



Citations and impact of ISI tourism and hospitality journals

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyses the leading international journals in Tourism and Hospitality Research using quantifiable Research Assessment Measures (RAMs), highlights the similarities and differences in alternative RAMs, shows that several RAMs capture similar performance characteristics of highly cited journals, and shows that some other RAMs have low correlations with each other, and hence add significant informational value. Several RAMs are discussed for the Thomson Reuters ISI Web of Science database (hereafter ISI). Alternative RAMs may be calculated annually or updated daily to answer the questions as to When, Where and How (frequently) published papers are cited. The RAMs include the most widely used RAM, namely the classic 2-year impact factor including journal self citations (2YIF), 2-year impact factor excluding journal self citations (2YIF*), 5-year impact factor including journal self citations (5YIF), Immediacy (or zero-year impact factor (0YIF)), Eigenfactor, Article Influence, C3PO (Citation Performance Per Paper Online), h-index, PI-BETA (Papers Ignored - By Even The Authors), 2-year Self-citation Threshold Approval Ratings (2Y-STAR), Historical Self-citation Threshold Approval Ratings (H-STAR), Impact Factor Inflation (IFI), and Cited Article Influence (CAI). As data are not available for 5YIF, Article Influence and CAI for 11 of the 14 journals considered, 10 RAMs are analysed for 14 highly-cited journals in Tourism and Hospitality in the ISI category of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism. Harmonic mean rankings of the 10 RAMs for the 14 highly-cited journals are also presented. A comparison of rankings is made for the h-index and C3PO for data from ISI and SCImago (2007) (see also SciVerse Scopus (2010)), which covers a broader range of journals, as well as a ranking of Tourism and Hospitality journals according to a subjective Aggregate Importance Rating. It is shown that emphasizing the 2-year impact factor of a journal, which partly answers the question as to When published papers are cited, to the exclusion of other informative RAMs, which answer Where and How (frequently) published papers are cited, can lead to a distorted evaluation of journal impact.

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1. Introduction

Tourism (including Travel) and Hospitality is one of the world's most important industries in terms of overall GDP and the number of individuals who are employed in the sector, both directly and indirectly. This area is also of significant interest to researchers and policy analysts. Therefore, it is not surprising that the number of international journals in Tourism and Hospitality has increased considerably in recent years. For example, there are now 41 journals in the SCImago (2007) (see also SciVerse Scopus, 2010) Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Management category in the Business, Management and Accounting area.

The Thomson Reuters *ISI Web of Science* (2011) database (hereafter ISI) is a leading high quality database for generating Research Assessment Measures (RAMs) to evaluate the research performance of individual researchers and the quality of academic journals (see Chang, McAleer, and Oxley (2011a, 2011b, 2011c) and Seglen (1997), among others, for caveats regarding ISI data). Within the last 5 years, 11 journals in Tourism and Hospitality have been added to the ISI database, so that there are now 14 journals in the ISI category of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism.

Although 14 journals in Tourism and Hospitality are still relatively small numerically in comparison with (say) Economics, which has 304 journals in ISI, the added journals nonetheless provide a critical mass for purposes of analysing the citations and impact of these leading journals. However, the growing number of international journals in Tourism and Hospitality has not yet been analysed in terms of citations and impact on the academic profession. One of the primary aims of this paper is to undertake such an assessment.

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Publishing high quality research is fundamental to scientific progress. Consequently, it is essential to evaluate the research output and impact of individual researchers. The perceived research performance of individual researchers can be crucial for hiring, promotion and tenure decisions in many countries worldwide. In the absence of appropriate information regarding the perceived quality of an individual's research output, the perceived quality of academic journals, however measured, has frequently been used as a guide, albeit inexact, for determining the quality of academic research publications. Such a proxy may not be especially meaningful for established researchers, whereby their impact can be measured by the number of citations for specific papers as well as the total number of citations. However, for early career researchers, who may not yet have many citations, the quality of their research is frequently based on the perceived quality of the journals in which they have published.

It is well known that the perceived quality of a journal can be an inappropriate and misleading proxy for the perceived quality of a paper that has been published in the journal. The quality and impact of an academic journal are typically based on outstanding papers that have already been published in the journal. However, publication in a leading journal should not be taken to be an accurate reflection of the quality of a published paper, especially when the paper has not yet received many, or any, citations. In this regard, Seglen (1997) finds that, although the citations rates of published papers determine the impact factor of journals, the reverse does not hold.

Leading journals publish important papers, though they may not publish many important papers. Such journals typically increase the visibility of the research findings of published papers, which may subsequently lead to higher citations. Otherwise, there would seem to be little point in publishing in leading journals, especially as the primary purpose in writing papers is to be cited, rather than just being published.

