

# DIFFERENCES IN CITATION PREDICTION FOR TWO SCOPUS/WOS-INDEXED BUSINESS JOURNALS:

the journal editor's perspective

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**Abstract:** Predict citation studies hold significant importance for editors and often involve analyzing various factors to forecast the future impact or number of citations a particular paper might receive. In this work, we study the prediction of citations for two business journals indexed in Scopus and WoS using four predictors: citations, peer-review process, bibliographic information, and study characteristics. The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and negative binomial regression. Results revealed significant differences between the two open-access business journals, highlighting that there is no unique model, even within databases. The four variables have different predictive importance.

**Keywords:** Document-level citation. Business journals. Negative binomial regression.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Informetrics scholars have conducted several studies to predict citations received by papers indexed in multidisciplinary databases like Scopus or Web of Science (WoS) using raw or normalized citations (Chen, 2012; Prathap; Mini; Nishy, 2016; Stegehuis; Litvak; Waltman, 2015). Even more recent ones have predicted citations using machine learning techniques (Beranová *et al.*, 2022). Even though there are two main theories to explain citations (normative and socio-constructivist), it is very difficult to ascertain why academics cite one scholar's paper. It is an important topic because citations can be used for assigning research funds, career promotion, or hiring to give common examples. These high-stakes decisions are attributed to the citation's nature, as they can be understood as a recognition of a contribution to knowledge advancement, a proxy of an author's reputation, or, broadly, as a measure of academic popularity.

Regarding the studies that predict citations, we find two primary issues to be briefly discussed. The first issue is the circular argument. We know that the rationale of predictive models is to examine the effect of independent variables on the predicted variable. However, studies that examine citations received by a paper use the citations received by the journal (using indicators like the journal impact factor) to explain citations (Abramo; D'Angelo; Felici, 2019; Stern, 2014). Ultimately, it becomes a kind of circular argument: analyze citations (at the journal level) to predict citations (at the document level). Therefore, it is necessary to consider other factors distinct from citation-based measurements to predict citations in multidisciplinary databases.

The second issue refers to the known citation predictors. In addition to the citations received by the journal, other well-known factors that predict citations are the number of coauthors, references, length of abstracts/keywords, and subject area (Bornmann; Leydesdorff; Wang, 2014; Chen, 2012; Sotudeh; Asadi; Yousefi, 2023). Most of these factors are those available from the two databases mentioned above. In other words, they are indicators ready to be used.

According to the previous review, we can organize the factors predicting citation in three levels: article, journal, or author. For each level, researchers have identified statistically significant predictors (Bornmann; Leydesdorff, 2015; Onodera; Yoshikane, 2015; Thelwall; Sud, 2022): article (title/abstract length, cited references, coauthorship), journal (academic prestige, research scope or peer-review process), and author (academic age, productivity, institutional affiliation). However, from the editors' perspective for predicting citations, the relevant factors are those which they can influence through editorial policies or instructions to the authors. Regarding the editorial policies, editors can set the number of revision rounds or recommend the review to be completed within a specific period (e.g., 20-40 days for each round). Concerning the instructions to the authors, editors can establish limits for the number of tables, figures, or references to be in the manuscript. Even in some research areas, they could establish the minimum sample size for manuscripts to be submitted to the journal.

Even though the contribution of article, journal, or author-level predictors has been documented in the literature (Bornmann; Leydesdorff, 2015; Bornmann; Leydesdorff; Wang, 2014; Thelwall; Sud, 2022), we still do not have a clear picture of how these factors affect citation, considering the research area, geographical precedence, or accessibility to the publication. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to



examine the contribution of article and journal-level predictors to citation in Scopus/WoS of two open-access business journals: one from Brazil and the other from Poland. Thus, we pose the following research question: Do two Scopus/WoS open-access business journals have different citation predictors?

## 2 METHODS

### 2.1 DATA COLLECTION

Since business and management is an under-explored subject area, we chose two publications in this field. Also, we examined open-access journals to observe the interaction among variables within an open science perspective. Both journals do not work with article processing charges (APCs). It means they belong to the open-access diamond model. Consequently, we collected data from Brazilian and Polish journals to observe differences between journals published by a Global North and South country: *Revista Brasileira de Gestão de Negócios* (RBGN) and Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management, and Innovation (JEMI). We registered data available for the 137 JEMI papers indexed in the WoS Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) and Scopus [2019-2023]. We restricted the data collection for RBGN ( $n = 108$ ) to the years 2020-2022 to have comparable measures.

