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Comparison of USA and UK rankings of LIS journals

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Comparison of USA and UK rankings of library and information science journals

Lynsey Shenton and Peter Willett

Information School, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom

Abstract

Purpose - To investigate UK academics' views of the importance and prestige of journals relevant to library and information science (LIS) teaching and research.

Design/methodology/approach - A questionnaire, based on one used previously in the USA, was sent to UK academics involved in LIS teaching and research. The questionnaire asked respondents to rate the importance of 87 LIS journals, to suggest others that were of importance to them but that were not amongst the 87, and to identify the five most prestigious journals for promotion purposes. In addition, those journals were identified that had figured in institutional submissions to the LIS Unit of Assessment in the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

Findings - While there was a fair measure of overall agreement between USA and UK rankings of the 87 journals, with both highlighting the standing of the *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* and of the *Journal of Documentation*, some substantial differences were also noted. Evidence is presented for a strong locational component to academics' assessments of journal prestige, and analysis of the REF2014 submissions demonstrates the highly inter-disciplinary nature of LIS research in the UK.

Originality/value - This is the first study to report UK academics' rankings of LIS journals, and to compare those with comparable data for USA academics.

Keywords - Inter-disciplinarity, Journal prestige, Journal ranking, Library and information science research, Library and information science teaching, Research Excellence Framework, Scientometrics

Paper type - Research paper

Introduction

There is much interest in evaluating and ranking the quality of academic journals, since their importance can influence authors' choices of where to publish their research, this in turn affecting decisions relating to salary and promotion (Adams and Johnson, 2008; Chen and Chen, 2011; Nixon, 2014; Tourish and Willmott, 2015). In an ideal world, of course, the ideas and findings within a research article should achieve recognition on their own merits, irrespective of the quality of the journal where they are published; in the real world, however, more credit is associated with publishing in some journals than in others, this despite a continuing debate in the literature as to the utility and appropriateness of journal rankings (Brembs *et al.*, 2013; Macdonald & Kam, 2007; Marsh & Hunt, 2006; Osterloh & Frey, 2014; Sangster, 2015; Willmott, 2011). Journal rankings also support collection management decisions, enable editors or publishers to monitor the success of their journals, and allow outsiders to acquaint themselves with a field's most important journals (Manzari, 2013; Nisonger & Davis, 2005; Rousseau, 2002).

The ranking of journals has been discussed in many different disciplines, such as accountancy, computer science, marketing, tourism and, of particular importance here, library and information science (LIS). To date, the great majority of ranking studies for LIS journals have been conducted in the USA, and it was this that led us to carry out the study reported here, which investigates the perceptions of LIS journal prestige as determined by a questionnaire survey of UK LIS staff in which they were asked to rank 87 LIS journals that had been used in a previous, analogous study conducted in the USA by Manzari (2013). It also investigates the extent to which those perceptions correlate with the publication behaviours of British LIS academics in practice, using LIS journal articles submitted to the Research Excellence Framework (REF2014, 2014), a nationwide evaluation of the quality of research in UK universities.

Literature review

There is an extensive literature discussing the evaluation of academic journals, and many different techniques have been described for conducting such evaluations, as exemplified by Beets *et al.* (2016), Blazek and Parrish (1992), Darmoni *et al.* (2002), Hood and Wilson (2001), Lowry *et al.* (2007), Nisonger (1999), Rousseau (2002) and Saarela *et al.* (2016). However, by far the most common are objective evaluations based on citation data and subjective evaluations based on expert judgements (Nisonger and Davis, 2005; Nixon, 2014).

Citation-based studies seek to quantify the importance of a journal by means of measures derived from citations to the articles in that journal. Examples of such measures include the Journal Impact Factor (JIF) (Garfield, 2006), the Eigenfactor (Bergstrom *et al.*, 2008), and the h-index (Hirsch, 2005) and its many derivatives. More recently, altmetrics, based on references in blogs, social media, website downloads etc. have been suggested as an alternative source of information

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3 about the importance of journals (Priem *et al.*, 2010). An early example of a citation-based study in
4 the LIS domain is that of Kim (1991), who undertook a citation analysis to compare objective
5 measures with a previous subjective ranking, identifying a degree of correlation between the two
6 approaches and highlighting a core of top journals using both methods. In the same year, Budd (1991)
7 analysed 328 articles related to academic libraries to identify the most frequently cited journals, while
8 Esteibar and Lancaster (1992) ranked journals according to how often they were cited in course
9 reading lists. Via and Schmidle (2007) measured how often journals were cited in the bibliographies
10 of a group of top LIS journals, and Blessinger and Frasier (2007) used *Journal Citation Reports* data
11 to determine the most prestigious 28 LIS journals between 1994 and 2004. More recently, Jacsó
12 (2010) demonstrated that different citation measures yielded significantly different rankings of a set of
13 52 LIS journals, and Yuan and Hua (2011) used not only Web of Science citation counts but also
14 coverage in the *Library and Information Science Abstracts* database, web links, web impact factors,
15 and Page Rank scores to rank LIS open access journals.

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17 While citation-based approaches to journal ranking have been widely used they can be
18 criticised on much the same grounds as any application of citation data (MacRoberts and MacRoberts,
19 1989; MacRoberts and MacRoberts, 1996). Examples of such limitations include: citation data tend to
20 be skewed, with just a few items contributing a large fraction of the citations; a bias towards English
21 language publications; differences in the numbers of readers (and hence citations) of specialist, niche
22 journals as against more broadly focused ones; rationales for citation that are not related to the quality
23 of the cited articles; and the possible effects of preferential journal self-citation *inter alia*.

