Citation Metrics for Editors of Top-Ranked Journals Related to Higher Education: A Descriptive Study

Michael K. Ponton

Dept. of Higher Education and Learning Technology, Texas A&M University-Commerce

P.O. Box 3011, Commerce, Texas 75429, United States

E-mail: Michael.Ponton@tamuc.edu

Abstract

Today's university faculty members engage in myriad activities related to the three general work categories of teaching, research, and service. In order to satisfy the evaluative process for tenure and promotion as related to the research category, the faculty member typically must present not only a curriculum vitae that establishes a substantive record of scholarly productivity but also indicants of impact to the field. Though these latter indicants have often been via letters of support from the faculty member's discipline, increasingly the provision of citation metrics are being used. But while such metrics are meant to provide support for advancement, their use is rather ambiguous due to the lack of defined standards of performance; that is, without standards, how can provided metrics be interpreted? Because chief editors of prestigious journals are typically seasoned scholars, the purpose of this descriptive study is to characterize the citation metrics—citation count, h-index, and i10-index—for the chief editors of 10 top-ranked journals related to the field of higher education. This field was chosen because such editors are likely fully engrossed in the study, practice, and traditions of higher education and, thus, should represent a professorial standard for comparison and, perhaps, a goal for a university faculty member's scholarly productivity. For this descriptive study, citation metrics were available for 11 out of 16 chief editors whose institutions represented the countries of Australia, Canada, Colombia, Spain, United Kingdom, and United States of America. Findings suggest these 11 chief editors are widely cited academicians and, thus, provide salient standards for the purpose of this discussion.

Keywords: university faculty, tenure, promotion, citation metric, h-index, i10-index.

1. Introduction

University faculty members are typically expected to engage in three broad categories of work: teaching, research, and service (Cohen, 1998). Teaching represents faculty-student transactions that facilitate student learning, research represents activities related to the pursuit and dissemination of new knowledge, and service represents work that furthers the mission of entities (e.g., committees, departments, colleges, boards, conferences, etc.) inside and outside respective institutions and rely on faculty expertise to achieve extant goals. The adequacy of such work in all three categories is judged in order to make personnel decisions such as tenure and promotion; in the United States, there is large body of legal discussion that addresses such decisions (e.g., Kaplin et al., 2020; Poskanzer, 2002).

With respect to the research category, an important goal of the tenure or promotion application is to present the impact of the faculty-applicant's scholarship to their chosen field. The traditional method for defending impact is the provision of letters of support from other academics in the faculty-applicant's discipline who provide a *qualitative* assessment of impact as well as a recommendation of tenure or promotion (as applicable) often based upon not only the faculty-applicant's institutional policy but also the recommender's institutional policy. In contrast, citation metrics are currently widely available that can support a *quantitative* defense of impact.

An argument to defend impact is the degree to which one's scholarly work—which includes conference papers, journal articles, book chapters, books, etc.—is actually being used and, thus, cited in the literature. With the simple creation of a google scholar citation account (at scholar.google.com) followed by the curating of one's work, the following citation metrics become available: citation count, h-index, and i10-index. The creation of such accounts has become widespread among academics particularly due to the extensive indexing of numerous sources of literature provided by scholar.google.com that has made this website's search feature extremely useful to researchers canvassing the literature for targeted topics.

Defining these metrics, citation count simply refers to the number of times the body of one's work has been cited in the literature. The h-index refers to the Hirsch index (introduced in 2005) and represents "the largest number h of a scientist's papers [or other curated works] that received at least h citations" (Schreiber, 2008, Abstract); for example, an h-index equaling 10 indicates that 10 works have been cited at least 10 times and that 10 is the largest number for this to be true (i.e., there are not 11 works that have been cited at least 11 times). The i10-index refers to the number of works with at least 10 citations; thus, an i10-index equaling 15 indicates that 15 works have been cited at least 10 times and that 15 is the largest number for this to be true (i.e., there are not 16 works that have been cited at least 10 times).

