standardized evaluation frameworks. Synthesizing these results underscores the necessity of comprehensive, role-sensitive, and standardized UX evaluations to enhance journal management system effectiveness. These insights inform theoretical models and practical guidelines for optimizing academic publishing infrastructures, emphasizing inclusive design and sustained user engagement to support scholarly communication workflows.

Keywords: User Experience, Online Journal Management System, Systematic Literature Review, Usability Evaluation, Accessibility

ABSTRAK

Kualiti pengalaman pengguna (UX) memainkan peranan kritikal dalam keberkesanan sistem pengurusan jurnal dalam talian, mempengaruhi penerimaan, kepuasan, dan keyakinan pengguna. Ulasan sistematik ini mengkaji kesan UX terhadap keberkesanan sistem tersebut dalam konteks akademik, dengan fokus pada kebolehgunaan, kebolehcapaian, dan kepuasan merentasi pelbagai platform dan peranan pengguna. Mengikut prosedur ulasan tiga peringkat Kitchenham, kajian ini menganalisis kajian ulasan rakan sebaya sehingga pertengahan 2025. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa walaupun alat kebolehgunaan sedia ada berjaya mengesan isu antara muka, ia terhad oleh sampel kecil dan metrik tidak konsisten. Ciri kebolehcapaian meningkatkan inklusiviti tetapi masih kurang diintegrasikan secara menyeluruh. Kepuasan pengguna berkait rapat dengan reka bentuk intuitif dan pembangunan berpusatkan pengguna, walaupun keperluan berbeza mengikut peranan (contohnya, penyunting, pengarang, pengulas). Analisis perbandingan antara platform mendedahkan kekuatan unik, tetapi kekurangan rangka kerja penilaian UX yang distandardkan menghalang perbandingan objektif. Kesimpulannya, penilaian UX yang komprehensif, sensitif terhadap peranan, dan distandardkan diperlukan untuk meningkatkan keberkesanan sistem pengurusan jurnal. Hasil kajian ini memberikan asas teori dan panduan praktikal untuk merekabentuk infrastruktur penerbitan akademik yang lebih inklusif dan responsif, serta menyokong alur kerja komunikasi ilmiah melalui penglibatan pengguna berterusan.

Kata kunci: Pengalaman Pengguna, Sistem Pengurusan Jurnal Dalam Talian, Ulasan Literatur Sistematik, Penilaian Kebolehgunaan, Kebolehcapaian

INTRODUCTION

Research on how user experience affects the efficacy of online journal management system in academic settings has become crucial due to the growing reliance on digital platforms for scholarly communication and publication (Hasan & Abuelrub, 2013; Kopak & Chiang, 2010). Over the past 20 years, the evolution of academic publishing has changed tremendously with the transition from traditional print journals to electronic journal systems. This can be seen through the introduction of electronic platforms such as Open Journal Systems becoming essential in managing submission, peer review and dissemination (Luparenko, 2020; Spirin & Luparenko, 2017). This shift holds significant importance with studies indicating that improved user interfaces can enhance satisfaction and engagement among multiple roles of users (Tawfeeq et al., 2023; Arifiani et al., 2024). Moreover, the global expansion of digital academic resources underscores the need for inclusive design to accommodate diverse user groups regardless of their capabilities (Arias-Flores et al., 2020; Muslim, 2024).

User experience (UX) plays a significant role in the adoption of online journal management systems, thus influencing user satisfaction and engagement. Smooth navigation often comes from smart layout choices that matters most in increasing user experience. When systems respond quickly and make sense at first glance, it encourages the user to stay longer and adopts the systems, as demonstrated by numerous studies. One study showed that an effective UX design creates an efficient system which is easy to navigate and leads to higher user satisfaction (Camargo & Farina, 2024). Research by Hidayat and Utomo (2021) noticed that the likelihood of adoption among systems with positive user experience are higher compared to those with negative user experience.

Despite the widespread adoption of online journal management systems, yet there are still issues with maximizing system efficacy through user experience optimization (Brito & Shintaku, 2015; Rahayu et al., 2018). Previous research indicates usability problems with accessibility, interface design and submission processes, but thorough analyses are still scarce (Hasan & Abuelrub, 2013; Almourad et al., 2024). There are differing opinions about how important usability features should be prioritized; some research stress workflow integration and technical functionality (Côrte-Real & Rocha, 2017; Hayati & Hakim, 2023), while others emphasize user satisfaction and engagement as crucial factors leading to system success (Tawfeeq et al., 2023; Kuadey et al., 2024). The knowledge gap lies in systematically understanding how user experience shapes the overall effectiveness of journal management systems in varied academic settings and among different user roles (Silnichaya et al., 2024; Kocharian & Kovalova, 2022; Alao et al., 2022). Failure to address this gap may lead to reduced adoption, ineffective publication procedures, and a decline in the caliber of scholarly communication quality (Colares & Ferreira, 2022).

