



# The interplay of author and editor gender in acceptance delays: evidence from accounting journals

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## Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the impact of the gender of editors and authors, as well as their interaction, on acceptance delays (ACCDEL) of articles. We focus on genders of the corresponding author and the editor overseeing the manuscript. Using data from three top accounting journals from 2015 to 2020, we conduct a regression analysis to test the hypotheses regarding longer ACCDEL for articles under female editorship or authors, those with gender-opposite editor-author pairs, and those with coincident genders editor-author pairs. We find that when the genders of editors and corresponding authors differ, there is a significant increase in ACCDEL compared to submissions where the genders of editors and corresponding authors match. Our results suggest the existence of a prevalent gender homophily effect.

**Keywords** Gender editor · Gender author · Acceptance delay · Publication delay · Accounting · Business

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## Introduction

While the presence of women in academia has recently increased, female academics are still less likely to be tenured and promoted to top-ranking positions (Lundberg & Stearns, 2019; Meschitti & Marini, 2023). One reason for such underrepresentation is attributed to the gap in research productivity that exists between male and female academics (Ductor et al., 2023; Eagly & Miller, 2016). Extensive evidence indicates a gender gap in the academic publishing system, affecting authors, editors, and referees across most academic fields, including accounting discipline (Dhanani & Jones, 2017; Larivière et al., 2013; Lerback & Hanson, 2017; Uribe-Bohorquez et al., 2023). Female underrepresentation is particularly pronounced in the leading author role, as well as in the appointments of referees and editors, in top scientific journals (Holman et al., 2018; Jagsi et al., 2006; Joanis & Patil, 2022; Uribe-Bohorquez et al., 2023).

Considering this gender disparity, numerous studies have investigated the impact of the authors' and referees' gender on the outcomes of the editorial process. These studies aim to determine to what extent, if any, female authors are at a disadvantage in terms of acceptance for publication of research articles and their impact. The results of this research are mixed. Witteman et al. (2019) provide evidence that male researchers receive more research funding than female across countries and disciplines. Budden et al. (2008) and Roberts and Verhoef (2016) find that implementing double-blind reviewing reduces bias against female authors in the rankings of conference papers and published papers in academic journals respectively. While Squazzoni et al. (2021) examined gender bias in the peer review process of 145 academic journals across various disciplines and concluded that, globally, peer review and editorial decisions do not penalize female-authored manuscripts, Fox and Paine (2019) found that female-authored manuscripts have lower acceptance rates and are less well cited than are papers authored by men in ecology and evolution discipline. Referring to top economics journals, Card et al. (2020) found no significant difference in the referee gender effect when assessing female-authored versus male-authored manuscripts. However, they concluded that globally, female-authored papers are held to a higher standard, as evidenced by their having 25% more citations on average compared to similar male-authored papers.

While there exists a substantial body of research examining the effects of authors' and referees' genders on publishing outcomes, studies investigating the impact of editors' gender on these outcomes remain limited. Editors play an important role in the publishing process; they are in charge of desk rejections, referees' appointments, the resolution of possible conflicts between referees' recommendations, communication with authors, and, ultimately, the acceptance decisions on research manuscripts. Most studies have focused on tracking the evolution of gender composition within editorial boards across various scientific disciplines, concluding that female representation in editorial boards has been increasing over time but still is not sufficient, especially in top journals (Alter et al., 2020; Dhanani & Jones, 2017; Fitzpatrick et al., 2023; Metz & Harzing, 2012).

However, only a few studies have assessed the influence of editors' gender on editorial outcomes. Bransch and Kvasnicka (2022) explored whether the gender composition of editorial boards is related to the publishing success of female authors and to the quality of articles that get published. The authors concluded that a higher level of female representation on editorial boards increases the share of published articles authored by women and the quality of articles. However, their data do not allow for the identification of the editor, and her/his gender, overseeing and deciding on each concrete paper.

Furthermore, concerning the editorial outcome variables, studies typically focused on the acceptance rate of manuscripts authored by females versus those authored by males and their comparative citation impact, but largely overlooked another important editorial outcome, such as publication delays.

Long publication delays are a significant concern in the academic community, as they hinder the rapid dissemination of knowledge, impeding the progress of scientific disciplines and individual careers of researchers (Ding & Du, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2015). Publication delays are notably prolonged in the social sciences, specifically in economics and business, and have been increasing over time (Björk & Solomon, 2013). To the best of our knowledge, few studies have analyzed factors determining publication delays in relation to the authors' gender (Card et al., 2020; Hengel, 2022). But the interaction between the gender of both, the editor and the corresponding author, and publication delays, remains largely unexplored, especially in accounting and management disciplines. Additionally, the gender of the editor overseeing the article has not been previously studied.

The current study seeks to examine the impact of the genders of editors overseeing the manuscripts and authors, as well as their interaction, on ACCDEL in accounting journals. We focus on acceptance, instead of publication delay, because most of the latter is caused by the ACCDEL (Lotriet, 2012) and because it is the delay that can be attributed to the editor. Additionally, we focus on accounting because its acceptance delay is between the highest in social sciences and has been increasing over time (Argilés-Bosch et al., 2023).

It is important to note that the acceptance delay cannot be attributed solely to the editor. The initial steps of the submission process, including receiving manuscripts and identifying suitable reviewers, constitute a complex procedure (Zazygva et al., 2017). Reviewers often decline invitations, and those who accept typically take a substantial amount of time to complete their reviews (Breuning et al., 2015). Authors may also require significant time to revise their manuscripts, and various other factors can influence the delay. In this context, Argilés-Bosch et al., (2023) emphasize that acceptance delays depend on a complex interplay of qualitative and unobserved factors that are difficult to quantify. However, rather than focusing on the total delay, our interest lies in examining the differential delay influenced by the interaction of author and editor gender.

We contribute to the existing research on gendered academic publishing, offering detailed analyses of the relationships between editor and author gender, as well as their different opposite and coincident gender combinations, and ACCDEL, which remains largely unexplored. Our study also provides evidence of a significant gender homophily effect on the ACCDEL of articles, particularly impacting female authors, given that the majority of submissions are overseen by male editors, in an area where previous research is almost non-existent. Additionally, we offer empirical multivariate research on publication delay, specifically on ACCDEL, an area where previous research has primarily been univariate.

In the next section, we develop our hypotheses. Next, we describe our empirical model, data collection and sample, followed by descriptions of the results, discussion and conclusions.

## Hypotheses development

As we highlight in the introduction, the academic publishing system is characterized by a gender disparity, with female underrepresentation being especially pronounced in key academic and editorial appointments, as well as in published research articles in top journals.

Accounting discipline is not an exception. Dhanani and Jones (2017) indicate that although women representation in editorial boards of accounting journals improved over time, women are still under-represented as editors and on boards of higher ranked journals. In such a male-dominated environment, minority groups, such as women in editorial committees and academic authorship (Liu et al., 2023), may experience anxiety and fear of underperforming.

Studies have shown that people, of both genders, tend to view men with higher expertise than women, suggesting potential challenges for women to exert influence in decision-making processes due to biases in expertise perception (Chang & Cesare, 2020). Inzlicht and Ben-Zeev (2000) found that women may feel threatened in male-dominated areas and experience problem solving deficits. Eagly et al. (1992) found that the devaluation of women was more pronounced in male-dominated roles, indicating the challenges faced by women in such environments. Similar to other prestigious, male-dominated professions such as corporate executives, the image of a prominent scientist clashes with the female gender stereotype, which typically associates women with higher levels of communion and lower levels of agency (Eagly, 2020; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Mareque et al., 2022). This incongruity may put female editors under additional stress of being perceived and evaluated less favorably than men editors in a similar position. Women confront stronger difficulties to attain leadership positions than men, and they must demonstrate extra competence (Dambrin & Lambert, 2012; Garcia-Blandon et al., 2019). As a result, female academics in leadership positions, such as editors, may take longer to fulfill their duties due to the fear of confirming negative stereotypes (Steele, 1997).