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25 Subjective - otherwise known as expert opinion or perception - studies are based on the
26 personal judgements of experts in the discipline under study (Böll, 2007; Nisonger, 1999).
27 Participants are typically provided with journal lists and then asked either to rank them or to score
28 them using a Likert scale, with the final ranking being obtained by applying some sort of averaging
29 procedure to the individual responses; alternatively, the participants can be asked to name their top
30 five or ten journals. Subjective studies are, however, also open to criticism (Holsapple, 2008;
31 McGrath, 1987; Peters *et al.* 2014; Serenko and Dohan, 2011) for three reasons: participants are likely
32 to rate more highly the journals with which they are familiar or self-identify (and rate lower those
33 where the converse applies); it can take a long time for individuals to change their opinions about
34 journals even if the nature of a journal has changed quite rapidly, which means rankings can be
35 outdated; and, most obviously, such rankings represent the mere expressions of opinion of a group of
36 people whose expertise may not be universally accepted.

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38 Despite these limitations, the subjective approach has found broad usage in the LIS
39 community, with the five principal studies of this sort adopting approaches based on a pioneering
40 study by Kohl and Davis (1985). These authors surveyed the opinions of two participant groups
41 (deans of LIS departments and academic library directors) regarding a set list of journals, and asked
42 them to list the five most prestigious journals for promotion and tenure. The analysis revealed a
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3 perceived hierarchy of prestige, with the two groups agreeing for two-thirds of the journals. Blake
4 (1996) and Nisonger and Davis (2005) replicated and compared their findings with the Kohl and
5 Davis study, with both finding less inter-group agreement than identified in the earlier study.
6 However, all three reports demonstrated that, although the groups' rankings varied, there was
7 agreement on the most highly ranked LIS journals. Tjoumas and Blake (1992) reproduced the Kohl-
8 Davis study with LIS academics working in public and in school librarianship. These two groups did
9 not hold similar perceptions, which suggested the need for separate hierarchies based on
10 specialisation. A similar issue was seen in the work of Manzari (2013), who investigated the
11 perceptions of all faculty members in LIS schools accredited by the American Library Association
12 (ALA): a high-prestige group of journals was identified, but participants in the survey emphasised the
13 multidisciplinary nature of LIS. It has been suggested in other fields that area-specific journal
14 rankings are more informative than overall rankings (Herron and Hall, 2005; Menachemi *et al.* 2015)
15 and this may well also be the case in LIS, given the field's increasing multidisciplinary character
16 (Hessey and Willett, 2013; Lariviere *et al.*, 2012; Nisonger and Davis, 2005; Tsay, 2008).
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24 All of the subjective evaluations of LIS journals that have been discussed above have been
25 carried out in the USA, but comparable studies in other disciplines have shown that perceptions of
26 journal prestige can vary in different parts of the world (Albrecht *et al.*, 2010; Lowe and Locke, 2005;
27 Lowry *et al.*, 2007; McLean *et al.*, 2009; Mylonopoulos and Theoharakis, 2001; Willcocks *et al.*,
28 2008). There have been studies of LIS journal ranking in Australia (Smith and Middleton, 2009),
29 China (Zhang *et al.*, 2012), Germany, Austria and Switzerland (Schloegl and Stock, 2004) and
30 Nigeria (Nkereuwern, 1997) but we are not aware of any such study having been carried out to
31 ascertain the perceptions of LIS journal prestige among UK LIS academics.
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38 **Methods**