### 2.2 VARIABLES MEASUREMENT

We measured four variables: citations, peer-review process, bibliographic information, and study characteristics. These variables have been used in previous citation studies (Didegah; Thelwall, 2013; Xie *et al.*, 2024). We operationalized citations as the number of citations received in Scopus and WoS ESCI. We restricted citation data up to 2022 because they accrue over time, and data from 2023 would not be as informative as the previous years. We measured the article-level data using known predictors, such as the number of international coauthors, length in words of title/abstract, and cited references. Despite there being several ways to measure the peer-review process (e.g., quality of the review, number of reviewers, revision rounds), we counted the months between the paper submission and the manuscript acceptance to be published in the journal for the peer-review process. Finally, we operationalized study characteristics with three indicators: number of observations, tables, and figures. The first one applied only to quantitative-oriented studies. Even though it is possible to examine other research design attributes, we decided to work with the already mentioned rather than qualitative ones, like the analytic technique, because most studies published in both journals worked with structural equation modeling, regression/panel-based, and time series analysis.

### 2.3 DATA ANALYSIS

After obtaining descriptive statistics and a correlation matrix, we used the negative binomial regression, which is the recommended approach when the predicted variable follows a power-law distribution and the predictors do not have a normal distribution (Chen, 2012; McDonald, 2007; Walters, 2006). Also,

it has been demonstrated the robustness of negative binomial regression compared with other regression models like linear, lognormal or generalized Poisson regression models (Ajiferuke; Famoye, 2015).

### 3 DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive analysis of Brazilian and Polish journals revealed notable differences. While Brazilian journal generally exhibited higher mean coauthorship and peer-review process, Polish journal had longer abstracts and titles on average. Additionally, Polish journals tended to garner more citations, both in Scopus and WoS. Interestingly, despite these differences, both journals had similar levels of international co-authorship. These findings suggest distinct publication practices and impact patterns between Brazilian and Polish journals, highlighting the complex nature of scholarly communication across different contexts (see Table 1).

Because of space limits, we aggregated the results of the correlation analysis. First, we found a moderate inverse correlation between citations in Scopus, the peer-review process, and the number of tables. Second, we also found an inverse relationship between citations in WoS and the peer-review process. Additionally, we detected a positive correlation between observations and the number of tables but an inverse one between observations and references (see Table 2).

**Table 1** - Descriptives for publications indexed in Scopus and WoS

| Variables                          | Mean    | Std. dev. | Coef_variation | Minimum | Maximum |
|------------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------------|---------|---------|
| <b>Brazilian journal (n = 108)</b> |         |           |                |         |         |
| Coauthorship                       | 2.806   | 0.779     | 0.278          | 1       | 4       |
| International coauthorship         | 0.241   | 0.527     | 2.187          | 0       | 3       |
| Title length                       | 14.019  | 4.310     | 0.307          | 5       | 26      |
| Abstract length                    | 243.870 | 46.477    | 0.191          | 134     | 422     |
| References                         | 66.593  | 26.578    | 0.399          | 17      | 162     |
| Peer-review process                | 11.648  | 5.643     | 0.484          | 1       | 32      |
| Tables                             | 5.259   | 2.377     | 0.452          | 0       | 13      |
| Figures                            | 1.843   | 2.276     | 1.235          | 0       | 16      |
| Scopus citations                   | 1.287   | 2.018     | 1.568          | 0       | 12      |
| WoS citations                      | 0.843   | 1.355     | 1.607          | 0       | 7       |
| <b>Polish journal (n = 128)</b>    |         |           |                |         |         |
| Coauthorship                       | 2.359   | 1.106     | 0.469          | 1       | 6       |
| International coauthorship         | 0.242   | 0.448     | 1.851          | 0       | 2       |
| Title length                       | 14.453  | 3.580     | 0.248          | 7       | 24      |
| Abstract length                    | 331.758 | 124.459   | 0.375          | 102     | 646     |
| References                         | 77.603  | 31.537    | 0.406          | 31      | 201     |
| Peer-review process                | 5.398   | 2.981     | 0.552          | 1       | 14      |
| Tables                             | 4.883   | 3.557     | 0.728          | 0       | 23      |

| Variables        | Mean  | Std. dev. | Coef_variation | Minimum | Maximum |
|------------------|-------|-----------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Figures          | 2.438 | 2.490     | 1.021          | 0       | 13      |
| Scopus citations | 5.828 | 7.205     | 1.236          | 0       | 42      |
| WoS citations    | 4.305 | 4.765     | 1.107          | 0       | 26      |

