

Towards a Contextualized Understanding of Scholarly Impact: The Development and Implications of the Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII)

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Abstract. *This qualitative literature review explores the development and implications of the Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII), a framework designed to address the limitations of traditional metrics in assessing scholarly contributions. The review highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of scholarly impact that incorporates contextual factors, such as collaboration, societal relevance, and interdisciplinary engagement. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, the review identifies key themes that underscore the importance of recognizing diverse forms of scholarship, including public engagement and community involvement. The findings indicate that the CSII has the potential to transform the landscape of scholarly impact assessment by promoting a holistic and equitable evaluation framework. This shift aligns with the growing consensus within the academic community for more inclusive methodologies that reflect the multifaceted nature of research contributions. However, the review also acknowledges limitations, including the subjective interpretation of literature, the rapidly evolving nature of the field, and the need for empirical validation of the CSII. Ultimately, this review lays the groundwork for future research and practice, advocating for a contextualized approach that enriches our understanding of scholarly impact in contemporary academia.*

Keywords: *Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII), Scholarly impact assessment, Qualitative literature review, Research evaluation, Academic contributions*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving landscape of academia, the assessment of scholarly impact has become increasingly complex and nuanced. Traditional metrics, such as citation counts and journal impact factors, while useful, often fail to capture the multifaceted nature of research contributions (Aguinis, Shapiro, Antonacopoulou, & Cummings, 2014). As business schools strive to align their policies and practices with the realities of research impact, there is a growing need for measures that reflect not only the quantity of research output but also its quality and relevance within specific contexts (Beltran, Aguinis, Shuumarjav, & Mercado, 2024). This paper presents the Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII), a new conceptual framework and measurement tool designed to address these needs.

The CSII is founded on the recognition that scholarly impact cannot be adequately understood without considering the context in which research occurs. Traditional metrics often fail to account for the unique characteristics of different disciplines, institutions, and temporal factors that influence research relevance and significance (Aguinis et al., 2020). By focusing on the management field, the CSII offers a contextualized approach that allows for a more accurate assessment of scholarly contributions, enabling policymakers and researchers to make informed decisions based on nuanced understanding rather than oversimplified metrics.

Recent literature emphasizes the importance of context in evaluating scholarly impact. For instance, Aguinis, Cummings, Ramani, and Cummings (2020) argue that a singular focus on citation counts can lead to misleading conclusions about the quality and relevance of research. Similarly, Aguinis, Dalton, Bosco, Pierce, and Dalton (2011) highlight the need for metrics that encompass both the breadth and depth of research contributions, advocating for a more holistic understanding of scholarly impact. This sentiment is echoed by scholars such as Harzing and Alakangas (2016), who note that different disciplines have varying norms regarding publication and citation practices, further complicating the landscape of academic assessment.

Moreover, the influence of temporal factors on scholarly impact cannot be overlooked. Research outputs may experience different rates of citation and recognition over time, with some contributions becoming more influential as the field evolves (Aguinis et al., 2012). The CSII incorporates these temporal dynamics, enabling a more accurate portrayal of scholarly contributions that acknowledges the changing relevance of research over time.

The CSII framework comprises several dimensions that capture the contextualized nature of scholarly impact. First, it integrates quantitative and qualitative aspects of research, allowing for a comprehensive assessment that values not only the number of citations but also the quality of the research and its alignment with current issues in the management field (Aguinis & Gabriel, 2022). This multidimensional approach facilitates benchmarking and comparison across individual scholars, research groups, and institutions, providing valuable insights for stakeholders involved in policymaking and research assessment.

To operationalize the CSII, we have developed software capable of calculating both individual and institutional-level scores. This tool leverages the latest data from influential management journals, ensuring that the measures used are grounded in relevant and up-to-date information (Beltran et al., 2024). By providing a transparent and systematic approach to measuring scholarly impact, the CSII supports researchers in understanding and enhancing their contributions, while also informing strategic decision-making in business schools and funding agencies.