The conceptual framework for this review integrates definitions of user experience as the holistic perception of system interaction encompassing usability, accessibility, and satisfaction (Farisi & Wicaksana, 2022; Kock et al., 2016). It relates these constructs to the effectiveness of online journal management systems, defined by their ability to support seamless editorial workflows, facilitate communication, and ensure timely publication (Hasan & Abuelrub, 2013; Kopak & Chiang, 2010). The framework draws on human-computer interaction theories and information system success models to link user experience dimensions with system performance outcomes (Tawfeeq et al., 2023; Alao et al., 2022).

The objective of this paper is to examine the existing research on how user experience affects the effectiveness on online journal management systems in order to explain the relationship between user experience factors and operational success and adoption of these systems. This research aims to identify key design elements and interaction patterns enhancing system efficiency and user engagement by examining current knowledge on usability, accessibility and user satisfaction.

More specifically, the study addresses the following research question: What is the current understanding of how user experience influences system effectiveness in online journal management platforms? How do specific design features of online journal management systems influence user experience and overall usability in academic settings?

To answer the research question, two research objectives (RO) have been identified which to systematically review and synthesize existing literature on:

1. (RO1) - current knowledge on the relationship between user experience and system effectiveness in online journal management platforms.
2. (RO2) – specific design features of online journal management systems influence user experience and overall usability in academic settings.

RELATED WORK

USER EXPERIENCE (UX) IN ACADEMIC DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Success in digital academic platforms now hinges more than ever on how users experience them, especially those supporting scholarly communication. User experience encompasses usability, accessibility, efficiency, satisfaction and emotional response during system

interaction and impacts their overall perception (Hassenzahl & Tractinsky, 2006). For scholars, editors or peer reviews, effective UX design directly influences participation, task completion rates and keep attention longer (Bargas-Avila et al., 2011). Zhang et al., (2020) emphasizes that intuitive navigation, consistent interface design and tools tailored to specific roles enhance user satisfaction. Yet, evaluations of UX in scholarly systems often rely on fragmented methodologies, which ranged from heuristics evaluations and think-aloud protocols to survey still lack standardized metrics or cross-platform comparability (Lazar et al., 2017). In addition, accessibility remains underprioritized despite its importance for inclusive scholarly participation; many platforms fail to comply fully with WCAG guidelines, limiting access for users with disabilities (Yesilada et al., 2022). Recent research calls for broader approaches focusing on user-centered integrating iterative testing with diverse user groups and contextualize findings within academic workflows.

ONLINE JOURNAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Academic publishing relies on Online Journal Management Systems (OJMS) like Open Journal Systems, PKP Publishing Services, and commercial equivalents like Scholastica or Editorial Manager. Although these systems expedite the procedures of submission, peer review, editing, and publication, their efficacy varies greatly depending on how they are designed and implemented (Willinsky, 2005). Although OJMS platforms have made journal publishing more accessible, particularly for institutions with little funding, their default interfaces frequently have poor usability, difficult learning curves, and no customization (Nurchahyo & Kusumaningrum, 2021). According to empirical research, non-intuitive dashboards and insufficient alerting systems often result in workflow bottlenecks for editors and reviewers (Sembiring et al., 2023). Systematic reviews are still rare, despite the fact that several platforms have integrated UX enhancements through redesigns or plugins. Furthermore, most OJMS implementations prioritize functional completeness over user-centered design, leading to suboptimal user satisfaction and reduced system efficacy. Recent efforts advocate for embedding UX principles into OJMS development lifecycles, emphasizing role-based interfaces, accessibility compliance, and continuous user feedback to align technical capabilities with real-world scholarly needs.

METHODOLOGY

The approach involves a thorough examination of peer-reviewed publications with an emphasis on user satisfaction surveys, accessibility studies, and usability assessments in actual academic contexts. Inclusion criteria stresses research addressing academic contexts and user experience metrics, while analytical frameworks incorporate usability standards and user-centered design principles. Evidence are organized thematically to clarify the relationships between user experience elements and system effectiveness (Tawfeeq et al., 2023; Arifiani et al., 2024).