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40 The starting point for the work reported here was a study by Manzari (2013), who conducted a survey
41 of all full-time faculty members teaching on ALA-accredited master's programmes at institutions in
42 the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. The respondents provided rankings on a scale of 1 (low)
43 to 5 (high) based on the importance of each of 87 journals to their research and teaching, with a "not
44 familiar" response available if they had insufficient knowledge of a particular journal. The selected
45 journals were based on those used in the earlier studies by Kohl and Davis (1985) and by Nisonger
46 and Davis (2005), additional ones suggested by participants in the latter study, and the twenty journals
47 with the highest JIF in the Information Science and Library Science category of the 2009 *Journal*
48 *Citation Reports* database. The participants were also asked to list the five most prestigious LIS
49 journals for promotion and tenure purposes at their institution.
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55 The equivalent target population in the UK is academics teaching on Chartered Institute of
56 Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)-accredited master's programmes. The decision was,
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3 however, made to include all CILIP-accredited degrees because it would be difficult to distinguish
4 which individuals taught only on master's degrees. Details of CILIP-accredited programmes were
5 retrieved from CILIP's website (at <http://cilip.org.uk/cilip/cilip-accredited-qualifications>). The
6 sampling frame was extended to include one institution that no longer offered a CILIP-accredited
7 degree but that had an important, and continuing, LIS teaching and research function.
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10 The CILIP website was useful for identifying relevant degree programmes and institutions,
11 but identifying the academics teaching on those programmes was less straightforward since the
12 information on departmental websites varied substantially. While most provided lists of all staff
13 within the department, some provided complete lists of the academics teaching on each specific
14 degree programme, while others provided no staff information at all. Where staff lists were available
15 they were used to provide contact data (specifically the email address); where this was not the case,
16 the relevant programme co-ordinator or head of department was contacted to obtain the names of all
17 appropriate individuals. Where no response was received from the latter approach, all academic staff
18 listed within the department offering the degree were included (thus allowing each individual to
19 decide whether or not the survey was applicable to them). In all, the final population comprised 187
20 academics at 16 institutions offering 39 CILIP-accredited LIS degrees as at October 2015. It should
21 be noted that this total is only approximate since it excludes staff teaching on an LIS programme but
22 from a different department within an institution, and includes staff within a department who were not
23 involved in teaching on an LIS programme).
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32 The questionnaire was in three parts, and was based on that devised by Manzari. The first
33 asked participants to rate a list of journals on an ordinal scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high) based on each
34 journal's importance to their research and teaching; a code was also available for use where the
35 academic was not familiar with a particular journal. The list of journals was that used by Manzari
36 after excluding the *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology (ARIST*, which had ceased
37 publication since the Manzari study) and after updating the names of the following nine journals
38 where these had changed: *Aslib Proceedings* to *Aslib Journal of Information Management*; *Journal of*
39 *the American Society for Information Science and Technology* to *Journal of the Association for*
40 *Information Science and Technology*; *Journal of the Society of Archivists* to *Archives and Records*;
41 *Libraries and the Cultural Record* to *Information and Culture*; *Library History* to *Library and*
42 *Information History*; *Literary and Linguistic Computing* to *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*;
43 *Microform and Imaging Review* to *Preservation, Digital Technology and Culture*; *Online* to *Online*
44 *Searcher*; and *School Library Media Research* to *School Library Research*. The second allowed
45 respondents, if they so wished, to add and rate journal titles not on the list, again using the five-point
46 scale. Finally, the participants were asked to list, in any order, the five most prestigious journals to be
47 published in for promotion purposes at their institution. After piloting, the questionnaire was
48 distributed *via* SurveyMonkey, a browser-based Web survey tool, with two follow-up reminders being
49 sent to increase the response rate.
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3 This questionnaire-based approach is typical of subjective approaches to journal evaluation;
4 in addition, a complementary, and rather different subjective approach was adopted based on
5 submissions to the Research Excellence Framework or REF (REF2014, 2014). The REF (formerly
6 known as the Research Assessment Exercise or RAE (Bence and Oppenheim, 2005; Willett, 2012)) is
7 a regular, sector-wide evaluation of the quality of research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs).
8 As part of this assessment, HEIs submit details of individual academics' research outputs, including
9 journal publications, with REF requiring four such outputs published by each academic in the period
10 1st January 2008 to 31st December 2013. The REF is a system for evaluating research quality, with
11 governmental funding for research being determined in part by the results of the evaluation:
12 substantial effort is hence put by HEIs into ensuring that their academics select only the very best
13 research published during the appropriate period. While it is unreasonable to assume that it is only the
14 best journals that publish the best research, it is not unreasonable to assume that academics will
15 choose to publish their best work in those journals in the appropriate subject area that they consider to
16 be the most prestigious, and the REF submissions hence provide an alternative way of judging the
17 relative merits of LIS journals. The approach is again subjective in character, but obtains judgements
18 of quality indirectly rather than directly as with the questionnaire-based approach.
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27 Publicly available data regarding the chosen outputs were collected from the REF 2014
28 website (at <http://results.ref.ac.uk/>). For the purposes of this study, submission data of type "D –
29 Journal article" in the "Outputs (REF2)" section of the "36 – Communication, Cultural and Media
30 Studies, Library and Information Management" unit of assessment (or UoA) were used. As its title
31 suggests, the outputs submitted to UoA 36 were not restricted to LIS-related topics, and decisions
32 needed to be made as to which outputs should be included in our analysis, these being based on the
33 journal title, our knowledge of the institutions involved, and the title of the output. This clearly
34 introduces a degree of bias into the process; and a further limitation is that some LIS outputs were
35 undoubtedly submitted to other UoAs (most obviously the UoA "11 – Computer Science and
36 Informatics") and were hence not considered here. Nonetheless, the procedure does provide a way of
37 identifying journals that authors believe to be an appropriate publication mechanism for high-quality
38 LIS research. In all, 16 HEIs were identified as having submitted relevant LIS journal articles as part
39 of the REF 2014, with nine of these offering CILIP-accredited degrees and thus having contributed to
40 the journal-ranking questionnaire described previously.
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50 **Results and discussion**

51 After the elimination of incomplete responses, a total of 30 fully-complete questionnaire responses
52 was obtained for analysis, this corresponding to a response rate of just over 16% with responses
53 received from academics at 13 of the 16 institutions that were contacted. This response rate was lower
54 than that in Manzari's study (27%) and significantly lower than the 53% obtained in the Nisonger and
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3 Davis study upon which Manzari's was based. It was, however, similar to the rates obtained in
4 analogous journal-perceptions studies, e.g., 15% in Schloegl and Stock (2004), 17% in Herron and
5 Hall (2005), 18% in Theoharakis and Skordia (2003), and 16% in Lowe and Locke (2005). Although
6 limited in number, the responses represented a wide range of LIS academics from across the UK, and
7 the responses that were received were comprehensive in character in that ratings were received for
8 each of the 87 journals on the journal list, and each was rated (i.e., given a 1-to-5 score, rather than
9 "not familiar") by at least 11 respondents (with the *Journal of Documentation*, the *Journal of*
10 *Librarianship and Information Science* and the *Journal of the Association for Information Science*
11 *and Technology* (hereafter *JASIST*) all being rated by more than 25 of the respondents).
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20 ***Table 1 about here***

