



Description

It is time to publish! My data collection and analysis are complete, and I have what I believe is a significant story to share with the scientific community. Now I need to decide which journal to submit my manuscript to. This is not as easy as it sounds. There are the obvious criteria – such as the journal’s subject focus – however, I would like to publish in a journal that will give my work maximum exposure to the research community. Therefore, I need a journal with a good reputation, indexed in a major electronic database such as the Science Citation Index (SCI). This gives my work a greater chance of being discovered and cited. It also gives me a way to track the opinion of other researchers about my research and how my paper contributed to the field as a whole.

Indexing Background

The SCI is published by the [International Scientific Information Inc](#) (ISI), who are part of Thomson & Reuters. Dr. Eugene Garfield created and launched in 1964 as science’s first citation index for papers published in academic journals. Dr. Garfield’s SCI became known as the “Web of Knowledge” and later the “Web of Science”. The SCI is more than just a database of journals and their articles. The SCI contains information on what each scientist has published, as well as links to papers that cite their work. This provides useful relationships in the literature, as one can easily find papers referenced by a scientist as well as how that work has progressed by reading the articles that cite it.

Therefore, citation indexing of papers provides control of the literature. [Eugene Garfield’s vision](#) for indexing citations of scientific papers grew out of a concern for students unknowingly citing disputed data. He became aware that criticisms of papers could become lost and overlooked over time if they were not linked to the paper in question. A citation index provides a quick link to researchers’ opinions on a paper and, therefore, improves the quality of information going forward. It assists in discussion of science.

“The uncritical citation of disputed data by a writer, whether it be deliberate or not, is a serious matter. Of course, knowingly propagandizing unsubstantiated claims is particularly abhorrent, but just as many naive students may be swayed by unfounded assertions presented by a writer who is unaware of the criticisms. Buried in scholarly journals, critical notes are increasingly likely to be overlooked with the passage of time, while the studies to which they pertain, having been reported more widely, are apt to be rediscovered.”

— Thomasson and Stanley, 1955

SCI Selection Criteria

Journals for the SCI database are [selected according to 24 quality criteria and 4 impact criteria](#). The basic principles include objectivity, selectivity and collection dynamics. These criteria ensure that the journals selected follow best practice and editorial thoroughness to make them the most respected and influential journals in their field. A journal's citation indicates the journal's impact on its field of research. The selection process is performed by Web of Science editors who have no affiliations to publishing houses or research institutions to ensure unbiased selection. The Web of Science editors regularly monitor the journals to ensure continued compliance.

Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) is Launched

Recently, Thomson & Reuters launched the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE). I was confused, what is the difference between SCI and SCIE? I was not alone; many researchers were asking the same question: [“Why are there two journal lists: “SCI” and “SCIE”?](#) Is the SCIE, as its name implies, an expanded version of the SCI? Does that mean that SCI journals are superior to SCIE journals? If I have an article published in a SCIE journal, can I say my paper was published in a SCI journal? If SCI journals are included in SCIE, why have two databases?

Two Databases, Similar Information

Initially, there was overlap between SCI and SCIE, as they were two separate databases. The SCIE contains a curated collection of over 9,200 journals that span 178 scientific disciplines. The SCI, on the other hand, comprised the most highly cited journals with the highest impact factors within the SCIE. Why not simply highlight the “top tier” journals in SCIE, why create a new database?

Thanks to researcher's chats on [ResearchGate](#), I discovered that SCI recently merged into SCIE. The difference between the two indexing databases was their storage media. CDs/DVDs mostly stored SCI, whereas SCIE is stored online. This meant that the SCI had limited storage capacity and therefore housed fewer journals than the SCIE. Although this implies that SCI journals are the “elite” of SCIE journals, the selection criteria for SCI and SCIE are the same.

SCI has subsequently merged into SCIE and [SCI was removed from the Clarivate Analytics master journal list](#). This reduced overlap and simplified the collections of research. Therefore, Web of Science's collections of journals are now:

- Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE): clinical, natural and applied sciences

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- Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI): social sciences
 - Arts & Humanities Citation Index (AHCI): arts and humanities
 - Emerging Sources Citation Index ([ESCI](#)): all disciplines

Journals in the ESCI collection that improve in impact factor move to AHCI, SSCI or SCIE.

Alternatively, journals in the AHCI, SSCI or SCIE collections that decrease in impact factor, move down to the ESCI collection.

Submit Your Paper to an Indexed Journal

It is vital to publish in a journal indexed in database such as Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE). Today, researchers access their literature online. Therefore, for a journal to be successful it must be indexed in an online academic database. As mentioned above, an indexed database contributes to the overall quality of scientific information. It provides a complete record of a scientific idea, one that helps scientists build on the ideas of others and enables them to watch it develop.

Which academic database do you follow? Let us know your thoughts in the comments section below.

Category

1. Publishing Research
2. Selecting Journals

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