In terms of basic psychological traits, women are often recognized as being more prudent and risk-averse compared to men, as evidenced by the meta-analysis conducted by Byrnes et al. (1999), and most studies reviewed by Croson and Gneezy (2009). Charness and Gneezy (2012) find that women invest less, and thus appear to be more financially risk averse than men. In this regard, audit studies have revealed that female auditors are usually more motivated than men to reduce the litigation and reputational risks stemming from poor quality or errors in financial statements (Hardies et al., 2021). This tendency can lead to female authors spending more time revising and resubmitting their manuscripts, resulting in longer periods before acceptance (Coffman, 2014; Exley & Kessley, 2022). Hengel (2022) discovered that female authors in economics journals typically have higher writing quality, measured in terms of readability. This enhanced quality often results in more time spent writing and rewriting their manuscripts and longer publication delays compared to their male counterparts. Likewise, the research reviewing funding research proposals supports the idea that women are more diligent in preparation of their proposals (Bornmann et al., 2007). In addition to this, women may write and submit at a slower pace due to consistently high academic service loads (Alter et al., 2020), as well as childbearing and family duties can be an obstacle (Forster, 2000).

We therefore raise the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1** Female editors in charge of the manuscript's acceptance are associated with longer ACCDEL.

**Hypothesis 2** Female-authored manuscripts are associated with longer ACCDEL.

**Hypothesis 3** Since female editors and corresponding authors are associated with longer ACCDEL, the combination of having a female editor and a female corresponding author

results in a longer delay compared to considering only the gender of the editor or the corresponding author individually.

Conscious or unconscious gender biases against individuals of the opposite gender can influence the editorial process, particularly affecting publishing outcomes. Previous research has primarily focused on the gender dynamics between referees and authors, yielding mixed findings (Card et al., 2020; Fox & Paine, 2019; Squazzoni et al., 2021). Yet, in the blind review system, authors and referees remain anonymous to each other. However, the relationship between editors and authors is marked by both parties being aware of each other's identities. This lack of anonymity may lead to biases influenced by gender perceptions.

The theoretical basis supporting the next hypotheses revolves around the theory from sociology, particularly gender homophily. Homophily suggests that individuals tend to associate and favor those who share similar characteristics or identities (McPherson et al., 2001). Gender homophily refers to the tendency for individuals to associate and collaborate more with others of the same gender. This principle extends into academic publishing dynamics, where gender homophily manifests in the interactions between editors, referees and authors. The study by Holman and Morandin (2019) demonstrated a higher tendency for same-gender collaborations among researchers in the life sciences. Helmer et al. (2017) identified substantial same-gender preferences among editors when appointing reviewers, indicating a likelihood of gender-based biases in the review process. Research by Murray et al. (2019) supported the correlation between the gender and country congruence of editors and authors with higher acceptance rates, reinforcing the impact of gender homophily on publishing outcomes. Malkinson et al. (2023) showed that senior editors predominantly appoint reviewing editors of the same gender. This tendency was observed in most of the disciplines and was stronger in more gender-balanced scientific disciplines. Based on this evidence, it can be concluded that gender homophily significantly influences academic publishing, potentially resulting in both female and male editors displaying smoother communication and preferential treatment towards authors of the same gender. We therefore raise the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 4** Opposite-gender combinations of the editor and manuscript author are associated with longer ACCDEL compared to instances where their genders coincide.

Furthermore, when the editor is male and the corresponding author is female, the aforementioned female tendencies in publishing process can be exacerbated. Due to tendencies toward prudence and lower confidence levels compared to men, a female author in contact with an influential male editor may experience a fear of not meeting the high-quality standards of top journals, leading to considerable time spent on improving and revising the manuscript (Hengel, 2022). It is also possible that manuscripts authored by women are held to higher standards compared to those authored by men (Card et al., 2020; Grossbard et al., 2021; Lerback & Hanson, 2017) resulting in a greater number of revisions and more prolonged ACCDEL.

Considering women editor and male author combination, the dynamic of publishing process is less clear. On one hand, women editors, in safeguarding their reputation, are likely to be cautious and diligent in their decision-making, which could extend the publishing process. However, on the other hand, in terms of their fundamental psychological traits, male authors are not likely to experience the same degree of insecurity as female authors.

In fact, men tend to exhibit higher levels of overconfidence compared to women across various domains, including investment decisions, competition, and decision-making under uncertainty (Barber & Odean, 2001; Niederle & Vesterlund, 2011). Although we do not expect male authors to spend as much time on revisions on average as female authors do, potentially leading to shorter ACCDEL, female editors overseeing the manuscript may be more demanding and require further revisions.

Therefore, there is no clear argument supporting the predominance of one of the opposite combinations, where either the female editor or the female author is more likely to cause delays. Consequently, we propose the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 5** There is no difference in ACCDEL between opposite gender combinations, where the editor is male and the corresponding author is female, compared to the alternative combination involving a female editor and a male corresponding author.

Referring to coincident editor-author gender interactions, we hypothesize that manuscripts under male editorship and with male corresponding authors will experience shorter ACCDEL compared to those with female leads. Research indicates that in male-dominated work environments, men tend to form professional social networks that are more homophilic than women, meaning they are more likely to connect and interact with other men who share similar characteristics or backgrounds and to benefit from such interactions strategically (Ibarra, 1992). Academic networks are no exception, with evidence suggesting that accounting academic networks are elite-centered and male-dominated (Uribe-Bohorquez et al., 2023). Such networks could facilitate faster communication, smoother interactions, and quicker decision-making processes for manuscripts authored by men. Female academic professional networks are typically smaller and less effective (Ductor et al., 2023) and less homophilic in comparison to the masculine ones (Helmer et al., 2017). In addition, some studies have shown that senior academic women are not always favorably disposed toward younger and less experienced colleagues. According to the 'queen bee' syndrome (Staines et al., 1974), women in leadership positions, working in male-dominated environments, may denigrate subordinate women to preserve their own status (Ellemers et al., 2004). Consequently, the homophily factor may be limited by the queen bee syndrome to a certain extent when the editor is a woman and the author a man. We therefore formulate the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 6** A coincident gender combination, where both the editor and corresponding author are female, is hypothesized to be associated with a longer delay compared to the combination involving a male editor and corresponding author.

## Empirical model

To test our hypotheses, we formulate a model, where *ACCDEL*, the number of days between submission and acceptance, depends on the gender of both, editor and corresponding author, and a set of control variables used by Ellison (2002) and Argilés-Bosch et al.,

(2023). Given that the dependent variable is a count variable and assuming overdispersion in count data,<sup>1</sup> the model is specified as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbb{E}(\text{ACCDEL}_i) = & \exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot \text{FEMEDIT}_i + \beta_2 \cdot \text{FEMCORAUT}_i \\ & + \beta_3 \cdot \text{NUMPAGE}_i + \beta_4 \cdot \text{NUMREF}_i + \beta_5 \cdot \text{NUMAUTH}_i \\ & + \beta_6 \cdot \text{TOPAUTH}_i + \beta_7 \cdot \text{TOPAFIL}_i + \beta_8 \cdot \text{INCNUMART}_i \\ & + \beta_9 \cdot \text{USAFIL}_i + \sum_{m=1}^7 \delta_m \cdot \text{JOURNAL}_{m,i} + \sum_{n=1}^8 \gamma_n \cdot \text{YEAR}_{n,i} + \varepsilon) \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

where *i* refers to a specific article,  $\varepsilon$  is the error term,  $\beta$ ,  $\delta$  and  $\gamma$  are parameters to be estimated, and *m* and *n*, are the number of dummy variables for country and year respectively. All variables are explained in detail in the appendix.

*FEMEDIT* is a dummy variable indicating with value 1, and zero otherwise, that the editor managing and deciding on manuscript’s publication is female. *FEMCORAUT* is also a dummy variable identifying that the corresponding author of the manuscript is female. We prioritize the gender of the corresponding author because they usually play the leading role, communicate with the editor, represent the research team, and are assumed to be the main author of the manuscript. These two variables test Hypotheses 1 and 2 respectively.

