

# An Editorial reflection: Towards building a research community

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In the last few years, the scholarly publishing space has received increased criticism and scrutiny from various stakeholders. Some of the crises journals and academics face are the move towards open-access publishing, a lack of research funding compared with the high publication costs, competing with the onslaughts of predatory publications, prominent academics falsifying their data, research with poor quality and, more recently, the introduction of AI tools in the development and dissemination of knowledge.

Many authors agree that the current research situation is unsustainable (e.g. Effendic & Van Zyl, 2019; Hoole 2019; Miller & Rice 2023; Mouton & Van Niekerk 2021). The proposed solution, however, depends on a person's perspective and local context. In South Africa, two main role players are affected by the previously mentioned challenges: the South African Academic Institutions (also called the academic research community - ARC) and the national government (Department of Higher Education).

From an academic research community perspective, the primary objectives – at least in theory – are high-quality, relevant research that is meaningful and stimulates the production of new knowledge, with publishers responsible for high-quality peer reviews, reasonable turnaround times, affordable page fees or publishing costs and easy access to researchers' scholarly works. Unfortunately, the current publishing and research models are not conducive to promoting these lofty goals.

Some in South Africa have argued that the incentive and reward system related to publishing has resulted in many unintended or undesirable consequences. South African universities and other higher education institutions depend on research subsidies to fund their activities as the government's subsidies dwindle. Given the funding pressures, it is unsurprising that there is a strong drive to publish as much as possible. Unfortunately, this drive can lead to negative consequences, such as compromising research quality in favour of quantity, unethical research practices, data falsification and poor review practices (Mouton & van Niekerk, 2021). Although much has been written about the current status of affairs, sadly, not much has changed. What is certain is that the crisis will not be averted overnight and that a multileveled approach is needed to solve it. The onus is now on research communities to take matters into their own hands.

As I mentioned above, one way of addressing many of these issues is through a multilevel stakeholder approach.

High-quality research and knowledge development are not just the responsibility of one role player. Instead, it is the joint responsibility of a network of stakeholders, including higher education institutions, government departments, research foundations and funding partners, publishers, journal owners, editorial members, readers and authors. As a journal subscribing to the noble practices of research, upholding ethical standards and striving to contribute to science through publishing high-quality research, SAJIP recognises that we have a significant role in solving the problems.

Through constant innovation and process improvement, AOSIS and SAJIP have worked tirelessly towards more sustainable research practices. The successes SAJIP achieved were the result of consistent hard work and would not have been possible without the tireless efforts and long hours worked by everyone involved. This year, SAJIP has published its 49th volume and is going from strength to strength.

In terms of the major themes in SAJIP's published articles, employee well-being and meaningful work have been the most popular themes for 2023, addressing various well-being aspects such as

quality of work life, flourishing, work engagement and resilience, the role of mental health in talent management and compassion fatigue.

Visibility and quality are important indicators for AOSIS and SAJIP. The DHT accredited SAJIP in 1985, and SAJIP is listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), IBSS, SciELO SA and Scopus Indices. South African Journal of Industrial Psychology is an open-access journal committed to making research accessible to all communities. In this regard, I am pleased that SAJIP is steadily growing in stature. Some interesting facts are as follows:

- In terms of views, the journal has grown from 531 823 views in 2018 to 1 162 289 views in 2022. The cross-reference citation score has increased from 521 in 2019 to 1354 in 2022.
- There has been a gradual decline in the number of manuscripts accepted by the journal (from 52 in 2019 to 32 in 2022). This decline can mainly be attributed to the significant efforts by the editorial team to elevate the journal standard and the implementation of more vigorous peer review processes. The SAJIP continues to attract international authors from countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

One of the core metrics of how well a journal is doing is its impact factor, which reflects the average number of citations of articles published in the journal. The higher the citations, the higher the journal's impact. Several factors determine the impact factor. Therefore, it should always be used as only a guideline, and one should also consider multiple sources of citations. As with SAJIP's steady growth in several other areas, it is also steadily climbing the ranks:

Citation-based measurement	2022
Journal Impact Factor, based on Web of Science (formerly ISI)	2.1
CiteScore, based on SCOPUS, Elsevier	2.8
Source-Normalized Impact per Paper (SNIP), based on SCOPUS, Elsevier	0.60
Scimago Journal Rank (SJR), based on SCOPUS, Elsevier	0.37
H5-index, based on Google Scholar	24.00

## What can we do better?

SAJIP is entirely dependent on our authors, reviewers and editorial members. SAJIP is doing well. However, I recognise

that there are things we can do better – for example, turnaround times and scholars' willingness to act as reviewers. SAJIP plans to introduce several initiatives to enhance the overall user experience. We would like to take more action to improve our research quality through hosting workshops on article writing and the latest research methodology techniques.

As a research community, we can do more to encourage interaction and conversation. We would like to introduce a monthly news flash highlighting outstanding articles, celebrating various authors, addressing important topics and highlighting specific research that is especially meaningful or useful. We would also like to introduce quarterly vlogs to attract prolific authors or authors who have published high-quality research to our journal.

We also aim to strengthen our ties with Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa, the professional body for industrial psychology in South Africa. SAJIP is a key outlet for scholarly contribution. One way of remaining relevant and growing the academic community is to collaborate with our professional societies to produce special issues based on their annual conferences.

I would also like to invite our readers to engage with us with suggestions you may have. SAJIP is committed to serving our research community and the objectives of science. It is not an either-or situation. They can mutually co-exist.

Lastly, I must express my sincerest gratitude to my editorial team and section editors. This journal would not have been possible without your selfless service to SAJIP and the broader research community.

May SAJIP go from strength to strength in 2024.

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