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# Insufficient Addressing Responses is One of The Main Reasons Behind the Rejection of Manuscripts Publishing in a High Impact Journals

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## A B S T R A C T

Scientific research is an important reason that indicates the progress of countries and the general scientific level. This study aims to research and verify some of the causes and obstacles that the Iraqi authors face and prevent them or lead rejection of their manuscripts from publishing in high-impact journals. Information was collected by questionnaires surveyed and some phone interviews with chief- editors of Iraqi journals subjected to the Scopus classification. The results showed that there are many reasons behind the rejection of research in high-impact journals ‘these reasons include several causes such as poor quality of the English language ‘ which is known as a language of publication in Iraq for the science field ‘as well as the lack of experience and the inefficiency of the authors' responses on the evaluators' comments. ‘these were the main three reason which obstructing the publishing process of Iraqi researchers.

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## عدم كفاية الردود أحد الأسباب الرئيسية وراء رفض المخطوطات من النشر في مجلات عالية التأثير

تقنيات صحة مجتمع/ المعهد الطبي التقني / الجامعة التقنية الوسطى / بغداد - العراق.  
قسم هندسة البيئة / كلية الهندسة / جامعة تكريت / العراق.

اسراء محمد علي الأمين  
عزيز ابراهيم عبدالله

### الخلاصة

البحث العلمي سبب مهم يدل على تقدم الدول والمستوى العلمي العام. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى البحث والتحقق من بعض الأسباب والعقبات التي يواجهها المؤلفون العراقيون والتي تؤدي إلى رفض نشر مخطوطاتهم في مجلات عالية التأثير. تم جمع المعلومات من خلال الاستبيانات وبعض المقابلات الهاتفية مع رؤساء تحرير المجلات العراقية المصنفة في المستوعب العالمي سكوبس. وأظهرت النتائج أن هناك أسباباً عديدة وراء رفض البحث في المجلات عالية التأثير، ومن هذه الأسباب عدة أسباب مثل رداءة اللغة الإنجليزية التي تعرف بلغة النشر في العراق في مجال العلوم، وكذلك قلة الخبرة وعدم كفاءة ردود المؤلفين على تعليقات المقيمين، كانت هذه هي الأسباب الثلاثة الرئيسية التي عرقلت عملية نشر الباحثين العراقيين.

الكلمات الدالة: المجلات عالية التأثير، استجابات غير كافية، كتاب عراقيون.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Most of the authors are happy when they finished their research paper, they think it's over !! but actually, they will be entered in the second round when they send the manuscript to the journal to be evaluated [1]. Even if you have the most important manuscript of the city or you may be one of the most important leading experts, you will still need the peer review that exposes your limitations and makes your quest easier to help you to sell your idea to the public, [2] Manuscript may reject from the first sight or it selected for peer review to read and give it comments in any case, this means more time and more effort to obtain a final better modified scientific paper, now authors doing the best to modify the paper, but even with that, after these steps, it's not mean they will accept authors manuscripts and publish it, it's still may reject [1]. So, the question here is (How you can avoid the rejection). when I was reading in literature, some phrase caught my eye, it was "only 9% of the 6,000 annual manuscript submissions to (The Journal of the American Medical Association) (JAMA) are accepted for publication, nearly 85% of submissions to Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery are rejected. Even manuscripts that later resulted in a Nobel Prize have been rejected for publication" [3]. This paper talked about the papers rejected in "JAMA" were not in the same journal scope. That pushes me to look after the reasons which cause the rejection of the Iraqi paper by. Rejection manuscripts are not for the same reasons, some journals are rejected due to fails the technical screening or if the manuscript is not according to scope, not a full study, defective data, or others [1]. In general, the high-impact journal scrutinizes authors' manuscripts intensely before submitted, Dr. Peter Thrower, the Editor-in-Chief of "Carbo" international journal advised authors to avoid eight mistakes to avoid rejection, he says "By avoiding these pitfalls, you will save reviewers,

editors and staff time and frustration, and ensure that your work is judged by its scientific merit, not mistakes". the eight mistakes are: -

