

Beyond Citation Counts

A Practical Editorial Framework for Measuring the Real Influence and Quality of Published Research

Toward a multidimensional, scalable model for responsible research assessment in scholarly publishing

BAACH BADR | Organic Chemistry, Catalysis and Environment Laboratory, Faculty of Sciences, Ibn Tofail University | baachbadr@gmail.com | <https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0000-0002-6349-2343>

Background / The Problem

Citation counts remain central to research evaluation, yet they capture only a narrow and delayed view of influence. They vary across disciplines and rarely reflect trustworthiness, transparency, editorial rigor, professional uptake, or societal relevance. Editors and publishers therefore need practical approaches that demonstrate journal quality and article value beyond traditional citation-based indicators.

Why Citation Counts Alone Are Not Enough

- Delayed accumulation of evidence
- Field-specific citation bias
- Limited reflection of trustworthiness
- Little visibility of openness and transparency
- Weak capture of professional and societal uptake

Aim

To propose a practical editorial framework for assessing the multidimensional influence, quality, and reception of published research beyond citation counts.

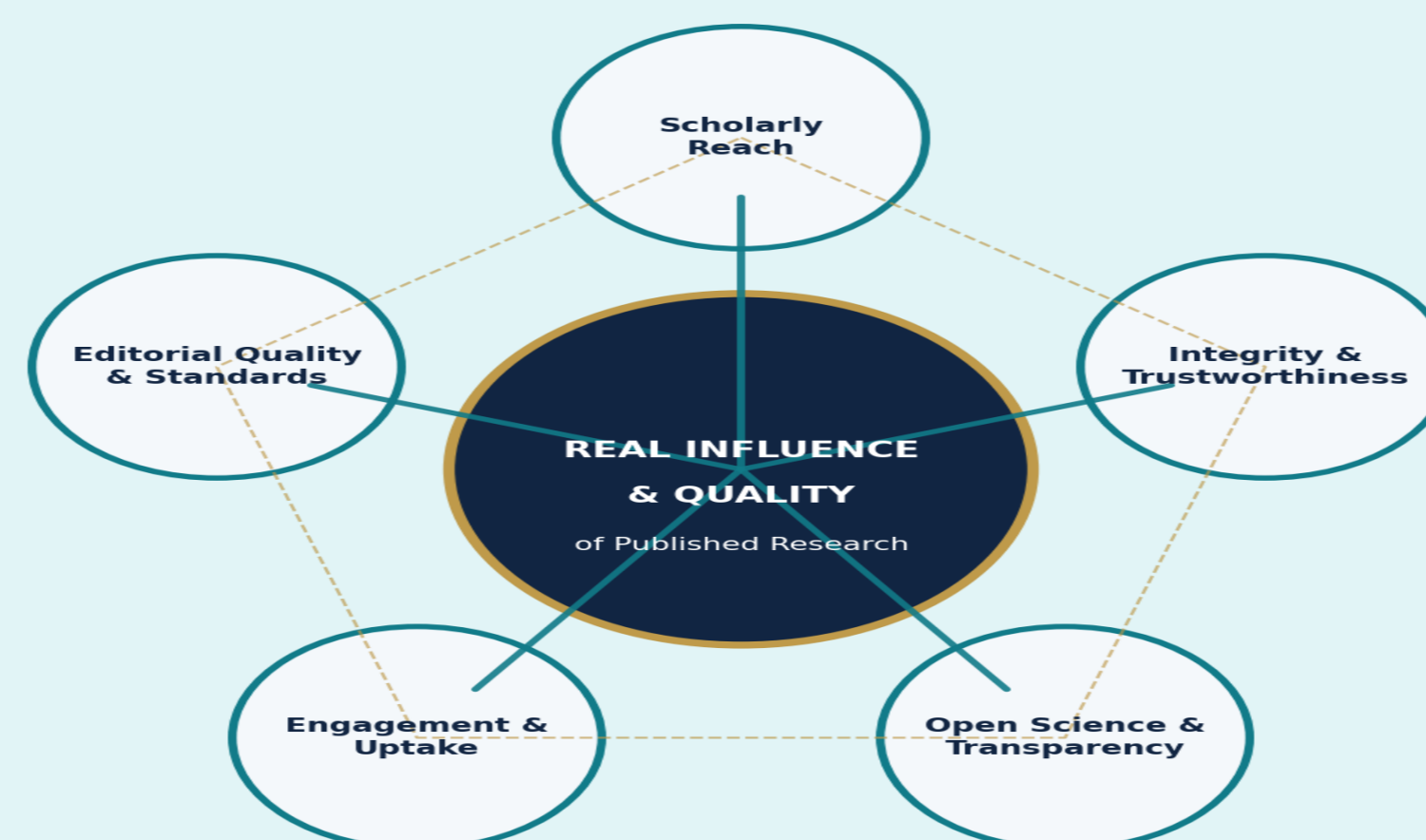
Key Insight

Research influence is not defined solely by how often it is cited, but also by how well it is trusted, used, shared, and supported by strong editorial and transparency standards.

