



DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in
Scientometrics and Science,
Technology and Innovation Policy

The state of SA journals project

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Introduction

- ▶ The last systematic studies of scientific journals and scholarly publishing in South Africa were done in 2006 and 2009 respectively (both by CREST under commission by ASSAf). Both of these are now seriously out-dated. One reason for this has to do with the Revision of the DHET Research Subsidy Framework in 2003 (which came into effect in 2005) as well as the more recent additional revisions to the Framework. Depending on how these revisions are implemented we could expect some far-reaching changes in scholarly publishing in South Africa.
 - ▶ Against this background CREST was recently commissioned by ASSAf (and with support from the DHET) to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the state of SA publications. The project will include sections on book publishing as well as trends in conference proceedings. My focus today is on journals and journal articles.
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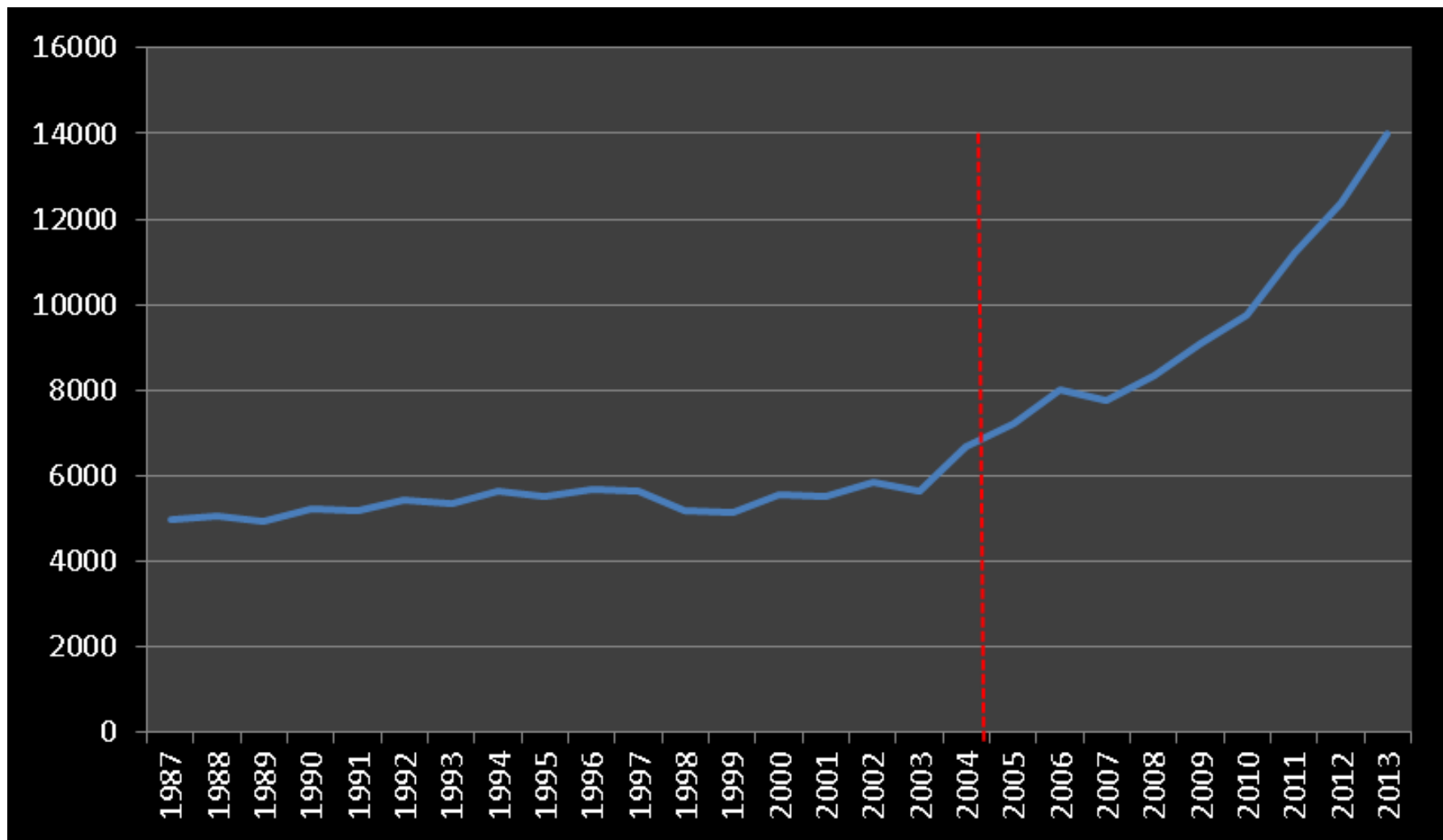


