

From the editor

Harvey S. James Jr.¹

Accepted: 1 September 2015 / Published online: 10 September 2015
© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2015

A member of the journal's editorial board introduced me to research suggesting that there is a link between the length of a research paper's title and the number of citations the paper receives. According to the study by Letchford et al. (2015), "journals which publish papers with shorter titles receive more citations per paper." The authors reviewed 140,000 of the most cited papers published between 2007 and 2013, using data from the *Scopus* database. The authors attempted to control for journal reputation, publication year and other factors.

I don't know if the results of this study hold true for citation counts of papers published in *Agriculture and Human Values*. However, a brief review from Google scholar shows that of the 100 most cited papers published in the journal between 2000 and 2014, approximately two-thirds had titles of 100 characters or less.

The study authors propose several possible explanations for their findings, such as high impact journals limiting title lengths and papers with marginal contributions requiring longer titles being relegated to less prestigious journals. An explanation the authors propose that I find intriguing is that "shorter titles may be easier to understand, enabling wider readership and increasing the influence of a paper" (Letchford et al. 2015).

I think the lesson here is not that there is a causal connection between title length and impact. Rather, it is that papers get cited if readers understand what the authors are saying and if they perceive the research as being

important, interesting and relevant. Thus, clarity in writing is crucial. Presentation matters as much as content. Great papers are strong in both categories. I regularly reject without review papers submitted to *Agriculture and Human Values* that make no sense to me. Maybe the research is important, but if the authors cannot make that clear to me, then I will move on to other submissions. Submissions to this journal are at an all-time high. I can afford to be choosy, and so I choose papers that I think readers will be able to understand and that reviewers evaluate as important, interesting and relevant and conducted with a high level of rigor.

This issue of *Agriculture and Human Values* contains the following articles. Sowerwine et al. examine the extent to which agricultural labor laws in California protect and discriminate against Southeast Asian immigrant farmers. Van Rijn et al. study the effects of participatory research and development projects on different dimensions of social capital. Harrison and Getz assess the extent to which job quality for hired farm workers is related to farm size, with a particular focus on organic farming in California and dairy farming in Wisconsin. Klein examines the tradeoffs between economic and alternative food values in a case study of food procurement by hospital group purchasing organizations. Hammer et al. use photos to explore how people perceive what healthy eating means to them. Atalan-Helicke studies the debate about the halal status of genetically engineered food through a case study of halal certification in Turkey. Sbicca examines fairness in the organization and functioning of labor practices in three alternative food network cases. Brown et al. assess the ability of the Australian grazing industry to adapt to changing climate conditions. Quisumbing et al. evaluate the differential effects on men's and women's ownership and control of agricultural assets resulting from the

✉ Harvey S. James Jr.
hjames@missouri.edu

¹ Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics,
University of Missouri, 146 Mumford Hall, Columbia,
MO 65211, USA

introduction of value-added development projects in developing countries. McIvor and Hale show how the civic implications of urban agriculture can be enhanced through the theoretical lens of deep democracy. Bausch et al. assess the implications of how development policies are framed and narrated using a case study from central Arizona. Christie et al. study gender differences in the knowledge and management practices of tomato growers in Ghana and Mali. Quark assesses the implications of efforts to formalize place-based branding when competitors are

geographically dispersed. Book reviews and the list of books received round out this issue of the journal.

Reference

- Letchford, A., H. Susannah Moat, and T. Preis. 2015. The advantage of short paper titles. *Royal Society Open Science*. doi:[10.1098/rsos.150266](https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.150266).