To answer all the research questions, the Kitchenham guidelines (Baheer et al., 2020; Kitchenham et al., 2009) have been adopted. These guidelines are widely applied in performing SLRs in Software Engineering and Information Systems, which makes it the suitable option for this study. The Kitchenham guidelines comprise three-step review stages that include planning the review, conducting the review and reporting the review. Figure 1 illustrates the components of each stage.

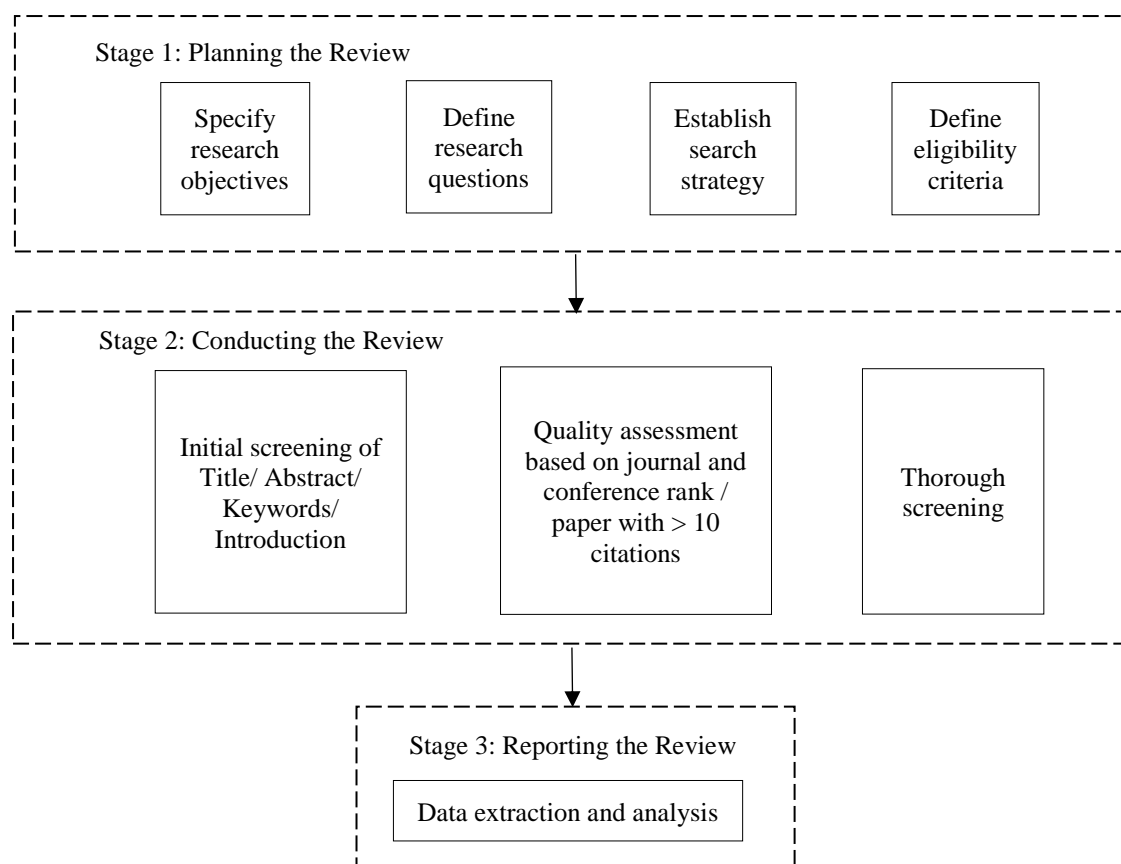


FIGURE 1. SLR research methodology

Stage 1: Planning the Review

During the planning stage, a research procedure was conducted to enhance the accuracy of the review process and guide the SLR process. The research procedure consists of the research objectives and questions, the eligibility criteria that specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the research findings, and information on the research strategy (i.e., search words and resources that will be searched).

In order to determine the scope of the SLR study, the research questions were formulated using the PICOC model (Hosseini et al., 2024; Kebede et al., 2020), as indicated in Table 1. The PICOC model is a framework for developing research questions, especially in systematic reviews and evidence-based practice. PICOC stands for Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome, and Context.