Major trends: 2005 - 2014

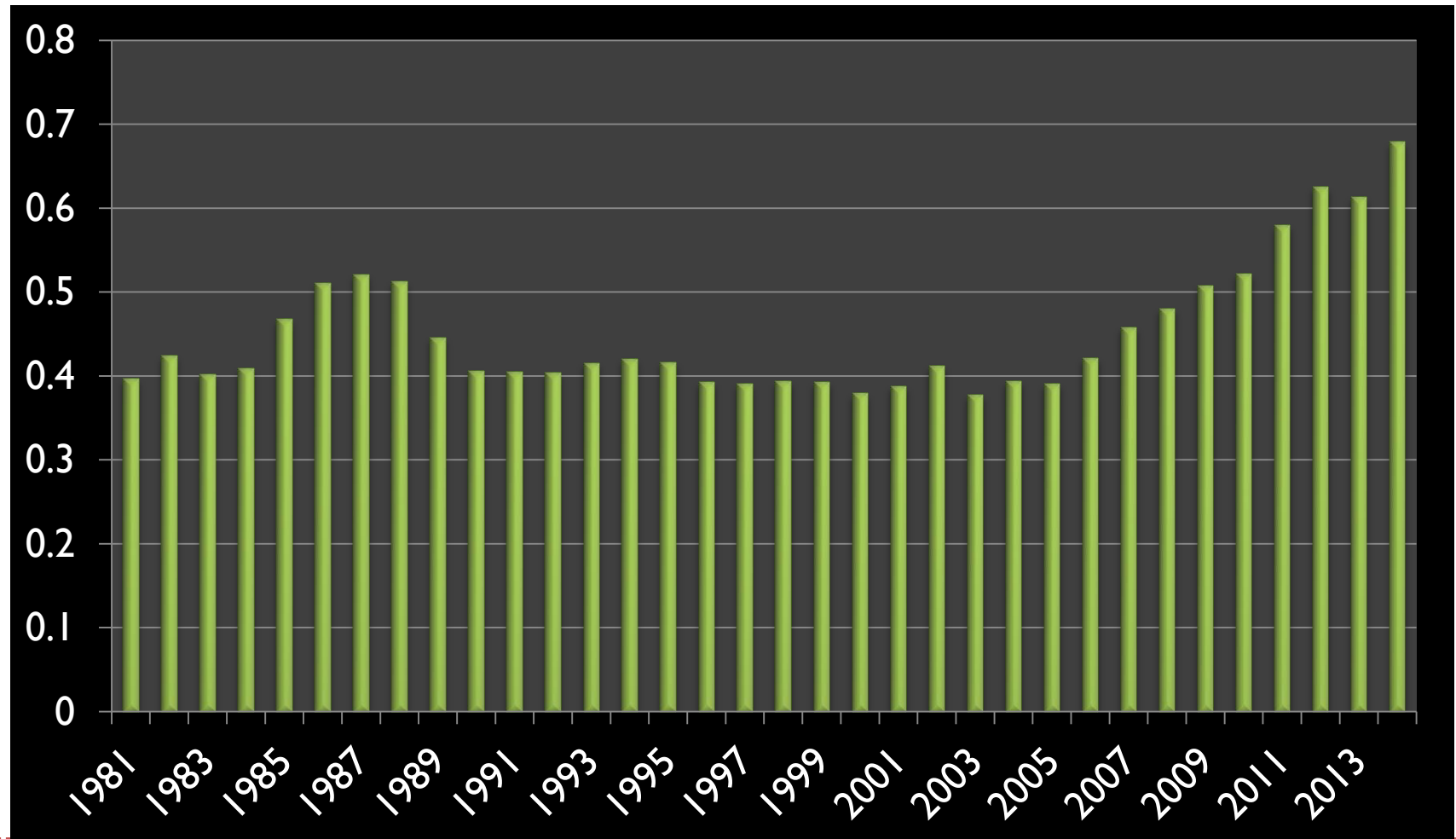
- ▶ The most obvious impact of the revised funding framework of 2003 has been the steep increase in the number of research publications since 2005 (See overleaf). In our view the introduction of new funding incentives was the single biggest cause for the observed increase in output. But three other factors would have contributed.
- ▶ The introduction of the NRF rating system to the social sciences in 2003 have placed new demands on academics to publish.
- ▶ The increase in the number of SA journals accredited by the DHET. The overall number increased from around 210 in 2003 to 302 in 2014. There was also a commensurate increase in the number of SA journals indexed in the WoS from around 26 in 2003 to 68 in 2014.
- ▶ There has been a small increase in the academic capacity of the university sector to produce additional output: from 12 800 permanent instructional staff in 2005 to 14 650 in 2012. But, we should also take into account that universities have implemented other “strategies” to augment their active human capital base!



Total HE research output (subsidy units): 1987-2013



SA's share of articles in Web of Science (1980 – 2013)



Assessment of SA journals (I)

Research project	Bibliometric data requirements	Source and time frame
Assessment of SA scholarly journals, conference proceedings and books: 2005 – 2014. Project time frame: 2015 - 2016	Consolidated database (SA Knowledgebase) of all SA publications for this time frame	University data (new) University research studies Previous versions of SAK Web of Science 2005 - 2014

Main research questions:

What are the main trends and changes (if any) in the nature of scientific journal publishing since the introduction of the revised funding framework of 2005?