1. any missing or false in technical screening. the main rejection reasons in this case are, First of all, plagiarism which is any elements that may be taken from other articles, Second, if the article is sent to another journal and is still under review (non-ethical), Third, manuscript still incomplete (such as the title, authors, affiliations, keywords, main text, references, and all tables and figures), Fourth insufficient English, Fifth if tables or figures are not clear enough, Sixth if the references are old or incomplete.
2. If the manuscript doesn't fall within the journal Scope.
3. If the study is incomplete such as incomplete discussion or if there is an ignoring of other important work.
4. If there is a disorder in procedures or data analysis, Like, the study lacked clear control groups or other comparison metrics, the study did not conform to recognized procedures or methodology that can be repeated, the analysis is not statistically valid or does not follow the norms of the field.
5. The un justifying conclusion.
6. If the paper is a part taken from another large study.
7. If It's incomprehensible, for example, if language or figures are poor to read.
8. sometimes the work be boring [1], In addition of that peer review conceder as one of the factors supporting the publishing process, and gives different helps to support the manuscript, one of these helps is the comments on your work, they give their comments after read every single written line and make their best to understand your work and give recommendation, conversely, they need good responses whit their. comments as proof that the authors give sufficient notes and respect for

what they spent their time doing, that explains why it is difficult for journal publishers to find willing reviewers [2]. The peer-review established to unify the general scientific writing way around the world, to give the good research and sober publishing houses the credibility that they deserve, and to make the deal and searching easy beyond people who are interested in special field so the peer reviewers have a high experience each in own field, [4]. as well as the responses, must have a special and clear way, peer review responses are the real reaction of the authors with the reviewer opinion, so it is not acceptable to be lenient in interaction with the reviewer comments, it will show them the extent of credibility, seriousness, humility, and the laws obey. Otherwise, a carelessness impression will be stamped on your manuscript and that doesn't from you and your manuscript side [5]. In February 2020 the Nature journal and Nature Research journals carried out an initiative that gives the authors the option to publish their referee reports and responses to reviewers". these initiatives make peer review more transparent and hope it will become a standard, any way Whether authors publish their referee reports with paper or not, the responses way to reviewers' comments on submitted articles are essential to publication [5], The reviewers' comments definitely will improve the manuscript due to the valuable and insightful comments from the editors and reviewers, who are often experts in the field. journals usually invite two or three reviewers, some of them invite up to six reviewers, six reviewers seem a huge number and that means more harsh and conflicting comments on the manuscript, but the real fact is that will help to get a manuscript with the least error, any way authors have to celebrate that reviewers give their paper time to evaluate [6], some simple steps may help authors in responding to reviewers and get a positive decision first of all take your time to read and understand the comments when you get the feedback comments letter, start fixing and correcting, and remember that they give you proper time to make an edition, so they don't want you to reply immediately, you can wait a while (about two days) after you addressing comments and reread your responses, this period is very important it let your emotion calm so you don't regret later about impulsive responses[7, 8, 9].The purpose of this project is to know the main reasons that faced the Iraqi authors and impede them to publish the paper in high-impact journals, and are the insufficiently addressed responses one of the main reasons behind this, or is it a lack of knowledge or experience, or others? The aim is to raise the level of awareness of the Iraqi authors and thus qualify Iraqi manuscripts for acceptance in a high-quality scholarly journal

and facilitate cooperation between editors and authors.

## **2.EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM**

### **2.1. Apparatus and Procedures**

Questionnaires and telephone interviews were relied on in this study. These questionnaires were designed by specialists

### **2.2.Experimental Procedure**

The experimental procedures are listed below:

**1.**Questionnaires and interviews have been designed; the interviews were conducted with some chief editors of Iraqi journals. The questionnaires were two types, the first type is a questionnaire for researchers in general, reviewers, editors, authors, and others. The second type of questionnaire was a brief questionnaire, and it was intended only for editors, reviewers, and chief editors who worked or had previously worked in Iraqi journals and publishing houses.

