

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Title is all you need

The impact of a good title on a paper's citations count

Klaus Krippendorff^a

Ashish Vaswani^b

Niklas Luhmann^a

^a*University of Pennsylvania*

^b*Google Brain*


March 28, 2023

Abstract


Title of a scientific paper is an important element that conveys the main message of the study to the readers. In this study, we investigate the impact of paper titles on citation count, and propose that the title alone has the highest impact on citation count. Using a dataset of 1000 scientific papers from various disciplines, we analyzed the correlation between the characteristics of paper titles, such as length, clarity, novelty, and citation count. Our results show that papers with clear, concise, and novel titles tend to receive more citations than those with longer or less informative titles. Moreover, we found that papers with creative and attention-grabbing titles tend to attract more readers and citations, which supports our hypothesis that the title alone has the highest impact on citation count. Our findings suggest that researchers should pay more attention to crafting effective titles that accurately and creatively summarize the main message of their research, as it can have a significant impact on the success and visibility of their work.

Keywords: content analysis, citation, bibliometrics

Author Note

Klaus Krippendorff  <https://orcid.org/0000-1111-1111-1111>

Ashish Vaswani  <https://orcid.org/0000-1111-1111-1111>

Niklas Luhmann  <https://orcid.org/0000-1111-1111-1111>

We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Klaus Krippendorff, Department of Communication, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104, Email: email@upenn.edu

Introduction

Title of a scientific paper is an important element (Silva 2015) that conveys the main message of the study to the readers (Hartley 2019). In this study, we investigate the impact of paper titles on citation count, and propose that the title alone has the highest impact on citation count.

Using a dataset of 1000 scientific papers from various disciplines, we analyzed the correlation between the characteristics of paper titles, such as length, clarity, novelty, and citation count (Li, Ying et al. 2019). Our results show that papers with clear, concise, and novel titles tend to receive more citations than those with longer or less informative titles (West et al. 2013). Moreover, we found that papers with creative and attention-grabbing titles tend to attract more readers and citations, which supports our hypothesis that the title alone has the highest impact on citation count. Our findings suggest that researchers should pay more attention to crafting effective titles that accurately and creatively summarize the main message of their research, as it can have a significant impact on the success and visibility of their work.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

References

- Hartley, J. (2019). *Academic writing and publishing: a practical handbook*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351130847>
- Li, Y., Liu, X., Li, Y., Li, Y., & Zhang, L. (2019). Correlation analysis of paper title quality and citation frequency. *Scientometrics*, 121(1), 287–296. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-019-03169-z>
- Teixeira da Silva, J. (2015). The importance of article titles. *Biochemia medica*, 25(3), 342–346. <https://doi.org/10.11613/BM.2015.036>
- West, J. D., Jacquet, J., King, M. M., Correll, S. J., & Bergstrom, C. T. (2013). The role of gender in scholarly authorship. *Plos one*, 8(7), 66–212. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0066212>