1. What are the changes in the distribution of journal articles by journal list (Web of Science/ IBSS/DHET) between 2005 and 2014?
2. In which journals do South African authors publish and how are these journals distributed by national and international publishers?
3. What are the main trends in the demographics of journal authors (gender, age, race, nationality, institutional affiliation)?

Assessment of SA journals (2)

Main research questions:

What are the main trends and changes (if any) in the nature of scientific journal publishing since the introduction of the revised funding framework of 2005?

1. What are the main trends in collaborative publishing (multi-authorship)?
2. What are the main trends in the citation impact of South African authored papers over the period 2005 – 2014?

The bibliometric analyses at the systems level in (1) above will be augmented by journal-level analyses.

1. How do the bibliometric properties (including citation profiles) of individual SA journals indexed by the Web of Science or Scopus compare with those journal titles not indexed in the Web of Science or Scopus?
2. How do the bibliometric properties (including journal citation impact) compare between open access journals and the “traditional” journals?
3. The bibliometric analyses generated under the previous two bullets should be compared with Journal information provided for the ASSAf reviews in order to assess whether these correlate with journal editorial practices (rejection rates, contribution of foreign authors to local journals, editorial policies, etc.)
4. What has been and is the impact of “predatory” journals on the publication practices of SA authors?

Elaboration on project (1)

- ▶ With the introduction of the 2015 revisions to the funding framework, some additional issues have been highlighted (and included in the study):
 - ▶ What impact will the additional lists (Scopus, NSD and Scielo) have on the publication practices of SA academics/scholars?
 - ▶ Perhaps an even more basic question should be asked: What does the DHET want to achieve with the introduction of these additional lists?
 - ▶ There is growing evidence (not just in SA) that the demand to publish and publish more is generating seemingly more unethical/non-virtuous practices: increasing cases of plagiarism are reported, increase in the number of ghost-authors, the huge increase in the number of predatory journals, dubious practices on the side of journal editors to “manipulate” their journal impact factors, and so on.



Elaboration on project (2)

- ▶ Many of these developments point to the increasing tension between maintaining high standards of quality and ethics and the demand for quantity and growth in output. Of course, the imperative to assure quality and ethical compliance is located at different points in the system: the author, the university (research office), the journal editor, reviewers, the publishers and the DHET. The project will therefore aim to address these issues in addition to the more standard bibliometric questions listed above.
- ▶ The project has only just commenced – but based on recent bibliometric studies conducted by CREST as well as a preliminary investigation into the NSD – I will in the remainder of my presentation address a few issues.



Journal publication trends: SA case studies

What have we learned about journal publication practices from institutional bibliometric studies?

- ▶ Over the past three years, CREST has conducted 14 bibliometric studies on the research performance of SA universities. These studies focussed on a wide range of issues but I will focus on one area relevant to our discussions today.
- ▶ Where do SA academics publish and what role do SA journals play? Two general trends emerged from our studies:
 - ▶ Despite a general trend towards more publications in the Web of Science, SA journals still account for around 30 - 35% of all journal articles produced by the sector.
 - ▶ There are huge differences between the universities in terms of their presence in SA versus foreign journals.
- ▶ I will present data from two of the top research universities (UCT and UKZN); two from middle-range universities (UWC and NWU) and one slide showing the results for the Universities of Technology



UCT Publication practices

- ▶ Between 2006 and 2011, staff at UCT published papers in 2489 journals in total. 50% of this output was published in 20 journals (overleaf). Of the 20 journals in the table:
 - ▶ All the journals on this list are WoS-indexed journals (with the exception of the *SA Law Journal*)
 - ▶ Of the 19 WoS-journals, 7 are South African journals
- ▶ It is worth mentioning that the fact that more than 10% of all UCT papers appear in the *SA Medical Journal* is quite unprecedented. At no other South African university is it the case that such a significant proportion of articles appears in a single journal.



Where do UCT authors publish?

Journal	Full papers	Relative proportion	Journal Index
SAMJ South African Medical Journal	293	10.28%	SA (WoS)
African Journal of Marine Science	120	4.21%	SA (WoS)
PLoS One	104	3.65%	Foreign WoS
Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society	91	3.19%	Foreign WoS
Minerals Engineering	82	2.88%	Foreign WoS
South African Journal of Science	76	2.67%	SA (WoS)
AIDS	64	2.25%	Foreign ISI
Ostrich	57	2.00%	SA (WoS)
British Journal of Sports Medicine	55	1.93%	Foreign WoS
Physical Review D	54	1.90%	Foreign WoS
South African Law Journal	50	1.76%	Local SA journal
International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease	50	1.76%	Foreign WoS
Lancet	49	1.72%	Foreign WoS
South African Journal of Surgery	47	1.65%	SA (WoS)
J aids-Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes	46	1.61%	Foreign WoS
South African Journal of Psychology	46	1.61%	SA (WoS)
Marine Ecology-Progress Series	44	1.54%	Foreign WoS
Journal of Infectious Diseases	44	1.54%	Foreign WoS
CNS Spectrums	42	1.47%	Foreign WoS
Water SA	41	1.44%	SA (WoS)

UKZN: Publication practices

Over the period 2008 - 2013, staff at UKZN published papers in 2 044 journals in total. In the table below we present a list of those Journals that account for 20% of all research output at the UKZN over this period.