To test the following hypotheses we use gender combinations of editor and corresponding author. *FEMEDFEMCORA* (editor and corresponding authors are females) is the interaction variable between *FEMEDIT* and *FEMCORAUT*, which allows test for Hypothesis H3 when it is added to Eq. (1). To test Hypothesis 4 we replace the experimental variables *FEMEDIT* and *FEMCORAUT* by the dummy *OPGENDER*, indicating with value 1 and zero otherwise, that both, editor and corresponding author, are of opposite gender. To test Hypothesis 5 and 6 we use dummies for different combinations of editor and corresponding author genders: the previously mentioned *FEMEDFEMCORA*, *FEMEDMALCORA* (editor is female, but corresponding author is male) and *MALEDFEMCORA* (editor is male and corresponding author is female), with value 1 identifying these characteristics, and zero otherwise. The default variable is for articles where male editors oversee male corresponding authors.

The number of articles’ pages, references and authors (*NUMPAGE*, *NUMREF*, and *NUMAUTH* respectively) are indicators of length, elaboration and complexity. In this vein, longer papers, and those with more references and authors may require more effort to read and analyze the confluence of various skills and theoretical underpinnings, requiring longer reviewing times, as found by Ellison (2002) and Argilés-Bosch et al., (2023).

Editorial workload may also influence *ACCDEL*, as higher burdens may slow the review procedure, and contrarily, lower workloads may speed the process. However, opposite behaviors are also possible to alleviate editorial workload when the number of submissions increases, as in these cases editors may increase desk rejections. Argilés-Bosch et al., (2023) found a significant positive relationship between editorial workload and *ACCDEL*. We use the increase in the number of published articles with rapport to previous year in the journal publishing the article (*INCNUMART*) to control for this characteristic.

<sup>1</sup> The mean of the dependent variable in our sample is 709.2 and its variance 97,062.5. Additionally, we estimate negative binomial for variables in Eq. (1) and the LR test of alpha=0 provides a  $\text{chibar2}(01)=9.7e+04$  with a  $\text{Prob}>=\text{chibar2}=0.000$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis of no overdispersion is rejected.

The seminal work by Peters and Ceci (1982) highlighted the crucial role played by prestigious authors and institutions in influencing manuscript acceptance. Swanson et al. (2007) revealed a pronounced concentration of top authors and institutions, particularly in premier journals, with a notable emphasis on top accounting journals. Petty et al. (1999) found a significant association between the prestige of authors and institutions and editors' decisions. These insights reveal an enduring impact of author and institutional prestige on the editorial evaluation process. *TOPAUTH* and *TOPAFIL* are dummy variables indicating that the corresponding author is a top author and belongs to a top institution, respectively.

Additionally, there exists a noteworthy concentration of US affiliation in top accounting journals (Buchheit et al., 2002; Evans, 2013) which suggests a potential influence on ACCDEL and underscores the importance of controlling for such affiliations. With this purpose we use the dummy variable *USAFIL*.

We additionally control for journal specific procedures and the increasing trend ACCDEL, as evidenced in previous research (Argilés-Bosch et al., 2023; Ellison, 2002) with dummies for journal and publication year.

All variables are winsorized at the 1% level in each tail to avoid influential cases distorting results, as is common in empirical business research (Argilés-Bosch et al., 2021; Di & Li, 2023; Le et al., 2022).

## Data and sample

We selected the three journals considered mainstream and the most important in the accounting discipline, which are usually included in similar studies (Buchheit et al., 2002; Swanson, 2004). They have consistently ranked in the first quartile in JCR over time. These three journals are the Journal of Accounting Research (JAR), The Accounting Review (TAR), and the Journal of Accounting and Economics (JAE). These journals usually disclose information about the editor who oversaw and decided on the manuscript on the first page of the article, which is not usually the case in most accounting journals. We limited to six years the period of analysis (2010–2015), the necessary to calculate the five-year JIF index. The slow elaboration of some data, including the manual collection of data on the gender of authors and editors, makes it impossible, and even inadvisable, to have a very up-to-date sample of data.

The three journals provide early access to accepted articles a few days after acceptance. They also publish annual reports on their websites, which include information about turnaround times for paper decisions and accepted articles. The JAE provides updated editorial data in each of its four issues per year. The latest available rejection rates (as on January 2, 2025) are notably high, standing at 92%, for JAE, 91% for JAR, and a ranging from 70–86% for TAR depending on the year of the manuscript submission.<sup>2</sup>

We downloaded data on the number of published articles by these journals, from Web of Science (WoS) on February 12, 2024. WoS also provided rankings of authors and affiliations for these journals and years considered. We refined these rankings analyzing repeated names. We set a threshold of five articles published in the three journals of our sample

<sup>2</sup> The corresponding data can be found at (accessed on January 2, 2025):

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0165410124000752>

<https://www.chicagobooth.edu/research/chookaszian/journal-of-accounting-research/statistics>

<https://aaahq.org/portals/0/documents/journals/journal-information-packets/2023/TAR%20Annual%20Report%202023%20FINAL.pdf>

**Table 1** Sample and data screening

|   | JAR  | TAR  | JAE  | Total | %     |
|---|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| <b>Panel A: Sample formation</b>  |      |      |      |       |       |
| Number of articles downloaded with webscrape                            | 187  | 476  | 234  | 897   |       |
| Number of articles with data on submission and acceptance dates         | 176  | 473  | 221  | 870   |       |
| Number of articles with data on editor gender                           | 185  | 469  | 194  | 848   |       |
| Number of articles with data on corresponding author gender             | 185  | 476  | 234  | 895   |       |
| Number of articles with data on editor and corresponding author genders | 183  | 469  | 194  | 846   |       |
| Number of articles with data on submission/acceptance dates and genders | 174  | 467  | 184  | 825   |       |
| Number of articles with data in all variables and final sample          | 174  | 467  | 184  | 825   | 100.0 |
| <b>Panel B: Gender in the data sample</b>                               |      |      |      |       |       |
| Number of male editors  | 171  | 355  | 126  | 652   | 79.0  |
| Number of female editors  | 3    | 112  | 58   | 173   | 21.0  |
| % of female editors   | 1.7  | 24.0 | 31.5 | 21.0  |       |
| Number of male corresponding author                                     | 131  | 337  | 151  | 619   | 75.0  |
| Number of female corresponding author                                   | 43   | 130  | 33   | 206   | 25.0  |
| % of female corresponding authors                                       | 24.7 | 27.8 | 17.9 | 25.0  |       |
| Number of female editor and female corresponding author                 | 0    | 26   | 11   | 37    | 4.5   |
| Number of female editor and male corresponding author                   | 3    | 86   | 47   | 136   | 16.5  |
| Number of male editor and female corresponding author                   | 43   | 104  | 22   | 169   | 20.5  |
| Number of male editor and male corresponding author                     | 128  | 251  | 104  | 483   | 58.5  |
| <b>Panel C: observations by year</b>                                    |      |      |      |       |       |
| 2015  | 26   | 83   | 20   | 129   | 15.6  |
| 2016  | 25   | 70   | 36   | 131   | 15.9  |
| 2017  | 32   | 60   | 35   | 127   | 15.4  |
| 2018  | 32   | 83   | 31   | 146   | 17.7  |
| 2019  | 30   | 83   | 34   | 147   | 17.8  |
| 2020  | 29   | 88   | 28   | 145   | 17.6  |

over the six-year period studied, identifying 61 authors publishing five or more articles. These authors co-authored 22% of all articles (11% if we only consider the corresponding authors). Lowering the threshold to four articles would increase the number of top authors by 70. For top institutions we considered 27 articles published in these three journals, generating a list of 23 institutions that affiliated co-authors in 63% of all articles published during the period. However, the percentage of corresponding authors affiliated with top institutions was much lower (43%). The following two institutions in the ranking each published 24 articles.

We obtained most of the remaining necessary data for our study, including the names of the authors and their affiliations, submission and acceptance dates, number of pages, references, and other details, through a web scrape procedure from the journals’ websites.

We hand-collected data regarding the gender of the corresponding author and the editor who oversaw the manuscript. In instances where names seemed controversial or unclear, we conducted further research on the individuals through their personal and affiliated institutional websites, including examining photos and bio descriptions, until

their gender could be conclusively ascertained. In cases where gender determination was challenging, we recorded a missing in the corresponding field.

