

Jumping through the loops – some notes on the ‘accreditation’ systems of DoE, IBSS, ISI and Scopus

Arnold S de Beer

Department of Journalism, Stellenbosch University

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**Institute for Media Analysis
in South Africa (iMasa)**



**Ecquid Novi:
African Journalism Studies**

The golden grail: It is written in the book of ISI (a.k.a. Thomson-Reuters)

□ Presentation

- Personal journey through corridors: DoE, IBSS, ISI and Scopus
- Point of View: Social Sciences (Journalism & Media Studies)
- Also, personal and even anecdotal
- Other points of view: Official/formal and Journal experience
- Important, 'necessary' road for SA journals to take, especially to the Journal Impact Factor (JFI) of ISI

□ Relevancy

- Strict "essentialistic" view of DoE about IBSS & ISI
- Low percentage of SA journals on ISI citation lists

□ Aim

- How to approach ISI/IBSS indexing

Why bother with having your journal on an index such as ISI?

- It is the SA journal flavour of the month thing to do
 - Pressure from SA education/university/research authorities
 - Research output calculated in terms of 'accredited' journals
 - Marketing/fund raising needs of universities
 - Income from state subsidies for universities and (some) researchers
 - Pressure from peer group/readers, also journal contributors
 - Individual promotion, NRF ratings, funding, project applications
 - Page-fee income for subsidized journals
 - International trends: SA lacking behind in ISI Journal Impact Factor
 - Much criticism about recognition by DoE of only ISI and IBSS
 - However: Other systems are gaining support, e.g. Scopus, Google

South Africa lacking behind in the ISI stakes – Social Science Index

□ Total of 15 of DoE journals on ISI Social Science Index

- Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies
- Education as Change
- Investment Analysts Journal
- Language Matters
- SAJ for Research in Sport, Physical Education & Recreation
- SAJ of Business Management
- SAJ of Economic & Management Sciences
- SAJ of Psychology
- SAHARA (IBSS)
- Social Dynamics (IBSS)
- Perspectives in Education (IBSS)
- SAJ of Education (IBSS)
- SAJ on Human Rights (IBSS)
- SA Linguistics and Applied Language Studies (Arts)

SA lacking behind in the ISI stakes – Science Citation Index

- A total of 15 DoE Journals are on the ISI Science Citation Index

- African Entomology
- African Invertebrates
- Afr.J of Aquatic Science
- Afr.J of Herpetology
- Afr.J. of Marine Science
- Afr.J. of Range & For.Sc.
- Cardiovascular J. of Afr.
- Curr. Allg. & Clinical. Immun.
- Quaestiones Mathematicae
- SA Medical Journal
- SA J of Enology and Viticulture
- SAJ of Industrial Engineering
- SAJ of Science
- Southern Forests
- SAJ of Psychiatry (also SSCI)

What is the SA (DoE) journal position on ISI (and IBSS)?

- Number of journals on DoE Approved List (2010): 248 (100%)
- Less than a fifth (18.5%) are on ISI and/or IBSS 46 (18.5%)
- Number of DoE Journals on three ISI lists: 37 (14.9%)
 - ISI Science List: 15 (6.1%)
 - ISI SSCI: 14 (5.6%)
 - ISI Arts List only: 8 (3.2%)
- Number of DoE Journals on IBSS only: 9 (3.6%)
- Number of DoE Journals not on ISI or IBSS: 202 (81.5%)

