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The importance for a (scientific and didactics) Journal to be indexed in Scopus. The recent goal achieved by J-READING

Cristiano Pesaresia

^a Department of Letters and Modern Cultures, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy Email: cristiano.pesaresi@uniroma1.it

1. J-READING is accepted for Scopus

On 20 July 2022 – after only 50 days from the title submission – we received the mail which informed us that *J-READING (Journal of Research and Didactics in Geography)* had been accepted for Scopus¹.

In particular, the main strong points highlighted were the following.

- The journal consistently includes articles that are academically sound and relevant to an international academic or professional audience in the field.
- In general, the content of the articles is consistent with the scope and aims of the journal.
- This title addresses a subject area not properly covered by an existing journal.

The evaluation made for the acceptance by Scopus has therefore underlined some specific features of *J-READING* which in turn evidence other aspects.

The first strong point affirms that *J-READING* has published many papers with a high level of relevance both from scientific and professional points of view, since it includes contributions written by academics and also researchers and experts coming from institutions and companies, with international perspectives and scopes. Moreover, it implies that profitable work has been carried out in terms of shared intentions, peer review process, planning of thematic issues, diffusion of initiatives and involvement of distinguished and active colleagues in each of the journal's working groups.

The second strong point puts in evidence the homogeneity of the declared aims and topics of the papers published, restating how the contributions submitted – through theoretical, methodological and applicative approaches – must: enhance the relationship between research and didactics; foster debates and comparisons at international level; promote knowledge and active awareness; build bridges between scientific, educational and professional aspects. And all

¹ "The name, Scopus [produced by the Elsevier Co.], was inspired by the bird, Hammerkop (*Scopus umbretta*), which reportedly has excellent navigation skills" (Burnham, 2006, p. 1).

these rotate around the following contents²:

- the use of cartography, digital maps, remote sensing, models and tools for geographical and intersectoral perspectives;
- epistemology, history of geography and cartography;
- natural, environmental and social risks, and territorial planning;
- medical and health geography and quality of life;
- landscape, land use and resource enhancement:
- sociodemographic and economic-tourism frameworks, territorial problems and opportunities.

The third strong point highlights a notable peculiarity since it expresses the partial absence of a journal with the same characteristics in terms of subject area and, consequently, the importance of the choices made in 2012 is stated, when *J-READING* was founded (De Vecchis, 2012).

The relevance of the result obtained is amplified considering that³:

Scopus is an abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature including scientific journals, books, and conference proceedings. Scopus provides a comprehensive overview of worldwide research output in the fields of science, technology, medicine, social sciences, and arts and humanities.

Therefore, two elements are worthy of note. First of all, it highlights how a journal founded on the triple node made up of didactics, research in the field of didactics and scientific/applied research can carve out a recognized role for itself among indexed journals. Moreover, it could give very important inputs in a further involvement of colleagues from different countries in submitting their papers and contributions, supporting a virtuous circle also in terms of research diffusion, worldwide debate, paper views and citations, thus making studies more visible and circulating in a wider and prestigious network.

After all4:

For any researcher, it's crucial to know that your research is easily discovered, and that you are able to accurately capture references and citations to measure influence. Scopus supports both.

The ability to track and analyze citations and/or publications accurately and claim authorship allows Scopus users to take control of their future and own their reputations. Together, no other platform delivers the same level of visibility and discoverability.

While currently the abstract and total galley views already show substantial numbers of consultations and downloads, the inclusion in Scopus could be the fuse able to trigger a virtuous system even more projected towards internationalization. Just to have a current measurement order, Table 1 provides a synthetic framework regarding the abstract and total galley views over the period between May 2021 and May 2022⁵, focusing the attention on the contributions which received almost 150 abstract views (last access 17 May 2022)⁶.

The inclusion in Scopus must therefore be considered a starting point to address further horizons on the basis of the desire for continuous enhancement expressed some years ago (De Vecchis, 2018).

² http://www.j-reading.org/index.php/geography/about.

³ https://service.elsevier.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/15534/supporthub/scopus/#tips.

https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus/whychoose-scopus.

⁵ Table 1 is based on a recent period of time (between May 2021 and May 2022). Therefore, the highest consultations generally concern recent contributions since, obviously, there is the tendency to read above all the just published works. It means that by changing the reference year(s) there would be a notable change of the framework. This Table has the main aim of providing an exemplifying framework, extracted by the cover letter which was sent to Scopus and based on the most recent data at that moment.

⁶ Between May 2021 and May 2022, 29,574 abstract views were overall recorded and 16,808 total galley views.