Panel A in Table 1 provides data about sample formation. We downloaded data of a total number of 897 articles, of which 870 presenting full data on submission and acceptance dates allowed the calculation of the ACCDEL. TAR publishes more articles than the other two journals. While the TAR and JAR provide information on the editor that accepted the article, the JAE does not always do it. Only in 194 JAE articles downloaded in the web scrapping we got information about the editor's gender. Considering all journals, the number of articles with available data for both types of gender and ACCDEL is 825, which is the final sample, as there is also data for the remaining variables necessary for our study in these articles.

As can be seen in Panel B in Table 1 all journals present low numbers and percentages of female editors or corresponding authors, with a maximum of 31.5% of articles with female editors for the JAE, and a minimum of 1.7% (3 articles) articles with female editors for the JAR, which is far below the figures of female corresponding authors in this journal. The number of articles with both, female editor and corresponding author, is even smaller across individual and all journals: 37 in all journals, and a 4.5% of all sample. On the contrary, there are 483 articles with male editor and corresponding author, which amounts for a 58.5% of all articles.

The number of articles in the sample is similar over the years, as shown in Panel C in Table 1.

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the remaining variables. The average ACCDEL is 709.2 days. Top authors and affiliations authored 22 and 63% of articles in our final sample respectively, and 11 and 43% as corresponding authors respectively. Moreover, 88% of all articles are co-authored by an author affiliated to a US institution (77% considering only corresponding authors).

**Table 2** Descriptive statistics (other than gender and publication year; described in the Annex)

| Variable                              | Obs | Mean   | Std. Dev | Min | Max  |
|---------------------------------------|-----|--------|----------|-----|------|
| <i>ACCDEL</i>                         | 825 | 709.20 | 311.55   | 15  | 1765 |
| <i>NUMPAGE</i>                        | 825 | 28.85  | 8.98     | 6   | 54   |
| <i>NUMREF</i>                         | 825 | 58.29  | 21.74    | 17  | 184  |
| <i>NUMAUTH</i>                        | 825 | 2.65   | 0.96     | 1   | 5    |
| <i>INCNUMART</i>                      | 825 | 1.92   | 10.37    | −15 | 25   |
| <i>TOPAUTH</i> (in all authors)       | 825 | 0.22   | 0.42     | 0   | 1    |
| <i>TOPAFIL</i> (in all authors)       | 825 | 0.63   | 0.48     | 0   | 1    |
| <i>TOPAUTH</i> (corresponding author) | 825 | 0.11   | 0.31     | 0   | 1    |
| <i>TOPAFIL</i> (corresponding author) | 825 | 0.43   | 0.50     | 0   | 1    |
| <i>USAFIL</i> (in all authors)        | 825 | 0.88   | 0.32     | 0   | 1    |
| <i>USAFIL</i> (corresponding author)  | 825 | 0.77   | 0.42     | 0   | 1    |

**Table 3** Pearson correlation ( $p$ -values in parentheses) between independent variables (point-biserial correlation between dummy and continuous variables)

|                     | <i>FEMEDIT</i>    | <i>FEMCORAUT</i>  | <i>FEMEFEMCORA</i> | <i>FEMEDMALCORA</i> | <i>MALEDFEMCORA</i> | <i>OPGENDER</i>   | <i>NUMPAGE</i>    |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>FEMEDIT</i>      | 1                 |                   |                    |                     |                     |                   |                   |
| <i>FEMCORAUT</i>    | -0.039<br>(0.254) | 1                 |                    |                     |                     |                   |                   |
| <i>FEMEFEMCORA</i>  | 0.42<br>(0.000)   | 0.375<br>(0.000)  | 1                  |                     |                     |                   |                   |
| <i>FEMEDMALCORA</i> | 0.864<br>(0.000)  | -0.251<br>(0.000) | -0.094<br>(0.006)  | 1                   |                     |                   |                   |
| <i>MALEDFEMCORA</i> | -0.256<br>(0.000) | 0.883<br>(0.000)  | -0.108<br>(0.002)  | -0.221<br>(0.000)   | 1                   |                   |                   |
| <i>OPGENDER</i>     | 0.448<br>(0.000)  | 0.544<br>(0.000)  | -0.162<br>(0.000)  | 0.581<br>(0.000)    | 0.665<br>(0.000)    | 1                 |                   |
| <i>NUMPAGE</i>      | -0.192<br>(0.000) | 0.012<br>(0.730)  | -0.099<br>(0.004)  | -0.155<br>(0.000)   | 0.098<br>(0.004)    | -0.052<br>(0.128) | 1                 |
| <i>NUMREF</i>       | -0.024<br>(0.477) | -0.026<br>(0.439) | -0.024<br>(0.484)  | -0.013<br>(0.710)   | -0.016<br>(0.638)   | -0.036<br>(0.300) | 0.294<br>(0.000)  |
| <i>NUMAUTH</i>      | -0.031<br>(0.374) | -0.037<br>(0.265) | -0.095<br>(0.006)  | 0.02<br>(0.554)     | 0.015<br>(0.656)    | 0.019<br>(0.585)  | 0.044<br>(0.186)  |
| <i>TOPAUTH</i>      | 0.009<br>(0.804)  | -0.117<br>(0.000) | -0.059<br>(0.085)  | 0.042<br>(0.227)    | -0.113<br>(0.001)   | -0.064<br>(0.064) | -0.013<br>(0.693) |
| <i>TOPAFIL</i>      | 0.017<br>(0.620)  | -0.012<br>(0.715) | -0.017<br>(0.615)  | 0.028<br>(0.416)    | -0.002<br>(0.960)   | 0.02<br>(0.568)   | 0.015<br>(0.664)  |
| <i>INCNUMART</i>    | 0.042<br>(0.219)  | -0.017<br>(0.611) | 0.052<br>(0.129)   | 0.017<br>(0.620)    | -0.046<br>(0.176)   | -0.025<br>(0.470) | -0.051<br>(0.125) |
| <i>USAFIL</i>       | 0.043<br>(0.215)  | 0.003<br>(0.924)  | -0.011<br>(0.745)  | 0.052<br>(0.134)    | 0.002<br>(0.946)    | 0.041<br>(0.232)  | -0.019<br>(0.566) |
| <i>JAR</i>          | -0.247<br>(0.000) | -0.016<br>(0.634) | -0.112<br>(0.001)  | -0.208<br>(0.000)   | 0.051<br>(0.134)    | -0.123<br>(0.000) | 0.725<br>(0.000)  |

**Table 3** (continued)

|                 | <i>FEMEDIT</i>    | <i>FEMCORAUT</i>  | <i>FEMEDEFMCORA</i> | <i>FEMEDMALCORA</i> | <i>MALEDEFMCORA</i> | <i>OPGENDER</i>   | <i>NUMPAGE</i>    |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>TAR</i>      | 0.093<br>(0.007)  | 0.069<br>(0.040)  | 0.064<br>(0.064)    | 0.065<br>(0.059)    | 0.069<br>(0.042)    | 0.095<br>(0.006)  | -0.211<br>(0.000) |
| <i>YEAR2016</i> | -0.071<br>(0.037) | -0.041<br>(0.216) | -0.019<br>(0.587)   | -0.069<br>(0.046)   | -0.02<br>(0.549)    | -0.07<br>(0.041)  | -0.051<br>(0.129) |
| <i>YEAR2017</i> | 0.024<br>(0.484)  | -0.089<br>(0.008) | -0.058<br>(0.095)   | 0.058<br>(0.093)    | -0.061<br>(0.072)   | -0.009<br>(0.805) | -0.011<br>(0.749) |
| <i>YEAR2018</i> | 0.042<br>(0.226)  | 0.004<br>(0.916)  | 0.054<br>(0.119)    | 0.017<br>(0.618)    | -0.039<br>(0.247)   | -0.019<br>(0.588) | -0.021<br>(0.532) |
| <i>YEAR2019</i> | 0.019<br>(0.588)  | 0.017<br>(0.609)  | 0.008<br>(0.816)    | 0.017<br>(0.618)    | 0.009<br>(0.787)    | 0.02<br>(0.558)   | 0.004<br>(0.910)  |
| <i>YEAR2020</i> | 0.048<br>(0.159)  | 0.058<br>(0.081)  | 0.025<br>(0.460)    | 0.038<br>(0.264)    | 0.052<br>(0.125)    | 0.073<br>(0.034)  | 0.018<br>(0.581)  |

