

Peer Review

Review of: "Evaluation of Indonesia's Scientific Publication Performance: Quantity, Quality, Open Access, and Comparison with ASEAN Countries"

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This study addresses an important question regarding Indonesia's position in the global scientific publication landscape, and the specific focus on Indonesia as an understudied yet significant emerging research economy with unique policy interventions represents a valuable contribution to the scientometric literature. However, it suffers from fundamental methodological shortcomings that significantly undermine its conclusions and policy recommendations. The research exhibits a troubling pattern of analytical oversimplification that fails to meet contemporary standards for comparative scientometric analysis.

The most glaring weakness lies in the authors' exclusive reliance on Scilit as their data source without adequate justification or validation against established bibliometric databases such as Web of Science or Scopus. This choice is particularly problematic given that the authors subsequently make claims about Indonesian publications appearing in "journals with limited reputation and reach" without providing any journal-level quality metrics such as Impact Factor, SJR rankings, or quartile classifications. Such assertions require empirical evidence, not speculation.

More critically, the paper provides an inadequately vague description of the data collection process, failing to specify search parameters, filtering criteria, time windows for citation counting, or country affiliation definitions. Scopus would have been far superior due to its sophisticated query capabilities, transparent inclusion criteria, and reproducible search syntax that allows for explicit documentation of Boolean operators, field-specific searches, document type filtering, and subject area restrictions. Without precise methodological details, this study cannot be replicated and represents a fundamental violation of scientific research standards in bibliometrics.

The study's treatment of the negative correlation ($r=-0.44$) between open access ratios and citation rates represents perhaps the most significant analytical failure. The authors assume causality without exploring alternative explanations or acknowledging the well-documented "open access citation advantage" literature that demonstrates the opposite effect under controlled conditions.

They ignore critical confounding variables including economic development disparities, temporal effects (newer OA policies haven't had time to generate citations), disciplinary variations in citation practices, international collaboration patterns, language barriers, and fundamental differences in research infrastructure maturity. Comparing Indonesia's citation performance to Singapore's without controlling for vast differences in economic resources, research history, and integration into global academic networks is methodologically indefensible.

Furthermore, the analysis treats all scientific fields equivalently, despite well-established evidence that citation practices vary dramatically across disciplines. The authors provide no field-normalized metrics or acknowledgment of how disciplinary composition might affect national-level citation averages. This oversight is particularly problematic when comparing countries with different research strengths and priorities.

The policy recommendations reveal internal contradictions that suggest conceptual confusion. The authors simultaneously criticize quantity-focused publication policies yet recommend that "the OA incentive system should be based on quantity and consider quality metrics"—a statement that directly contradicts their primary argument. Such inconsistencies raise questions about the coherence of the underlying analytical framework.

In conclusion, although the research question merits investigation, this study's methodological oversimplification, inadequate data validation, and poor documentation of data collection procedures render its findings unreliable. The failure to account for structural inequalities in the global research system makes the policy recommendations potentially harmful. Future research in this area would benefit from more sophisticated analytical approaches using established bibliometric databases with transparent, reproducible methodologies that acknowledge the complex socioeconomic contexts within which national publication systems operate.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.