

## Author Classification Methods and Author Group Construction Strategies for Scientific Journals: A Case Study of *Journal of Clothing*

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### Abstract

**[Purpose]** To propose classification construction strategies for different types of authors, thereby improving manuscript quality and achieving healthy, sustainable development of textile and apparel science journals.

**[Method]** Taking authors of *Journal of Clothing Research* as an example, this study quantitatively analyzes the publication volume and journal influence of all authors from 2016 to 2022 based on Price's Law, exponential calculation method, and hybrid selection method. Authors are classified into four categories: "core authors", "proactive authors", "potential authors", and "developing authors", with targeted classification construction strategies proposed for each.

**[Results]** Authors with  $\geq 5$  publications and an influence index  $\geq 5$  are core authors of *Journal of Clothing Research*; those with  $\geq 5$  publications and an influence index  $\leq -5$  are proactive authors; those with 1 publication and an influence index  $\geq 5$  are potential authors; and those with 1 publication and an influence index  $\leq -5$  are developing authors. Editors enhance manuscript quality through classified author group construction by maintaining core authors, serving proactive authors, expanding potential authors, and cultivating developing authors.

**[Conclusion]** Classified author group construction is an important strategy for science journals to cultivate author teams and improve paper quality, and represents a crucial link in promoting high-quality journal development. Textile and apparel science journals must focus on author team construction to consolidate the foundation of journal development and enhance academic leadership within the industry.

## Full Text

### Author Classification Method and Author Group Construction Strategy for Scientific and Technological Journals—A Case Study of *Journal of Clothing Research*

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## Abstract

**[Purposes]** This study proposes a classification-based construction strategy for different types of authors to improve manuscript quality and achieve healthy, sustainable development of textile and apparel scientific and technological journals. **[Methods]** Taking authors of *Journal of Clothing Research* as a case study, this paper quantitatively analyzes the publication volume and journal impact of all authors from 2016 to 2022 based on Price's Law, index calculation methods, and mixed selection approaches. Authors are classified into four categories: "core authors," "enterprising authors," "potential authors," and "growth authors," with targeted construction strategies proposed for each group. **[Findings]** Authors with  $\geq 5$  publications and an influence index  $\geq 5$  are identified as core authors of *Journal of Clothing Research*; those with  $\geq 5$  publications and an influence index  $\leq 5$  are enterprising authors; those with 1 publication and an influence index  $\geq 5$  are potential authors; and those with 1 publication and an influence index  $\leq 5$  are growth authors. Through classified author group construction—maintaining core authors, serving enterprising authors, expanding potential authors, and cultivating growth authors—editors can enhance manuscript quality. **[Conclusions]** Classified author group construction represents a crucial strategy for scientific journals to cultivate author teams and improve paper quality, as well as a key component in advancing high-quality journal development. Textile and apparel scientific journals must prioritize author team building to establish a solid foundation for journal development and strengthen their academic leadership within the industry.

**Keywords:** scientific and technological journals; textile and apparel; author classification; author group construction

## Introduction

As a traditional industry in China, the textile and apparel sector holds significant importance in national economic development. China is the world's largest producer and exporter of textile and apparel products and has essentially achieved its goal of becoming a textile powerhouse. In recent years, the state has vigorously promoted industrial transformation and upgrading, yielding a constant stream of research achievements in textile and apparel fields, with scientific journals playing a vital driving role in this process. However, China has relatively few scientific journals in this domain. According to the 2022 *Annual Report on Chinese Academic Journal Impact Factors (Natural Science and Engineering Technology)* [1], there are only 37 textile science and technology journals, with few high-impact publications among them. The *High-Quality Scientific Journal Classification Directory for the Textile Field* released by the China Textile Engineering Society in 2022 [2] shows that among the eight journals selected as Tier T1 (indicating they are approaching or have achieved international first-class status), only one is Chinese-language journal—a mismatch with China's status as a textile powerhouse.

Authors constitute the foundation and lifeblood of scientific journals. Against the backdrop of internationalization, networking, and specialization in scientific journal development, textile and apparel journals must focus on author discovery and cultivation to improve manuscript quality and enhance core competitiveness. Current research on author group construction for scientific journals primarily concentrates on author expansion, resource development, and cultivation methods. Tian et al. [3] proposed strategies and practices for author group expansion; Yu and Chen [4] introduced methods for strengthening author team building through journal resources; Zhang [5] identified the golden strategy of cultivating excellent author groups centered on “research teams”; Yang [6] provided effective approaches for strengthening author team construction from three perspectives: maintaining existing authors, discovering new authors, and cultivating young authors; Dai et al. [7] and Zhao [8] introduced effective measures for core author discovery, cultivation, and maintenance using their respective journals as examples. However, most of these studies propose author group construction strategies only from theoretical perspectives without quantitatively classifying authors based on metrics, making it impossible to implement targeted construction strategies for different categories. Therefore, this study classifies authors of textile and apparel scientific journals based on publication volume and journal impact, proposing construction strategies for different author groups to cultivate outstanding author populations, improve manuscript quality, and build internationally professional academic journals that promote high-quality development.

