
Evaluating the Internationality of Scholarly Communications in Information Science Publications

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Abstract

With the advancement of communication technology there has been a growing emphasis on international and intercultural communication. Following this trend, Library and Information Science (LIS) journals have become open to a more internationalized authorship. Although the Internet today has facilitated the infrastructure for scholars to exchange work on a more international level, there are still additional barriers interfering with a balanced internationalization of LIS journals. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the internationality of several high visibility library and information science journals by studying the permeation of international participation through the exploration of seven indicators: (1) the editorial and advisory boards, (2) peer review boards, (3) peer review evaluation criteria, (4) authorship, (5) database circulation, (6) internationality of citations, and (7) citation impact. By evaluating LIS journals across these seven indicators this study presents evidence to support that internationalization of scholarly journals can be an effective vehicle to address the issues of limited scope and access of research in the global academic environment.

Keywords: scientific journals evaluation; internationalization of Information Science; LIS journals; bibliometrics; social justice in academia

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1 Introduction

Studying the authorship of library and information science journals is one way to assess the internationality of published output (Sin, 2005; Sin, 2011). Internationality reflects geographically diverse voices in scholarship and is critical to broadening the credibility and transferability of published research. This is of particular importance to scholars based in countries, where recognized high impact LIS journals.

Historically, social science research publications have originated principally from linguistically Anglocentric (Danell, 2013) and geographically North Atlantic publishers (Cronin & Shaw, 1999). English, as the principal language of research publications, has become the global lingua franca of the academic world (Danell, 2013). As a result, research on the nature of scholarly communications has suggested that non-English speaking authors of the social sciences have faced an imbalanced access to publication opportunities in English-language journals (Danell 2001; Danell, 2013; Kyvik, 1988). Given the issues of language barriers, prejudice and cultural imperialism (Dahdough-Guebas et al., 2003; Gibbs, 1985; Sin, 2005), the purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which the apparent homogeneity in social science research extends to LIS research publications and whether the internationality of the established infrastructure has changed to incorporate a holistic multicultural participation and to address these issues.

1.1 Research Questions and Hypothesis

This study is guided by the following research questions, which address the gap in current LIS literature as it relates to the internationalization of scholarly communications in the field:

- Does the multinational composition of an editorial and advisory board correlate with the participation of international scholars within that publication?
- Does the multinational composition of an editorial and advisory board correlate with the citation impact of articles in that publication?
- Does the membership of peer review boards reflect the internationalization of a journal and its database circulation?
- Are the peer review criteria across international publications comparable to criteria used in high impact journals?
- Has the rate of internationalization in LIS journals increased over the past five years?

The exploration of these research questions will add value to the field of communication and information sciences and contribute to its knowledge base. Our hypothesis is that Library and Information Science journals do not demonstrate internationalization across the seven indicators in either 2009 or in 2014.

2 Methods

Previous studies looking at content trends in LIS journals have developed and implemented a multidimensional evaluation criteria for impact (Blessinger & Hrycaj, 2010; Hider & Pymm, 2008; Järvelin and Vakkari, 1990; Kumpulainen, 1991), which go beyond the H-Index, which is presently broadly accepted as the measure of research impact and is based on the number of scholarly publications produced and the number of times the publication of interest is cited. In order to build on this initial work and reflect continuity and replicability for the findings, the selection of high-impact LIS journals for analysis in the present study comes from Blessinger and Frasier's (2007) research, which evaluates the dimensions of impact using the *Journal Citation Reports* along with cross-references to both the *Library Literature* database and *SSCI* database from *Ullrich's Periodicals Directory*.

2.1 Sampling

A random selection of 10 journals generated from among the 28 high-impact journals identified by Blessinger and Frasier (2007) produced the following list—the corresponding impact factors were extracted from two additional studies, as noted in the table below:

Journal Title	Impact Factor in 2008 (Blessinger & Hrycaj, 2010)
Journal of the American Society for Information Science	1.954
Journal of Documentation	1.712
Online Information Review	1.103
Library Resources and Technical Services	0.698
Journal of Academic Librarianship	0.667
Journal of Librarianship and Information Science	0.562
Library Collections Acquisitions & Technical Services	0.364
Reference & User Services Quarterly	0.339
Library Trends	0.239
Information – Wissenschaft & Praxis: NFD	0.20*

* Regional impact factor (Schloegl & Stock, 2004)

Table 1. Journals Analyzed in this Study (Listed by impact factor)

In addition to investigating the composition of the editorial and advisory boards for the periods of 2009 and 2014 for the above listed journals, articles from each of these journals will be selected for analysis using a stratified random sample. This sample will consist of 15 articles selected from the 2009 publication year of each journal and 15 articles selected from the 2014 publication year, resulting in a compilation of 300 articles among the 10 selected journals.