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24 Table 1 presents the principal results from the survey, viz the average rating for each one of
25 the 87 journals. Given the ordinal nature of the data collected (i.e., a 1-5 score) the median is arguably
26 the most appropriate way of averaging the ratings from the individual respondents. However, Table 1
27 lists (and is ordered on the basis of) the arithmetic mean (to two decimal places) of the ratings in each
28 case so as to allow comparison with the Manzari mean values that are listed in the final column of the
29 table (she does not provide median scores). A comparison of the mean and median ratings obtained
30 here using the Spearman rank correlation coefficient gives a value of 0.91, confirming the closeness
31 of the two ways of ranking the data.
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37 Table 1 also contains the number of responses for each journal and the standard deviations
38 associated with each mean value obtained here, the latter demonstrating some degree of variation in
39 the ratings that were provided. This variation is least in evidence towards the bottom portion of the
40 ranking, suggesting that there is a fair degree of unanimity in respondents' perceptions of lower
41 prestige journals. These variations would appear on the surface to be more marked than in the
42 Manzari study, which used a consistency criterion, rather than standard deviations, to assess the
43 spread of ratings for a journal. Assume that a journal is rated X times and that Y of these ratings are
44 adjacent to each other: then the consistency is defined to be $100*Y/X$. For example, the journal
45 *Library Resources and Technical Services* was rated 13 times with all of the scores being either a 1 or
46 a 2, thus achieving a consistency of 100%. Manzari suggested that a value of 50% was required for
47 the results for a particular journal to be regarded as consistent, and found that this criterion was
48 satisfied for 87% of the journals in her study; here, consensus using this criterion was achieved for 84
49 of the 87 journals (96.6%) with only *Library Trends* (at 47.8%), *Journal of Academic Librarianship*
50 and *Library and Information Science Research* (both 47.6%) falling marginally below the threshold.
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3 As noted in the introduction, this study seeks to compare the results for US and UK faculty.
4 There are clear similarities as demonstrated by Figure 1, which is a scatter plot demonstrating the
5 correlation between the US rankings from Table 1 in Manzari's article and the comparable UK
6 rankings from Table 1 here, with the Spearman rank correlation coefficient for this plot being 0.61.
7 That said there are also clear differences. The five top-ranked journals in each case are shown in
8 Table 2, where the figure in brackets is the rank position of a journal in the other ranking, e.g., *JASIST*
9 is ranked first in the USA rankings but third in the UK rankings. Of the eight distinct journals in Table
10 2, there is a substantial difference between the UK and USA rankings only for the *Journal of*
11 *Librarianship and Information Science*. This is understandable when one looks at the source of the
12 articles published in the journal, with almost ten times as many UK authors as USA authors, and at
13 the editorial board, with only two of the 31 representatives listed on the journal's website being from
14 the USA. Other substantial differences in rankings are exemplified in Table 3 with the *International*
15 *Journal of Information Management* and *Program: Electronic Library and Information Systems*
16 differing by more than 50 positions in the two sets of rankings. The latter is similar to *Journal of*
17 *Librarianship and Information Science* in terms of make-up of the board and the source of the
18 published articles; however, the *International Journal of Information Management* has a regional
19 editor for North America and, with the sole exception of the UK, by far the largest number of
20 published articles have authors from the USA, so it might have been expected to have been ranked
21 rather higher than it was in the Manzari survey. As a further example, *Library Resources & Technical*
22 *Services* and *Reference & User Services Quarterly* are both published by divisions of the American
23 Library Association (ALA) and the authors come overwhelmingly from the USA, so it is hardly
24 surprising that they were ranked much higher in the Manzari survey than here.
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Tables 2 and 3, and Figure 1 about here

When asked to suggest journals not included in Table 1, 20 of the respondents suggested an additional 44 publications that they found useful for their research and teaching. Of these, only the *Journal of Information Literacy* (mentioned five times) and *Library and Information Research* and *Library Review* (both mentioned three times) were mentioned more than twice. The remaining 41 make clear the wide range of disciplines of relevance to the respondents: while some of the singleton mentions have an obvious LIS focus (such as *Information, Communication and Society*, *International Journal of Medical Informatics*, and *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*) this is by no means always the case (such as *ACM Journal on Computing and Cultural Heritage*, *Harvard Law Review*, and *Journal of Risk Research*).