TABLE 1. PICOC elements

	RQ1		RQ2	
Population	User experience evaluation methods and challenges in e-government services			
Intervention	User experience			
Comparison	NA			
Outcome	Evaluation methods	Evaluation methods	Evaluation methods	Evaluation methods
Context	Research papers selected from six scientific databases to investigate in the study			

After identifying research objectives and questions, the next step is to conduct a search strategy to investigate relevant empirical studies of previous research to map existing knowledge and to draw conclusions pertaining the topic (Tremblay-Cantin et al. 2023). The search strategy includes building a knowledge base from major resources and databases. Hence, six (6) databases were included: ACM Digital Library, IEEE Explore, Springer Link and ScienceDirect, Web of Science and Scopus. The search phrase was formed by identifying keywords that help answer the research questions. The example of search string keywords used are as follows: ("user experience" OR UX OR usability OR "user satisfaction") AND ("online journal management system" OR "digital journal system" OR "electronic journal management").

Next, after retrieving all relevant studies based on the searched keywords, a screening process was applied to include only those which met the inclusion criteria. Table 2 highlights the inclusion and exclusion criteria used in this study.

TABLE 2. Eligibility criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Publication Year: 2010 – 2025	Document is not related to the research topic.
Peer reviewed documents	Non peer reviewed documents
Documents focusing on the user experience evaluation methods and challenges in online journal management system	Studies unrelated to UX or online journal management system
Available online	Marginal publication venue
The document answers the research question	-

Stage 2: Conducting the Review

In Stage 2, the selected articles are evaluated based on their relevancy to this study based on their titles, abstracts, introductions and conclusions. The strategy to evaluate quality was informed by the following criteria:

1. The article should discuss the impact of user experience on the effectiveness of online journal management system
2. The article should discuss the common challenges and barriers faced by diverse user groups within online journal management environments.

Next, the credibility of all the selected articles were assessed using two (2) credibility criteria and was included once it met any of the criteria below:

1. To ensure maximum visibility and recognition, the selection process applied specific criteria, including only journal articles with an impact factor greater than 3 and conferences with well-established reputations.
2. To ensure the study is grounded in high-quality research, a screening process was applied that included evaluating the citation count of each study. Based on the premise that citation frequency indicates a study's significance and influence in the area, only studies with more than ten citations were kept. 132 papers were included at the end of this phase as a result of this criterion. As a result, the subsequent process of the research focused on a smaller and more pertinent set of articles.

Finally, all the remaining studies were screened by reviewing the full texts against the eligibility criteria in Table 2, and relevance was assessed using pre-established quality checklist. Based on the criteria, a total of 132 articles were found deemed relevant and align closely to the reasearch questions and thus chosen as the primary studies. Figure 2 provides a step-by-step overview of this screening process.