**2.**The questionnaire was distributed via the Internet as links. About 344 author and researcher were surveyed by first questionnaire, and about 116 participants responded to the second questionnaire, they were had an experience due to that they as editors, reviewers, and editors in chief who working or had previously worked in Iraqi journals and publishing houses. The questionnaires were sent during October, November and Desember 2020 via internet , more than 30 Universities around 35raq including the following (Al-Mustansiriya University, University of kufa, Salahaddin University, Baghdad University, Central Technical University, Tikrit University, Al-Qadisiyah University, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, The two rivers university, Al-Furat university, Albasrah University , Al- Kafeel University, Babylon University, Hamdaniya University, Sumer University, Muthanna University, , University of Karbal, College of Medicine, Technology University, Ministry of Health, Al Kut University College, University of Duhok, Al-Karkh University of Science, University of Mosul, Dhi Qar University, Diyala University, Tigris University College, University of Kufa, Northern Technical University, College knowledge university, University of Babylon, Anbar University ).

**3.**survey had been collected during three months (October, November, and December at 2020).

### **2.3.Experimental Sets**

Two questionnaires of experiment were examined. IN the two questionnaires, all experiments 35participant answers were analysed using a SSPS program, and the information of the telephon interviews were has been writed down Table 1 includes the operating variables for these questionnaires.

**Table 1** Operating parameters values of the present work.

Questionnaire (1)		Questionnaire (2)	
Questions		Questions	
Age		Age	
Gender	Male	Gender	Male
	Female		Female
Marital status	Single	Marital status	Single
	Married		Married
Affiliation		Affiliation	
How many papers have you published so far?		Are you editors or chief editor or reviewer?	Yes
			No
How many papers have you published in local journals?		In your opinion, what are the reasons that prevent publication in high-impact journals?	a) Financial reasons
			b) lake experience
			c) The research is rejected after the first review
How many papers have you published in high impact journals as Scopus?		As an editor or a reviewer, what are the reasons for rejecting the research or the	a) lake experience
			b) poor English
			c) No new idea
Where do you prefer to publish your papers? In local journals or in high impact journals?	Local	Do shorts answers to the reviewers comments lead to	Yes
	High impact		No
Why do you prefer publishing in high impact journals? Why do you prefer publishing in high impact journals?			Some time
	a) Financial reasons		
	b) lake experience		
In your opinion, what are the reasons that prevent publication in high-impact journals?	c) The research is rejected after the first review		
	D) The search is rejected for unknown reasons		

### 3. RESULTS AND DESCUSSION

**3.1. Results of First and second questionnaire**

These results are listed in Tables 2 and 3 and samples of these results are presented graphically.

**Table 2** Experimental results of the first questionnaire.

Variations		Frequency			% Percentage		
<b>Age (years)</b>	30- 27	160			46.5%		
	35 – 30	34			9.9%		
	35<	150			43.6%		
	Total	344			100%		
<b>Gender</b>	Male	218			63.3%		
	female	126			36.6%		
	total	344			100%		
<b>Educational level</b>		BSc	MSc	PhD	BSc	MSc	PhD
	30- 27	92	68	0	26.7%	20%	0%
	35 – 30	4	29	1	1.2%	8.4%	0.3%
	35<	53	39	58	15.4%	11.3%	16.9%
	Total	149	136	59	43.3%	39.7%	17.2%
<b>Affiliation</b>	More than 25 university						
	Type of journal	Local journal	High impact journal	% Local journal		High impact %journal	
<b>Where do you prefer to publish your papers? In local journals or in high impact journals</b>	age						
	30- 27	66	94	19%	27.3%		
	35 – 30	12	22	3.4%	6.4%		
	35<	47	103	13.7	30%		
	total	125	219	36.1%	63.7%		
<b>How many papers have you published so far</b>	age	no. of papers					
	30- 27	143					
	35 – 30	120					
	35<	506					
	Total	769					
<b>How many papers have you published in local journals</b>		BSc	MSc	PhD	% 69.9		
	30- 27	7	112	0			
	35 – 30	1	49	13			
	35<	11	131	215			
	Total	18	292	228			
<b>How many papers have you published in high impact journals</b>		no. of papers					
		BSc	MSc	PhD			
	30- 27	1	23	0			
	35 – 30	0	55	2			
	35<	0	98	51			
Total	1	176	53				
<b>The reasons that prevent publication in high-impact journals</b>	age	Financial reasons	Lake experience	Rejection for unknown reason	Financial %reason	Lake experience	Rejection for unknown reason
	30- 27	75	52	34	21.8%	15%	9.8%
	35 – 30	21	0	13	6%	0%	3.8%
	35<	103	13	34	29.9%	3.8%	9.8%
	Total	199	65	80	57.8%	18.9%	23.3%

