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A survey of users' perspectives and preferences as to the value of JISIB - a spot-check

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ABSTRACT: The Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business (JISIB) has performed a survey, or done a spot-check, to learn more about its users at the end of three years of publications. Users were found via the journal's site on LinkedIn and a web-survey was sent from there as an announcement. 18 respondents answered completely. This was only 3,2% of the total member group, but we still think we can draw a number of conclusion from it, also as compared to feedback gathered during the years. Users are looking for more case study material in the articles. There is an even balance between those who think there is too much technical material and too little. The discussion about what languages to publish articles in is likely to continue. It is not given that this should be exclusively English in the future. At the same time publishing non-English articles present a number of challenges.

KEYWORDS: The Journal of intelligence Studies in Business, JISIB, Spot-check, annual report

1.0 Introduction

The Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business (JISIB) has now existed for three years. During that time it has been accepted to EBSCO and SCOPUS. As journal is opens source it is also

available over DOAJ. As its platform it uses the software system Open Journal System (OJS).

The content and format of the journal was much decided based on previous experience with other similar journals. The process to start up the journal took about two years. During that time the

failure with the previous journal was much discussed and a consensus was formed around the possibilities to form a new journal. The most important venues for these discussions were Competitive Intelligence (CI) conferences. Users' preferences and perspectives were not considered simply because there were none. To find out what users think a survey was conducted. By "users" we refer to a large group then "readers" even though the latter is a more common term for these surveys. Many contributors are not necessarily ardent readers of the journal. Consultants likewise, may just check out a model in an article. Some companies may be interested in the journal more for publicity, etc. Similar articles are also often referred to as "Reader Spotchecks" or "report to readers".

2.0 Theory and Method

There cannot be said to be much relevant theory for this field, as it is highly applied. JISIB has previously published an article about a review of two previous CI journals (Solberg Søylen, K., 2013), but that was by no means an analysis of users or readers. Other papers have found that readers want more material that is interesting for practitioners, but also more case studies, for example Fairlie, R., & Holder, D. (2010). Some journals operate with a kind of annual report to readers where surveys are a part, for example Sullivan, R. N. (2014). There are many potential dimensions which can be surveyed. Anonymous. (2003) lists high marks for "article length," "career applicability," and "timeliness of topics."

The survey went out by email to 569 members of the JISIB group on LinkedIn. After 1 week 18 users had responded with complete answers to the Survey table. That is a 3,2% response rate. This is a low rate, also considering that the users were well targeted, as all were members of the JISIB site on LinkedIn, and the questions to be answered were

few. The Introduction letter asked for 5 minutes time from the users.

The first four questions were about the value of JISIB. Answers were given by Likert scale of five grades. The second question was about what topics users would like to see in the journal. The third question was about how to improve the quality (not popularity) of the journal. The last question was about the role the user could imagine playing for the journal, for example to be an author, reviewer or to get involved during conferences.

3.0 Results and Discussion

The average score for "the value of the SIIB journal to me" was 3,78 which means that most users think that the journal has value to them. The Average score for the value of the journal for the development of intelligence studies was even higher, 4,22. This was the highest score for the survey. For the moment there are two other journals which focus specifically on intelligence in business; both are open source. There are also journals on intelligence studies in the political field and of course in the military domain. We do not know if the users are familiar with these or if they thought that the question was only for business related journals. The lowest score was given to the question if the journal was of value to their company/organization, with average of 3,28. Even though this was the lowest score it was still positive/above neutral (=3). The second highest score was related to whether or not JISIB publishes good science. The average here was 3,89. It is clear that questions 2 and 4 assume the respondents know what good science is. From question 4 we could see that most users were in fact academics and researchers themselves (the survey was anonymous, but here users could write their contact info if they wanted to and many did). Many have also contributed directly to the journal.