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3 It is noteworthy that the 20 respondents to this question suggested so many additional
4 journals, in fact almost exactly one-half the number in Table 1. There are two possible reasons for
5 this. First, the highly multidisciplinary nature of LIS in the UK (as discussed further below in the
6 context of the REF submissions); second, a potential USA bias in the original list of journals. This is
7 evidenced by the fact that a good proportion of the suggested additions, and particularly those
8 suggested more than once, had a UK base or background. Thus, the *Journal of Information Literacy* is
9 the professional journal of the CILIP Information Literacy Group, *Library and Information Research*
10 is published by the Library and Information Research Group of CILIP, *Archives and Records* is the
11 official journal of the Archives and Records Association of the UK and Ireland, and *CILIP Update* is
12 the regular magazine for the CILIP membership. Further, publications based in or focused on other
13 world regions/countries, such as *Archives and Manuscripts* (the journal of the Australian Society of
14 Archivists), *ESARBICA Journal* (the journal of the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of
15 the International Council on Archives) and *TransInformação* (a publication of the Pontifical Catholic
16 University of Campinas in Brazil) were also proposed, supporting the idea of a potential USA
17 orientation in the original list of journals.
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26 When invited to list the five most prestigious journals to be published in for promotion
27 purposes at their institution, 27 respondents listed 37 distinct titles (no fewer than 14 of which were
28 not included in the 87 listed in Table 1). The top five responses were *Journal of Documentation* (21
29 responses), *JASIST* (20), *Journal of Information Science* (17), *Journal of Librarianship and*
30 *Information Science* (12), *Information Research* and *International Journal of Information*
31 *Management* (both 6), with no other journals being mentioned more than five times. In the Manzari
32 survey, 145 respondents listed 100 distinct titles: of these, 46 were absent from Table 1 and the five
33 most mentioned were *JASIST* (126 responses), *Library Quarterly* (76), *Information Processing and*
34 *Management* (53), *Library and Information Science Research* (45), and *Journal of Documentation*
35 (44). A comparison of these two sets of responses supports the data in Table 2 in demonstrating the
36 importance attached on both sides of the Atlantic to *JASIST* and to *Journal of Documentation*.
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43 The differences in the rankings and in the titles suggested by the USA and UK respondents is
44 by no means unexpected. In an early study, Nkereuwem (1997) asked university librarians in Nigeria
45 to rank 26 different LIS journals. The top five were judged to be *Information Technology for*
46 *Development*, *African Journal of Library Archives & Information Science*, *Journal of Information*
47 *Science*, *IFLA Journal* and *International Library Review*, with only two of these (*Journal of*
48 *Information Science* and *International Library Review*, now *International Information and Library*
49 *Review*) occurring in Table 1 and with *JASIST* being ranked as low as nineteenth. These differences
50 are marked, even when allowance is made for the sample comprising academic librarians rather than
51 LIS academics. Similar comments apply to the survey of Australian LIS educators and researchers
52 carried out by Smith and Middleton (2009) as part of the preparations for Australia's Research
53 Quality Framework (a nation-wide, research-quality evaluation process analogous to the UK's REF).
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3 Rather than a ranking, the extended selection process resulted in a total of 134 different journals
4 grouped into four increasingly large categories. The elite, A* category contained nine journals (plus
5 *ARIST*, which has now ceased publication) of which all but *School Library Media Research* appear in
6 Table 1. However, no less than ten of the 19 journals in the second, A category were also absent from
7 this table: *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, *Australian Library Journal*, *Cataloging &*
8 *Classification Quarterly*, *Information, Communication and Society*, *Interlending & Document Supply*,
9 *Journal of Community Informatics*, *Journal of Digital Information*, *Library and Information*
10 *Research*, *New Review of Information and Library Research*, and *School Libraries Worldwide*. While
11 some of these have an obvious national flavour there are other, well-known publications that (at least
12 from a UK perspective) one might have expected to have been included in Manzari's list.
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26 Turning now to the REF2014 data, 105 different journals were identified in the LIS
27 departmental submissions. Table 4 shows those 22 journals that contributed more than two articles to
28 the submissions; in addition, there were 15 journals that contributed twice and no less than 68 (almost
29 two-thirds of the total) singleton contributions. The distribution is hence highly skewed, with *JASIST*
30 and then *Journal of Documentation* being cited at least four times as often as any of the other journals
31 listed here with the sole exception of the *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*. The top-
32 ranked journals here are similar to those in Table 1, with the notable exception of the *Journal of*
33 *Information Science*: this is ranked fourth in Table 1 but, for no obvious reason, was one of the 68
34 singletons in the REF submissions.
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39 Five of the journals in Table 4 had not been mentioned previously by the respondents, either
40 in Table 1 or in response to the request for additional journals that were important for their research
41 and teaching and research. These five were *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, *Knowledge*
42 *Management Research and Practice*, and *Information Technologies and International Development*,
43 *Knowledge and Process Management*, and the *New Review of Information Networking*. In all, 58
44 journals (over one-half of the total number of journals in the REF submissions) had not been
45 mentioned previously, and even a cursory inspection of them will reveal the vast range of subjects
46 studied by LIS academics in the UK and submitted to the REF process as exemplifying high-quality
47 research. The subjects covered here are wide-ranging in scope, covering (as has been noted previously
48 when discussing suggested omissions from Table 1) both topics that are clearly aligned with LIS (in
49 journals such as *Australian Library Journal*, *Education for Information*, *Information Development*,
50 *Journal of Information Policy* and *Journal of Library Metadata*), and topics that might, on first
51 inspection at least, appear to have little or no obvious relationship with the discipline (in journals such
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3 as *BMJ*, *Digital Journalism*, *IEEE Transactions on Affective Computing*, *Pattern Recognition Letters*,
4 and *Studies in Higher Education*). This provides strong support for the view that LIS is highly inter-
5 disciplinary in character, providing significant knowledge exports to a wide range of other subject
6 domains (Cronin & Meho, 2008; Hessey & Willett, 2013).
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9 It may be argued that this usage-based ranking is not necessarily illustrative of the most
10 prestigious journals in LIS for at least two reasons. First, prestige may not be the only reason that
11 academics choose to publish their work in a particular journal: for example, they might choose the
12 title that is most relevant to their particular article, they might have been invited to contribute to a
13 special issue, and they might have published there previously and found that they had been heavily
14 cited, *inter alia*. Second, the methodology might have affected the ranking, in that the larger LIS
15 departments had more articles submitted to the REF, meaning that there was a bias in the results
16 towards those research areas that were most prevalent at those institutions. These limitations
17 notwithstanding, the top of the ranking here shows a marked degree of consensus with that in Table 1,
18 with the first five journals in Table 4 occupying five of the six top positions in Table 1.
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27 **Conclusions**

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29 In this paper, we have discussed the views of 30 UK LIS academics on the standing of journals in the
30 field, taking as the starting point an analogous survey carried out in the USA (Manzari, 2013). The
31 small sample size is less than one would have hoped for given the importance of the topic to the target
32 population and means that the conclusions that can be drawn are less robust than one would wish.
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35 Bearing this limitation in mind, the study is in agreement with that of Manzari in highlighting
36 the prominence of *JASIST* and of the *Journal of Documentation*, but otherwise reveals differences,
37 some of which are very substantial, in the perceived standings of the other journals that were rated in
38 the two studies. When asked to suggest journals additional to those in Table 1, the UK respondents
39 identified a further 44 that were relevant to their teaching and/or research. Many of the journals that
40 were suggested had a UK, or at least a non-USA, focus, suggesting that perceptions of the importance
41 of journals can vary in different parts of the world and that there is unlikely to be a single ranking that
42 is of universal relevance; similar conclusions can be drawn from the ranking of LIS journals that was
43 developed for the Australian Research Quality Framework (Smith and Middleton, 2009). Considering
44 not just the suggested additional journals but also the REF submissions, a further conclusion is that
45 LIS research in the UK is wide-ranging in scope, and certainly much broader than if the discipline is
46 defined by traditional LIS journals.
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55 **Acknowledgements**