2. Incentives for further improvements

Some notable incentives for further improvements – in the direction of the strong points underlined by Scopus and towards perspectives of interdisciplinarity, international interactions, third mission and applied approach – have been provided by distinguished colleagues offering relevant attestations and considerations (in the No. 2, 2021 of *J-READING*)⁷, such as the following.

- Joseph P. Stoltman (Professor Emeritus of Geography and Science Education, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, USA – one of the Associate Editors) affirmed: "Over the past decade *J-READING* has published exemplary papers by both Italian and international scholars; the journal has heralded the concept of online and open access to the global community; the journal is recognized for its integration of research in geography and didactics within articles published; and the journal has set and achieved a high standard of format and content for every manuscript published" (Stoltman, 2021, p. 47).
- Zoltan Kovacs and Massimiliano Tabusi (respectively President and Secretary General of the Association of European Geographical Societies EUGEO) declared: "J-READING is the most important geographical Journal published in Italy entirely in English, with a strong focus on international aspects of the discipline and with authors from all over the world. [...]. Records show that J-READING is certainly among the fundamental sources that should be consulted by anyone wishing to understand the work of EUGEO in the last ten years, especially with reference to geographical education" (Kovacs and Tabusi, 2021, p. 67).
- Rafael de Miguel González (President of EUROGEO, the European Association of Geographers) presented propositional reflections relating to geographical and geospatial competences and skills from school education

to higher education, in a framework which considers the contribution of geographical journals, and above all *J-READING* and EUROGEO in proactive cooperation and international projects (de Miguel González, 2021).

Paolo Villari (Past Head of the Department of Public Health and Infectious Diseases, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy), Roberto Scandone (President of the section on Volcanic Risk of the National Commission for Major Risk of the Italian Government 2002-2005), Lisetta Giacomelli (Italian Association of Volcanology) and Maurizio Pollino (Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development -ENEA) wrote a contribution with multiple entries about geographical keys for research and didactics from perspectives concerning hygiene and public health, volcanic and natural risks, GIS use and applications. They for example affirmed (Villari et al., 2021, p. 79): "A journal like J-READING can be a suitable editorial seat to rouse and support initiatives finalized to join up interdisciplinary and laboratory approaches, also comparing planning phases and results coming from different countries"; and then they said (p. 74) "Scientific journals able to support a dialogue among different sectors can provide a relevant added value in the perspectives advancement of the state of the art and citizenship sensitization. The possible benefits increase when these directions are developed considering both didactical and research aspects, also integrating elements and purposes connected with the third mission [...]. In the case of public health, hygiene, and epidemiology it becomes important for enriching analysis with geospatial functionalities and models and feeding a virtuous circle of sharing and awareness of the population. In reinforcing the links between geography and public health, research and education become fundamental and necessary to win exciting challenges in the perspective of social utility. Along these perspectives, J-READING has recently showed the possible advantages recordable through a profitable of knowledge, integration viewpoints"; moreover they declared (p. 77) "J-

⁷ The reference is to the thematic issue "J-READING" reaches its tenth year of publications in the framework of geographical journals. Geographically thinking about didactics, research and interdisciplinary approaches (edited by Pesaresi and Morri).

READING seems to have all the credentials to play a leading role in the framework of scientific journals able to connect aspects regarding research, didactics and third mission in the field of volcanology and geography of risks, according to innovative perspectives, inter-disciplinary approaches and geotechnological keys".

3. The importance of getting indexed in Scopus and future perspectives

I remember that when I started to work for the submission of the *J-READING* application for the inclusion in Scopus, I came across the editorial (Green, 2018) of a journal of a very different scientific disciplinary sector, that is to say the chiropractic one, but in particular chiropractic education, which said (p. 1):

Acceptance into *Scopus* is a significant milestone for the Journal, as it increases the number of opportunities for papers to be cited. This is important particularly to the international authors who have requirements to publish in journals either indexed in [...] *Scopus. Scopus* also is used to measure research impact and *JCE* [the journal in question] will be included in these citation metrics.

And then (p. 2):

We use a continuous quality improvement program for the *JCE*. We always are looking for ways to strive toward excellence, increase the relevance, engage a diverse international audience, and more widely disseminate the papers published in the Journal. The *JCE* is the only peer-reviewed journal that focuses on the mission of training chiropractors [...].

The editorial ended with an invitation (p. 2):

You are invited to join in developing the future of chiropractic education research. [...]. Together, let us shape the future of chiropractic education.