Table 1: Answers on value of JISIB

1. Answer on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

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#	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	JISIB is a valuable journal for me	1	1	4	7	5	18	3.78
2	JISIB is a valuable journal for the development of Intelligence Studies	0	1	2	7	8	18	4.22
3	JISIB is a valuable journal for my company/organization	0	2	9	7	0	18	3.28
4	JISIB publish good science	0	1	5	7	5	18	3.89

Statistic	JISIB is a valuable journal for me	JISIB is a valuable journal for the development of Intelligence Studies	JISIB is a valuable journal for my company/organization	JISIB publish good science
Min Value	1	2	2	2
Max Value	5	5	4	5
Mean	3.78	4.22	3.28	3.89
Variance	1.24	0.77	0.45	0.81
Standard Deviation	1.11	0.88	0.67	0.90
Total Responses	18	18	18	18

The second question was about what topics users would like to see published in the journal. The information given here was very useful and again showed that the users who answered were in many cases at least experts; working with/in intelligence related areas. One response was given two times, which indicated it was same person. The most common request was to publish more case studies. Secondly it is not clear whether or not users want to see IT related material in the journal, as has been the tendency so far. One user says he is against it, while another user wants to see more on big data. Other suggestions include: articles on competitive strategy, more related to developing countries, more critical studies (Critical theory) and more articles related to innovation. All of these topics have

indeed been covered in the journal. We have also published case studies, including in this issue. One conclusion could be to try to find even more case studies. This has also been requested by CI consultants. There is one problem with critical theory and case studies from a scientific perspective and that is that it tends to become more difficult to be acknowledged as a scientific. In most ratings and evaluations scientific implies a dominance of empirical articles. We have solved this question by dividing the articles into articles and "opinions". In some recent issues the number of "opinion" articles has been rather large. This may be a difficult trade off, as many readers want "opinions" and evaluators/peers want science/empirical material.

Table 2: User preferences as to JISIB content

2. What topics would you like to see published in JISIB? (List them with commas)

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Text Response	
View	More non-IT and software related articles and studies. I would also like to see more case studies or views from practitioners.
View	more about competitive strategy. More case studies.
View	more case studies, but I know how hard they are to come by.
View	Continue as is, include big data topics.
View	Competitive intelligence in developing countries
View	Critical studies on intelligence, cultural studies on intelligence, a special issue on how intelligence connect to different scientific traditions (business, technology, philosophy etc.)
View	Innovation management; Triple & quadruple helix case studies; Open Information Systems, Patent contribution in innovation and competitive intelligence
View	Innovation management; Triple & quadruple helix case studies; Open Information Systems, Patent contribution in innovation and competitive intelligence
View	The journal does not achieve its potential there's too much passive endorsement/agreement and not enough stimulating debate.
View	Intuition based Competitive Intelligence

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	10

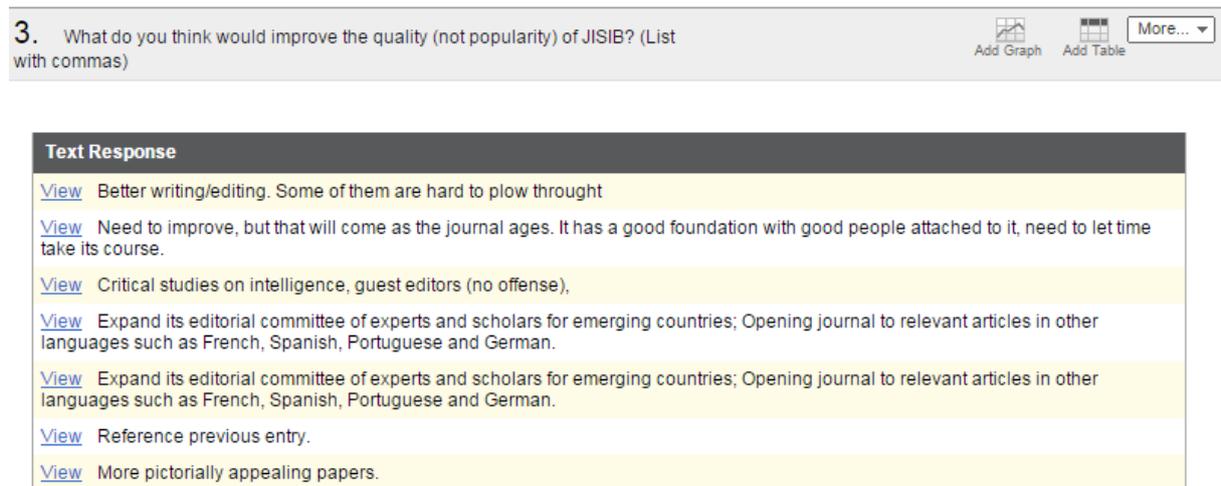
The third question was about quality improvement. It is implicit here that a comparison between the answers of question two and three is interesting as it shows if suggested improvements for better quality is the same as the material users want to see more of in the journal.

