

Number of citations of a journal article or other KM publication

Indicator Number:

31

Logic Model Component:

Outputs (Usefulness)

Data Type(s):

Count

Short Definition:

Measures the number of times a journal article or other KM publication is referenced in other information products

Definition and Explanation (Long):

This indicator measures the number of times a journal article or other KM publication, such as a book, guide, or white paper is referenced in other information products. The number of citations represents the instances when the article or KM publication was used as evidence, as back-up information, or supplementary knowledge in the development of another publication.

Data Requirements:

Quantitative data from citation studies; Journal Citation Reports (Science Edition) or Journal Citation Reports (Social Sciences Edition) (Thompson Reuters <http://thomsonreuters.com/journal-citation-reports/>)

Data Sources:

Citation studies; web search engines; citation indexes

Frequency of Data Collection:

Semiannually

Purpose:

This indicator is a collective measure of the perceived authority, quality, and importance of a scientific publication in the research community. The number of citations reflects the popularity of the topic and importance of findings.

Issues and Challenges:

A limitation of indicators based on citation counts is that they do not apply to all types of KM outputs, only to published scientific literature, where influence in the scientific community is a goal and a sign of success. For many other KM outputs, such as a database or course curriculum, influence in the scientific community is not a primary goal. In some instances, KM practitioners and authors in low- and middle-income countries may find this indicator not useful for them. Even when influence in the scientific community is a goal, authors in developing countries often face biases and other limitations that make it difficult for them to make their work known to others in the scientific community. A related limitation is that many relevant journals published in developing countries are not included/indexed in some widely used databases such as MEDLINE. Internet search engines, such as Google Scholar, can only provide partial information on the number of times a publication is cited online. Citation reports are costly, but easy to obtain from specialized services.

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