**Source:** Data research (2024).

The negative binomial regression analysis reveals significant predictors of citations for both the Brazilian and Polish journals. Notably, tables negatively influence WoS citation counts in the Brazilian journal, whereas they positively impact citations in the Polish journal (although the coefficient was not significant). Conversely, including figures seems to hurt citations in the Brazilian journal, although this finding is marginally significant. Additionally, international coauthorship shows a positive trend, though not statistically significant, indicating its potential influence on citation counts in both journals. Previous studies also found that the distribution of the number of citations follows a negative binomial distribution and s-curve type behavior. The empirical model hypothesized by those authors achieved satisfactory performance in over six management science journals (Mingers; Burrell, 2006; Mingers, 2008).

**Table 2** – Correlation matrix for Brazilian and Polish journals

| Variables            | 2.                 | 3.                 | 4.                  | 5.                  | 6.                  | 7.                  | 8.                  |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Scopus            | 0.9113<br>(0.0000) | 0.0719<br>(0.3920) | -0.0315<br>(0.7076) | 0.1304<br>(0.1193)  | -0.2046<br>(0.0139) | -0.2046<br>(0.0139) | 0.0418<br>(0.6187)  |
| 2. WoS               |                    | 0.0147<br>(0.8609) | 0.0090<br>(0.9144)  | -0.2776<br>(0.0008) | -0.1315<br>(0.1162) | -0.1315<br>(0.1162) | 0.0129<br>(0.8780)  |
| 3. Int. coauthorship |                    |                    | -0.0394<br>(0.6388) | -0.0555<br>(0.5089) | -0.0836<br>(0.3194) | -0.0836<br>(0.3194) | 0.0094<br>(0.9106)  |
| 4. Observations      |                    |                    |                     | 0.0445<br>(0.5962)  | 0.2654<br>(0.0013)  | 0.2654<br>(0.0013)  | -0.0070<br>(0.9339) |
| 5. References        |                    |                    |                     | -0.0830<br>(0.3224) | -0.1054<br>(0.2089) | -0.1054<br>(0.2089) | -0.0994<br>(0.2360) |
| 6. Peer-review       |                    |                    |                     |                     | 0.0005<br>(0.9951)  | 0.0005<br>(0.9951)  | -0.0974<br>(0.2454) |
| 7. Tables            |                    |                    |                     |                     |                     |                     | 0.0991<br>(0.2371)  |
| 8. Figures           |                    |                    |                     |                     |                     |                     |                     |

**Source:** Data Research (2024).

**Note:** Statistical significance (p-value) within parentheses.

**Table 3** - Predicting WoS citations for both journals [95% confidence interval: lower - upper]

| Brazilian journal (n = 71) |          |        |         |         |         |         |
|----------------------------|----------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Variable                   | Estimate | S.E.   | Lower   | Upper   | z-value | p-value |
| Intercept                  | 1.0127   | 0.7181 | -0.3948 | 2.4202  | 1.41    | 0.158   |
| Tables                     | -0.1536  | 0.0726 | -0.2960 | -0.0113 | -2.12   | 0.034   |
| Figures                    | -0.3172  | 0.1652 | -0.6411 | 0.0067  | -1.92   | 0.055   |
| International coauthorship | 0.3140   | 0.2342 | -0.1449 | 0.7730  | 1.34    | 0.180   |