Because there are no standards to evaluate citation metrics, the purpose of this article is to provide the citation metrics for the chief editors of 10 prestigious journals related to the field of higher education. I assumed that such editors are seasoned scholars and fully engrossed in the study, practice, and traditions of higher education; as such, their metrics can provide a professorial standard for comparison and an aspirational goal for university faculty members' scholarly productivity. As part of a tenure and promotion system, their metrics should be

considered in creating progressive standards for evaluation as part of an overall evaluation policy.

2. Method

The chief editors associated with the top 10 journals related to higher education were targeted for analysis. In order to identify the journals, Scrimago Lab (2022), which uses data from Scopus®, was used with the following search parameters:

- Subject area: Social Sciences

- Subject category: Education

- All regions/countries

- Type: Journals

- Year: 2022

    Note. Metrics were based on data as of April 2023

Upon receipt of the search results, the top 10 journal titles that included the phrase "higher education" were selected. Next, the top 10 journals' websites were searched to find their respective chief editors. Finally, each chief editor's information (name, institution, and country) was searched via scholar.google.com to yield the following citation metrics: citation count, h-index, and i10-index.

3. Findings

Table 1 presents the top 10 journals related to higher education. These journals represent a range of overall Scrimago rankings from 6 to 93 and publishers from the following countries: India, Netherlands, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

Table 1. Scimago Lab (2022) Top 10 Journals Related to Higher Education

Scrimago Rank	Journal	SJR[1]	H-Index	Total Documents [2]	Total Cites [2]	Country/ Publisher	ISSN
6	*Internet and Higher Education*	3.327	109	72	902	United Kingdom/ Elsevier BV	10967516
30	*Higher Education for the Future*	2.107	9	44	495	India/ Sage Publications India	2485779, 23476311
31	*Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*	2.079	97	262	1741	United Kingdom/ Taylor and Francis	02602938, 1469297 X

34	*International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*	2.051	49	164	1922	Netherlands / Springer Netherlands	23659440
37	*Higher Education*	1.952	118	375	2515	Netherlands / Springer Netherlands	00181560, 1573174X
49	*Studies in Higher Education*	1.716	120	561	3142	United Kingdom/ Routledge	03075079, 1470174X
51	*Active Learning in Higher Education*	1.686	57	67	393	United Kingdom/ Sage Publications	14697874, 17412625
69	*Journal of Higher Education*	1.550	100	126	487	United Kingdom/ Taylor and Francis	15384640, 00221546
75	*Higher Education Research and Development*	1.462	83	320	1694	United Kingdom/ Taylor and Francis	14698366, 07294360
93	*Journal of Computing in Higher Education*	1.339	47	93	607	United States/ Spring US	10421726, 18671233

Note. Data acquired from Scrimago Lab (2022). [1]SJR (Scimago Journal Rank) reflects "impact, influence or prestige"; [2]3-year period.

Table 2 presents the chief editors of the top 10 journals as per their cited websites. Note that all 16 chief editors are academicians and represent the following countries: Australia, Canada, Colombia, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Spain, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

Table 2. Chief Editors for Top 10 Journals

Journal	Chief Editor(s)
Internet and Higher Education (2023)	Cher Ping Lam The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Vanessa Dennen Florida State University, United States of America
Higher Education for the Future (2023)	Rajan Gurukal Kerala State Higher Education Council, Kerala, India
Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education (2023)	Malcolm Tight Lancaster University, United Kingdom
International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education (2023)	Josep M. Duart, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain Alvaro Galvis, Universidad de los Andes, Colombia Mairead Nic Giolla Mhichil, Dublin City University, Ireland
Higher Education (2023)	Brendan Cantwell Michigan State University, United States of America Jennifer Case Virginia Tech, United States of America Simon Marginson University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Studies in Higher Education (2023)	Creso Sa University of Toronto, Canada
Active Learning in Higher Education (2023)	Virginia Clinton-Lisell University of North Dakota, United States of America
Journal of Higher Education (2023)	Stephen John Quaye The Ohio State University, United States of America
Higher Education Research and Development (2023)	Susan Blackley Curtin University, Australia Cally Guerin Australian National University, Australia

Journal of Computing in Higher Education (2023)	Stephanie L. Moore University of New Mexico, United States of America

Note. Chief editors' names retrieved June 29, 2023.