  

|                     | <i>NUMREF</i>     | <i>NUMAUTH</i>   | <i>TOPAUTH</i> | <i>TOPAFIL</i> | <i>INCNUMART</i> | <i>USAFIL</i> | <i>JAR</i> |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|------------|
| <i>FEMEDIT</i>      |                   |                  |                |                |                  |               |            |
| <i>FEMCORAUT</i>    |                   |                  |                |                |                  |               |            |
| <i>FEMEDEFMCORA</i> |                   |                  |                |                |                  |               |            |
| <i>FEMEDMALCORA</i> |                   |                  |                |                |                  |               |            |
| <i>MALEDEFMCORA</i> |                   |                  |                |                |                  |               |            |
| <i>OPGENDER</i>     |                   |                  |                |                |                  |               |            |
| <i>NUMPAGE</i>      | 1                 |                  |                |                |                  |               |            |
| <i>NUMREF</i>       | 0.053<br>(0.110)  | 1                |                |                |                  |               |            |
| <i>NUMAUTH</i>      |                   |                  |                |                |                  |               |            |
| <i>TOPAUTH</i>      | -0.031<br>(0.354) | 0.127<br>(0.000) | 1              |                |                  |               |            |

Table 3 (continued)

|              | NUMREF            | NUMAUTH           | TOPAUTH           | TOPAFIL           | INCNUMART         | USAFIL            | JAR               |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| TOPAFIL      | -0.081<br>(0.015) | 0.093<br>(0.005)  | 0.297<br>(0.000)  | 1                 |                   |                   |                   |
| INCNUMART    | 0.01<br>(0.768)   | -0.011<br>(0.753) | -0.084<br>(0.012) | -0.079<br>(0.018) | 1                 |                   |                   |
| USAFIL       | -0.105<br>(0.002) | 0.022<br>(0.507)  | 0.19<br>(0.000)   | 0.423<br>(0.000)  | -0.085<br>(0.011) | 1                 |                   |
| JAR          | 0.11<br>(0.001)   | -0.026<br>(0.443) | 0.024<br>(0.470)  | 0.044<br>(0.184)  | -0.109<br>(0.001) | 0.009<br>(0.780)  | 1                 |
| TAR          | -0.005<br>(0.879) | 0.014<br>(0.676)  | -0.073<br>(0.028) | -0.05<br>(0.131)  | 0.118<br>(0.000)  | -0.061<br>(0.070) | -0.546<br>(0.000) |
| YEAR2016     | 0.002<br>(0.961)  | 0.005<br>(0.886)  | 0.063<br>(0.060)  | 0.013<br>(0.698)  | -0.194<br>(0.000) | 0.013<br>(0.702)  | 0.01<br>(0.764)   |
| YEAR2017     | -0.02<br>(0.553)  | 0.058<br>(0.085)  | 0.069<br>(0.040)  | 0.056<br>(0.094)  | -0.333<br>(0.000) | 0.016<br>(0.641)  | 0.035<br>(0.299)  |
| YEAR2018     | 0.02<br>(0.547)   | -0.02<br>(0.550)  | -0.06<br>(0.073)  | -0.056<br>(0.091) | 0.571<br>(0.000)  | -0.053<br>(0.116) | 0.002<br>(0.961)  |
| YEAR2019     | 0.057<br>(0.085)  | 0.005<br>(0.873)  | 0.023<br>(0.497)  | -0.017<br>(0.602) | -0.079<br>(0.017) | 0.042<br>(0.205)  | -0.007<br>(0.840) |
| YEAR2020     | 0.031<br>(0.362)  | 0.012<br>(0.725)  | -0.047<br>(0.160) | 0.014<br>(0.674)  | -0.105<br>(0.002) | -0.008<br>(0.801) | -0.014<br>(0.679) |
|              | TAR               | YEAR2016          | YEAR2017          | YEAR2018          | YEAR2019          | YEAR2020          |                   |
| FEMEDIT      |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| FEMCORAUT    |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| FEMEFEMCORA  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| FEMEDMALCORA |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |

Table 3 (continued)

|              | TAR               | YEAR2016          | YEAR2017          | YEAR2018          | YEAR2019         | YEAR2020 |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------|
| MALEDFEMCORA |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |          |
| OPGENDER     |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |          |
| NUMPAGE      |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |          |
| NUMREF       |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |          |
| NUMAUTH      |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |          |
| TOPAUTH      |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |          |
| TOPAFIL      |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |          |
| INCNUMART    |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |          |
| USAFIL       |                   |                   |                   |                   |                  |          |
| JAR          | 1                 |                   |                   |                   |                  |          |
| TAR          |                   | 1                 |                   |                   |                  |          |
| YEAR2016     | -0.048<br>(0.148) |                   |                   |                   |                  |          |
| YEAR2017     | -0.063<br>(0.058) | -0.184<br>(0.000) | 1                 |                   |                  |          |
| YEAR2018     | -0.006<br>(0.867) | -0.208<br>(0.000) | -0.195<br>(0.000) | 1                 |                  |          |
| YEAR2019     | 0.024<br>(0.466)  | -0.205<br>(0.000) | -0.192<br>(0.000) | -0.217<br>(0.000) | 1                |          |
| YEAR2020     | 0.04<br>(0.226)   | -0.201<br>(0.000) | -0.188<br>(0.000) | -0.213<br>(0.000) | -0.21<br>(0.000) | 1        |

## Results

### Bivariate results

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlations between all independent variables. Correlations between dummies and continuous variables are reported as point-biserial correlations.

The highest coefficient, 0.72 (significant at  $p < 0.01$ ), is observed between the dummy variable *JAR* and the continuous variable *NUMPAGE*, which may raise concerns about collinearity. The second highest correlation coefficient among the independent variables is  $-0.546$  (significant at  $p < 0.01$ ) between the dummy variables *JAR* and *TAR*<sup>3</sup>. However, the highest variance inflation factor, 3.72 for *JAR*, remains well below the commonly recommended threshold of 10, or even the more stringent threshold of 5 that some authors consider indicative of collinearity concerns (Kutner et al., 2005; Menard, 2005; Sheather, 2009).

Larger articles are positively and significantly (at  $p < 0.01$ ) associated with a higher number of references, as shown in Table 3 by the correlation coefficient of 0.294 between *NUMPAGE* and *NUMREF*. The *JAR* variable is positively and significantly associated with longer articles, as measured by the number of pages (variable *NUMPAGE*, as mentioned in the previous paragraph), and negatively and significantly (at  $p < 0.01$ ) associated with female editors reviewing submissions from both male or female corresponding authors: coefficients of  $-0.112$  and  $-0.208$  between the *JAR* variable and *FEMEDFEMCORA* and *FEMEDMALCORA* respectively. Most correlations are low, specifically the correlations between continuous independent variables.

### Multivariate results

As mentioned, as our dependent variable in Eq. (1) is a count variable, and the data present overdispersion, the negative binomial estimation is the most adequate for our data. Additionally, our sample presents heteroskedasticity. The Breusch-Pagan test estimating OLS for Eq. (1) provided a chi2 of 11.17, significant at  $p < 0.01$ . Robust standard errors were chosen due to their flexibility in accounting for unknown forms of heteroskedasticity without requiring prior assumptions about the error variance structure. We therefore estimate negative binomial with robust standard errors.

Column (1) in Table 4 displays estimations for the basic model formulated in Eq. (1). As there is no significant coefficient for *FEMEDIT* at  $p < 0.1$ , this result does not provide support for Hypothesis 1. However, the significant positive coefficient for *FEMCORAUT* at  $p < 0.05$  supports Hypothesis 2, indicating an increase of 7.6% in delay ( $e^{0.0737} = 1.076$ ). Given the mean *ACCDEL* of 709.2 days in our sample, this translates to approximately 54 days of additional delay compared to manuscripts with male editor.

