

Self-Citation Trends in SRELS Journal of Information Management (SRELS): An Evaluation

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Abstract

The present paper examines the proportion of self-citations in the SRELS Journal of Information Management during the period of 2008-2017. A total of 554 articles were published during the period with 7675 citations out of which 148 (26.71%) articles contain self-citations. There are total 387(5.04%) self-citations by the authors. The three categories of self-citations found in the journal- author self-citation (64.53%), author journal self-citation (6.22%) and journal self-citation (29.25%) have been examined.

Keywords: Author Self-Citations, Journal Self-Citations, Self-Citations, *SRELS Journal of Information Management*

1. Introduction

Self-citations account for a relatively large share of all citations (Aksnes, 2003). Self-citation refers to a condition where citing and cited works have a common link – either the same author or same journal. If there is overlapping of authors in citing and cited works, it is called self-citation, and where both are published in the same journal, it is referred to as journal self-citation. Both forms of citations are common in the scholarly communication world.

An author makes a self-citation when he / she cite one of his / her previously published works as a reference in a new article. In multi-authored articles, a self-citation occurs whenever the set of co-authors of the citing article and that of the cited one share at least one author (Snyder & Bonzi, 1998).

Self-citations may be necessary, e.g., to introduce a study that builds on previous works, refer to methodologies already described in previous articles, or even acknowledge the personal contribution to a research topic (Glänzel *et al.*, 2006).

2. SRELS Journal of Information Management

The *SRELS Journal of Information Management* was founded in 1964 by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan under the title '*Library Science with a slant to Documentation*'. The title of the journal was changed to *Library Science with a slant to Documentation and Information Studies* from Vol. 25 in 1988 and then to '*SRELS Journal of Information Management*' from Vol. 37 in 2000. The journal is peer-reviewed and publishes scholarly as well as articles of practical use in the fields of library and information science and services. The journal is published bimonthly and completed 50 years of continuous publication in 2013 (<http://www.srels.org/>).

3. Literature Review

Shah, *et.al.* (2015) conducted a study of authors' self-citation behaviour in the field of library an information science and found a positive correlation between the number of authors and number of citations. It found that articles which are

produced in collaboration carry more self-citations than articles by a single author. There is a negative correlation between impact factor and self-citations.

Rattan (2013) carried out a study of self-citations in *Annals of Library and Information Studies* during the period of 2002-2012. It found that total 53.72% of the articles had self-citations.

Liu and wang (2010) investigated self-citations in 6 Chinese biomedical journals published during 2005-2007 and found a decreasing trend in self-citations.

Shokeen and Kaushik (2004) studied *Indian Journal of Plant Physiology* and found that the ratio of author self-citation to total citations is 1:16.65 while the ratio of journal self-citation to total citations is 1:31.91 only.

Tiew (2000) studied the *Journal of Natural Rubber Research* for the period 1988-1997. It was found that 53% of articles contained journal self-citations and the range of journal self-citation is lying between 1 to 12 per article. Total 61.4% authors cited themselves and the highest self-citing author is A. D. Roberts.

4. Objectives of the study

The objective of the present study is to examine the extent of self-citations in the *SRELS Journal of Information Management*.

5. Methodology

This study is based on the articles published in *SRELS Journal of Information Management* during the period of 10 years i.e. 2008-2017. The data was downloaded from the website of the journal (<http://www.srels.org/>) A total of 567 articles were published with 7675 references during the period (13 articles didn't carry any references).

6. Data Analysis

6.1 Distribution of Articles with Self-Citations by Year

Table 1 and Figure 1 indicate the distribution of self-citations for the period 2008-2017. Out of 554 articles, 148 articles had self-citations and 406 articles were without self-citations. This amounts to a little over a quarter of papers published in the journal carrying self-citations. The year 2013 had the highest number of 24 articles with self-citations followed by

the year 2016 with 20 articles and year 2010 with 19 articles having, second and third position respectively.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of articles with self-citations

Year	Number of articles with self-citations	Number of articles without self-citations	Total number of articles
2008	14	36	50
2009	8	40	48
2010	19	43	62
2011	15	47	62
2012	14	54	68
2013	24	47	71
2014	10	22	32*
2015	15	35	50*
2016	20	44	64
2017	9	38	47
Total	148	406	554

*= Articles without references are not considered (13)

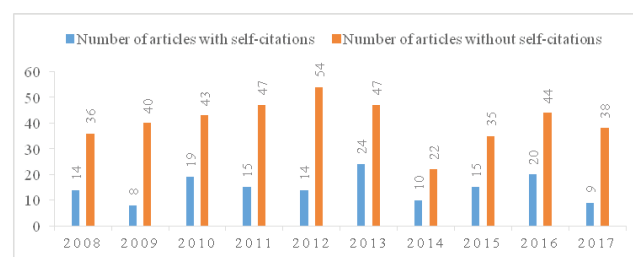


Figure 1. Frequency distribution of articles with self-citations.

6.2 Frequency Distribution of Self-Citations Per Article

More than half the papers that carry self-citations have only one self-citation. Less than 8% carry 6 or more self-citations (Table 2 and Figure 2).