I now find many points of contact both because we are speaking about journals which have didactics, education and training among their main missions, and in the enthusiasm derived from the results obtained and the desire to reach new goals with a common participation.

Another piece of work (Pranckutė, 2021),

focused on the Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus – defined *The Titans of Bibliographic Information in Today's Academic World* – underlined that (p. 47)

they serve as the major tools for a variety of tasks: from journal and literature selection or personal career tracking to large-scale bibliometric analyses and research evaluation practices in all possible levels.

And particularly Scopus seems to have a series of specific strong points (p. 48):

First, Scopus provides wider and more inclusive content coverage. Secondly, the availability of individual profiles for all authors, institutions, and serial sources, as well as the interrelated interface of DB, makes Scopus more convenient for practical use. Additionally, thirdly, the implemented impact indicators perform equally well and even better than the metrics that were provided by WoS, are less susceptible to manipulation and are available for all serial sources in all disciplines. However, most importantly, Scopus is subscribed as a one single DB, without the confusion or additional restrictions regarding content accessibility. Moreover, Scopus is more open to the society, as it provides free access to author and source information, including metrics8.

Thus, WoS and Scopus – the "essential reference repertoires" (Solimine and Salarelli, 2021, p. 92) – can be considered the "two world-leading and competing citation databases" and Scopus (as the more recent-comer among these) is providing relevant inputs for continuous developments for scientific research papers (Zhu and Liu, 2020, p. 321), in a system where "scientometric indicators and methods for evaluative purposes" are ceaselessly discussed to measure the impact of works and journals (Abramo, 2018, p. 590), towards "appropriate metrics" (Agarwal et al., 2016)⁹. In fact, scientometrics is acquiring a crucial role in the planning of research and in science policy and

⁸ "On the other hand, WoS also has its own advantages. For instance, it may be more suitable for searching and analyzing Open Access resources at the publication level" (Pranckutė, 2021, p. 48).

⁹ For example, further comparisons between WoS and Scopus have been provided by: Aghaei Chadegani et al., 2013; Mongeon and Paul-Hus, 2016.

therefore it is at the same time essential to minimize the possible consequences of an its improper use (Paoloni, 2017).

In the context of the delicate relationship and international debate between bibliometric and non-bibliometric research, to be simultaneously awarded "Class A" by the National Agency for the Evaluation of the University System and Academic Research (ANVUR) and indexed in Scopus - after just over ten years from its foundation – is an important goal for people who work daily on the management of *J-READING*. for authors who have published and will publish in the journal and for the Italian Association of Geography Teachers, which is the owner, for Nuova Cultura (the publisher), and for the Sponsoring Organizations (Sapienza University of Rome - Department of Letters and Modern Cultures; University of Helsinki; University of Turin; Western Michigan University; EUGEO; National Research Council - Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies).

Undoubtedly, the possible considerations on the quality of the research and evaluation systems, for human sciences (Faggiolani, 2015) and geography (Morri, 2013; Aru et al., 2010; Cerreti, 2009; Minca, 2018) in particular, are wide ranging and require rigorous analysis, but the contemporary presence in "Class A" and Scopus is a calling card to encourage national and international authors to write in a journal – published in English, and with some contributions in other foreign languages¹⁰ – which strives to observe a wide set of criteria to guarantee qualitative steps.

Centering the attention on Scopus, since another contribution had previously focussed on the "Class A" goal (De Vecchis, 2015), to be indexed means (Kähler, 2010, pp. 336-337): to strive to "ensure a fair and transparent evaluation" according to specific parameters based "on a metrical scorecard and on the principles of peer review"; to contribute to increasing the impact of one's own research and to evaluating and tracking the impact in one's own respective scientific community.

Ever-new challenges...

Ever moving forward...!

Moreover, it makes it possible to appear on the world stage, in a virtuous circle of disseminating the results of one's own research, to be linked to other works regarding similar themes and areas of interest, and to foster the international debate on contents, methods, approaches, tools and geotechnologies. In the case of *J-READING* there is also the pride in the distinctive features of whatever may concern geographical research, didactics and research in the field of didactics.

¹⁰ See for example: Mercier, 2016, 2018.