**Table 3.** Experimental results of the second questionnaire.

Variations		Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)		35>	
Gender		Male 79	68.1%
		female 37	31.9%
Affiliation		more than 25 university	
Are you editors or chief editor or reviewer?		Yes 114	100%
		No 0	
In your opinion, what are the reasons that prevent publication in high-impact journals?		no new in work idea 8	6.9%
		Authors poor English 46	39.7%
		lake experience 52	44.8%
		others 10	8.6%
As an editor or a reviewer, what are the reasons for rejecting the research or the		lake experience 73	63%
		poor English 33	28.50%
		No new idea 10	8.40%
Do shorts answers to the reviewers comments lead to ?manuscript rejection		Yes 38	32.50%
		No 44	38.50%
		Some time 34	29.10

Figs. 1,2 and 3 represent the age of participant in general that is G1 (27 to 30), G2 (31 to 35), and G3 (Older than35) and the gender of participant dose can be shown in Figs.2, and Figs.3. shown the educational level of them.

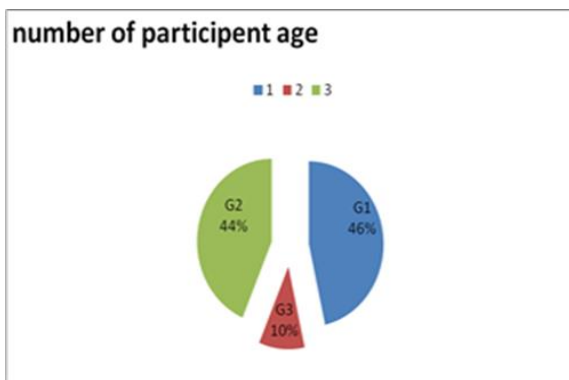


Fig.1. Represent the age of participant in general.

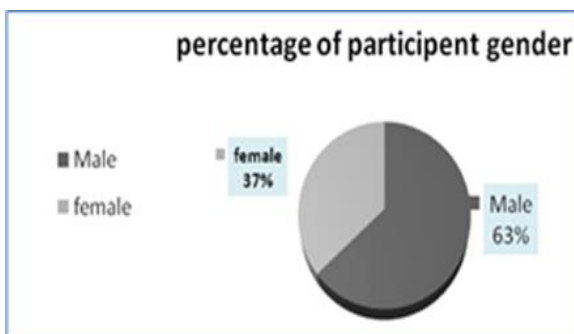


Fig.2. Represent the participants gender ratio.