| Brazilian journal (n = 71) |          |        |         |        |         |         |
|----------------------------|----------|--------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| Variable                   | Estimate | S.E.   | Lower   | Upper  | z-value | p-value |
| References                 | 0.0034   | 0.0055 | -0.0072 | 0.0142 | 0.63    | 0.531   |
| Observations               | 0.0006   | 0.0008 | -0.0001 | 0.0002 | 0.07    | 0.940   |
| Peer-review process        | -0.0016  | 0.0254 | -0.0514 | 0.0481 | -0.06   | 0.949   |
| Polish journal (n = 73)    |          |        |         |        |         |         |
| Variable                   | Estimate | S.E.   | Lower   | Upper  | z-value | p-value |
| Intercept                  | 1.4377   | 0.3121 | 0.8259  | 2.0495 | 4.61    | 0.000   |
| Peer-review process        | 0.0613   | 0.0262 | 0.0099  | 0.1127 | 2.34    | 0.020   |
| Observations               | 0.0001   | 0.0000 | 0.0000  | 0.0002 | 2.32    | 0.020   |
| Tables                     | -0.0424  | 0.0247 | -0.0908 | 0.0061 | -1.71   | 0.087   |
| Figures                    | -0.0487  | 0.0304 | -0.1083 | 0.0109 | -1.60   | 0.109   |
| International coauthorship | 0.0188   | 0.1914 | -0.3564 | 0.3539 | 0.10    | 0.922   |
| References                 | -0.0000  | 0.0025 | -0.0050 | 0.0049 | -0.01   | 0.989   |

Source: Data Research (2024).

**Table 4** - Predicting Scopus citations for both journals [95% confidence interval: lower - upper]

| Brazilian journal (n = 71) |          |        |         |         |         |         |
|----------------------------|----------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Variable                   | Estimate | S.E.   | Lower   | Upper   | z-value | p-value |
| Intercept                  | 1.3268   | 0.5947 | 0.1613  | 2.4924  | 2.23    | 0.026   |
| International coauthorship | 0.5294   | 0.1753 | 0.1858  | 0.8731  | 3.02    | 0.003   |
| Tables                     | -0.1305  | 0.0209 | -0.2449 | -0.0162 | -2.24   | 0.025   |
| Figures                    | -0.2605  | 0.1244 | -0.5042 | -0.0167 | -2.09   | 0.036   |
| Peer-review process        | 0.0037   | 0.0209 | -0.0373 | 0.0446  | 0.18    | 0.861   |
| Observations               | 0.0000   | 0.0000 | -0.0001 | 0.0001  | 0.16    | 0.870   |
| References                 | -0.0002  | 0.0046 | -0.0090 | 0.0090  | -0.01   | 0.995   |
| Polish journal (n = 73)    |          |        |         |         |         |         |
| Variable                   | Estimate | S.E.   | Lower   | Upper   | z-value | p-value |
| Intercept                  | 1.6804   | 0.3407 | 1.0127  | 2.3482  | 4.93    | 0.000   |
| Tables                     | -0.0771  | 0.2759 | -0.1312 | -0.0230 | -2.79   | 0.005   |
| Peer-review process        | 0.0666   | 0.0276 | 0.0124  | 0.1207  | 2.41    | 0.016   |
| Observations               | -0.1536  | 0.0726 | -0.2960 | -0.0113 | -2.12   | 0.033   |
| Figures                    | -0.0283  | 0.0324 | -0.0918 | 0.0352  | -0.87   | 0.383   |
| References                 | 0.0012   | 0.0028 | -0.0042 | 0.0066  | 0.44    | 0.656   |
| International coauthorship | -0.0080  | 0.2012 | -0.4023 | 0.3864  | -0.04   | 0.968   |

Source: Data Research (2024).

Interestingly, the peer-review process has a significant negative association with citations in the Polish journal, suggesting a possible area for improvement in enhancing citation impact (see Table 3). Regarding Scopus, the significant predictors were international coauthorship, tables, and figures for the Brazilian journal, whereas the number of tables, peer-review, and observations for the Polish journal

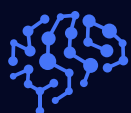
(see Table 4).

## 4 CONCLUSION

This study examined the citation prediction for two Scopus/WoS-indexed business journals, one from Brazil and one from Poland. Results revealed distinct publication practices, with the Polish journals having longer abstracts/titles and attracting more citations. Despite similar international co-authorship levels, correlation analysis showed an inverse relationship between citations and the peer-review process in both journals. Negative binomial regression identified significant predictors for citations in each journal, with a high number of tables impacting negatively in both journals, but the peer-review process only affected the Polish journal, revealing an improvement area for getting a better citation impact. These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of citation prediction across geographical contexts and editorial practices.

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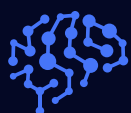
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