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## 1.1 Research Object

*Journal of Clothing Research* is a professional academic journal in the textile and apparel field that was renamed in 2016. Grounded in textile science as its theoretical foundation and characterized by the “integration of engineering technology and design art,” it reflects trends in clothing technology and serves the development of the textile and apparel industry. This study uses *Journal of Clothing Research* as a case study to conduct classified statistical analysis of its authors from 2016 to 2022.

## 1.2 Research Methods

Publication volume and impact are crucial indicators for measuring authors' academic contributions and status, representing a comprehensive evaluation of both research “quantity” and “quality.” Therefore, this study uses author publication volume in *Journal of Clothing Research* and their impact on the journal as classification metrics. Authors with high publication volume and high impact are designated “core authors”; those with high publication volume but low impact are “enterprising authors”; those with low publication volume but high impact are “potential authors”; and those with low publication volume and low impact are “growth authors.”

The China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) academic journal database was searched with “Journal of Clothing Research” as the source, selecting all articles published during the seven years since the journal's renaming (January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2022), yielding 679 entries. After excluding 22 non-citable documents, 657 citable articles remained. All data were exported to Excel format, and through “word segmentation processing” and “pivot table” functions, statistical analysis revealed that 1,094 authors published 657 papers in *Journal of Clothing Research* from 2016 to 2022. The publication volume of each author was counted, and their impact on the journal was calculated.

Bibliometrician Price proposed a formula for calculating high-productivity authors [9]:

$$M = 0.749 \times \sqrt{N_{max}}$$

where  $N_{max}$  represents the maximum number of publications by any single author in the journal. Authors with publication volumes greater than  $M$  can be identified as high-productivity authors.

Low-productivity authors are determined using the percentage method, designating the bottom 20% or 10% of authors with the fewest publications as low-productivity authors based on the journal's total volume [10].

Author impact on a journal can be evaluated using the  $J$ -index [11], with the formula:

$$J = N \times \left( \frac{n}{x_{avg}} - 1 \right)$$

where  $J$  is the author impact index;  $N$  is the total number of publications by the author in the journal;  $n$  is the total citation count of the author's papers in the journal; and  $x_{avg}$  is the average citation rate per paper published in the journal from 2016 to 2022. Citation counts were collected as of April 20, 2023.

## 2 Results and Analysis

According to Formula (1), the most prolific author in *Journal of Clothing Research* is Liang Hui'e with 44 publications, yielding  $M = 4.97$  papers. Thus, authors with  $\geq 5$  publications are considered high-productivity authors. However, given that only 27 authors meet this threshold, the mixed selection method [12] was adopted to identify authors with  $\geq 3$  publications, totaling 108 authors (approximately 10% of all authors [10]), who were classified as high-productivity authors.

Based on Formula (2), *Journal of Clothing Research* had a total of 2,392 citations and 657 publications from 2016 to 2022, resulting in an average citation rate  $x_{avg}$  of 3.6. The  $J$ -index was calculated for each of the 108 high-productivity authors, with higher values indicating greater impact on the journal.

The quartiles of the  $J$ -index for these 108 authors are 5.44, -0.92, and -5.92. Using the upper and lower quartile values, authors with  $J \geq 5$  are classified as high-impact authors, while those with  $J \leq -5$  are low-impact authors.

Among the 1,094 authors of *Journal of Clothing Research*, 829 published only one paper, making them low-productivity authors. In Formula (2), when  $N = 1$ ,  $J \geq 5$  requires  $n \geq 8.6$ , meaning a single paper must have  $\geq 9$  citations;  $J \leq -5$  requires  $n \leq -1.4$ , which in practice means zero citations.

In summary, authors with  $\geq 5$  publications and  $J \geq 5$  are core authors; those with  $\geq 5$  publications and  $J \leq -5$  are enterprising authors; those with 1 publication and  $J \geq 5$  (i.e., single-paper citation count  $\geq 9$ ) are potential authors; and those with 1 publication and  $J \leq -5$  (i.e., zero citations) are growth authors.