SA journals on ISI (Arts) and IBSS

❑ ISI Arts

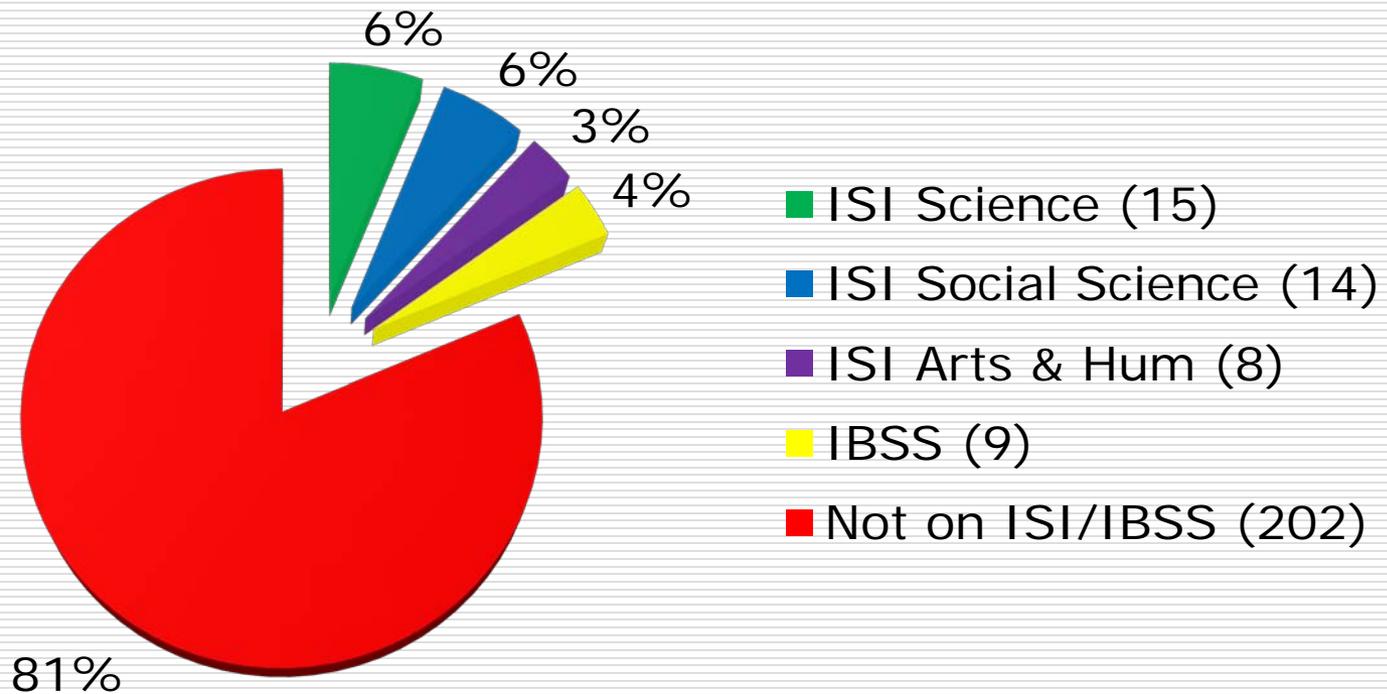
- ❑ Acta Theologica
- ❑ English Studies in Africa
- ❑ HTS Theological Studies
- ❑ J. of the Musical Arts in Africa
- ❑ Lexikos
- ❑ SAJ of Philosophy
- ❑ Tydskrif vir Letterkunde
- ❑ SA Archaeological Bulletin

❑ IBSS

- ❑ Africa Insight
- ❑ African Finance Journal
- ❑ African Journal of Aids Research
- ❑ African Sociological Review
- ❑ Historia: J. of the Hist. Soc. of SA
- ❑ Journal of Psychology in Africa
- ❑ Journal of Public Administration
- ❑ Strategic Review for So. Africa
- ❑ Theoria: J of Social & Pol. Theory

SA journal position on ISI (and IBSS)

DoE Journals 2010 N = 248



Department of Education's criteria for the approved list

- ❑ Purpose: disseminate research results
- ❑ Content: support high level learning,
- ❑ Teaching/research in relevant subject area
- ❑ Articles: must be peer reviewed
- ❑ Contributions: beyond a single institution
- ❑ Must have International Standard Serial Number (ISSN)
- ❑ Must be published regularly
- ❑ Editorial board: Members beyond a single institution
- ❑ reflective of expertise in the relevant subject area
- ❑ Distribution: beyond a single institution
- ❑ Relevancy
- ❑ Aim

ISI Journal Submission Form

- ❑ The main hoops to jump through seem straight forward
- ❑ But it is deceptively simple and without real clues