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Journal	Median	Mean	SD	Number of Responses	Mean (Manzari)
<i>Journal of Documentation</i>	5	4.11	1.45	27	3.12
<i>Journal of Librarianship and Information Science</i>	4	3.82	1.31	28	1.27
<i>Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology</i>	4.5	3.77	1.58	26	4.04
<i>Journal of Information Science</i>	4	3.75	1.36	24	1.92
<i>Information Research</i>	4	3.40	1.35	25	2.29
<i>Aslib Journal of Information Management</i>	3	3.24	1.05	25	1.67
<i>International Journal of Information Management</i>	3	3.05	1.18	19	0.74
<i>Library and Information Science Research</i>	3	3.05	1.50	21	2.93
<i>Library Trends</i>	3	2.87	1.42	23	3.11
<i>Journal of Academic Librarianship</i>	3	2.86	1.42	21	2.36
<i>D-Lib Magazine</i>	3	2.72	1.41	18	2.41
<i>Government Information Quarterly</i>	2.5	2.71	1.59	14	1.41
<i>Health Information and Libraries Journal</i>	3	2.70	1.38	20	0.84
<i>First Monday</i>	3	2.65	1.18	20	2.45
<i>Library Quarterly</i>	2.5	2.55	1.36	20	3.45
<i>Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication</i>	2	2.50	1.62	12	1.24
<i>Journal of Information Ethics</i>	3	2.46	1.20	13	1.41
<i>Information Processing and Management</i>	2.5	2.44	1.46	18	2.76
<i>Online Information Review</i>	2	2.44	1.34	18	1.25
<i>Information Society</i>	2.5	2.44	1.26	16	1.50
<i>Internet Research</i>	2.5	2.44	1.26	16	1.15
<i>College and Research Libraries</i>	2	2.43	1.25	21	2.68
<i>Information and Management</i>	2	2.43	1.16	14	1.34
<i>Journal of Education for Library and Information Science</i>	2.5	2.39	1.20	18	2.71
<i>Public Libraries</i>	2	2.38	1.45	13	1.67
<i>Library and Information Science</i>	2	2.38	0.96	16	1.20
<i>Program: Electronic Library and Information Systems</i>	2	2.38	1.20	16	0.50
<i>Library Journal</i>	2	2.30	1.30	20	2.13
<i>Libri</i>	2	2.26	1.28	19	1.80

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5	<i>Electronic Library</i>	2	2.24	1.15	17	1.11
6	<i>Journal of Information Technology</i>	2	2.24	1.25	17	1.08
7	<i>portal: Libraries and the Academy</i>	1	2.20	1.42	15	1.37
8	<i>MIS Quarterly</i>	1.5	2.13	1.45	16	1.31
9	<i>Journal of Informetrics</i>	1.5	2.07	1.38	14	1.09
10	<i>School Library Journal</i>	1.5	2.07	1.38	14	1.55
11	<i>Information Technology and Libraries</i>	2	2.06	1.00	16	1.61
12	<i>Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science</i>	2	2.00	1.18	14	1.90
13	<i>International Information and Library Review</i>	2	2.00	1.08	18	0.90
14	<i>Journal of Health Communication</i>	1.5	2.00	1.24	14	0.71
15	<i>Knowledge Organization</i>	1.5	2.00	1.21	16	1.63
16	<i>Journal of the Association for Information Systems</i>	1	2.00	1.58	13	0.79
17	<i>Library Hi Tech</i>	2	1.95	0.89	20	1.77
18	<i>Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association</i>	1	1.93	1.38	14	1.21
19	<i>School Library Research</i>	1	1.91	1.45	11	1.62
20	<i>Collection Management</i>	2	1.88	1.02	16	1.38
21	<i>Journal of Library Administration</i>	2	1.87	0.99	15	1.46
22	<i>Information and Culture</i>	2	1.86	0.95	14	1.84
23	<i>Journal of Scholarly Publishing</i>	1	1.86	1.35	14	0.94
24	<i>Journal of the Medical Library Association</i>	1	1.86	1.35	14	1.27
25	<i>Libres</i>	1	1.85	1.28	13	1.19
26	<i>International Journal of Legal Information</i>	1	1.83	1.27	12	0.37
27	<i>Online Searcher</i>	1	1.83	1.27	12	1.14
28	<i>American Archivist</i>	1	1.80	1.42	15	1.44
29	<i>American Libraries</i>	1	1.80	1.26	15	1.91
30	<i>Educause Review</i>	1	1.79	1.19	14	1.45
31	<i>Archivaria</i>	1	1.77	1.48	13	1.01
32	<i>Learned Publishing</i>	1	1.77	1.24	13	0.73
33	<i>Scientometrics</i>	1	1.76	1.15	17	1.13
34	<i>Cataloging and Classification Quarterly</i>	1	1.74	1.15	19	1.78
35	<i>Archival Science</i>	1	1.73	1.53	15	0.99
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5	<i>Information Retrieval Journal</i>	1	1.73	1.28	15	1.36
6	<i>Social Science Computer Review</i>	1	1.69	1.03	13	0.53
7	<i>Telecommunications Policy</i>	1	1.67	1.07	12	0.63
8	<i>Reference Services Review</i>	1	1.63	1.26	16	1.40
9	<i>International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning</i>	1	1.62	1.19	13	0.80
10	<i>Journal of Management Information Systems</i>	1	1.62	1.04	13	0.92
11	<i>Information Systems Journal</i>	1	1.60	0.91	15	0.75
12	<i>Information Systems Research</i>	1	1.57	0.76	14	0.85
13	<i>Reference and User Services Quarterly</i>	1	1.56	0.98	18	2.22
14	<i>Information Systems</i>	1	1.53	0.92	15	0.79
15	<i>Information Outlook</i>	1	1.50	1.00	12	1.22
16	<i>Information Wissenschaft and Praxis</i>	1	1.50	1.00	12	0.32
17	<i>Law Library Journal</i>	1	1.50	0.80	12	0.82
18	<i>Serials Librarian</i>	1	1.50	0.90	12	1.19
19	<i>Social Science Information</i>	1	1.42	0.67	12	0.61
20	<i>Harvard Library Bulletin</i>	1	1.38	0.77	13	0.70
21	<i>International Journal of Geographical Information Science</i>	1	1.38	0.77	13	0.48
22	<i>EContent</i>	1	1.36	0.81	11	0.60
23	<i>Preservation, Digital Technology and Culture</i>	1	1.36	0.92	11	0.37
24	<i>Library Collections, Acquisitions and Technical Services</i>	1	1.29	0.47	14	1.26
25	<i>Restaurator</i>	1	1.27	0.90	11	0.41
26	<i>Scientist</i>	1	1.27	0.90	11	0.70
27	<i>Zeitschrift für Bibliothekswesen und Bibliographie</i>	1	1.27	0.90	11	0.34
28	<i>Cybermetrics</i>	1	1.25	0.62	12	0.73
29	<i>Interlending and Document Supply</i>	1	1.25	0.45	16	0.48
30	<i>Serials Review</i>	1	1.23	0.60	13	0.97
31	<i>Library Resources and Technical Services</i>	1	1.15	0.38	13	1.87
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Table 1. Average ratings (median, mean and standard deviation, number of responses and mean in the Manzari study) for 87 LIS journals