Inspection of the list shows the predominance of Web of Science journals in the top twenty. Fifteen of the top twenty are indexed in the Thomson Reuters Web of Science core collection. But 7 of the journals are also SA journals.



List of journals (20) that account for 20% of UKZN research article output (2008 – 2013)


JOURNAL TITLE	Journal List	Papers	Cum %
ACTA CRYSTALLOGRAPHICA SECTION E-STRUCTURE REPORTS ONLINE	Foreign WoS	445	2.51%
SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF BOTANY	SA WoS	384	4.67%
PLoS ONE	Foreign WoS	299	6.36%
Alternation: International Journal for the Study of Southern African Literature and Languages	Local SA	290	7.99%
SAMJ SOUTH AFRICAN MEDICAL JOURNAL	SA WoS	187	9.05%
Journal Of Ethnopharmacology	Foreign WoS	165	9.98%
AIDS	Foreign WoS	158	10.87%
AFRICAN JOURNAL OF BIOTECHNOLOGY	Foreign WoS	149	11.71%
Agenda	IBSS	142	12.51%
JOURNAL OF VIROLOGY	Foreign WoS	137	13.28%
JOURNAL OF CHEMICAL AND ENGINEERING DATA	Foreign WoS	126	13.99%
WATER SA	Foreign WoS	126	14.70%
SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF SCIENCE	SA WoS	124	15.40%
African Journal Of Agricultural Research	Foreign WoS	118	16.06%
South African Journal of Higher Education	Local SA	118	16.73%
FLUID PHASE EQUILIBRIA	Foreign WoS	116	17.38%
JOURNAL OF CHEMICAL THERMODYNAMICS	Foreign WoS	114	18.02%
JOURNAL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES	Foreign WoS	109	18.64%
South African Family Practice	Local SA	98	19.19%
Obiter	Local SA	96	19.73%



UWC Publication practices

Over the period 2006 - 2013, staff at UWC published papers in 973 journals in total. In the table below we present a list of those Journals that account for 20% of all research output at the UWC over the past eight years.

Of this list of 18 journals, the majority (13) are SA journals: of which only one is currently indexed in the Web of Science.



List of journals (n=18) that account for 20% of UWC's article output (2006 – 2013)

Title of Journal	Journal List	Nr of papers	Cum %
South African Dental Journal	Local SA	292	5.70%
Monthly Notice of the Royal Astronomical Society	Foreign WoS	134	8.32%
African Journal for Physical Health Education Recreation and Dance (AJPHERD)	Local SA	84	9.96%
Law Democracy & Development	Local SA	38	10.70%
South African Journal of Physiotherapy	Local SA	72	12.11%
Scriptura	Local SA	27	12.64%
Kronos: Southern African Histories	Local SA	30	13.22%
African Human Rights Law Journal	IBSS	34	13.89%
Social Work	Local SA	36	14.59%
South African Journal of Higher Education	Local SA	43	15.43%
Nederduits Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif (NGTT)	Local SA	21	15.84%
International Journal of Hydrogen Energy	Foreign WoS	85	17.50%
Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal (PER)	IBSS	20	17.89%
Journal of Psychology in Africa	SA WoS	31	18.50%
Speculum Juris	Local SA	16	18.81%
Agenda	Local SA	27	19.34%
Social Work Practitioner-Researcher	Local SA	25	19.82%
International Business and Economics Research Journal	IBSS	27	20.35%



NWU Publication Practices

Over the period 2007 to 2011, staff at NWU published their articles in 784 journals in total. 50% of this output was published in 49 journals (Top 10 listed overleaf). Of the 49 journals -

- ▶ Only 7 journals are international journals indexed in the Web of Science or IBSS
- ▶ A further 9 journals are South African journals included in the Web of Science – but mostly with very low journal impact scores (The *SA Journal of Science* is an exception)
- ▶ Five journals are published by Departments of Faculties at the North West University
- ▶ The majority of journals (33) are local SA journals which are not included in any international index.

The profile that emerges from these results is partially due to the dominance of the Humanities (including Law, Theology and Social Sciences) at NWU. The fact that the broad domain of the Humanities accounts for 60% of total output at the University explains why there is a relatively large number of local journals in this Table.