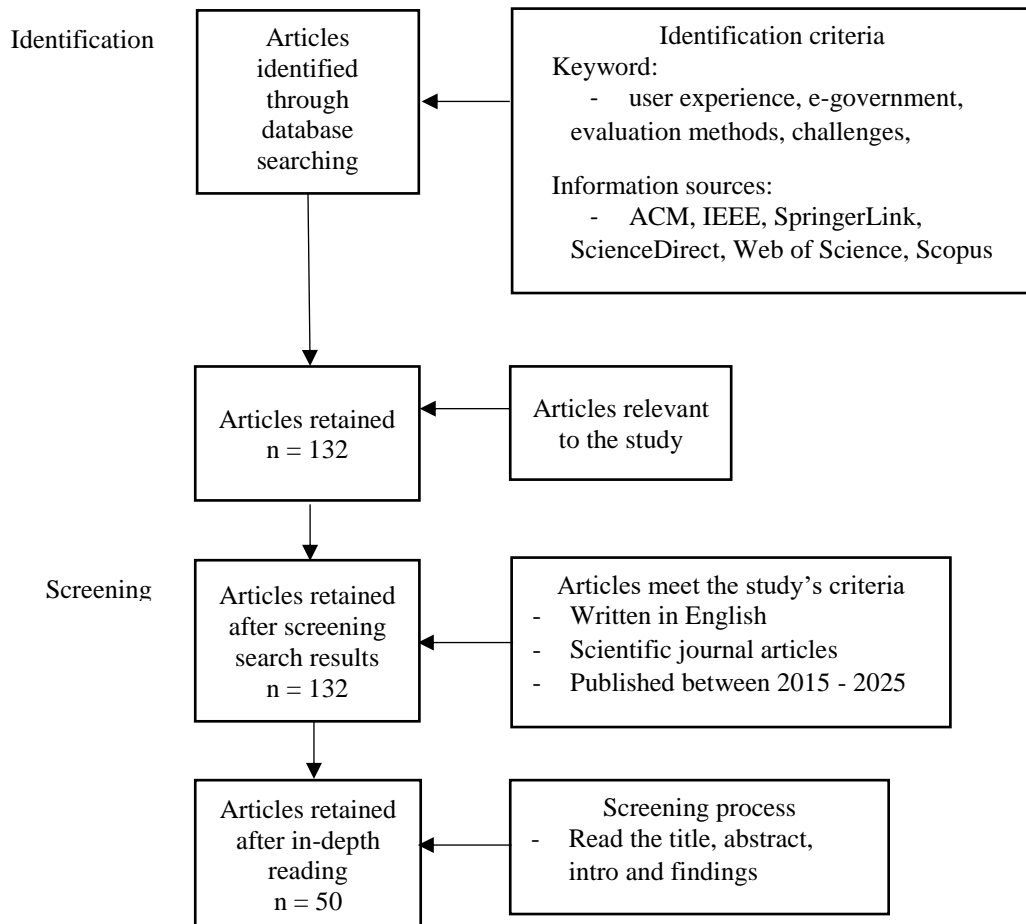


FIGURE 2. Flowchart of the screening process

Stage 3: Reporting the Review

Next, the selected studies were transferred through a data extraction strategy. Each work was retrieved from its digital repository and assigned a unique file ID as part of this technique. The data from each study was entered into a spreadsheet. Important details were taken from the study and placed in the appropriate columns, including the abstract, the user experience issue, the set of elements, the study's importance and limitations, the study gap, the suggested remedy, and future work. Out of 132 papers, 50 papers were found highly relevant to the research.

RESULTS

The two predetermined study objectives are methodically addressed using the thorough analysis obtained from the systematic literature review (SLR). Robust data is acquired and triangulated through the synthesis of defined themes, methodology, and findings from the chosen studies, making it easier to formulate direct replies to each stated purpose. This

meticulous procedure guarantees that the results are supported by empirical data and accurately represent the knowledge gained from the literature review.

Findings from the systematic literature review (SLR) provide the foundation for addressing the two pre-defined research objectives. Integration of recurring themes, methodological approaches and empirical results across selected studies yields triangulated evidence, thereby facilitating the formulation of direct responses to each stated objective. This analytical framework ensures conclusions derive directly from the synthesized literature, and empirically grounded to maintain validity and integrity.

In the studies examined, there was a variety of approaches taken to research the user experiences, including usability testing, surveys, heuristics evaluations, and eye-tracking studies, and there was also representational geography from many continents and subject areas of academia. This area of the literature would provide a good basis from which to make comparisons and address research questions related to operational effectiveness, usability issues, accessibility and inclusion challenges, and design approaches that enhance user engagement in journal management systems.

RO1: Relationship between User Experience and System Effectiveness

In order to examine the relationship between user experience and system effectiveness, the system is evaluated based on usability, accessibility and also efficiency rate. Various techniques and measurement metrics are deemed suitable to measure those elements as described below.

Usability Assessment Techniques

Over 30 studies employed standardized usability evaluation methods such as System Usability Scale (SUS), User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ), HEART Metrics and heuristics evaluations to measure ease of use and satisfaction (Brito & Shintaku, 2015; Tawfeeq et al., 2023; Arifiani et al., 2024). Table 3 shows the distinct usability assessment techniques.

TABLE 3. Usability assessment techniques

Technique	Type	Source
Standard evaluation methods	System Usability Scale (SUS), User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ), HEART Metrics and heuristics evaluations	Brito & Shintaku, 2015; Tawfeeq et al., 2023; Arifiani et al., 2024
Qualitative and quantitative	Surveys, Interviews and Eye-tracking	Hasan & Abuelrub, 2013; Kock et al., 2016; Almourad et al., 2024
Task-specific usability	Submission processes, Academic management workflows,	Brito & Shintaku, 2015; Rahayu et al., 2018; Tawfeeq et al., 2023

Accessibility Features

A subset of studies explicitly addressed accessibility, implementing features like screen reader compatibility, accessible PDFs, and multimedia alternatives to support users with disabilities

(Arias-Flores et al., 2020; Sari et al., 2023; Almonte et al., 2024). Many studies indirectly considered accessibility through mobile compatibility, responsive design, and security features enhancing inclusivity (Reynoso et al., 2022; Silnichaya et al., 2024; Ghaffari et al., 2024). According to a number of studies, there is still a lack of thorough accessible integration in all journal management systems (Hasan & Abuelrub, 2013; Farisi & Wicaksana, 2022).