Table 3 presents the citation metrics for the chief editors. Of the 16 chief editors, 11 had google scholar citation accounts and, thus, available information. No data were available for chief editors of the following journals: *Higher Education for the Future*, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, and *Active Learning in Higher Education*. Using the country data from Table 2, the following countries were represented by the available accounts in Table 3: Australia, Canada, Colombia, Spain, United Kingdom, and United States of America. Thus, the available data represent academicians from the continents of Australia, Europe, North America, and South America.

Table 3. Citation Metrics for Chief Editors

Journal Name	Chief Editor(s) Citation Metrics[1]
Internet and Higher Education (2023)	Cher Ping Lam n/a[2] Vanessa Dennen, Citations: 6099, h-index: 36, i10-index: 75
Higher Education for the Future (2023)	Rajan Gurukal n/a[2]
Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education (2023)	Malcolm Tight n/a[2]
International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education (2023)	Josep M. Duart, Citations: 5008, h-index: 31, i10-index: 62 Alvaro Galvis, Citations: 2974, h-index: 23, i10-index: 58 Mairead Nic Giolla Mhichil n/a[2]
Higher Education (2023)	Brendan Cantwell, Citations: 2719, h-index: 23, i10-index: 37 Jennifer Case, Citations: 4784, h-index: 33, i10-index: 61 Simon Marginson, Citations: 38999, h-index: 80, i10-index: 333
Studies in Higher Education (2023)	Creso Sa, Citations: 2250, h-index: 24, i10-index: 45
Active Learning in Higher Education (2023)	Virginia Clinton-Lisell n/a[2]
Journal of Higher Education (2023)	Stephen John Quaye, Citations: 6244, h-index: 26, i10-index: 40
Higher Education Research and Development (2023)	Susan Blackley, Citations: 825, h-index: 10, i10-index: 10 Cally Guerin, Citations: 1147, h-index: 19, i10-index: 25
Journal of Computing in Higher Education (2023)	Stephanie L. Moore, Citations: 8669, h-index: 17, i10-index: 25

Note. [1]Text from Column 2 was directly inserted in a scholar.google.com search query on June 29, 2023. Data provided for only those persons holding a google scholar citation account ($n = 11$ out of 16 possible persons; 68.8%); [2]no google scholar citation account ($n = 5$).

Table 4 presents the citation metrics for the 11 chief editors. Note that citations range from 825 to 38999, h-index from 10 to 80, and i10-index from 10 to 333. Chief Editor Marginson (*Higher Education*) provided extremely high values for all citation metrics; thus, median values were calculated in addition to mean values (see Table 5). As per Table 5, the measures of central tendency (i.e., mean and median) for all citation metrics (i.e., citation count, h-index, and i10-index) suggest that the work of the 11 chief editors is widely cited in the literature.

Table 4. Citation Metrics for Chief Editors With Google Scholar Citation Accounts

Editor	Citation Count	h-index	i10-index
Vanessa Dennen	6099	36	75
Josep M. Duart	5008	31	62
Alvaro Galvis	2974	23	58
Brendan Cantwell	2719	23	37
Jennifer Case	4784	33	61
Simon Marginson	38999	80	333
Creso Sa	2250	24	45
Stephen John Quaye	6244	26	40
Susan Blackley	825	10	10
Cally Guerin	1147	19	25
Stephanie L. Moore	8669	17	25

Table 5. Mean and Median for Citation Information

Variable	Mean	Median
Citation Count	7247.1	4784
h-index	29.3	24
i10-index	70.1	45

Note. $n = 11$.

4. Conclusions

The measures of central tendency provided in Table 5 are presently argued to represent high standards of citation metrics as they are based upon data from 11 chief editors of 7 of the top 10 most prestigious journals related to higher education. For faculty members in education and particularly in the field of higher education, these mean and median values serve as useful comparative standards for the achievements of senior faculty members as well as goals for junior faculty members. As part of a tenure and promotion evaluation system, these metrics (or metrics derived from a similar analysis for other respective fields) may be considered as a guide in developing incremental standards for faculty members moving through each stage of the tenure and promotion process.

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