Regarding control variables, *TOPAUTH* (with negative and significant coefficient at  $p < 0.1$ ) is associated with lower *ACCDEL*, while *INCNUMART* (with positive and significant coefficient at  $p < 0.05$ ) is associated with higher *ACCDEL*. As anticipated, manuscripts submitted by top authors serving as corresponding authors exhibit lower *ACCDEL* compared to those submitted by non-top authors. Furthermore, when editorial

<sup>3</sup> The correlation between *FEMEDMALCORA* and *FEMEDIT*, and between *MALEDFEMCORA* and *OPGENDER*, are understandably high and significant, but neither of these two pairs of variables is ever included simultaneously in any regression.

**Table 4** Acceptance delay depending on gender (negative binomial estimations with robust standard errors)

| Variables                       | (1)                       | (2)                        |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>FEMEDIT</i>                  | 0.0573<br>(0.0364)        | 0.0803**<br>(0.0408)       |
| <i>FEMCORAUT</i>                | 0.0737**<br>(0.0335)      | 0.0932**<br>(0.0370)       |
| <i>FEMEDIT-FEMCORAUT</i>        |                           | −0.106<br>(0.0843)         |
| <i>NUMPAGE</i>                  | 0.00377<br>(0.00312)      | 0.00366<br>(0.00312)       |
| <i>NUMREF</i>                   | −0.000674<br>(0.000786)   | −0.000676<br>(0.000783)    |
| <i>NUMAUTH</i>                  | −0.0129<br>(0.0154)       | −0.0136<br>(0.0154)        |
| <i>TOPAUTH</i> (in all authors) | −0.0627*<br>(0.0371)      | −0.0635*<br>(0.0370)       |
| <i>TOPAFIL</i> (in all authors) | −0.0370<br>(0.0357)       | −0.0369<br>(0.0357)        |
| <i>INCNUMART</i>                | 0.00426**<br>(0.00196)    | 0.00434**<br>(0.00196)     |
| <i>USAFIL</i> (in all authors)  | −0.0455<br>(0.0512)       | −0.0468<br>(0.0511)        |
| <i>JAR</i>                      | −0.0177<br>(0.0745)       | −0.0164<br>(0.0747)        |
| <i>TAR</i>                      | 0.140***<br>(0.0389)      | 0.139***<br>(0.0389)       |
| <i>YEAR2016</i>                 | 0.106*<br>(0.0563)        | 0.106*<br>(0.0562)         |
| <i>YEAR2017</i>                 | 0.0641<br>(0.0586)        | 0.0618<br>(0.0586)         |
| <i>YEAR2018</i>                 | 0.114**<br>(0.0562)       | 0.116**<br>(0.0564)        |
| <i>YEAR2019</i>                 | 0.246***<br>(0.0515)      | 0.246***<br>(0.0516)       |
| <i>YEAR2020</i>                 | 0.166***<br>(0.0533)      | 0.164***<br>(0.0533)       |
|                                 | −1.617***<br>(0.0748)     | −1.618***<br>(0.0748)      |
|                                 | .1985061***<br>(.0148442) | 0.1982071***<br>(.0148336) |
| Constant                        | 6.363***<br>(0.110)       | 6.365***<br>(0.110)        |
| Observations                    | 825                       | 825                        |
| Wald Chi2                       | 89.19***                  | 90.41***                   |

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.1$

workload increases due to the journal publishing a greater number of articles ACCDEL also rises. The positive signs of dummies for years (2015 is the default year), with predominant increasing values as time increases, most of them significant (*YEAR2016* at  $p < 0.1$ , *YEAR2018* at  $p < 0.05$  and *YEAR2019* and *YEAR2020* at  $p < 0.01$ ), provide evidence of the expected increase in ACCDEL over time. The *TAR* dummy, with positive and significant coefficient at  $p < 0.01$ , reveals a longer review process in the journal represented by this variable with respect to the default JAE journal.

Column (2) in Table 4 displays results when we added the interaction variable between *FEMEDIT* and *FEMCORAUT* to Eq. (1). The coefficient of this variable (*FEMDFEMCORA*) is not significant at  $p < 0.1$ , which does not provide support for Hypothesis H3. However, the coefficient of *FEMEDIT* becomes positive and significant at  $p < 0.05$  when we added this interaction variable, which indicates that the relationship between editor gender and acceptance delay varies depending on the corresponding author's gender. This result provides only limited support for Hypothesis 1. Variable *FEMCORAUT* is again positive and significant at  $p < 0.05$ , a fact that provides reinforced support for Hypothesis 2. However, the results in Column (2) of Table 4 highlight the complexity of author and gender editor in ACCDEL. The signs and significance of the coefficients for the control variables are similar to those in Column (1).

Table 5 analyses in more detail the complex relationship between gender and ACCDEL. Column (1) presents results for the dummy variable *OPGENDER*. The positive and significant (at  $p < 0.01$ ) coefficient of this variable provides support for Hypothesis 4, indicating an increase of 8.5% in delay ( $e^{0.0819} = 1.085$ ). Given the mean ACCDEL of 709.2 days in our sample, this translates to approximately 60 days of additional delay than manuscripts with editor and corresponding author gender coincidence, the default variable. Column (2) presents results splitting the variable into the two different combinations of gender. The two positive and significant coefficients (at  $p < 0.1$  and  $p < 0.05$  for and *FEMEDMALCORA* and *MALEDFEMCORA*, respectively) provide reinforced support for Hypothesis 4, evidencing the existence of a longer delay for all combinations of opposite gender than the default variable of coincident genders.

Column (3) in Table 5 displays results for all combinations of editor and corresponding author genders. The signs of *FEMEDMALCORA* and *MALEDFEMCORA* are positive and significant at  $p < 0.05$  respectively, with respect to the default variable, male editor and male corresponding author, providing reinforced support for Hypothesis 4. The lower and less significant coefficient for *FEMEDMALCORA* (at  $p < 0.1$ ) than *MALEDFEMCORA* (at  $p < 0.05$ ), as in Column (2), could suggest that the gender bias against individuals of the opposite gender is more pronounced among male editors than their female counterparts. However, we run *F*-test comparing the two variables and find that there is no significant difference between both coefficients (0.07 with  $p > 0.785$ ), thus supporting Hypothesis 5 (the test provided similar result for both coefficients in Column (2)). Moreover, the coefficient of *FEMEDFEMCORA* is positive, but not significant at  $p < 0.1$ , which does not provide support for Hypothesis 6, either. Columns (4) and (5) refine the analyses, running regressions for the subsamples of manuscripts with opposite and coincident genders, with 305 and 520 observations respectively, and allowing more direct comparisons of opposite and coincident combinations of gender, respectively. The nonsignificant coefficients of *MALEDFEMCORA* and *FEMEDFEMCORA* at  $p < 0.1$  in Columns (4) and (5), respectively, again provide support for Hypothesis 5 and fail to support Hypothesis 6, respectively.

Results in Table 5 cast light on the limited support for Hypothesis 1 found in Table 4. Female editor is only associated with longer *ACCDEL* when she reviews articles submitted

**Table 5** Acceptance delay depending on detailed combinations of gender editor and corresponding author (negative binomial estimations with robust standard errors and)