## 2.1 Core Authors

Screening for authors with  $\geq 5$  publications and  $J \geq 5$ , and considering their actual research contributions, identified 22 high-productivity, high-impact authors as the journal's core authors (see Table 1).

## 2.2 Enterprising Authors

Screening for authors with  $\geq 5$  publications and  $J \leq -5$ , and considering their actual research contributions, identified 24 high-productivity, low-impact authors as the journal's enterprising authors (see Table 2).

## 2.3 Potential Authors

Screening for authors with 1 publication and  $J \geq 5$  (i.e., single-paper citation count  $\geq 9$ ), and comprehensively considering their current affiliations and research activity in recent years, identified 19 high-impact, low-productivity authors as the journal's potential authors (see Table 3).

## 2.4 Growth Authors

Authors with 1 publication and  $J \leq -5$  (i.e., zero citations) are classified as growth authors. This group is numerous, so detailed enumeration is not provided. Statistical analysis shows that most growth authors were master's students or technical management personnel in textile and apparel enterprises at the time of submission.

## 3.1 Maintaining Core Authors

Core authors possess high academic influence in the textile and apparel field, produce high-quality and well-structured papers, and demonstrate strong trust in the journal through high publication volumes. Consolidating and strengthening the core author team is therefore essential for journal development.

**3.1.1 Implementing an Editor Management Model** As shown in Table 1, 10 of the 22 core authors (45.45%) are members of the journal's first or second editorial board, indicating that board members constitute an important source of core authors. These editorial board members are authorities in the textile and apparel field who understand current industry hotspots and academic frontiers and have contributed significantly to journal development. Editors should prioritize board member relations, strengthen emotional communication, maintain regular contact, and track their teams' latest research developments while promoting their achievements and awards through the WeChat public account to attract their long-term support. *Journal of Clothing Research* has implemented an editor management model where each editor is assigned specific board members. Through holiday greetings, one-on-one services, and other humanistic care measures, board members feel respected by the journal. Editors also solicit

contributions from their assigned board members or their teams and establish “green channels” for high-quality submissions to facilitate rapid publication. Currently, each issue features papers by board members or their teams; in Issue 2, 2023, 8 of 13 papers came from board member solicitations, demonstrating the model’s effectiveness. Textile and apparel scientific journals should assign appropriate responsible editors to each board member based on research directions and editorial expertise, providing exclusive services to enhance their sense of belonging.

**3.1.2 Stimulating Expert Enthusiasm** Among the 22 core authors in Table 1, 19 (86.36%) are reviewers for *Journal of Clothing Research*, indicating that reviewers are also crucial maintenance targets. Reviewers serve as gatekeepers of academic quality, and their interactions with editors during the review process strengthen their emotional connection to the journal, laying the foundation for their eventual membership in the journal’s academic community. *Journal of Clothing Research* has 12 columns, with each editor responsible for three fixed columns, enabling them to track disciplinary developments in their areas, enhance their professional knowledge, and effectively screen manuscripts during initial review to ensure high-quality submissions for peer review, thereby increasing reviewer satisfaction. The editorial office should categorize reviewers, granting those with high-quality, rapid, and numerous reviews not only certificates of excellence but also privileges such as priority publication and the right to recommend others’ manuscripts. For less active reviewers, the editorial office should increase communication to understand their needs and develop targeted incentives to elevate the journal’s status in their eyes. Additionally, inviting experts to publish series of papers on industry hotspots such as costume culture and smart clothing can be effective; for example, *Journal of Clothing Research* published three consecutive issues in 2018 featuring core author and folklorist Professor Zhou Xing’s series “Practice, Inclusivity, and Openness of ‘Chinese-style Clothing,’” earning his lasting recognition of the journal.

### 3.2 Serving Enterprising Authors

As shown in Table 2, the 24 enterprising authors are primarily researchers from universities and research institutes or technical and management personnel from apparel enterprises. While academically active, their published articles have relatively low impact on the journal, mainly for two reasons: (1) their research areas are niche or unpopular with limited readership, resulting in low citation and download rates; and (2) they publish their most important findings in foreign or domestic authoritative journals while submitting less innovative, general results to this journal. To address these issues, the editorial office can serve enterprising authors through the following approaches.