The Proposed Editorial Framework

The framework evaluates published research across five complementary dimensions that together provide a more credible picture of influence and quality.

Five-Dimensional Model



1. Scholarly Reach

Citations, downloads, indexing visibility, and cross-disciplinary reach indicate how far research travels within scholarly communities.

2. Integrity & Trustworthiness

Ethics statements, reporting quality, conflict-of-interest disclosure, correction monitoring, and reproducibility signals indicate whether findings can be trusted.

3. Open Science & Transparency

Data availability, protocol sharing, preregistration, code access, and open peer review strengthen verifiability, reuse, and transparency.

4. Engagement & Uptake

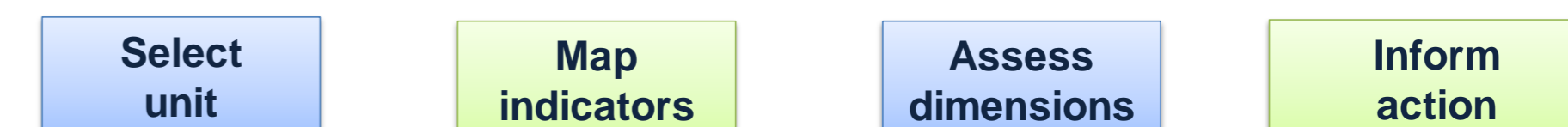
Policy mentions, practitioner use, educational uptake, altmetrics, and public communication capture influence beyond academic citation networks.

5. Editorial Quality & Standards

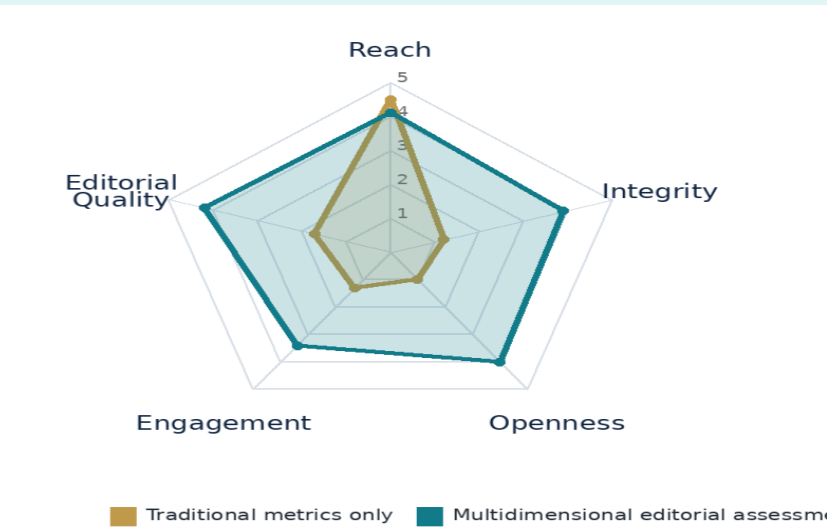
Peer review quality assurance, reporting-guideline compliance, timeliness, editorial checks, and metadata completeness reflect publishing-process quality.

Use Case / Application

Editorial teams can apply the framework to articles, special issues, or journals by mapping available evidence to the five dimensions, identifying strengths and gaps, and using the results to guide policy, author support, and quality improvement.



Assessment Profile



A narrow citation-only view produces an uneven assessment profile. The multidimensional model offers a broader, more meaningful picture of journal quality and article influence.

Practical Value

Helps editors make more balanced decisions, communicate journal quality more credibly, strengthen trust in published research, and highlight influence beyond citations.

Scalable Across Journals

Adaptable across disciplines, journal sizes, and publishing models because it combines shared editorial principles with flexible indicators.

Take-Home Message

What matters in publishing is not only how often research is cited, but how well it is trusted, used, shared, and translated into meaningful influence.

References / Sources

DORA; Leiden Manifesto; COPE guidance; TOP Guidelines; relevant EASE resources.