

Geosci. Commun. Discuss., referee comment RC2
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Comment on gc-2021-14

Anonymous Referee #2

Referee comment on "About right: references in open-access EGU (European Geosciences Union) journals" by Andrea Pozzer, Geosci. Commun. Discuss.,
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The submitted manuscript presents a study dedicated to determining the average number of references per page in the Open Access EGU journals, considering the timeframe 2010-2020. The title and the abstract well present the paper and describe the topic. The structure of the paper comprises Introduction, Methodology, Temporal trends, Results, Conclusions and Bibliography.

Overall, the paper presents a case study well defined. However, some comments are necessary:

- Although the case study is well defined considering only the journals of a specific publisher within a well-determined time frame, a clear description of the research question is lacking. Is this just a statistical analysis or does it provide implications on the publication of papers in these journals (as it seems from the conclusions)?
- Stating that "pages or references limit should be strongly avoided in journals, as authors could be discouraged to describe their study with sufficient details" is quite a strong conclusion that requires a further discussion and a deeper analysis. Furthermore, given the analysed data, which refer only to some specific EGU Open Access journals in a specific time frame, it is not possible to get to this general conclusion;
- Although the text is overall well written and easy to read, a better distribution of the information has to be considered. For example, the first paragraphs of the section "Temporal trends" would better fit the "Introduction" section. Moreover, once the research question is clearly defined, more space could be given to the discussion of the results, which here seems quite limited.

Here is a list of necessary technical corrections. However, further attention must be paid in revisioning the whole manuscript from the grammatical point of view:

- Line 25: XML in capital letters;

- Line 29: "has remained"
- Line 30: "In Sect. 2"
- Line 30: "the methods for data collection are explained"
- Line 34: "at the latest"
- Line 48: "Python"
- Line 59: "(os—14-471-2018)"
- Line 65: "Ucar et al. (2014)"
- Line 86: "more manuscripts"
- Line 86: "number of citations"
- Line 88: "on the specific topic"
- Line 101: "Fig. 1"
- Line 113: "Fig. 2"
- Line 122: there is something wrong with the phrasing "Abt and Garfield (e.g. number of authors 2002)"
- Line 122: "the journal layout plays..."
- Line 142: "discouraged"
- Table 1: "...journal characteristics. The number of..."
- Table 1: "The number of papers analysed in each journal is listed"
- Table 1: "as well as"
- Table 1: "...the number of papers excluded..."
- Table 1: "...as outliers. The papers..."
- Table 1: "...and the highest..."