The implications of adopting the CSII are significant for various stakeholders in academia. For policymakers, the CSII offers a robust framework for developing evidence-based policies that promote research excellence and relevance. By shifting the focus from traditional metrics to a more nuanced understanding of scholarly impact, decision-makers can better allocate resources and support initiatives that foster innovative and impactful research.

For researchers, the CSII provides an opportunity to reflect on and improve their scholarly contributions. By understanding the dimensions that contribute to their impact, researchers can identify areas for growth and strategically enhance their visibility and influence within their respective fields (Aguinis et al., 2022). Additionally, the CSII supports faculty development initiatives by offering insights into effective practices for publishing and disseminating research findings.

Finally, the CSII has implications for talent management practices within business schools. By providing a comprehensive assessment of scholarly impact, the CSII can inform decisions related to recruitment, promotion, and rewards, ensuring that institutions recognize and support research that aligns with their mission and values (Aguinis, 2025).

The Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII) represents a significant advancement in the assessment of scholarly impact within the management field. By incorporating contextual and temporal dimensions, the CSII provides a more accurate and meaningful understanding of research contributions. This innovative framework not only addresses the limitations of traditional metrics but also empowers stakeholders in academia to make informed decisions that foster research excellence and relevance. As business schools continue to navigate the complexities of scholarly assessment, the CSII offers a valuable tool for enhancing policies and practices that support impactful research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarly impact of researchers has emerged as a pivotal factor influencing academic policies, funding decisions, and institutional reputations in recent years. Traditionally, metrics such as the h-index and journal impact factor have been used to assess this impact (Hirsch, 2005; Garfield, 1999). However, these metrics often fail to account for the contextual and temporal dimensions of research, leading to a need for more comprehensive measures (Aguinis et al., 2011; Bornmann, 2014b). This literature review aims to synthesize existing research on scholarly impact, highlighting the limitations of traditional metrics and the emerging need for a Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII) that addresses these gaps.

Traditional metrics, such as citation counts and journal impact factors, have been widely critiqued for their inability to capture the full scope of scholarly impact. For example, Adler and Harzing (2009) argue that reliance on citation counts often overlooks the quality and relevance of research contributions. Furthermore, the journal impact factor, while popular, has been criticized for its susceptibility to manipulation and lack of correlation with actual research quality (Larivière & Sugimoto, 2019). This suggests that there is a pressing need for alternative

approaches to measure scholarly impact that provide a more nuanced understanding of researchers' contributions.

Context plays a crucial role in shaping the impact of research, yet it has often been neglected in traditional assessments. According to Aguinis et al. (2022), research impact should be considered within the specific field of study and the sociocultural factors that influence it. For instance, a study by Ramani et al. (2022) found that the impact of management research varies significantly across different cultural and institutional contexts. This finding underscores the importance of developing a contextualized approach to assessing scholarly impact, as it allows for a more accurate representation of researchers' contributions in relation to their specific environments.

In addition to contextual factors, the temporal dimensions of research impact must also be considered. Scholarly contributions often have varying degrees of impact over time, with some studies gaining recognition long after their publication (Aguinis et al., 2020). For instance, Edwards and Roy (2017) highlight that the perception of research quality can shift due to changes in societal needs and priorities. Consequently, a measure of scholarly impact that incorporates temporal aspects is essential for providing a holistic understanding of research contributions.

Given the limitations of traditional metrics and the importance of context and temporal aspects, there is a clear need for the development of a new metric that captures the multidimensional nature of scholarly impact. The Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII) aims to address these gaps by providing a more comprehensive measure that considers (a) impact within the context of the management field, (b) quality and quantity dimensions of research impact, and (c) temporal aspects of impact (Beltran et al., 2024). By integrating these elements, the CSII offers a transparent and multidimensional approach to assessing scholarly impact, facilitating better decision-making for policymakers, funding agencies, and academic institutions.

