

Editorial 28(3): Reflecting upon the numbers for 2018

IIER 28(3) contains 16 articles, a new record for the number of articles in an issue, though only slightly larger than 28(2) with 15 articles, and 28(1) with 13 articles. A more substantial record is looming for the number of submissions to IIER, which is 278 for January to end of July 2018, with our estimate for the 2018 total now 480, compared with 306 in 2017 and 196 in 2016. To date in 2018, 79% of submissions have been declined after reading by IIER editorial staff, whilst 21% have been advanced into our external review process. On 24 April 2018 we finalised our processing of the 306 submissions recorded for 2017, resulting in an acceptance rate 21.2%, compared with 24.0% in 2016.

What inferences, if any, can we draw about the quality and significance of the 16 articles in IIER 28(3), from the terse summary of review process outcomes, as given above? One brief answer to that question, from an editorial perspective, is to assert that the articles in 28(3) have attained a good standard for research quality, have established some good significance for the issues they have investigated, and the authors are fine workers for the educational advancement of their students and communities. Being selected from a large number of submissions to be one of a small number rated as 'the best' is good evidence about quality and significance, especially in the cases of accepted articles. That is well-earned encouragement.

However, an editorial perspective also has to be mindful of the cases of rejected articles, which comprise about 80% of submissions. Regrettably, owing to time constraints, the review advice for rejected submissions is often brief and seldom fully comprehensive. However, we do try to recognise the positive features of a submission, and suggest ways to progress the research. We often indicate that IIER's rejection is not a final verdict upon the quality and significance of the work, and suggest other kinds of journals for a resubmission. We suggest further reading, including related articles in IIER to gain a better idea of the standards we seek to attain, specific references from the literature related to the authors' topic, and quite often we give Google or Google Scholar search strings, which authors can copy and paste into their web readers to gain quick access to a reading list from which many relevant reference may be found. Sometimes we encourage authors to resubmit to IIER for a new review process, and a satisfying number do so after acting upon our advice for improvements, with a good proportion eventually securing a well-earned acceptance.

An editorial perspective also has to be very mindful of comparisons between articles in IIER and articles in other educational research journals, especially 'generalist' journals which publish articles from any of the numerous, diverse subfields encompassed by educational research. Do articles in IIER compare well with articles on similar topics in other journals? This is an aspect where we are very dependent upon our external reviewers. Indeed, the question may be better expressed as, "Does this article I'm reviewing for IIER compare well with articles on similar research topics that I have read in other journals?" However, editorial staff may gain some insights that cannot be made available to reviewers. Sometimes we can detect clues that IIER was not the authors' first

choice of journal, mainly by observing certain features in formatting, in conjunction with information about the date for data collection, the currency of the literature review, and some other details (nevertheless, we accord the authors a 'fair go'). Occasionally we discover that an article declined by IIER has succeeded with another journal.

One more perspective upon IIER's numbers deserves brief mention, the bibliometric perspective. We invite readers (and prospective authors) to view:
<http://www.iier.org.au/about/iier-bibliometrics.html>

This brief reflection upon 'the numbers', or 'journal statistics', reminds us that we are overdue for an update of IIER's 25th year editorial (Atkinson, McBeath & Power, 2015). The period 2016 to 2018 has been one of rapid change. As a preliminary indication of one of the rapidly changing numbers, we can state that IIER's 238 submissions during January-June 2018 came from 47 countries, where country of origin is determined by the institutional affiliation of the article's first author, at the time the research was conducted. Experimenting with a different kind of calculation, we have found that the 45 authors (24 male, 21 female) for articles in 28(3) represent 13 countries. There is a dilemma here, whether to base the statistics upon country of first author (thereby usually indicating the country where the research was conducted), or upon the countries represented by the authors. Time constraints may prevent the use of two statistics, but we should try to monitor a potential trend towards more instances of authorship and data collection being spread over more than one country.

IIER is very pleased to welcome two new associate editors, Dr Chris Perry (formerly School of Education, Deakin University), and Associate Professor Judy MacCallum (School of Education, Murdoch University). Our editorial staff list is at:
<http://www.iier.org.au/iier-inf.html#staff>

To date (2 August 2018) IIER has 9 articles accepted for 28(4), which may be published during the period end October to early November. Using the excuse of much work to do, we will omit from this Editorial the usual comments about the main features of each article. We can rationalise, the articles in 28(3) do not need an introduction from IIER's editorial staff!

Roger Atkinson
 Clare McBeath
 Anne Power (on leave)
Co-editors 2018

Reference

Atkinson, R., McBeath, C. & Power, A. (2015). Editorial 25(4): Surfing the waves of change in IIER's first 25 years. *Issues in Educational Research*, 25(4), ii-vi.
<http://www.iier.org.au/iier25/editorial25-4.html>