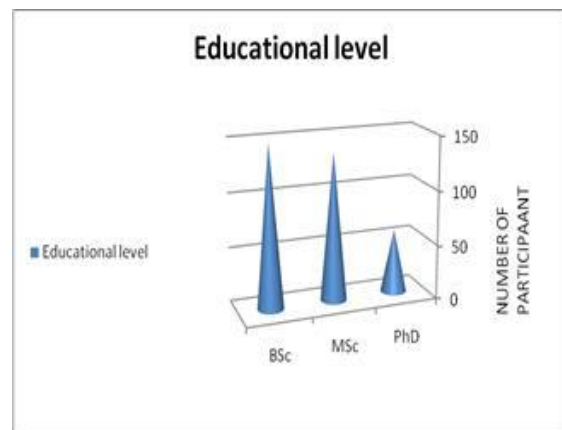
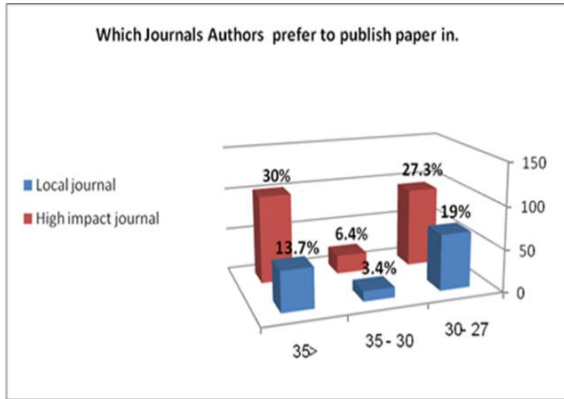


Fig.3. Represent the Educational level of participants.

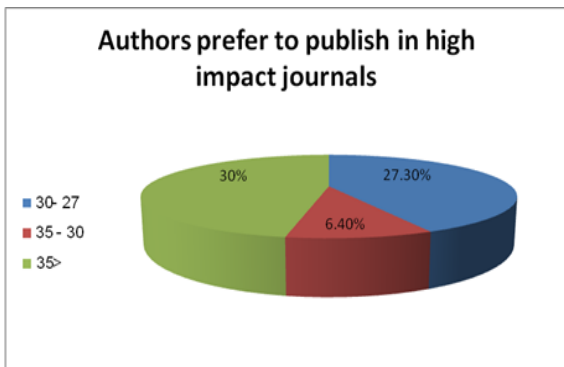
### 3.2. Ordinary local journal vs high impact journals.

Fig. 4(a) Shown the ratio of journals which Authors prefer to publish in as we see 19% of authors in age 27 to 30 prefer published in local journals and 27.3% prefer published in high impact journals, 3.4 % of authors in age 27 to 30 prefer published in local journals and 6.4 % prefer published in high impact journals, and 13.7 % of authors in age 27 to 30 prefer published in local journals and 30 % prefer published in high impact journals, so we see that High impact journals are the preferring Journals. Fig. 4 (b) shown that 63.7% of participants have desire to publish in high impact journal and Fig. 4 (c) shown that just 29.8 % of participants had publish in high impact journal and that because of different reasons.

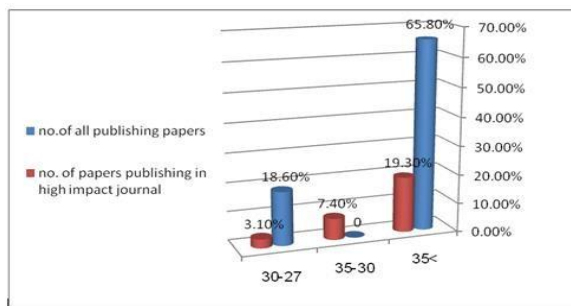




**Fig.4.a.** The ratio of journals which Authors prefer to publish in.



**Fig.4. b.** show that 63.7% of participants have desire to publish in high impact journal



**Fig.4. c.** shows that just 29.8 % of participants had publish in high impact journal

### 3.3. The factors that limit some Authors to publish in high impact journals

The following Tables 4 shows the frequencies and percentages of age category groups and the different obstacles that limit authors from publishing in high-impact journals. The questions were (open end questions) but all the varied answers were centered around three main obstacles, they were as follows: Financial reasons, Lake experiences, and Rejection of manuscript for unknown reasons. The table indicated that a 30% of the highest age group (>35 age range group) said that the financial reasons as one of important obstacles to prevent them to publish in high impact journal followed by 21% and 6.0% to (27-30 age range groups) and (30 -35 age range group) respectively they haven't the proper price to cover the publishing cost so they prefer to publish in local journals, so financial reason has more than 57%. 18.8% it's the total percipient percentage who said that lake experience it's the main obstacles reason as 3.8% of (>35 age range group), and 15% of (27-30 age range groups). Finally, 9.8% of (27-30 age range groups), (>35 age range group), and 3.8 to (30 -35 age range group) said their manuscript reject to unknown reasons, the gap between variation seem clear as shown in following Fig.5. Authors also can find some template help to arrange the comment responding see " A template for responding to peer reviewer comments" [8]