Rank	UK	USA
1	<i>Journal of Documentation</i> (3)	<i>JASIST</i> (3)
2	<i>Journal of Librarianship and Information Science</i> (39)	<i>Library Quarterly</i> (14)
3	<i>JASIST</i> (1)	<i>Journal of Documentation</i> (1)
4	<i>Journal of Information Science</i> (15)	<i>Library Trends</i> (8)
5	<i>Information Research</i> (12)	<i>Library & Information Science Research</i> (7)

Table 2. UK and USA equivalent rank positions

Journal	UK rank	USA rank
<i>Health Information and Libraries Journal</i>	12	60
<i>International Information and Library Review</i>	28	58
<i>International Journal of Information Management</i>	7	65
<i>International Journal of Legal Information</i>	36	76
<i>Internet Research</i>	17	47
<i>Journal of Health Communication</i>	28	67
<i>Journal of Librarianship and Information Science</i>	2	39
<i>Library Resources and Technical Services</i>	59	18
<i>Program: Electronic Library and Information Systems</i>	20	73
<i>Reference and User Services Quarterly</i>	49	13

Table 3. Journals appearing at substantially different positions in the UK and USA rankings

Journal	Outputs
<i>JASIST</i>	39
<i>Journal of Documentation</i>	29
<i>Journal of Librarianship and Information Science</i>	11
<i>Aslib Journal of Information Management</i>	7
<i>Information Research</i>	7
<i>Libri</i>	7
<i>Health Information and Libraries Journal</i>	6
<i>Digital Scholarship in the Humanities</i>	5
<i>Information Processing and Management</i>	5
<i>International Journal of Information Management</i>	5
<i>Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling</i>	5
<i>Library and Information History</i>	5
<i>Performance Measurement and Metrics</i>	5
<i>Knowledge Management Research and Practice</i>	4
<i>Library and Information Research</i>	4
<i>Library Management</i>	4
<i>Records Management Journal</i>	4
<i>Archival Science</i>	3
<i>Information Technologies and International Development</i>	3
<i>Journal of Informetrics</i>	3
<i>Knowledge and Process Management</i>	3
<i>New Review of Information Networking</i>	3

Table 4. Journals identified at least three times in LIS journal-article submissions to REF UoA 36

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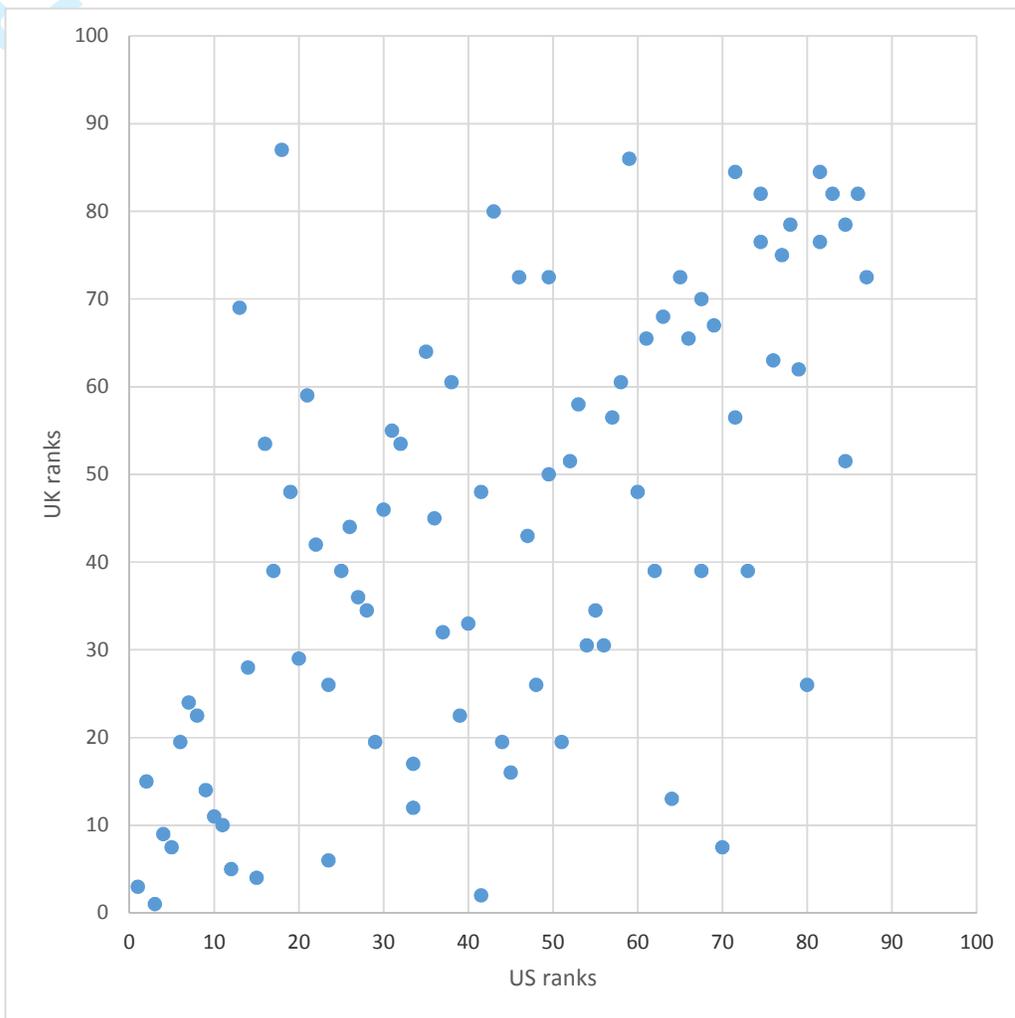