| Variables                       | (1)<br>Opposite genders | (2)<br>Detailed opposite genders | (3)<br>All combinations | (4)<br>Subsample of opposite genders | (5)<br>Subsample of Coincident genders |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <i>OPGENDER</i>                 | 0.0819***<br>(0.0302)   |                                  | 0.0673<br>(0.0716)      |                                      | 0.0747<br>(0.0702)                     |
| <i>FEMEDFEMCORA</i>             |                         |                                  |                         |                                      |  |
| <i>FEMEDMALCORA</i>             |                         | 0.0743*<br>(0.0402)              | 0.0803**<br>(0.0408)    |                                      |  |
| <i>MALEDFEMCORA</i>             |                         | 0.0879***<br>(0.0365)            | 0.0932**<br>(0.0370)    | 0.0324<br>(0.0490)                   |  |
| <i>NUMPAGE</i>                  | 0.00370<br>(0.00312)    | 0.00368<br>(0.00313)             | 0.00366<br>(0.00312)    | 0.00413<br>(0.00441)                 | 0.00256<br>(0.00422)                   |
| <i>NUMREF</i>                   | -0.000703<br>(0.000782) | -0.000695<br>(0.000783)          | -0.000676<br>(0.000783) | 0.000165<br>(0.00138)                | -0.000957<br>(0.000956)                |
| <i>NUMAUTH</i>                  | -0.0149<br>(0.0152)     | -0.0149<br>(0.0152)              | -0.0136<br>(0.0154)     | -0.0759***<br>(0.0231)               | 0.0205<br>(0.0198)                     |
| <i>TOPAUTH</i> (in all authors) | -0.0669*<br>(0.0365)    | -0.0657*<br>(0.0370)             | -0.0635*<br>(0.0370)    | -0.0117<br>(0.0604)                  | -0.0895*<br>(0.0475)                   |
| <i>TOPAFIL</i> (in all authors) | -0.0360<br>(0.0357)     | -0.0362<br>(0.0356)              | -0.0369<br>(0.0357)     | -0.0111<br>(0.0569)                  | -0.0385<br>(0.0452)                    |
| <i>INCNUMART</i>                | 0.00432**<br>(0.00196)  | 0.00433**<br>(0.00196)           | 0.00434**<br>(0.00196)  | 0.00284<br>(0.00342)                 | 0.00514**<br>(0.00239)                 |
| <i>USAFIL</i> (in all authors)  | -0.0465<br>(0.0511)     | -0.0467<br>(0.0512)              | -0.0468<br>(0.0511)     | -0.0869<br>(0.0932)                  | -0.0455<br>(0.0609)                    |
| <i>JAR</i>                      | -0.0203<br>(0.0745)     | -0.0225<br>(0.0746)              | -0.0164<br>(0.0747)     | -0.0772<br>(0.119)                   | 0.0175<br>(0.0952)                     |

**Table 5** (continued)

| Variables    | (1)<br>Opposite genders   | (2)<br>Detailed opposite genders | (3)<br>All combinations   | (4)<br>Subsample of opposite genders | (5)<br>Subsample of Coincident genders |
|--------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| TAR          | 0.139***<br>(0.0389)      | 0.138***<br>(0.0389)             | 0.139***<br>(0.0389)      | 0.182***<br>(0.0591)                 | 0.118**<br>(0.0502)                    |
| YEAR2016     | 0.105*<br>(0.0562)        | 0.105*<br>(0.0562)               | 0.106*<br>(0.0562)        | 0.0830<br>(0.0955)                   | 0.0987<br>(0.0694)                     |
| YEAR2017     | 0.0587<br>(0.0583)        | 0.0601<br>(0.0585)               | 0.0618<br>(0.0586)        | 0.120<br>(0.0978)                    | 0.00925<br>(0.0745)                    |
| YEAR2018     | 0.117**<br>(0.0563)       | 0.118**<br>(0.0564)              | 0.116**<br>(0.0564)       | 0.0832<br>(0.0929)                   | 0.125*<br>(0.0708)                     |
| YEAR2019     | 0.245***<br>(0.0516)      | 0.246***<br>(0.0517)             | 0.246***<br>(0.0516)      | 0.289***<br>(0.0763)                 | 0.225***<br>(0.0674)                   |
| YEAR2020     | 0.164***<br>(0.0532)      | 0.165***<br>(0.0532)             | 0.164***<br>(0.0533)      | 0.185**<br>(0.0817)                  | 0.139**<br>(0.0698)                    |
| Constant     | -1.617***<br>(0.0750)     | -1.618***<br>(0.0750)            | -1.618***<br>(0.0748)     | -1.869***<br>(0.0842)                | -1.519***<br>(0.101)                   |
| Observations | .1983972***<br>(.0148772) | .1983824***<br>(.0148797)        | .1982071***<br>(.0148336) | .1542287***<br>(.0129857)            | 2.188862***<br>(.0220928)              |
| Wald Chi2    | 6.375***<br>(0.109)       | 6.375***<br>(0.109)              | 6.365***<br>(0.110)       | 6.517***<br>(0.163)                  | 6.344***<br>(0.143)                    |
|              | 825                       | 825                              | 825                       | 305                                  | 520                                    |
|              | 90.08***                  | 90.20***                         | 90.41***                  | 54.98***                             | 51.56***                               |

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.1$

by male corresponding authors, which happens in most cases. Moreover, these results cast doubt on the support for Hypothesis 2, as previously identified in the findings from Table 4. Specifically, the significant positive coefficient for *FEMCORAUT* in Table 4 may be attributed to the greater frequency of observations involving female authors overseen by male editors, which is also most frequent, rather than those managed by female editors.

We repeated all estimations in Tables 4 and 5 without adjusting for standard errors (results not tabulated<sup>4</sup>) and the findings remain consistent with those presented in these tables regarding the coefficients and significance of the experimental variables. Additionally, we reran all estimations with non-winsorized continuous variables (results not tabulated) and obtained similar outcomes.

We repeated all estimations in Tables 4 and 5 with OLS (not tabulated) and the findings are similar to those displayed in these tables regarding the experimental variables.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, when we ran OLS with the dependent variable transformed into logarithms, the results (not tabulated) remained consistent.<sup>6</sup>

We additionally ran OLS Fama–Macbeth estimations to validate results with cross sectional samples at the yearly level.<sup>7</sup> Results shown in Table 6 reinforce previous findings. While the coefficient for *FEMCORAUT* is positive and significant in Columns (1) and (2), the coefficient for *FEMEDIT* is positive and significant only in Column (2). Additionally, the dummies identifying opposite gender combinations are positive and significant in Columns (3) and (4). We also ran estimations with the subsamples of opposite and coincident gender combinations (not displayed by simplicity) and results are also similar to those in Columns (4) and (5) in Table 5. The results from Fama–Macbeth regressions using non-winsorized continuous variables, as well as transforming the dependent variable into logarithms, are essentially the same (not tabulated).

We repeated all estimations in Tables 4, 5, 6 using dummies of top author and affiliation for corresponding authors, instead of for all co-authors, as well as a dummy indicating the US affiliations of the corresponding author only, instead of all co-authors, and results (not tabulated) are essentially the same as those showed in these tables.

## Discussion and conclusions

This study aims to explore the influence of the genders of authors and editors on ACCDEL. This aspect represents a largely unexplored research question within the field of gendered academic publishing. The topic is especially interesting in the accounting domain, given that publication delays are among the longest within academic fields.

Using data from top-tier accounting journals, spanning 2015 to 2020, our analysis highlights several important issues. Female representations in top accounting journals among both authors and editors remains notably low, showing in a line with the prior studies

<sup>4</sup> All non-tabulated results in this article are available from the authors upon request.

<sup>5</sup> The only difference is that the significance of *FEMEDIT* in Column (2) of Table 4 and *FEMEDMALCORA* in Column (3) of Table 5 decreases from  $p < 0.05$  to  $p < 0.1$ .

<sup>6</sup> Regarding our experimental variables, there is no change in signs of their coefficients, but *FEMEDIT* and *FEMCORAUT* become significant at  $p < 0.05$  and  $p < 0.001$  respectively in Column (2) of Table 4, and *FEMEDMALCORA* and *MALEDFEMCORA* become significant at  $p < 0.05$  and  $p < 0.001$  respectively, in Columns (2) and (3) of Table 5, respectively. There is no other change in the significance of the experimental variables.

<sup>7</sup> Fama–Macbeth procedure requires OLS.