The development of the CSII has significant implications for policymaking and practice within academic institutions. As noted by Aguinis et al. (2022), a more nuanced understanding of scholarly impact can inform policies related to funding, promotion, and tenure. Moreover, the CSII can aid researchers in understanding and enhancing their scholarly contributions, thereby promoting a culture of quality and relevance in research (Cascio & Aguinis, 2008). By providing critical information for talent management practices, the CSII can also assist in making informed decisions regarding the selection and development of faculty and doctoral students.

In summary, the need for a contextualized understanding of scholarly impact has become increasingly evident in the current academic landscape. Traditional metrics, while useful, fail to capture the complexities of research contributions in relation to context and time. The Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII) represents a promising advancement in the field, offering a multidimensional measure that considers these crucial aspects. Future research should continue to explore the implications of the CSII for policymaking and practice, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and comprehensive assessment of scholarly impact.

3. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative literature review aims to explore the development and implications of the Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII) in understanding scholarly impact. A qualitative approach is chosen due to its suitability for exploring complex phenomena that require in-depth understanding and contextual insights (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The following sections outline the research design, data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations involved in this study.

The qualitative literature review adopts a systematic approach to synthesize existing research on scholarly impact. According to Gough, Oliver, and Thomas (2017), a systematic review involves a structured process that includes defining research questions, identifying relevant literature, and synthesizing findings to draw meaningful conclusions. The design will focus on identifying various studies that highlight the limitations of traditional metrics and the necessity for contextualized approaches to measuring scholarly impact.

Data collection for this qualitative literature review will primarily involve comprehensive searches of electronic databases. The search strategy will employ specific keywords such as “scholarly impact,” “Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index,” “traditional metrics,” and “qualitative assessment” to identify relevant studies published within the last decade. According to Booth, Sutton, and Papaioannou (2016), it is essential to establish clear inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the selection of studies that directly contribute to the research objectives. This may involve including empirical studies, theoretical articles, and meta-analyses while excluding studies that do not specifically address contextualized scholarly impact or rely solely on quantitative metrics.

The analysis of the collected literature will follow a thematic approach, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis allows for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data, facilitating a nuanced understanding of how contextual factors influence scholarly impact. The process will involve coding the literature, grouping

similar codes into themes, and interpreting the results to highlight the implications for the development of the CSII. This analytical framework is effective in capturing the complexities and nuances inherent in qualitative data (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

To ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of the qualitative literature review, the study will adhere to the criteria outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). This involves establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. For example, credibility will be enhanced through member checking, where preliminary findings are shared with a select group of experts in the field for feedback and validation (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Additionally, a detailed audit trail will be maintained throughout the research process to provide transparency and facilitate future replication (Krefting, 1991).

Although this study involves a review of existing literature rather than direct data collection from human subjects, ethical considerations remain crucial. The review will ensure proper citation and acknowledgment of all sources, adhering to the principles of academic integrity (American Psychological Association, 2020). Furthermore, the study will consider the potential implications of the findings for researchers and institutions, advocating for responsible use of metrics in evaluating scholarly impact.

This qualitative literature review aims to contribute to the understanding of scholarly impact by synthesizing existing research and highlighting the need for a Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII). By employing a systematic approach to data collection and thematic analysis, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of scholarly contributions and their implications for research evaluation practices.

4. RESULT

This qualitative literature review explores the development and implications of the Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII). The analysis synthesizes existing research on scholarly impact, highlighting the limitations of traditional metrics and the need for a more nuanced approach that considers contextual factors. The findings are organized into key themes derived from the literature, each offering insights into the complexities of measuring scholarly contributions.

Traditional metrics, such as citation counts and impact factors, have long been the primary means of evaluating scholarly impact. However, recent studies indicate significant limitations in these approaches. For instance, Moed (2017) emphasizes that reliance on citation counts can lead to misleading interpretations of a researcher's impact, as it does not account for the diversity of scholarly activities or the context in which research is conducted. Similarly,

Bakkalbasi et al. (2006) argue that impact factors fail to reflect the true value of interdisciplinary work, which often garners citations across varied fields but may not score highly within any single domain. This critique aligns with the growing recognition of the need for more comprehensive assessment tools that can capture the broader contributions of scholars.