Table 2. Frequency distribution of self-citations per article

Frequency of self-citations	Number of articles with self-citations	Percentage
1	76	51.35
2	32	21.62
3	13	8.78
4	10	6.76
5	6	4.05
6 or more	11	7.46
Total	148	100.00

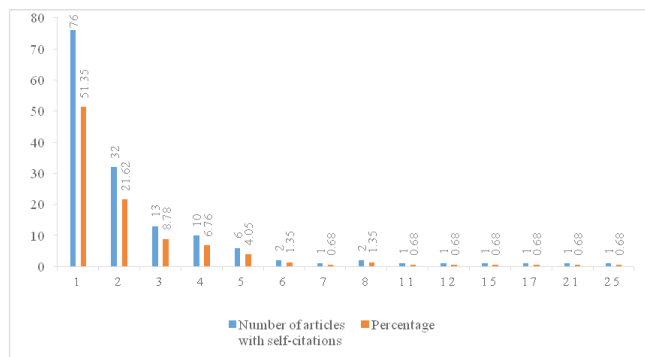


Figure 2. Frequency distribution of self-citations per article.

6.3 Frequency Distribution of Self-Citations by Year

It is seen from Table 3 that only a little over 5% of all citations are self-citations. Also, the proportion of self-citations to total citations has more or less remained low, except for the years 2014 and 2015.

Table 3. Frequency distribution of self-citations by year

Year	Total number of self-citations	Total number of references	Percentage of self-citations
2008	23	528	4.36
2009	21	483	4.35
2010	43	868	4.95
2011	44	816	5.39
2012	25	802	3.12
2013	77	1157	6.66
2014	41	452	9.07
2015	58	772	7.51
2016	35	1108	3.16
2017	20	689	2.90
Total	387	7675	5.04

6.4 Distribution of Different Forms of Self-Citations

Figure 3 reveals the distribution of self-citations by type, viz., author self-citations, author/journal self-citations and journal self-citations. Out of 547 self-citations maximum 353 (64.53%), self-citations are author self-citations,

160 (29.25%) self-citations are journal self-citations and only 34 (29.25%) self-citations are author/journal self-citations.

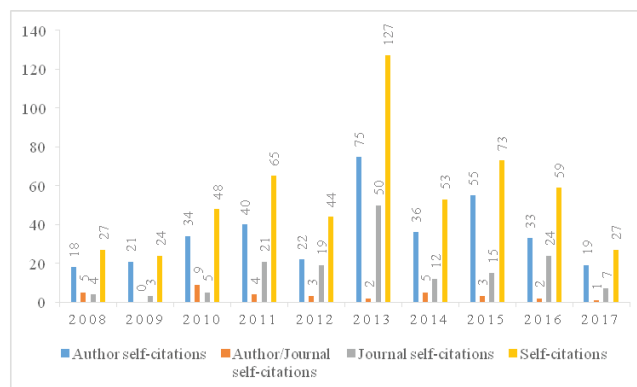


Figure 3. Frequency distribution of different forms of self-citations.

6.5 Frequency Distribution of Journal Self-Citations by Title

Table 4 and Figure 4 show the distribution of journal self-citations in the journal. Just over half of all self-citations are citations to other papers in the *SRELS Journal of Information Management* and rest 189 (49.09%) are to other journals.

Table 4. Frequency distribution of journal self-citations by title

Year	<i>SRELS Journal of Information Management</i>	Total number of journal self-citations
2008	9	22
2009	3	4
2010	14	29
2011	25	50
2012	22	30
2013	52	92
2014	17	42
2015	18	50
2016	28	46
2017	8	20
Total	196 (50.91%)	385

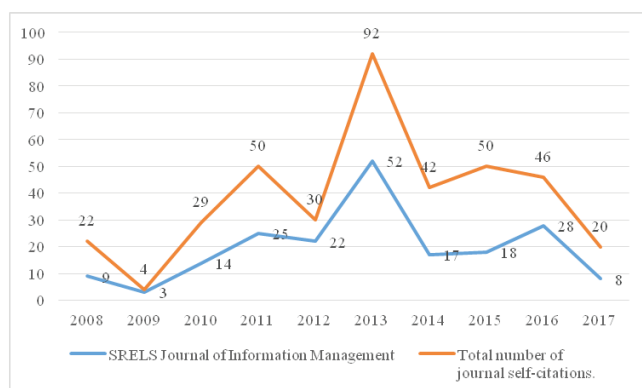


Figure 4. Frequency distribution of journal self-citations by title.

6.6 Frequency Distribution of Self-Citing Author

Figure 5 shows the distribution of self-citing authors in the references related to articles of the journal. Out of 384 self-citing authors, 154 (40.10%) authors cite themselves only once in their articles, followed by 136 (35.42%) authors cite twice, 61 (15.89%) authors citing thrice and 17 (4.43%) authors citing four times. The rest of the authors cite themselves between five and nine times.

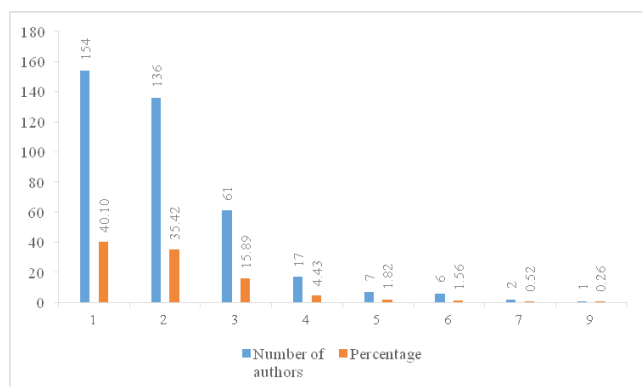


Figure 5. Frequency distribution of self-citing author.

7. Findings of the Study

The major finding of the study is:

1. Only about a quarter of papers in the SRELS Journal of Information Management carry self-citations,
2. Just about 5% of all references in the papers published in the *SRELS Journal of Information Management* are self-citations, and
3. Only 26% of all authors who have published papers in the journal have cited themselves.

8. References

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