

Gender Disparities in Editorial Board Member in Information Science & Library Science Journals

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Introduction

Members of editorial boards of scientific journals (EBMs) are qualified professionals characterized by their professional achievements and academic leadership (Kaji et al., 2019). Gender studies of EBMs are of great interest because of their impact on both equity and the quality and representativeness of science (Mauleón et al., 2013). In medicine, for example, the proportion of women in EBMs increased from 11% to 23% between 1993 and 2003 (Keiser et al., 2003). In Mathematics, it was 8.9% (Topaz & Sen, 2016), and in some Information Science & Library Science (ISLS) journals, it was 40% (Willett, 2013). Thus, it is evident that there is a gender disparity in EBMs in some fields, with lower representation of women,

especially as Editors-in-Chief (EiC). The current representation of women as EBMs in ISLS journals is unknown, as well as their geographical origin and their roles within the EBMs. Therefore, the objectives of this work are: a) to determine whether there are gender differences in the EBMs of ISLS journals according to their country of origin, quartile in Journal Citation Reports (JCR), and role in the committees; b) to analyze the representation of women in the journal editorial boards.

Methodology

The EBMs of 83 journals in the ISLS category of the JCR, Social Science Citation Index edition of 2023, were identified. To classify the different roles of the EBMs, the methodology of Liu et al. (2023) was

followed, which grouped them into 10 categories. Each journal was assigned the publisher and the quartile in JCR (Q), and each EBM was assigned the gender (female or male) and its country of affiliation. Figure 1 shows the flowchart of the methodological process.

Results

A total of 4,468 EBMs from 86 different countries were identified, 2,813 males (62.96%) and 1,616 females (36.17%). The gender of 39 EBMs (0.87%) could not be determined. The United States has the largest number of EBMs (n=1,697), followed by the United Kingdom (n=445). The percentage of women

in the 10 countries with the highest number of EBMs is less than 45% in all of them, except in South Africa (58.33%), Malaysia (57.69%) and Israel (52%). Female representation is lower in China (25.36%), Germany (29.55%), France (29.67%), Italy (32.94%), and Spain (33.33%) (Figure 2).

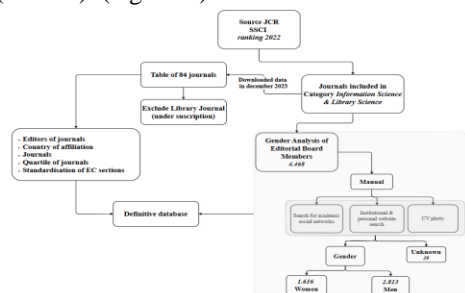


Figure 1. Flowchart for gender analysis of EBMs.

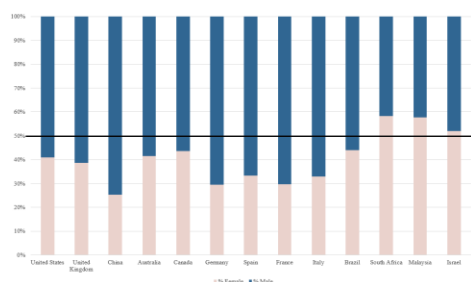


Figure 2. Gender distribution of EBMs by geographical origin.

70.07% of male EBMs (n=1,491) were found in Q1 of the journals, while the distribution of

females follows a reverse staircase pattern from Q4 to Q1: Q4_{Female}=49.58%; Q3_{Female}=46.6%; Q2_{Female}=36.88%; and Q1_{Female}=29.93%. The representation of men is above 65% in all roles classified in Q1, except in the role "Administration, Marketing and Communication" (AMC), where it is 45%, and in addition, 79.17% of the EiC in Q1 are men. On the other hand, the percentage of women increased in Q4: 83.33% in the role of reviewer; 59.26% in the role of associate editor; 54.67% in the role of AMC; 50.91% in the role of editorial board; and 48.15% in the role of EiC (Figure 3).

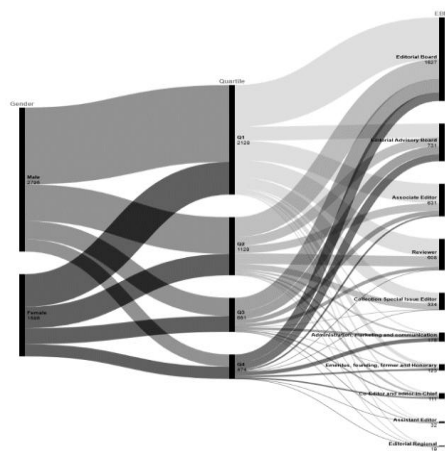


Figure 3. Sankey diagram of gender, journal quartile and role relationships in EBMs.

Among the 10 publishers producing more than 2 journals (Figure 4), Elsevier (n=11), Taylor & Francis (n=10), and Emerald Group Publishing (n=10) lead. Commercial publishers such as Igi Global (81.71%), Springer (70.78%) and Elsevier (69.63%) have a high proportion of men, while academic publishers such as Johns Hopkins University Press (65.38%), American Library Association (60.53%) and Oxford University

ress (43.41%) have a high proportion of women.

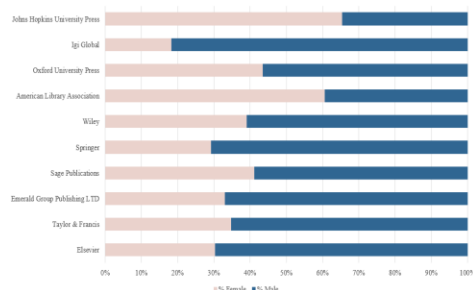


Figure 4. Gender distribution according to publishers publishing more than one journal.

Conclusion

There is a predominance of men among the EBM of ISLS journals in most countries, and also among journals in the upper quartiles. The representation of women is inversely related to the quartile, increasing as the quartile decreases, and there are more female EiC in the lower quartiles than in the upper quartiles. Women are more represented in some specific roles, such as AMC. Only in two of the ten publishers with more than two journals does the percentage of women exceed 50%. This work confirms the existence of gender differences in the EBM of journals in the ISLS field, both in management positions and in most roles within each editorial board. As future work, it would be interesting to analyze the evolution of EBMs in the coming years, as well as to investigate the causes of the lower representation of women, including the analysis of historical and socio-cultural factors, power dynamics in the ISLS field, and social expectations that may affect the participation and leadership of women in EBMs.

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