NWU Top 0 journals)

Journal	Article Units	Journal Index	Comments
In die Skriflig	127.65	Local SA journal	Journal of the Reformed Theological Society and housed in Potchefstroom
Koers: Bulletin for Christian Scholarship	69.92	Local SA journal	Journal published at NWU
African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance	64.84	Local SA journal	
Journal of Psychology in Africa	47.26	Local SA journal	IF = 0.116. Ranked 120 th out of 125 journals in Psychology, Multidisciplinary in the Web of Science
SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH IN SPORT PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION	42.70	WoS (SA)	IF = 167. Ranked 79 th out of 89 journals in the category of Social Sciences, Multidisciplinary in the Web of Science
Literator	38.50	Local SA journal	
Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa	38.21	Local SA journal	Journal published at NWU
Tydskrif vir Christelike Wetenskap	37.82	Local SA journal	Journal of the VCHO
LIFE SCIENCE JOURNAL-ACTA ZHENGZHOU UNIVERSITY OVERSEAS EDITION	36.35	WoS (Foreign)	IF = .073. Ranked 84 th out of 85 journals in the category of Biology in Web of Science
HTS Theological Studies / Hervormde Teologiese Studies	33.49	WoS (SA)	No IF available

Universities of Technology

Title of Journal	SA	WoS	Nr of papers	Article units	Row%	Cum %
African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance	Yes	No	274	184.50	5.18%	5.18%
AFRICAN JOURNAL OF BIOTECHNOLOGY	No	Yes	116	80.60	2.26%	7.44%
Journal for New Generation Sciences	Yes	No	102	82.46	2.31%	9.75%
AFRICAN JOURNAL OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	No	Yes	97	83.66	2.35%	12.10%
South African Journal of Higher Education	Yes	No	94	82.22	2.31%	14.40%
WATER SA	Yes	Yes	92	60.46	1.70%	16.10%
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PHYSICAL SCIENCES	No	Yes	90	75.13	2.11%	18.21%
Journal of Public Administration - SAAPAM	Yes	No	87	76.80	2.15%	20.36%
Medical Technology SA	Yes	No	71	56.61	1.59%	21.95%
SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF BOTANY	Yes	Yes	71	42.27	1.19%	23.13%
SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF ART HISTORY	Yes	No	57	53.16	1.49%	24.62%
JOURNAL OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	No	Yes	49	41.69	1.17%	25.79%