Figure 1. Scatter-plot showing the relationship between rankings for the current UK-based study and for Manzari's US-based study

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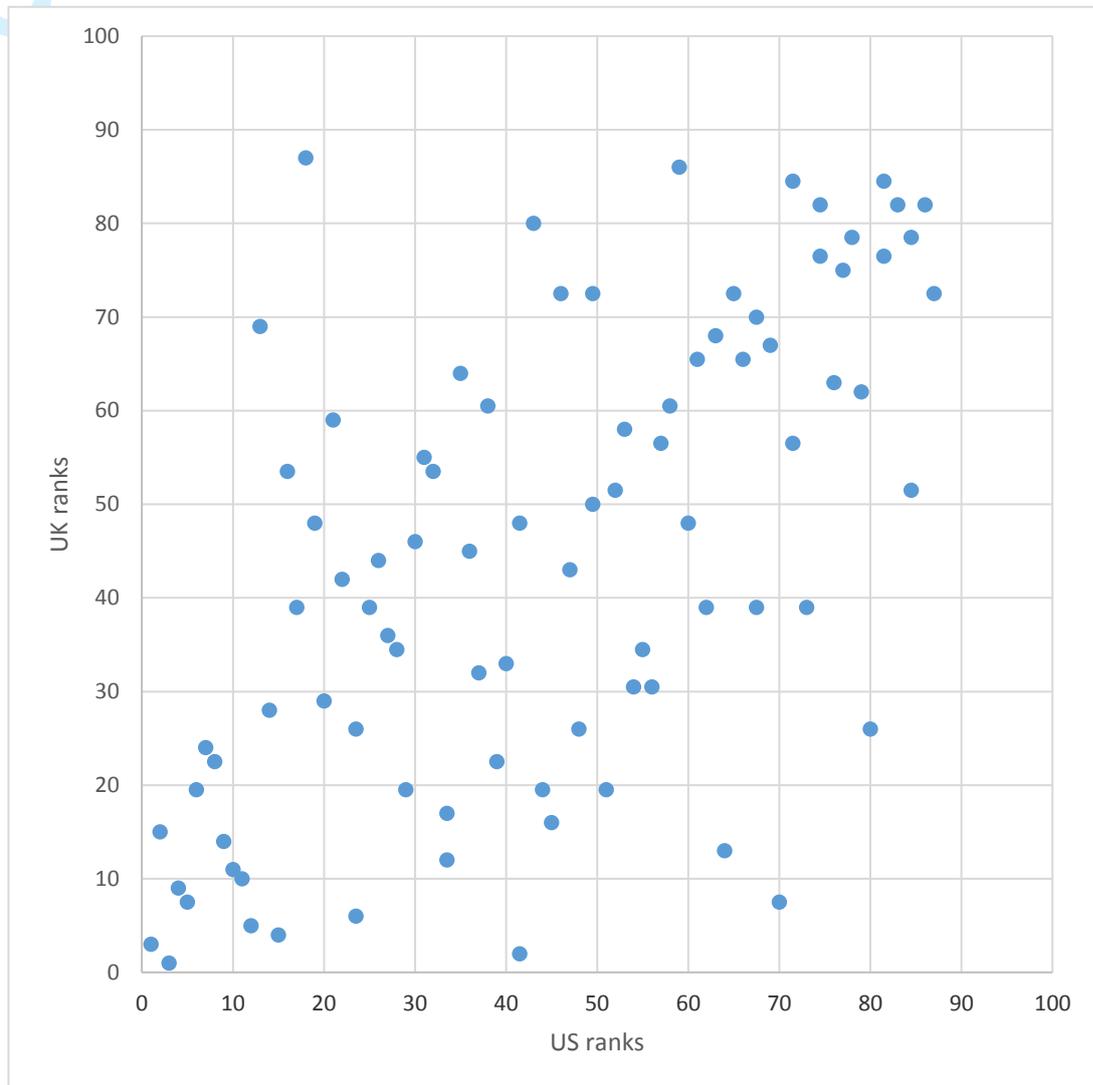


Figure 1. Scatter-plot showing the relationship between rankings for the current UK-based study and for Manzari's US-based study

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