2.2 Data collection and analysis

The selected journals and scholarly publications will be analyzed using seven indicators as seen in Figure 1 below and will be scored on internationality as follows:

- a) Editorial and advisory boards—defined by the country of origin of individuals serving on these boards (Torrado-Morales & Gimenez-Toledo, 2012).
- b) Peer review boards—defined by the country of origin of individuals serving on these boards (Torrado-Morales & Gimenez-Toledo, 2012).
- c) Peer review evaluation criteria—based on information provided as published on journal websites or provided by publishers (Torrado-Morales & Gimenez-Toledo, 2012).
- d) Authorship—defined by the country of origin of each contributing author within the publication, determined through the location or address of the author's professional or academic institution (Torrado-Morales & Gimenez-Toledo, 2012).
- e) Database circulation—based on the level of presence of the journal in national and international databases (Torrado-Morales & Gimenez-Toledo, 2012).

- f) Internationality of citations—defined by the number of international citations within each paper and determined by subtracting the number of national citations (relative to the country of publication) from the total citations (Danell, 2013).
- g) Citation impact—based on the number of scholarly publications produced and the number of times the publication of interest is cited (Blessinger & Hrycaj, 2010).

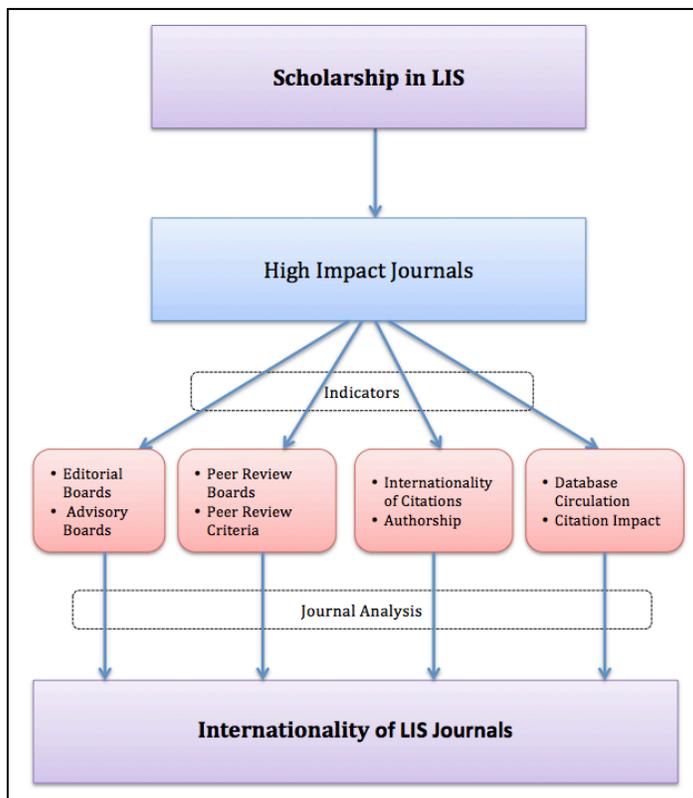


Figure 1. Conceptual Basis of the Journal Analysis Used for This Study

3 Conclusion

The present study aims to look at the internationality of LIS scholarly communications across multiple levels in the publication process. The seven indicators used to evaluate the permeation of international participation will provide more detailed insights to the trends identified in previous studies and add to the knowledge base of the fields of communication and information science. By studying the internationality of high impact LIS journals across multiple dimensions, we will determine whether the presence of geographical barriers in scholarship can be addressed through increased international participation at all levels of scholarly publishing. This knowledge will allow the community of scholars in Library and Information Science to further consider whether the current system in place is appropriate for a balanced participation in scholarly discourse.

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