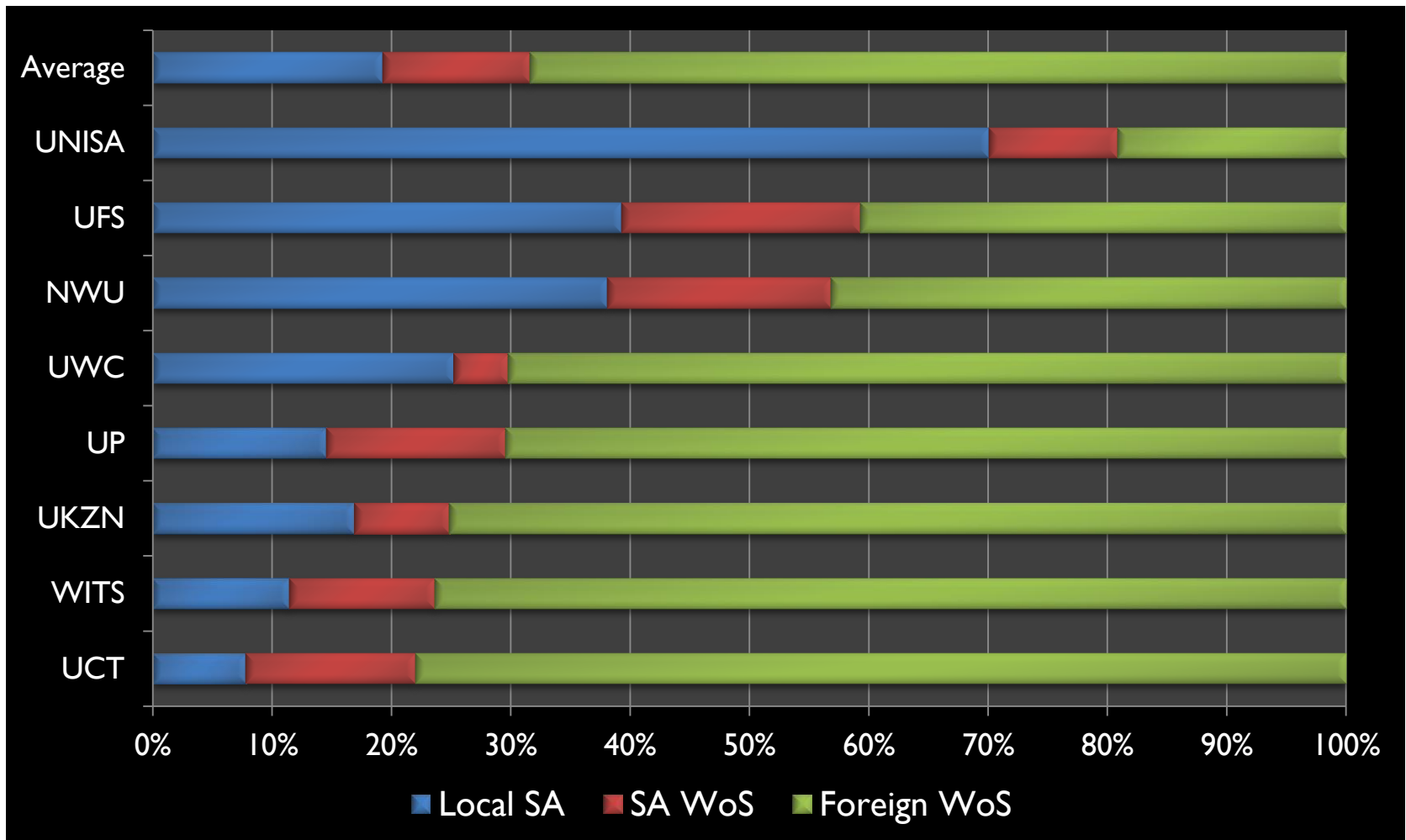


Summary

- ▶ Publication behaviour (and specifically in which journals academics publish) is a function of the shape of knowledge production at an university (which fields and disciplines are represented in the organogram)
- ▶ Universities such as UCT where the natural and medical sciences are the strongest faculties, will have a different publication profile from universities (such as NWU, UFS and UNISA) where the humanities and social sciences are the strongest faculties. These differences, in turn, are the results of differences in institutional missions and histories which have become entrenched over decades. They will not change quickly.
- ▶ The next slide presents a summary of the distribution of journal articles between SA and WoS journals for selected universities.



Distribution of journal articles by journal list (most recent data for selected universities)



NSD List: Some preliminary observations

Norwegian Ministry of Higher Education policy on reporting requirements for academic publications

The Norwegian documentation system for research funding was approved by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2005 upon the recommendation of the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR). First used in connection with budget allocations in 2006, the system is designed to facilitate a performance-based distribution of research funding to the institutions based on their academic publishing activity. The Ministry's objective for this project has been to develop a qualitatively better, more reliable system of documenting academic publishing that will serve as the basis for the research component of the budgets for universities and university colleges. The purpose is to create a performance-based funding model for research and to encourage more research activity at universities and university colleges. To ensure that the funding model has a positive influence on the publication patterns in the various academic fields, the committee recommended that the publication channels be divided into two levels. As a starting point, Level 1 includes all publications that may be defined as academic. On the basis of Level 1, certain publication channels are selected for a list representing Level 2. This list, which relates to a specific budget model, is updated annually through an academic approval process. According to the recommendations, the publication channels nominated for Level 2 must:

- be perceived as the leading publication channels in a wide variety of academic contexts;
- publish the most outstanding works by researchers from different countries.

The Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services (NSD) List

Publication points

Publication points are calculated by multiplying the author share by different weights for the level and form of publication. The individual institution's publication points are calculated by adding up all the weighted author shares.

Category	Level 1	Level 2
Academic article in journal and series (ISSN)	1	3
Article in anthology (not ISSN)	0.7	1
Monograph	5	8

- ▶ The current (2014) list has 26 893 journal titles. Of these 2081 are tagged as Level 2 (the top rated) journal titles and 21 154 as Level 1. The remainder have either not been rated or not considered.
 - ▶ There are 236 African journals included in the NSD list of which only 6 are tagged as Level 2 journals.
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Distribution of journal titles by Subject Area and Scientific level

Subject area	Scientific level	Nr of titles
Archaeology and conservation	Approved, level 1	192
Archaeology and conservation	Approved, level 2	60
Architecture and design	Approved, level 1	112
Architecture and design	Approved, level 2	22
Asian and African studies	Approved, level 1	164
Asian and African studies	Approved, level 2	24
Biology	Approved, level 1	1528
Biology	Approved, level 2	65
Chemistry	Approved, level 1	468
Chemistry	Approved, level 2	16
Culture studies	Approved, level 1	127
Culture studies	Approved, level 2	8
Dance studies	Approved, level 1	10
Dance studies	Approved, level 2	2
Development studies	Approved, level 1	71
Development studies	Approved, level 2	6



Distribution of journal titles by Subject Area and Scientific level

Subject area	Scientific level	Nr of titles
Economics and business administration	Approved, level 1	1069
Economics and business administration	Approved, level 2	58
English	Approved, level 1	65
English	Approved, level 2	6
Gender studies	Approved, level 1	75
Gender studies	Approved, level 2	22
Geography	Approved, level 1	284
Geography	Approved, level 2	17
Geosciences	Approved, level 1	522
Geosciences	Approved, level 2	39
German and Dutch	Approved, level 1	68
German and Dutch	Approved, level 2	8
Greek and Latin	Approved, level 1	116
Greek and Latin	Approved, level 2	50
Health and social care	Approved, level 1	241
Health and social care	Approved, level 2	13
History	Approved, level 1	543
History	Approved, level 2	42