**Table 6** Acceptance delay depending on gender

| Variables                       | (1)                 | (2)                 | (3)                 | (4)                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <i>FEMEDIT</i>                  | 49.85<br>(30.88)    | 67.18**<br>(25.36)  |                     |                     |
| <i>FEMCORAUT</i>                | 42.34**<br>(13.36)  | 57.92**<br>(20.98)  |                     |                     |
| <i>FEMEDIT·FEMCORAUT</i>        |                     | – 107.6<br>(87.14)  |                     |                     |
| <i>OPGENDER</i>                 |                     |                     | 62.20**<br>(20.00)  |                     |
| <i>FEMEDFEMCORA</i>             |                     |                     |                     | 17.50<br>(70.63)    |
| <i>FEMEDMALCORA</i>             |                     |                     |                     | 67.18**<br>(25.36)  |
| <i>MALEDFEMCORA</i>             |                     |                     |                     | 57.92**<br>(20.98)  |
| <i>NUMPAGE</i>                  | 2.196<br>(2.084)    | 1.951<br>(2.096)    | 1.921<br>(2.061)    | 1.951<br>(2.096)    |
| <i>NUMREF</i>                   | –0.365<br>(0.372)   | –0.316<br>(0.337)   | –0.450<br>(0.317)   | –0.316<br>(0.337)   |
| <i>NUMAUTH</i>                  | –11.65<br>(6.437)   | –11.77<br>(6.344)   | –12.88<br>(6.854)   | –11.77<br>(6.344)   |
| <i>TOPAUTH</i> (in all authors) | –39.97<br>(35.17)   | –40.95<br>(35.22)   | –43.42<br>(38.34)   | –40.95<br>(35.22)   |
| <i>TOPAFIL</i> (in all authors) | –20.98<br>(38.96)   | –20.85<br>(40.26)   | –23.49<br>(38.27)   | –20.85<br>(40.26)   |
| <i>INCNUMART</i>                | 11.57**<br>(4.398)  | 12.68*<br>(5.324)   | 12.42*<br>(5.948)   | 12.68*<br>(5.324)   |
| <i>USAFIL</i> (in all authors)  | –38.13<br>(31.92)   | –41.29<br>(33.42)   | –42.34<br>(30.99)   | –41.29<br>(33.42)   |
| <i>JAR</i>                      | –26.39<br>(52.36)   | –22.85<br>(55.36)   | –28.77<br>(53.57)   | –22.85<br>(55.36)   |
| <i>TAR</i>                      | 76.98<br>(46.38)    | 73.09<br>(45.39)    | 76.63<br>(42.54)    | 73.09<br>(34.50)    |
| Constant                        | 687.4***<br>(35.72) | 690.7***<br>(34.50) | 706.2***<br>(41.21) | 690.7***<br>(34.50) |
| Observations                    | 825                 | 825                 | 825                 | 825                 |
| <i>R</i> -squared               | 0.127               | 0.140               | 0.124               | 0.140               |
| <i>F</i>                        |                     |                     | 11.37***            |                     |

Fama Macbeth estimations (six years)

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.1$

in diverse disciplines persistent gender inequality (Holman et al., 2018; Joanis & Patil, 2022; Uribe-Bohorquez et al., 2023). Female-authored manuscripts face longer ACCDEL

compared to male-authored manuscripts. This finding is somewhat contrary to Card et al. (2020), who reported no differences in editorial delays between female- and male-authored articles, but it aligns with Hengel's (2022) study. While numerous factors, such as prudence, higher-quality writing, and overload with other professional and personal tasks, may explain longer revision periods for female authors, our analysis also addressed the interplay of genders in the editorial process.

Manuscripts with opposite-gender combinations of editors and corresponding authors experience significantly longer ACCDEL compared to those with same-gender combinations. This supports the hypothesis of a prevalent gender homophily effect influencing editorial outcomes. The tendency for editors to process manuscripts more efficiently when interacting with same-gender authors may reflect an unconscious preference for engaging with individuals perceived as similar—a phenomenon well-documented in academic circles (Helmer et al., 2017; Holman & Morandin, 2019). Our findings suggest that this editorial bias is bidirectional, affecting both female and male authors. These results align with the study by Murray et al. (2019), which found evidence of a homophilic relationship between the demographics of editors and authors, impacting peer-review outcomes. Specifically, they observed higher acceptance rates when gender and country demographics between editors and authors aligned. Although not statistically significant, the effect on ACCDEL is particularly pronounced for female-authored articles handled by male editors. Given that most female-authored articles are overseen by male editors, this disproportionately affects the ACCDEL for female authors, ultimately impacting their productivity and career prospects.

Our study highlights several important implications. Editors should increase awareness of the higher standards applied for manuscripts authored by the opposite gender to the editor, which usually penalizes women, as they are under-represented in editorial teams, as well as authors. Increasing recruitment of females for editor responsibilities is an obvious recommendation. Editorial policies can also be adjusted by raising the awareness about greater publication lags in cases of opposite genders of editors and corresponding authors. This awareness can significantly influence the development of more inclusive and equitable editorial policies in the future, which are important for science advancement. In consonance with the study by Malkinson et al. (2023), an additional implication of our study is that editorial policies should not only prioritize gender equality by increasing gender diversity among the editors and reviewers, but also pay attention to equity issues, aiming to diminish the pernicious effects of gender homophily. Training and mentoring sessions to PhDs, and editorial processes participants may help to overcome this dynamic.

A final and important remark addresses the current crisis of peer review, often described as random (Cole et al., 1981; Peters & Ceci, 1982), arbitrary (Gans & Shepherd, 1994), inefficient (Reinhart & Schendzielorz, 2020; Roumbanis, 2019), lengthy and flawed or biased (Street & Ward, 2019). This has raised concerns about the need to change, transform or improve peer review through new approaches (Waltman et al., 2023). Additionally, the increasing number of submissions imposes a significant burden on editorial offices tasked with managing the complex factors associated with peer review. This process is inherently lengthy and difficult to shorten. Factors such as finding reviewers, securing their collaboration, conducting reviews, preparing revised versions, and completing the entire review process must be acknowledged as critical contributors to ACCDEL (Huisman & Smits, 2017).

An important caveat should be noted here, indicating that the proportion of female-led publications in our sample is very limited, and therefore, our results should be interpreted with caution. This study could be supplemented with larger and wider samples including other than top-tier accounting journals, as well as with a larger number of

observations of female editors and authors. Other social sciences fields and disciplines could also be included in the analysis. In this study we have focused on overseeing editors and corresponding authors as the primary participants in the publishing process, while gender attribution of an article could be approached differently by considering the genders of other co-authors. It would be also recommendable to supplement this research with qualitative studies on editorial processes, which could uncover the exact causes of the prolonged publications delays in the case of opposite genders. The analysis of whether the higher ACCDEL incurred by these combinations of editor and author gender leads to a higher number of future citations is also an avenue for future research.

## Appendix

See Table 7.

**Table 7** Variable description

| Variable                 | Definition   |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>ACCDEL</i>            | Acceptance delay: number of days from submission to acceptance   |
| <i>FEMEDIT</i>           | Dummy variable with value 1 when the editor overseeing the article is female, and 0 otherwise  |
| <i>FEMCORAUT</i>         | Dummy variable with value 1 if the corresponding author is male, and 0 otherwise   |
| <i>FEMEDIT·FEMCORAUT</i> | The interaction variable between <i>FEMEDIT</i> and <i>FEMCORAUT</i>   |
| <i>FEMEDFEMCORA</i>      | Dummy variable with value 1 if the editor overseeing the article and the corresponding author are female, and 0 otherwise  |
| <i>FEMEDMALCORA</i>      | Dummy variable with value 1 if the editor overseeing the article is female and the corresponding author is male, and 0 otherwise   |
| <i>MALEDFEMCORA</i>      | Dummy variable with value 1 if the editor overseeing the article is male and the corresponding author is female, and 0 otherwise   |
| <i>NUMPAGE</i>           | Number of pages in the article   |
| <i>NUMREF</i>            | Number of references in the article  |
| <i>NUMAUTH</i>           | Number of authors  |
| <i>TOPAUTH</i>           | Dummy variable with value 1 if the corresponding author is a top author: if he published 5 or more articles in the JAR, TAR and JAE over 2015 and 2020, and 0 otherwise  |
| <i>TOPAFIL</i>           | Dummy variable with value 1 if the corresponding author belongs to a top institution: if his/her institution is one of the institutions featured as being the affiliation of 27 or more articles published in the JAR, TAR and JAE over 2015 and 2020, and 0 otherwise |
| <i>INCNUMART</i>         | Net change in the number of published articles, from the previous year to the current year, in the journal publishing the article  |
| <i>USAFIL</i>            | Dummy variable with value 1 if one of the co-authors of the article is affiliated to a US institution, and 0 otherwise   |
| <i>JOURNAL</i>           | Dummy variables identifying the journal where the article is published, with value 1 and 0 otherwise. The variables are <i>JAR</i> , and <i>TAR</i> , being <i>JAE</i> the default journal   |
| <i>YEAR</i>              | Dummy variables identifying the year in which the article was published, with value 1 and 0 otherwise. The default year is 2015  |

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## Declarations

**Conflict of interest** The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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