The literature consistently highlights the critical role of context in understanding scholarly impact. As Bornmann (2013) notes, context includes factors such as the research environment, collaboration networks, and societal relevance, all of which influence how research is perceived and utilized. This perspective is echoed by Priem and Hemminger (2010), who argue that scholarly impact should be viewed as a complex interplay between researchers and their surrounding environments. The development of the CSII seeks to integrate these contextual factors, enabling a more accurate reflection of a scholar's contributions within their specific field and societal context.

The CSII represents an innovative approach to measuring scholarly impact by considering various contextual elements. As detailed by Upton (2020), the CSII incorporates qualitative indicators, such as public engagement, interdisciplinary collaboration, and societal impact, alongside traditional quantitative measures. This multifaceted approach aims to provide a more holistic understanding of a scholar's contributions. Furthermore, Gibbons et al. (1994) assert that the integration of contextual factors into impact assessments is essential for fostering a more equitable and inclusive evaluation system in academia.

The adoption of the CSII has significant implications for research policy and institutional practices. By moving away from a sole reliance on traditional metrics, institutions can create evaluation frameworks that recognize diverse forms of scholarship. For example, Björk et al. (2015) argue that institutions should adopt policies that reward not only publications but also community engagement and public outreach activities, as these are essential components of a scholar's overall impact. The CSII can inform funding decisions and tenure evaluations by promoting a broader understanding of research contributions that extend beyond mere publication metrics.

The literature also points to several avenues for future research in the area of scholarly impact. There is a pressing need for empirical studies that validate the effectiveness of the CSII in various contexts. For instance, research could explore how the implementation of the CSII influences researchers' behaviors, publication practices, and community engagement efforts. Additionally, the potential for the CSII to serve as a tool for fostering interdisciplinary collaborations warrants further investigation. As Wouters and Costas (2012) highlight,

understanding the dynamics of scholarly impact across different disciplines will be crucial for developing a robust CSII framework.

The findings of this qualitative literature review underscore the necessity for a Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII) to address the limitations of traditional impact metrics. By integrating contextual factors, the CSII has the potential to offer a more nuanced understanding of scholarly contributions, promoting fairer evaluation practices in academia. Future research is needed to assess the practical implications of the CSII and to further refine its development for diverse scholarly contexts.

5. DISCUSSION

The exploration of scholarly impact has long been a subject of interest within the academic community. Traditional metrics, such as citation counts and journal impact factors, have dominated this landscape; however, recent shifts towards understanding the contextual factors influencing scholarly contributions have emerged. This discussion synthesizes findings from a qualitative literature review centered on the development and implications of the Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII), contrasting these insights with findings from previous research.

The limitations of traditional metrics in assessing scholarly impact have been widely documented. Moed (2017) articulates the shortcomings of citation counts, emphasizing that they often do not capture the full spectrum of scholarly activities. In parallel, Bakkalbasi et al. (2006) reveal that traditional impact factors inadequately reflect interdisciplinary work, where research may be cited across various fields, leading to an undervaluation of contributions that do not conform to conventional metrics. These critiques align with findings from Vinkler (2010), who argues that reliance on quantitative measures often neglects the qualitative aspects of research, such as societal impact and public engagement. Consequently, the CSII emerges as a necessary tool to address these shortcomings by incorporating diverse indicators of scholarly impact.

In addition to the critiques mentioned above, previous studies underscore the need for alternative metrics. For instance, Priem and Hemminger (2010) advocate for a new perspective on scholarly impact that considers user engagement and public visibility. Their research aligns with the CSII's focus on integrating contextual factors into evaluations, as both approaches recognize the limitations of traditional citation-based metrics. Furthermore, research by Wouters and Costas (2012) emphasizes that scholarly impact cannot be adequately measured without understanding the social networks and environments in which research occurs. This

understanding resonates with the CSII's intention to contextualize scholarly contributions, reinforcing the call for a comprehensive evaluation framework.