System Efficiency Metrics

Several research examined task completion rates, error frequencies, and time efficiency in order to determine system efficacy and performance constraints (Hasan & Abuelrub, 2013; Tawfeeq et al., 2023; Almourad et al., 2024). Results show that interface design and usability issues have a major impact on operational efficiency, with recorded instances of high error rates or confused navigation patterns (Hasan & Abuelrub, 2013; Almourad et al., 2024; Shinta et al., 2024). However, efficiency gains are consistent with a development strategy that emphasizes user-centered design concepts and iterative design procedures (Arifiani et al., 2024; Alao et al., 2022).

RO2: Design Features Influencing User Experience

According to empirical research, interface features including responsive layouts, easy-to-use navigation, and integrated tools significantly improve user happiness and engagement (Côte-Real & Rocha, 2017; Kopak & Chiang, 2010). According to cross-platform research, certain design decisions have a direct impact on user behavior and content engagement, especially when it comes to direct PDF access and multimedia support (Az-zahra et al., 2023). Simultaneously, user feedback constantly cites customizable options, simplicity, and clarity as critical factors that determine a favorable user experience (Alao et al., 2022; Silnichaya et al., 2024; Kuadey et al., 2024). Table 4 summarizes the design elements that have the most effects on the OJMS user experience.

TABLE 4. Summary of design features influencing UX in OJMS

Design Features	Influence on UX
Intuitive navigation / layout	Increases satisfaction / reduce errors
Responsive/multi-device design	Ensures consistent experience
User-centered / customizable	Higher acceptance, meets user needs
Comprehensive features	Streamline workflow, increases usefulness
Aesthetics / emotional appeal	Enhances engagement and pleasure
Accessibility	Broadens usability, supports diverse users
Efficient search / discovery	Improves task efficiency. satisfaction

These findings underscore that successful OJMS platforms prioritize usability, accessibility, personalization and comprehensive functionality, all grounded in user-centered design principles.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review critically analyzes the relationship between user experience and operational effectiveness in online journal management systems used in academic settings. The study addresses two research objectives i) understanding how user experience dimensions affect system effectiveness and ii) identifying design features that demonstrably shape user

experience and usability performance. Evidence drawn from 50 high quality, peer-reviewed publications published between 2010 and mid-2025 supports multidimensional synthesis encompassing usability, accessibility, user satisfaction and system efficiency.

The review establishes a clear positive relationship between UX and system effectiveness. Standardized tools like the System Usability Scale (SUS) and User Experience Questionnaire (UEQ) consistently reveal that intuitive interfaces and role-specific designs reduce errors, enhance task completion, and boost satisfaction among diverse users, including authors, reviewers, and editors. However, challenges persist, including inconsistent metrics, limited sample sizes, and underemphasized accessibility features, which hinder comprehensive evaluations and equitable access. Accessibility integrations, such as screen reader compatibility and responsive designs, promote inclusivity but are often inconsistently implemented, underscoring the need for WCAG-compliant standards to support users with disabilities and global academic diversity.

Furthermore, the findings also reflect that specific design features that influence user experience and usability. Intuitive navigation, adaptable dashboards and integrated tools proven to be primary catalysts for sustained user engagement and efficiency. Platforms implementing user-centered development methodologies demonstrate higher adoption and mitigate editorial process bottlenecks.

In light of these insights, this study calls for a paradigm shift in OJMS development: from function-driven implementations to user-centered, iterative design processes grounded in standardized UX evaluation frameworks. Future systems should embed accessibility from inception, support continuous user feedback loops, and adopt modular interfaces that adapt to user roles and contexts.

In conclusion, optimizing UX in journal management systems is not merely a technical enhancement but it is beyond that. It is a foundational step towards efficiency and sustainable scholarly publishing. This review bridges theoretical advancements in human-computer interaction with actionable design standards, delivering practical guidelines for developers, publishers and academic institutions aiming to strengthen the digital ecosystems responsible for global knowledge dissemination and ensures long-term platform visibility.

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