A Comparison of Information Systems Journal Quality Standards

TREO Talk Paper

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Abstract

Establishing proper journal quality standards has been a major policy issue in business schools. A journal quality standard accepted by the faculty usually plays an essential role in an accreditation process. The inclusion or exclusion of specific journals also has profound impacts on the tenure and promotion outcomes of individual faculty members. Inclusion of a journal in the Cabell’s Directory of Publishing Opportunities, combined with requirement on journal acceptance rate (e.g., 30 percent or below), is often used by business schools in determination of faculty qualification when seeking accreditation with AACSB. The Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) list and associated rankings provides another option for institutions that require a higher standard in faculty research. In addition, journal impact factor, as reported by Journal Citation Reports (JCR), is widely accepted in many academic fields as an objective measure of quality of academic journals. In practice, it is not uncommon for traditionally teaching-oriented institutions to utilize the Cabell’s directory during initial accreditation with AACSB, while aspiring to adopt the ABDC list further down the road to stimulate higher quality in faculty research (Krueger 2017).

A few scholars have performed comparisons of these widely used journal standards. Krueger (2017) compared sample journals drawn from ABDC list and Cabell’s directory in key variables such as acceptance rate. However, the scope is limited to journals in finance only. A recent study by Hair, Wood, and Sharland (2019) suggests that JCP impact factor is a more accurate proxy for ABDC ranking than Cabell’s acceptance rate. In the present study, we analyzed the 178 Information Systems journals included in the ABDC list. We found that Cabell’s acceptance rate increased from A*-ranked journals in ABDC list (mean = 12.88%, median = 10%) to B-ranked journals (mean = 24.75%, median = 25%). However, C-ranked journals showed a decrease in acceptance rate (mean = 22.63%, median = 20%). Similarly, JCR impact factor decreased from A*-ranked journals (mean = 3.29, median = 3.20) to B-ranked journals (mean = 1.39, median = 1.22), as C-ranked journals showed an increase (mean = 1.67, median = 1.49) from B-ranked journals.

To further assess the relative impact of Cabell’s acceptance rate and JCR impact factor on ABDC rankings, a generalized linear model analysis reveals that holding impact factor at a fixed value, an increase in acceptance rate was associated with a decrease in the odds of ABDC ranking, with an odds ratio of 0.941 (95% CI, 0.843 to 0.991), Wald $\chi^2(1) = 5.257, p < .05$. Holding acceptance rate at a fixed value, an increase in impact factor was associated with an increase in the odds of ABDC ranking, with an odds ratio of 2.322 (95% CI, 1.544 to 3.493), Wald $\chi^2(1) = 16.355, p < .001$, suggesting impact factor to be a better predictor of ABDC ranking than Cabell’s acceptance rate.

References