**3.2.1 Expanding Academic Dissemination Channels** Although niche research areas have smaller audiences, they are highly targeted. The journal can leverage emerging dissemination channels for precise literature distribution. For

instance, journals can cultivate Key Opinion Consumers (KOCs) with influence in the textile and apparel industry as loyal readers, selecting relevant KOCs to forward and share articles on specific topics to achieve viral dissemination effects. *Journal of Clothing Research* also uses the “Academic Journal Precision Dissemination System” developed by Chongqing Feixiao Data Technology Co., Ltd. to precisely match paper keywords with author research fields, pushing 2021 and 2022 journal articles to relevant scholars directionally, which has received excellent feedback with readers specifically emailing the editorial office to praise this approach. Editors can also ask each author to recommend several potential readers in their field and send journal information and relevant articles via one-on-one emails, simultaneously promoting academic achievements and the journal itself. Textile and apparel scientific journals should also emphasize cluster development by collaboratively organizing academic exchange meetings to gather expert resources and sharing network dissemination channels and academic information to leverage collective advantages and enhance dissemination capacity.

**3.2.2 Emphasizing Journal Academic Service Development** Many domestic scholars currently prefer publishing their achievements in foreign journals, especially in textile and other science and engineering fields, believing that foreign journals have greater influence, lower submission difficulty, and better facilitate research promotion. In response, domestic textile and apparel scientific journals must strengthen academic service development, optimize review processes, shorten publication delays, and establish good cooperative relationships with authors. Currently, *Journal of Clothing Research* has strengthened the initial review by responsible editors, with an initial rejection rate of approximately 60%. Authors rejected at this stage receive detailed feedback within one week, saving them valuable time. Submissions sent for external review are generally high-quality, with an expert rejection rate of only about 10%, effectively reducing time consumption in the peer-review phase. For high-quality manuscripts on hot topics and cutting-edge research or major scientific achievements, *Journal of Clothing Research* applies for a fast-track publication channel. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, a paper titled “Supply and Demand Situation and Production Recommendations for Medical Protective Clothing During Epidemic Prevention and Control” was submitted on May 11, 2020, underwent expedited external review, and was published on June 15, receiving excellent responses. Textile and apparel scientific journals should enhance academic service levels by utilizing journal websites and WeChat public platforms to ensure timely processing of new submissions, tracking of peer-review manuscripts, and prompt feedback on issues, addressing authors’ urgent needs and solving their problems to attract enterprising authors to publish their best achievements domestically.

### 3.3 Expanding Potential Authors

As shown in Table 3, the 19 potential authors of *Journal of Clothing Research* are all university researchers who have long been engaged in textile and apparel-related research with certain academic influence but prefer submitting to international or domestic authoritative journals, resulting in fewer publications in this journal. Therefore, the key to expanding potential authors lies in attracting their submissions.

**3.3.1 Focusing on Senior Title Holders** Although *Journal of Clothing Research* is not yet a core journal as a high-quality scientific journal in the textile field, it is highly professional, distinctive, and enjoys good reputation and recognition among experts, with effective promotion, dissemination, and application of published research. However, many young scholars must publish in core journals to meet promotion requirements, whereas senior title holders generally face no such pressure and have fewer research index constraints, with larger teams and richer academic achievements, making them key targets for the editorial office. Among the 19 potential authors in Table 3, 7 hold senior titles and 6 hold associate senior titles. The editorial office should focus on these 13 senior-title potential authors by actively visiting their universities, establishing connections through the journal's board members or "loyal fans" at those institutions, forming groups to track their research project progress in a timely manner, agreeing on paper submission plans, and publishing articles by them and their team members. These senior-title potential authors can also be developed as reviewers or even editorial board members to increase the journal's weight in their minds and strive for a win-win situation. Currently, 7 of the 13 senior-title potential authors have become reviewers for *Journal of Clothing Research*, and 1 has been appointed to the second editorial board. After becoming reviewers or board members, 4 have resubmitted to the journal and have been accepted. Senior-title authors attach great importance to journal academic quality when selecting submission venues [13]; therefore, textile and apparel scientific journals should closely follow industry frontiers, attract senior-title authors through carefully planned topics, combine academic achievements with contemporary needs, and enhance the journal's academic leadership.

**3.3.2 Encouraging Author Participation in Journal Operation** Experts and scholars often have unique insights and judgments on industry hotspots and future development directions, especially academically active authors who frequently attend various industry conferences, forums, and lectures and understand the latest academic trends, many of whom are potential authors for *Journal of Clothing Research*. Since potential authors publish less frequently in the journal, the editorial office should actively contact them and encourage their deep participation in journal operation by planning valuable columns around current research hotspots and frontiers in the textile and apparel field and participating in solicitation and organization of manuscripts to enable series publication of relevant academic achievements. This is also a

powerful measure to help authors enhance their academic status and influence. Currently, *Journal of Clothing Research* has successfully invited Professor Zhu Weiming from Zhejiang Sci-Tech University to plan the “Digital Marketing of Clothing” column and Associate Researcher Wang Zhicheng to plan the “Sustainable Clothing” column. Textile and apparel scientific journals should actively encourage potential authors to participate in journal operation, making them not only creators and promoters of papers but also builders of the journal, thereby narrowing the distance between the journal and potential authors. Simultaneously, journals should actively help potential authors promote their academic achievements to enhance social influence in a ripple effect, achieving win-win outcomes.