We see that for most part this is not the case. Instead there is a list of specific suggestions directly related to quality. The first point is the editing and implicitly the grammar and syntax. This has been a major issue for the journal. If we should reject articles which are not written in proper English we would have to disregard a large amount. This would also have the effect that most articles would be from authors from Anglo Saxon countries. To a certain extent we have tried to help some authors, but this has also been difficult due to time restraints. We will continue to make efforts to improve this part. Another user suggests the invitation of guest editors. This is absolutely a possibility and the same person got an invitation directly, as he has also published with us before and have been active in the community for many years.

The next suggestion is to expand the editorial committee. It is quite possible that this can be done,

and we will look into it, but at the same time, few journals have a more diverse editorial committee. In addition JISIB has an active co-editor on each continent. Committee members are evaluated every second year based on their net contribution. New members will then have the possibility to enter and contribute. It is probably only healthy for the wellbeing of the journal with a certain turnover here. Another suggestion is to allow for more articles in more languages. At the start of JISIB there was some talk of having a bilingual journal, French and English. It is still an open question. At the same time the language of science tends to be English, even though there are a growing number of articles in other languages, first of all Chinese. If we play with the idea of having articles in several other languages it is a question how many of our users would in fact be able to read the articles. One user also wants us to use more appealing images in the articles. This is possible, but normally not associated with scientific articles. It also takes many resources, which we do not have. There are some good exceptions to, like the journals "Science" and "Nature", but these stand in a class by themselves.

Table 3: User perceptions about quality improvements of JISIB



Statistic	Value
Total Responses	7

The last question was more an open invitation to get users more involved with the journal. When the journal started it was clear that it was only going to be possible if a large number of people volunteered with their own free time. This is still the building block for the journal five years down the road. As the survey was anonymous we could not see who sent in the different answers. We used the web service Qualtrics to gather the actual data, and it shows the approximate GPS coordinate for the IP number only. I personally consider this information not to be acceptable, but did not know about the

function before afterwards, as I have used other services before. Still it was not possible for us to see who the respondents were. However, in question four the respondents could disclose who he was, and many did. Their information is not presented in the table below, which is then more of a figure.

Many users showed here that they are already active, writing articles, being reviewer and participating at conferences. Some users also volunteered to do work (write, review and even edit) which is a great thing for the journal.

Figure 1: What role users would like to fill in JISIB



Statistic	Value
Total Responses	9

4.0 Conclusion

To keep the conclusion short users think the overall value of the journal is high, but they are looking for more case study material in the articles. There is an even balance between those who think there is too much technical material and too little. One conclusion that is not suggested by any one user,

but which could be explored is to invite guest-editors to publish a whole issue in their own

language. There could be a special french issue, as many contributions continue to come from France and a Spanish special issue, as we have several contributions from Mexico and Spain. It could also

be imagined that we do a Portuguese issue, to accompany the interest in Portugal and Brazil.

It can be a good idea to do a users survey every three years or so, also to see how the journal changes and to see to what extent it is following recommendations by users.

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