Distribution of journal titles by Subject Area and Scientific level

Subject area	Scientific level	Nr of titles
History of art	Approved, level 1	124
History of art	Approved, level 2	20
Informatics	Approved, level 1	490
Informatics	Approved, level 2	59
Interdisciplinary humanities research	Approved, level 1	197
Interdisciplinary humanities research	Approved, level 2	30
Interdisciplinary natural science and medicine	Approved, level 1	120
Interdisciplinary natural science and medicine	Approved, level 2	6
Interdisciplinary social research	Approved, level 1	356
Interdisciplinary social research	Approved, level 2	15
Legal studies	Approved, level 1	466
Legal studies	Approved, level 2	106
Library and information science	Approved, level 1	278
Library and information science	Approved, level 2	36
Linguistics	Approved, level 1	505
Linguistics	Approved, level 2	42
Literary studies	Approved, level 1	327
Literary studies	Approved, level 2	58

An example: Theology and Religious Studies

Theology and religious studies	Approved, level 1	362
Theology and religious studies	Approved, level 2	109
77 of the 109 are currently indexed in Web of Science		

Aries Book Series

Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche

Biblica

Biblical Interpretation

Biblical Interpretation Series

Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion

British Journal of Religious Education

Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture

Der Islam

Ekstasis

Empirical Studies in Theology

Forschungen zum Alten Testament

Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2.Reihe

Harvard Theological Review

Hebrew Language and Literature Series

History of Religions

International Journal of Practical Theology

International Journal of Systematic Theology

International Review of Biblical Studies

Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations

Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series

Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion

Journal for the Study of Judaism

Journal for the Study of the New Testament

Journal for the Study of the Old Testament

Journal of Biblical Literature

Journal of Contemporary Religion

Journal of early Christian studies (Print)

Journal of empirical theology

Journal of feminist studies in religion

Journal of Hebrew Scriptures

Journal of Islamic Studies

Journal of Jewish studies

Journal of religious ethics

Journal of Semitic Studies

Journal of the American Academy of Religion

Journal of theological studies

Kerygma und Dogma : Zeitschrift für theologische

Forschung und kirchliche Lehre

Literature & Theology

Luther jahrbuch

An example: Theology and Religious Studies

Method & Theory in the Study of Religion

Mission studies

Modern Theology

Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies

Neue Zeitschrift Für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie

New Testament Studies

New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents

Nordic Journal of Religion and Society

Novum Testamentum

Novum Testamentum. Supplements

Numen

Pauline Studies

Religion

Religion and Reason

Religion and Society

Religion in the Americas Series

Religions in the Graeco-Roman World

Religious Diversity and Education in Europe

Religious education

Religious Studies: An International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion

Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion

Review of religious research

Revue de l'histoire des religions

SBL - Academia Biblica

SBL - Archaeology and Biblical Studies

SBL - History of Biblical Studies

SBL - Semeia Studies

SBL - Studies in Biblical Literature

SBL - The New Testament in the Greek Fathers

SBL - Writings from the Ancient World

SBL - Writings from the Greco-Roman World

Sociology of religion

Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha

Studia liturgica: an international ecumenical review for liturgical research and renewal

Studia Theologica

Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum

Studies in Christian Ethics

Studies in Christian Mission

Studies in Interreligious Dialogue

Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions

Studies in Philosophical Theology

Studies in Systematic Theology

Studies in the History of Christian Traditions

Studies of Religion in Africa

Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism

Supplements to Vetus Testamentum



Comparison of SA journals on DHET, WoS, IBSS and NSD

Journal/series	SA-DHET	SA-WoS	SA-IBSS	NSD Scientific level
Acta Classica	y	y		Approved, level I
Acta Commercii	y			
Acta Theologica	y	y		Approved, level I
Africa Education Review	y			Approved, level I
Africa Insight	y		y	Approved, level I
African Entomology	y	y		Approved, level I
African Invertebrates: a Journal of Biodiversity Research	y	y		Approved, level I
African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics	y			Approved, level I
African Journal of AIDS Research	y	y	y	Approved, level I
African Journal of Aquatic Science	y	y		Approved, level I
African Journal of Disability	y			Approved, level I
African Journal of Laboratory Medicine	y			
African Journal of Marine Science	y	y		Approved, level I
African Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education	y			Approved, level I



Comparison of SA journals on DHET, WoS, IBSS and NSD

Journal/series	SA-DHET	SA-WoS	SA-IBSS	NSD Scientific level
African Journal of Primary Health Care & Family Medicine	y			
African Journal of Psychiatry	y	y		Approved, level I
African Journal of Range and Forage Science	y	y		Approved, level I
African Journal of Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education	y			
African Journal on Conflict Resolution	y			Approved, level I
African Journalism Studies	y	y		Approved, level I
African Population Studies	y		y	Approved, level I
African Review of Economics and Finance	y			Approved, level I
African Security Review	y			Approved, level I
African Sociological Review	y		y	Approved, level I
African Vision and Eye Health	y			
African Zoology		y		Approved, level I