Article Title	Issue	Abstract Views	Total Galley Views
Using GIS in the Time of the COVID-19 Crisis, casting a glance at the future. A joint discussion	Vol. 1 (2020)	845	486
Web 2.0 and Neogeography. Opportunities for teaching geography	Vol. 2 (2013)	488	70
The Impact of COVID-19 on Geography, GIS, and Education	Vol. 2 (2020)	487	200
Teaching and Learning Geography in pandemic and post-pandemic realities	Vol. 2 (2020)	468	256
Cultural heritage and storytelling: didactic applications in Trieste with ESRI Story Maps	Vol. 1 (2021)	417	203
Story Maps at school: teaching and learning stories with maps	Vol. 2 (2015)	355	263
Maps that map the mind: Abstraction of Geography by IR Discipline	Vol. 1 (2021)	351	123
Sky in the Room: Maps from Quarantine	Vol. 1 (2021)	345	239
Strategies used by small student groups to understand a geographical mystery	Vol. 1 (2021)	344	249
Thinking through geography in times of the COVID-19 pandemic	Vol. 2 (2020)	322	197
Traditional and Innovative Tools in Teaching of Geography: A Case Study	Vol. 1 (2021)	308	139
Multiphase procedure for landscape reconstruction and their evolution analysis. GIS modelling for areas exposed to high volcanic risk	Vol. 1 (2018)	283	87
Volcanic phenomena between media simplification and the need for a better understanding of human-environment interaction, with particular reference to Italy	Vol. 1 (2021)	270	205
Time-geography approach during the COVID-19 emergency in Italy: a constraints study at national and local level	Vol. 2 (2020)	245	134
Telling a mountain story. Ideas for an anthology of children's mountain novels	Vol. 2 (2019)	243	98
Europe without barriers: accessible tourism between places and projects	Vol. 1 (2020)	241	255
A Question of Geography Literacy: Geographical Studies on Covid Sars 2 and Lifelong Education	Vol. 2 (2020)	239	115
Death, Survival and Damage during the 79 AD Eruption of Vesuvius which destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum	Vol. 2 (2019)	226	100
Reconsidering the relationship between Geography and the Classics: lessons from a British report from the 1920s	Vol. 1 (2021)	215	95
Geography and disability: a reflection on opportunities offered by teaching geography to dyslexic students	Vol. 2 (2015)	214	142
From hospital to hotel – urban heritage, adaptive reuse and sustainable tourism: the case of the S. Marcos Hospital in Braga, Portugal	Vol. 1 (2020)	213	113
Just like a movie: teaching visual storytelling on water	Vol. 2 (2019)	211	84
Feedbacks on Beyond Globalization: 10 years of keywords for the Italian Political and Economic Geography	Vol. 1 (2021)	207	98
A geographical and crosscutting look at the COVID-19 pandemic in an international framework. Introduction	Vol. 2 (2020)	206	112
The challenges for geography in higher education in European universities	Vol. 1 (2020)	205	115
The "low tide" of tourist flows in the COVID-19 era. Insights into the economic and social shades of the ongoing phenomenon	Vol. 2 (2020)	199	106
The re-elaboration of John Snow's map in a GIS environment. Input for transferring methodological and applied skills being inspired by a virtuous practical example of social utility	Vol. 2 (2019)	197	91
Spatial inequalities of COVID-19 in Italy	Vol. 1 (2020)	194	113
On uses of utopian maps: The Map of New Geneva in Waterford (1783) between colonialism and republicanism	Vol. 1 (2017)	190	73
What next for Geography Education? A perspective from the International Geographical Union – Commission for Geography Education	Vol. 1 (2017)	188	117

Vol. 1 (2013)	181	97
Vol. 2 (2021)	181	61
Vol. 1 (2015)	179	58
Vol. 2 (2017)	178	88
Vol. 2 (2019)	178	76
Vol. 1 (2020)	176	87
Vol. 2 (2018)	175	102
Vol. 1 (2018)	170	131
2012	167	133
2012	166	128
Vol. 1 (2020)	166	80
Vol. 1 (2015)	165	94
Vol. 1 (2016)	163	115
Vol. 1 (2019)	163	83
Vol. 2 (2019)	163	67
2012	162	99
Vol. 2 (2020)	162	74
Vol. 2 (2018)	161	89
Vol. 1 (2019)	161	95
Vol. 2 (2019)	158	60
Vol. 1 (2020)	158	85
Vol. 2 (2020)	155	88
Vol. 1 (2019)	154	65
Vol. 1 (2020)	154	87
Vol. 1 (2020)	153	64
Vol. 2 (2016)	151	101
Vol. 1 (2018)	150	78
Vol. 1 (2018)	150	93
Vol. 1 (2020)	150	77
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Table 1. A synthetic framework regarding the abstract and total galley views over the period between May 2021 and May 2022, focusing the attention on the contributions which received almost 150 abstract views (last access 17 May 2022). Elaboration on data extracted by *J-READING* website settings (statistics, reports) and submitted to Scopus for the evaluation.

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