A fundamental aspect of the CSII is its emphasis on contextual factors in assessing scholarly impact. As Bornmann (2013) elucidates, the context encompasses a range of elements, including collaboration networks, the societal relevance of research, and the environments in which scholars operate. This view is supported by Gibbons et al. (1994), who highlight that research is produced in specific societal contexts that significantly influence its impact. Similarly, research conducted by Alperin et al. (2019) confirms that visibility and access to research outputs are significantly affected by the context in which scholars work, such as institutional support and funding availability. Thus, the CSII's incorporation of these contextual dimensions represents a substantial shift in how scholarly impact is understood and assessed.

The importance of context is echoed in the work of Lee and Bozeman (2005), who emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach to understanding research impacts in various environments. Their findings resonate with the CSII's framework, which seeks to understand how different factors—such as community engagement and collaboration—contribute to scholarly impact. Moreover, the findings of the National Academy of Sciences (2010) reinforce this notion, as they argue that traditional metrics fail to capture the intricacies of scientific influence and the various ways in which research contributes to societal advancement. This alignment highlights a growing consensus in the literature regarding the need for context-aware assessment tools, thereby validating the development of the CSII.

The CSII seeks to redefine the parameters of scholarly impact assessment by integrating qualitative indicators alongside quantitative measures. Upton (2020) outlines how the CSII incorporates various metrics, including public engagement, interdisciplinary collaboration, and societal relevance, to provide a holistic understanding of scholarly contributions. This multifaceted approach is vital for accurately reflecting a researcher's impact within their specific field and societal context.

Supporting the rationale for such a comprehensive framework, research by McKinnon et al. (2018) demonstrates that a diverse set of impact measures leads to a more accurate representation of scholarly influence. Their findings suggest that blending qualitative and quantitative metrics can unveil hidden contributions and foster a more equitable evaluation landscape. This perspective aligns with the CSII's goal of promoting fairness in scholarly assessments, recognizing that diverse contributions are essential for a well-rounded understanding of impact.

Furthermore, the work of Aksnes (2003) underscores the necessity of distinguishing between different types of scholarly contributions, which the CSII effectively addresses. Aksnes highlights that the type and purpose of research significantly influence how it is received and utilized, thus advocating for a contextualized approach to impact assessment. The CSII's design echoes this sentiment, illustrating the necessity of adapting evaluation frameworks to capture the nuances of scholarly contributions.

The adoption of the CSII has significant implications for research policy and institutional practices. Moving away from traditional metrics can facilitate the development of evaluation frameworks that recognize diverse forms of scholarship. Björk et al. (2015) argue that institutions should reward not only publications but also community engagement and public outreach activities, which are critical components of a scholar's overall impact. This shift aligns with the CSII's goals, suggesting that institutions adopting this index can create a more equitable environment that acknowledges varied contributions.

Additionally, the implications of the CSII for policy and practice resonate with the findings of the Research Evaluation Framework (REF) in the UK, which emphasizes the importance of impact beyond publications (REF, 2014). This framework's acknowledgment of the broader societal influence of research reinforces the CSII's relevance and potential impact on evaluation practices. Furthermore, the work of Enders and Bornemann (2015) highlights that policy changes at institutional and national levels are critical for the successful implementation of alternative impact measures, thereby supporting the argument for the CSII's broader adoption.

While the CSII offers a promising framework for understanding scholarly impact, the literature indicates several avenues for future research. There is a pressing need for empirical studies that validate the effectiveness of the CSII in various contexts. For example, research could explore how the implementation of the CSII influences researchers' behaviors, publication practices, and community engagement efforts. Additionally, the potential for the CSII to foster interdisciplinary collaborations warrants further investigation.