- ❑ Journal title *
- ❑ Editor-in-Chief
- ❑ Publisher's Address
- ❑ **Frequency (# of issues p.a.)**
- ❑ Country of origin *
- ❑ **Unique features distinguishing this journal**
- ❑ ISSN Print (if applicable)
- ❑ ISSN Electronic (if applicable)
- ❑ Journal URL *
- ❑ Publisher name (if available)
- ❑ 1st Year of Publication
- ❑ Most recent issue (Vol, ISSN, Yr)
- ❑ **Journal Scope**
- ❑ Contact Details *
- ❑ Phone, Address, Email *

ISI: The name of the game is 'frequency' and again 'frequency'

Frequency

- Extremely important
- Show three successive issues – on time
- Frequency applies to print and electronic

Unique features that distinguish the journal, also 'Scope'

- Being regional with a very particular focus
- Subject matter not covered by other (also Northern) journals
- Subject matter is relevant, 'cutting edge', authoritative
- What will be missing for the scientific community if not listed?

Some limitations of Web of Science

- ❑ Underestimation of individual actual citation impact
- ❑ General search limited to ISI journals
- ❑ Captures no (book) chapters
- ❑ Only 5-10% of soc.sci. output in ISI journals (?)
- ❑ Few new journals are added annually to ISI
- ❑ (e.g. 10-12% of 2 000 reviewed p.a.)
- ❑ Over-representation of US/UK journals
- ❑ Not as recent as Google Scholar
- ❑ Not very representative of junior academics
- ❑ Limited coverage of non-English researchers, sources
- ❑ Journal Impact Factor (JIF) open to criticism

IBSS Submission Form

- Scholarly nature
- Analytical articles
- '**Ideally**' (?) peer reviewed
- Editorial Board - respected academics
- Languages: English, F; G; I; P; R & S
- Relevant to IBSS's own subject coverage**
- Journals **international** and **comparative** in scope
- Regional** focus other than the US or UK
- Priority** (80%) unsolicited journals outside UK/US
- Importance to social science research in the UK (sic!)**
- Judged: IBSS's EAB and **LSE Library**
- OAP**: Favourably, academic quality, subject relevance.

IBSS hurdles to overcome... or not

- ❑ **Relevant to IBSS's own subject coverage**
 - ❑ Implications for disciplines not part of 'own subject coverage'
- ❑ **Importance to social science research in the UK**
 - ❑ Sic! As far as the DoE criteria are concerned
- ❑ **Judged with reference to the collection of the LSE Library**
 - ❑ Sic! As far as the DoE criteria are concerned
 - ❖ **Question:** How relevant is IBSS to the global journal indexing/database scene?

Scopus and ISI: A possible alternative?

❑ Prior: Oct 2009 evaluated by Content Selection and Advisory Board

- ❑ English-language title
- ❑ English-language abstracts
- ❑ Full-text articles in **any language**
- ❑ Minimum **one issue** p.a. (sic)
- ❑ Overall high quality
- ❑ Authority in the field
- ❑ Reputation of commercial or society **publisher**
- ❑ **Diversity (?)** of authors/EB
- ❑ International recognition of leading editors
- ❑ **'Some'** (sic) form of **quality control** (e.g. peer review).

❑ Post- Oct 2009. Scoring system

- ❑ Journal Policy (35%)
- ❑ Content (20%)
- ❑ Scope of citations (25%)
- ❑ **Regularity** (10%)
- ❑ **Online Availability** (10%)

Possible questions for discussion

1. How important is it for (all of) the journals on the DoE list to be listed by ISI?
2. How can the above (1) best be realised?
3. How realistic is it to expect more than 20% of the DoE journals to be indexed by ISI?
4. What should the percentage aim of inclusion on ISI be?
5. How important is it to keep ISI as one of only two indexes recognised by the DoE?
6. How important is it to keep IBSS as one of only two indexes recognised by the DoE?
7. Which other indexes can realistically compete with ISI (IBSS)?
8. Given question 7, which other indexes should be considered by the DoE for inclusion for subsidy on journal articles?