### 3.4 Cultivating Growth Authors

Growth authors consist primarily of master’s students and technical management personnel from textile and apparel enterprises. Master’s students have relatively short engagement in textile and apparel academic research with insufficient depth, and their submissions are generally related to their theses. Currently, most master’s students in textile and apparel-related universities are required to publish at least one academic paper related to their research direction for graduation, so many authors cease further research after meeting this requirement. Meanwhile, technical management personnel from apparel enterprises publish papers mainly for professional title evaluation, resulting in generally low manuscript quality. Based on this reality, editors should identify from numerous growth authors those with high academic enthusiasm, further education needs, and strong problem-identification and problem-solving abilities, providing them with systematic guidance to cultivate them into future research stars.

**3.4.1 Assisting in Topic Selection** Many growth authors have high research enthusiasm but are insensitive to current research hotspots, especially technical personnel in textile and apparel enterprises whose papers focus on factory practices with strong applicability but fail to keep pace with industry development trends. In recent years, new technologies in the textile and apparel industry have rapidly developed, with sustainable materials, smart wearables, and digital design becoming research hotspots. As frontline workers, enterprise employees have access to the most advanced technologies and equipment, and if the editorial office provides them with topic selection guidance, they may produce manuscripts that are both practical and innovative. Therefore, the editorial office can annually publish a “Key Topic Selection Guide” in the form of “assigned topics” to help authors identify directions and stimulate their writing enthusiasm. Additionally, enterprise authors’ submissions often have relatively poor standardization and low readability. For submitted papers with valuable topics that do not yet meet publication requirements, editors should be adept at extracting valuable content, helping authors clarify their thinking and improve writing skills to boost their confidence.

**3.4.2 Growing Together with Young Scholars** Although *Journal of Clothing Research* is a professional academic journal, as a university journal, it naturally serves as a venue for many students' first publications. When the journal was successfully renamed in 2016, one-third of submissions came from the university's master's and doctoral students due to insufficient manuscript sources. Although many student papers were generally poorly written, editors used their professional knowledge to patiently communicate and guide them through revisions, helping them develop academic thinking. The *Journal of Clothing Research* WeChat public platform also publishes paper writing methods and techniques, helping authors improve their research and writing abilities through interpretation of actual cases. Many authors have been trained and improved through the submission process, with some now having become associate professors or even full professors, while the journal's influence has steadily increased, truly achieving joint growth between the journal and young scholars. Among the 37 textile science and technology journals, 11 are hosted by universities, which should fully utilize their institutional disciplinary advantages, historical traditions, and regional characteristics to leverage the important role of scientific journals in cultivating talent.

## Conclusion

This study uses *Journal of Clothing Research* as a case study to classify authors based on two indicators—publication volume and journal impact—and proposes author group construction strategies for textile and apparel scientific journals. The findings indicate that core authors are primarily editorial board members and reviewers, whom the editorial office can maintain through an editor management model while stimulating expert enthusiasm. Enterprising authors show high academic activity but low impact on the journal due to niche research areas or reluctance to submit important findings; they should be served by expanding academic dissemination channels and emphasizing journal academic service development. Potential authors publish less frequently in the journal, so editors should focus on senior-title holders and encourage author participation in journal operation to attract their submissions. Growth authors are mainly master's students and technical management personnel from enterprises with generally low manuscript quality, so editors can help them identify topics and provide systematic guidance for joint growth with the journal.

However, this study only uses *Journal of Clothing Research* as a single case, resulting in a limited sample source. Future research could comprehensively analyze data from multiple textile and apparel scientific journals and explore from multi-stakeholder perspectives to enhance the persuasiveness and guiding value of the findings.

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**Author Contribution Statement:**

SHEN Tianqi: Conceptualized the research, designed the study framework, collected and analyzed data, wrote and revised the manuscript.

LIANG Hui'e: Provided overall guidance, revised the research topic, framework, and manuscript.

PAN Ruru: Provided overall guidance, revised and reviewed the manuscript.

*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

*Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.*