



Research note

Systems of surveillance and control: commentary on ‘An analysis of institutional contributors to three major academic tourism journals: 1992–2001’

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Abstract

The assessment of academic publishing performance has implications not only for individuals and institutions, but also the development of tourism as a field of study. The article examines the ways in which academic journals are used and how this relates to scholarship and performance. The article notes some of the difficulties in citation analysis, questions what should be regarded as core quality tourism journals, and argues that citation analyses, without being linked to a broader understanding of the sociology of tourism knowledge, may be highly instrumental in character. The article concludes by questioning whether citation analyses are undertaken to actually contribute to understanding the development of a field and the knowledge networks which eventuate, or whether they represent a flawed attempt to develop ‘league tables’ of performance.

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The article by Jogaratnam et al. raises fundamental issues regarding the role and nature of academic publishing, particularly in academic journals. Perhaps just as significantly it also raises questions about the assessment of the field of tourism and academic performance in an age in which such analyses may have enormous implications not only for individual careers but also education funding, decisions regarding university and college governance, the decision-making processes of students, as well as the broader development of tourism as a field of academic endeavour.

As Weiner (2001) has noted, academic journals are used in three main ways. The first and arguably the most important, although not sufficiently acknowledged in either the Jogaratnam et al. article or in many other similar publications in tourism and hospitality, including debates on academic publishing on TRINET in early 2004, is to produce, disseminate and exchange academic

knowledge. Second, to rank research and scholarly work in order to aid the distribution of education and research funds, e.g. through such processes as the United Kingdom’s research assessment exercise (RAE) or New Zealand’s performance based research fund (PBRF). Third, to inform decisions concerning appointment and promotion as well as to contribute to the positioning of the status of individuals, departments and institutions for purposes of self-promotion, marketing and ego-enhancement. The second and third factors, in particular, have meant that journals and the procedures they use have become more important to some individual writers and academics, and their institutions and is particularly acute where research activity is highly prioritised and where it constitutes a significant source of institutional and, directly or indirectly, personal income. To these three main ways in which academic journals are used can also be added a fourth dimensions which is reflection on the development of academic endeavour itself at either a meta-level (the field as a whole), a meso-level (an individual journal or narrow

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selection of specific journals), or at a micro-level (an individual author or department). Therefore, unfortunately, the article by Jogaratnam et al. provides only a very narrow perspective on what is happening in tourism and is really only a reflection of what is happening with respect to the three journals that are utilised in the study and certainly does not provide 'a broad profile of the publishing activity in our field' (Jogaratnam et al., in press: 11). A criticism that is equally valid of the original study (Sheldon, 1991) that Jogaratnam et al. seek to replicate on a number of different grounds.

Obviously journals are a significant area for academic scholarship, but they are certainly not the only means of academic publication and evaluation, nor are they the only form of publication opened up to external anonymous review. Indeed, most reputable academic publishers will anonymously review not only the proposal for a publication but also upon receipt of the final draft manuscript. In the case of both the RAE and the PBRF a wide range of published work was considered. As Whittington (1993: 385) noted with respect to the RAE

Publications in refereed journals were given a high weighting, because the refereeing process provides a filter for quality, but the publications were not simply counted: a serious attempt was made to assess their quality and contribution to knowledge. Equally books, professional research monographs and publications in professional journals were given a high weight when it was felt that they represented a serious research contribution.

More recently, an analysis of the 2001 RAE exercise with respect to submissions to the business and management panel (of which tourism is a part) indicates that while just over 80% of the total number of submissions were journal articles, book chapters accounted for 8.7% of submissions in total and authored books 4.3%. Interestingly, for the highest rated departments (5*), journal articles only represented 72% of submissions, while book chapters and authored books accounted for 10.6% and 5.1%, respectively (Geary, Marriott, & Rowlinson, 2004). Indeed, detailed data from the 2001 RAE submissions are available on the internet (<http://www.hero.ac.uk/rae>) and has been utilised in a detailed analysis of the journal articles that were cited in the submissions to the Business and Management Panel and which has been utilised in the rating of individual journals for the core list of 562 journals cited in submissions (Geary et al., 2004). Table 1 provides an overview of the ratings of tourism subject area journals in relation to the performance of institutions. For a broader discussion of the performance of institutions within the 2001 RAE and the relatively poor performance of tourism institutions see Page (2003).

Table 1
Citations of tourism and related journals in the 2001 RAE exercise in relation to institutional performance

Journal title	Mean	Mode	Median
<i>More than five citations</i>			
Annals of Tourism Research	4.5	5	5
Current Issues in Tourism	4.6	5	5
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	3.6	4	4
International Journal of Heritage Studies	4.0	5	4
International Journal of Hospitality Management	3.4	2	2.5
International Journal of Tourism Research	4.2	4	4
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	4.3	5	5
Journal of Travel Research	3.9	4	4
Journal of Vacation Marketing	3.7	4	4
Progress in Tourism and Hospitality Research	3.9	5	4
Service Industries Journal	4.5	4	5
Tourism Economics	4.0	5	4
Tourism Management	4.4	5	5
Tourism Recreation Research	4.3	4	4
<i>Five or less citations</i>			
Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly	3.5	5	3.5
Information Technology and Tourism	3.7	5	4
Journal of Leisure Research	5.0	5	5
Leisure Studies	3.8	4	4
Tourism, Culture and Communication	4.5	5	4.5

Allocation of institutional performance scores (RAE ratings in brackets): 7(5*), 6(5), 5(4), 4(3A), 3(3B), 2, 1. (7 is highest).

Sources: Derived from Geary et al. (2004).

Perhaps just as pointedly one can ask why these three journals? According to Jogaratnam, Chon, McClearly, Mean, and Yoo (in press: 3), 'Although there has been a profusion of new travel and tourism journals in recent times, the three journals evaluated are considered the highest quality and most referenced tourism journals (Sheldon, 1990)'. In the case of Sheldon's, (1990) original analysis it can be argued that the original faculty perceptions were considerably biased towards English language and North American faculty perceptions. These biases are therefore merely being repeated in the Jogaratnam et al. study. Hall, Williams, and Lew (2004) noted that as at the end of 2004 some 75 core academic journals in tourism, hospitality and leisure could be identified (with the hospitality and leisure journals also including a substantial number of tourism articles), of these 23 had been first published prior to 1990. With the two oldest academic tourism journals being *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal*

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