**Table 4.** Represent the relationship between the Iraqi authors age and the obstacles that prevent them to publish in high impact journal

variables	%Of total	Age			total	per-centage
		27 to 30 G1	30 to 35 G2	Older than 35 G3		
Financial reasons	Count	75	21	103	199	57.9%
	% of Total	21.8%	6.0%	30.1%	57.9%	
Lake experiences	Count	52	0	13	65	18.8%
	% of Total	15.0%	0%	3.8%	18.8%	
Rejection of man- uscript for un- known reasons	Count	34	13	34	80	23.3%
	% of Total	9.8%	3.8%	9.80%	23.3%	
total		161	34	150	344	100%

Fig. 5 Shown the relationship between the authors age and the different obstacles that limit them to publish in high impact journals.

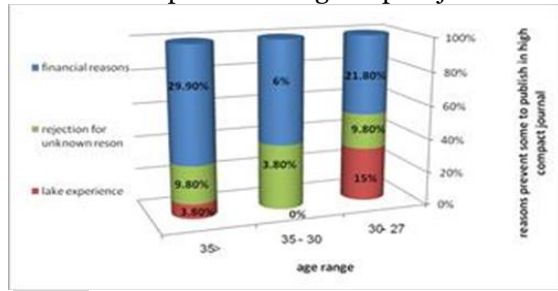


Fig.5. Represent the relationship between the authors age and the obstacles that limit them to publish in high impact journals.

One of Iraqi editor in chief who work at Karbala International Journal of Modern Science, also agree about these results, he said: that the main reason they looking after it, is the English language, and about insufficient addressing responses he said that there is about one third (33.3%) of rejected manuscript its due the non-suitable addressing comments which may be because lake experience. Question directed to 116 evaluators whom work in different journals or publishing houses, it was (Open end question) about if the "Insufficient addressing responses on reviewers' comments and short answers effect on manuscripts acceptance?". The evaluators said that "even if authors publish in high impact journals, almost these journals were local journal (subjected to Scopus or other classification). Because if you try to publish in not local high impact journals it will be more difficult , the trigger behind that is the valuation staff of the local journal have more consciousness about the general situation of the country and the authors education and culture level, so the acceptance be more easier, and this is the reason behind the rise of journals rank through the quarters (Q1, Q2, Q3,Q4) affiliated with these classifications". All of them endorsed that the poor English language is behind the limited ambition to ascending more higher rank in international journals because authors cannot convince the international evaluators of

their point of view. The following Fig.6. shows the frequencies and percentages of evaluators category and effects of ineffective addressed responses from their perspective.

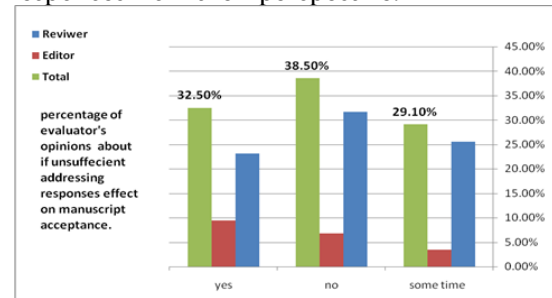


Fig.6. Represent the relationship between the evaluators category and effects of insufficient addressed responses on rejection authors manuscripts from their perspective.