Comparison of SA journals on DHET, WoS, IBSS and NSD

Journal/series	SA-DHET	SA-WoS	SA-IBSS	NSD Scientific level
Agenda: Empowering Women For Gender Equity			y	Approved, level I
Akroterion	y			Approved, level I
Bothalia		y		Approved, level I
Cardiovascular Journal of Africa	y	y		Approved, level I
Communicare	y			Approved, level I
Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa			y	Approved, level I
Critical Arts.A Journal for Cultural Studies	y	y	y	Approved, level I
Curationis	y			
Current Writing:Text and Reception in Southern Africa	y			Approved, level I
Development Southern Africa			y	Approved, level I
Education as Change	y	y		Approved, level I
English Studies in Africa	y	y	y	Approved, level I
Hervormde teologiese studies	y	y		
In die Skriflig	y			
Indilinga:African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems	y			Approved, level I



Comparison of SA journals on DHET, WoS, IBSS and NSD

Journal/series	SA-DHET	SA-WoS	SA-IBSS	NSD Scientific level
International Journal of African Renaissance Studies	y			Approved, level I
Journal of Energy in Southern Africa	y	y		Approved, level I
Journal of Literary Studies	y			Approved, level I
Journal of Psychology in Africa	y	y		Approved, level I
Journal of the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy		y		
Journal of the South African Institution of Civil Engineering.	y	y		Approved, level I
Journal of the South African Veterinary Association		y		
Journal of Theology for Southern Africa	y			Approved, level I



Some implications (1)

- ▶ There are 111 South African journal titles included in the NSD list – all classified as Level 1 journals. Of these 85 titles, are accredited by the DHET. Of the 111 titles 31 are already included in the Web of Science and 24 on the IBSS list
- ▶ In total 45 SA journals – which are not on WoS nor on IBSS - appear on the NSD list. The result is that if the NSD is supposed to be a list that substitute for the DHET accreditation process, its impact would be limited to these 45 titles and would leave around 180 SA journals unaffected.



Some implications (2)

- ▶ So we return to the question: Why has the NSD list been added to the DHET list of accredited journals that qualify for subsidy purposes: Three possible responses
 1. It is a well-known fact that the DHET at some point considered having lists (WoS, Scopus, IBSS and others) that would be adequate in their coverage of disciplines to such an extent that the DHET would not need to have an administrative machinery in place to do annual accreditation of new or even regular review of existing SA journals. Stated differently: if all or most of the current 303 SA journals were already included in external lists (that screens journals for quality) there would not be any need for the DHET to maintain its own list.



Some implications (3)

2. In the work of the DHET Ministerial Committee on the revision of the funding framework huge emphasis was placed on ensuring that any revision should address concerns about journal quality more than before. There was a definite perception that the huge increase in the quantity of journal publications since 2005 have come at the cost of a decline of quality. Within this discourse the Norwegian List seemed to offer a possible solution as it incorporates a qualitative dimension (the fact that slightly more than 2000 journal titles are classified as Level 2 journals) in its list. As we have seen above, its adoption have two very different consequences: (1) since not a single South African journal is rated to be at level 2 by the Norwegians, this list has NO impact of ensuring greater quality amongst SA journals; and (2) there is indeed now a much expanded list of “high quality” journals in which SA academics can publish and earn subsidy (and many of these journals are not listed in the Web of Science).
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Some implications (4)

3. However, in a recent communication from a DHET official, it was stated that the complete list of journals of the NSD (all 26 000+ titles) is now recognized for subsidy purposes by the DHET. So it seems that the Norwegian list has not in fact been added because it introduces a much need quality criterion. Its introduction simply expands the list of journals that qualify for subsidy purposes AND substantially so. And, ironically, only 45 SA journals are included in this list, which still leaves about 180 SA journals “out in the cold” (if the purpose was an administrative one).



In conclusion

Our first investigation of the possible impact of the addition of the NSD list on publication practices in SA has highlighted a number of ambiguities and possible contradictory effects.

- (1) Its addition will certainly not alleviate the administrative burden of the DHET in managing the system. On the contrary, they will now have to monitor the changes to this list annually to see which SA journals are included or excluded.
- (2) Its addition has not addressed the concerns about quality that were raised in recent years (and which of course was the main driver of the introduction of the peer review process administered by ASSAf)
- (3) Its addition will give SA academics hugely expanded publication opportunities (especially in the humanities and social sciences) which may have positive effects (more SA academics publish in foreign journals) but also negative effects (discourage SA academics from publishing in good local journals). Of course, if the overall effect is to further fuel the continuing growth in overall publication output it will simply mean a reduction in the monetary value paid for journal articles.



Thank you