The acceptance of a paper for publication in a journal is typically based on the purported expertise of a few members of the Editorial Board and referees. These professionals determine the rejection rate of a journal before publication. However, members of editorial boards and referees can, and do, make mistakes. After a paper has been published in a journal, the implicit rejection rate depends on the worldwide academic professional community. Consequently, the proportion of published papers that is ignored by the profession, and by even the authors, is an important (non-) impact performance measure after publication. The community of academic scholars worldwide is less likely to make serious errors regarding the quality of academic research papers after they have been published, especially after several years have passed, than a small group of Editorial Board members and referees who are required to make (frequently incorrect) judgments regarding the quality of a paper before it is published in a journal.

Citations capture both the impact of a journal and the impact or performance of individual researchers. Citations should be, and are, more important than publications for individual researchers, especially in the sciences. As the only quantitative way in which to evaluate journal impact is through citations, it is not surprising that all RAMs are based on citations.

This paper examines the importance of RAMs as viable rankings criteria in Tourism and Hospitality, attempts to answer the questions as to When, Where and How (frequently) published papers are cited in leading Tourism and Hospitality journals, and evaluates the usefulness of 10 existing RAMs for 14 leading journals in Tourism and Hospitality in the ISI category of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism.

The plan of the remainder of the paper is as follows. Section 2 presents some key RAMs using ISI data that may be calculated annually or updated daily, including the most widely used RAM, namely the classic 2-year impact factor including journal self citations (2YIF), 2-year impact factor excluding journal self citations (2YIF*), 5-year

impact factor including journal self citations (5YIF), Immediacy (or zero-year impact factor (0YIF)), Eigenfactor, Article Influence, C3PO (Citation Performance Per Paper Online), h-index, PI-BETA (Papers Ignored - By Even The Authors), 2-year Self-citation Threshold Approval Ratings (2Y-STAR), Historical Self-citation Threshold Approval Ratings (H-STAR), Impact Factor Inflation (IFI), and Cited Article Influence (CAI). Section 3 discusses and analyses 10 RAMs for 14 leading journals in Tourism and Hospitality in the ISI category of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism. In Section 4, a comparison of rankings is made for the h-index and C3PO for data from ISI and SCImago (2007) (see also SciVerse Scopus, 2010), which covers a broader range of journals, as well as a ranking of Tourism and Hospitality journals according to a subjective Aggregate Importance Rating. Section 5 summarizes the outcomes.

2. Research Assessment Measures (RAM)

The RAMs are intended as descriptive statistics to capture journal impact and performance, and are not based on a mathematical model. Hence, in what follows, no optimization or estimation is required in calculating the alternative RAMs.

As the alternative RAMs that are provided in ISI and in several recent publications may not be widely known, this section provides a brief description and definition of 13 RAMs that may be calculated annually or updated daily to answer the questions as to When, and Where and How (frequently), published papers are cited. The answers to When published papers are cited are based on {2YIF, 2YIF*, 5YIF, Immediacy}, and the answers to Where and How (frequently) published papers are cited are based on {Eigenfactor, Article Influence, IFI, H-STAR, 2Y-STAR, C3PO, h-index, PI-BETA, CAI}.

2.1. Annual RAM

With two exceptions, namely Eigenfactor and Article Influence, existing RAMs are reported separately for the sciences and social sciences. RAMs may be computed annually or updated daily. The annual RAMs given below are calculated for a Journal Citations Reports (JCR) calendar year, which is the year before the annual RAM are released. For example, the RAMs were released in late-June 2011 for the JCR calendar year 2010.

2.1.1. 2-year impact factor including journal self citations (2YIF)

The classic 2-year impact factor including journal self citations (2YIF) of a journal is typically referred to as "the impact factor", is calculated annually, and is defined as "Total citations in a year to papers published in a journal in the previous 2 years/Total papers published in a journal in the previous 2 years". The choice of 2 years by ISI is arbitrary.

2.1.2. 2-year impact factor excluding journal self citations (2YIF*)

ISI also reports a 2-year impact factor without journal self citations (that is, citations to a journal in which a citing paper is published), which is calculated annually. As this impact factor is not widely known or used, Chang et al. (2011c) refer to this RAM as 2YIF*.

2.1.3. 5-year impact factor including journal self citations (5YIF)

The 5-year impact factor including journal self citations (5YIF) of a journal is calculated annually, and is defined as "Total citations in a year to papers published in a journal in the previous 5 years/Total papers published in a journal in the previous 5 years." The choice of 5 years by ISI is arbitrary.

2.1.4. Immediacy, or zero-year impact factor including journal self citations (0YIF)

Immediacy is a zero-year impact factor including journal self citations (0YIF) of a journal, is calculated annually, and is defined as

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