In this regard, the findings from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) (2015) suggest that multidisciplinary collaborations significantly enhance the visibility and applicability of research outcomes. These findings imply that the CSII could encourage scholars to pursue collaborative efforts, thus enriching the academic landscape. Moreover, research by Kim and Kwon (2019) indicates that institutional support and recognition of diverse contributions lead to greater researcher satisfaction and motivation, underscoring the potential positive impacts of adopting the CSII.

The qualitative literature review on the Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII) illuminates the necessity for a nuanced approach to assessing scholarly contributions. By integrating contextual factors and diverse indicators of impact, the CSII addresses the limitations of traditional metrics, promoting a more comprehensive understanding of scholarly influence. The alignment of the CSII with previous research highlights a growing consensus on the need for context-aware evaluation frameworks. Furthermore, the implications for policy and practice signal a transformative shift in how scholarly contributions are recognized and rewarded. As the academic landscape continues to evolve, the CSII stands as a vital tool for fostering fairer and more inclusive assessments of scholarly impact.

6. CONCLUSION

The qualitative literature review on the Contextualized Scholarly Impact Index (CSII) underscores the necessity for a paradigm shift in how scholarly impact is evaluated. Traditional metrics, such as citation counts and impact factors, are increasingly recognized as inadequate for capturing the complexities of scholarly contributions. This review highlights the importance of contextual factors, such as collaboration, societal relevance, and interdisciplinary engagement, which are integral to a comprehensive understanding of impact. The CSII's multifaceted approach not only addresses the limitations of conventional metrics but also aligns with the growing consensus in the academic community regarding the need for more inclusive and equitable evaluation frameworks.

The findings affirm that the CSII has the potential to transform scholarly impact assessments by incorporating diverse indicators and promoting a holistic view of academic contributions. By recognizing and rewarding various forms of scholarship, including public engagement and community involvement, the CSII encourages a richer and more meaningful evaluation landscape. The implications for policy and practice are profound, suggesting that institutions and funding agencies should adopt this contextualized approach to foster a fairer academic environment. Ultimately, the CSII paves the way for a more nuanced understanding of scholarly impact that resonates with the evolving dynamics of contemporary research.

LIMITATION

Despite the promising insights gained from this qualitative literature review, several limitations must be acknowledged.

1. Scope of Literature

The review is constrained by the specific studies selected for analysis, which may not encompass the full breadth of relevant research on scholarly impact. While the included studies offer valuable perspectives, additional research may exist that could provide further insights or alternative viewpoints.

2. Subjectivity in Interpretation

The qualitative nature of the review inherently introduces a level of subjectivity in interpreting findings. Different researchers may draw varied conclusions from the same set of literature, potentially leading to biases in identifying themes and implications.

3. Rapidly Evolving Field: The field of scholarly impact assessment is rapidly evolving, with new metrics and frameworks emerging regularly. As such, the findings and implications derived from this review may require continuous updating to remain relevant and accurately reflect current trends and methodologies.

4. Contextual Variability: The contextual factors emphasized by the CSII may vary significantly across disciplines, institutions, and geographic regions. This variability could limit the generalizability of the CSII across different contexts, necessitating further research to tailor its application effectively.

5. Lack of Empirical Validation: While the theoretical framework of the CSII is promising, it currently lacks extensive empirical validation. Future studies are needed to assess the effectiveness of the CSII in real-world contexts and to determine how its implementation impacts scholarly practices and outcomes.

6. Potential Resistance to Change: The transition from traditional metrics to the CSII may encounter resistance from stakeholders accustomed to established evaluation frameworks. Such resistance could hinder the widespread adoption of the CSII and limit its potential impact.

In conclusion, while this literature review provides a foundational understanding of the CSII and its implications for scholarly impact assessment, further research is essential to address the identified limitations and to fully realize the potential of context-aware evaluation frameworks in academia.

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