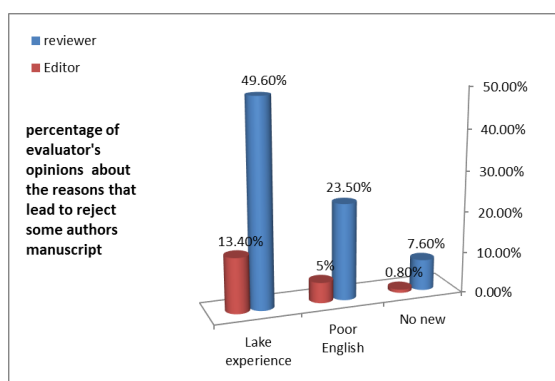
**3.4. Different reasons to insufficient responses:**

The following table shows the frequencies and percentages of evaluators category and different reason to insufficient responses. The table indicate that 63% of valuator said that Iraqi authors haven't the enough experiences to make a sufficient response which suitable the committee of evaluation, 28.6% of them said poor English is the main reason to reject the manuscripts and just 8.4% whom said that the authors not have any new idea in their manuscript so they not responses to comments which ask about. Fig.7. shows these results.

Table.5. Represent the relationship between the evaluators category and their opinion about the reasons to insufficient responses from their perspective

Variables	% of total	category			percentage	$\chi^2$	Sig
		Editor	reviewer	total			
Lake experience	Count	16	59	75	%	.813 <sup>a</sup>	.666
	% of Total	13.4%	49.6%	63.0%			
Poor English	Count	6	28	34	28.6%		
	% of Total	5.0%	23.5%	28.6%			
No new	Count	1	7.6%	10	8.4%		
	% of total	0.8%		8.4%			
Total	Count	23	96	119	100%		
	%of total	19.3%	80.7	100%			





**Fig.7.** Represent the relationship between the evaluators category and reasons of insufficient responses from their sight.

The chart Fig.6. showed that the insufficient responses significantly affect the Iraqi research publication, and chart Fig.7. showed the reasons these results agree with study done by (MilapC. Nahata et al) during four decades explained the reason behind designing the system of peer review, the study showed that there is variation between authors about answering reviewers comments, the variability occurs due to the limitation of the experience, so this system helped to avoid unbiased and getting final decision, and about variability reasons the study explained that authors ignoring comment or made incomplete responses, sometimes they were not specific about what and where they made the correction, sometimes they failed to address the contradicting comments in addition to they not know how they explain the real value for them work, some of them seem that they havent a new idea deu to pooper english which also play role to confused the authoers, finally some authors havent time and motivation so they give up simply and that lead to delay or simply reject the manuscript [7].

#### 4. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The collected data were statistically analysed using the SPSS. we used frequencies and Chi-Square ( $X^2$ ) to determine the relationship between Data. Differences were considered significant if  $P \geq 0.05$ .

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

The results revealed that there are many reasons limit Iraqi authors from publication in high impact journals, and the study clarified these reasons from the viewpoint of the Iraqi authors, and the point of view of evaluators of these manuscripts. As for the opinions of authors, the most important obstacles were the following: financial reasons, lack of experience, and rejection to un knowing reasons, in other hand evaluators said that the work repetition, lack experiences and poor English were the main reasons to reject the manuscripts, and the

insufficient responses significantly affect the Iraqi authors publication.

#### 6. RECOMMENDATION

**1-**its recommending to make a study to compare the different opinion of different expert specialization of peer reviewers to study the authors responses and draw a standard line to learn Iraqi authors how they addressed the peer reviewers comments, and taking in to consideration the opinion of reviewers and editors in Iraqi journal to be more real and effective.,

**2-**Developing a plan include programs to teach how to write scientific papers and how to respond to the comments of the different reviewers, each according to his point of view, and include this plan within the curricula required for awarding a master's degree.

**3-**Awareness master's students about the importance of learning English language, so it help to opens up great knowledge horizons for students to develop their expertise and information, each within his/her specialization, because it is the first and most widespread scientific language using in science and research publishing around the world and it used also to setting different international standards in various disciplines In various fields, which help them to developing and getting more expertise.

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