

Stories



Is There a South-North Knowledge Gap?

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This in-depth study aims to provide focus on scientific journals based in the Global South. The limits and challenges of doing science in any Global South area are widely understood, especially among Global South researchers. Even with such circumstances, a larger dimension of the impact of research generated by and from the Global South must be recognised (Cortes, 2022).

This study sheds light on 7 peer-reviewed and open access Journals based in a Global South country (World Bank Classification¹) in all the continents; the selection criteria were:

- Digital;
- Open Access;
- Affiliation;
- Geographical area of main research focus in the Global South;
- Impact score.

The research was not based on comparing the selected Journals with the characteristics of the leading journals published in developed countries; on the opposite, the

study intends to highlight and compare the research features among the presented case studies to avoid comparison between countries of different income and educational levels, as indicated by recent development cooperation theories (Mitchell, 2021).

Many factors could be observed and analysed when developing a comparison based on data sets; in this focus, the research has considered the composition of Editorial and Scientific Boards in these publication venues as the leading factor in the analysis. The results show a lack of scientific intertwining of researchers between the Global South and Global North, but the two spheres remain interconnected. Using this indicator, the study highlights a quantitative and qualitative approach (shown in the density map) per each Journal that is representative of a status quo of non-contamination between the South and the North, where the North is less involved in the scientific research and impact conducted by the Global South. The

investigation is aware that the involvement of the Global North cannot be measured only based on the inclusion in Editorial or Scientific Boards. However, the institutional appearance on a Board can be considered a crucial factor among others; as evidenced by *PAD (Pages on Art and Design)* Journal, which is based in Italy and focuses on the Mediterranean area, its composition is the most “intertwined” of the case studies. Most of them are not indexed and do not have an impact score, which indicates that their scientific advancement levels cannot challenge the status quo or privilege knowledge generated primarily in the Global North. This limit has a significant impact on access to funding which perpetuates the problem.

The density map indicates all the countries where the researchers of the Editorial and Scientific Boards are affiliated; in most cases, the Board is predominately composed of researchers from the same country (or University) where the Journal is based.



Fig. 1
The density map shows the geographical composition of the Editorial and Scientific Boards in the analysed case studies (based on the affiliation of the researchers).
Credits: Lorela Mehmeti

AFRICA

A Africa Design Review Journal	
Affiliation	Department of Art and Design, University of Nairobi, Kenya
Funding date	2019
Open Access	Yes
Impact score	N/D
North-South composition in the Board	100% South

The Journal publishes research results on contemporary East African art and design issues with a broad-based outlook. Articles tackle problems as diverse as multimedia, fashion, Afrofuturism, furniture and Matwana culture. The Journal invites the readers to reflect on the evolution of African visual design in the digital world. Under these three themes, namely visual reality, the future and the power to influence, the editors highlight the need to anchor African art and design on a solid cultural grounding and repository, mainly because African collaboration is critical for the growth of the arts, design, and creative sectors. It focuses on how African art and design are evolving in the digital era to accommodate new realities and technologies.



B Ellipses	
Affiliation	Wits School of Arts, Johannesburg, South Africa
Funding date	2015
Open Access	Yes
Impact score	N/D
North-South composition in the Board	70% South - 30% North

Ellipses was collectively founded as a multi/cross-disciplinary, digital and interactive Journal for creative research by collectively responsive to the urgent political demand for the decolonisation of knowledge. Ellipses' direction asks questions from an explicitly Global South perspective, rooted in the local, open to the diasporic and informed by a range of practices, processes and tactics that deviate from conventional, analytical and colonial modes of knowledge production. It is a collaborative platform, drawing editors and contributors into creative dialogue with digital arts practitioners and encouraging interactive and digitally published scholarship that extends beyond the rarefied space of the academy. It supports a growing community of scholars, artists, curators, creative practitioners and collectives, thinking and working in and from the Global South.





Fig. 1

ASIA

C Asia Design Journal	
Affiliation	Seoul National University, Korea
Funding date	2004
Open Access	Yes
Impact score	N/D
North-South composition in the Board	62% South - 38% North

Promoted by the Korean Design Research Institute (KDRI), Asia Design Journal aims to find and create concepts and trends in Asian values and culture every year. It hopes to explore new Asian ideas each year through papers on multi-interdisciplinary topics, including culture, social science, literature, engineering, management, liberal arts and design, which deal with Asian culture and design. KDRI strives to make the Journal more helpful to the readers and become the centre of healthy debate on innovation.

ASIA
DESIGN
JOURNAL

D Central Asian Journal of Arts and Design	
Affiliation	Central Asian Studies (CAS)
Funding date	2020
Open Access	Yes
Impact score	N/D
North-South composition in the Board	77% South - 23% North

CAJAD provides an international forum for research in art and design education in Central Asian Studies. It is a source for disseminating independently refereed articles about the visual arts, creativity, crafts, design, and art history, in all aspects, phases, and types of educational contexts and learning situations in the region. The Journal welcomes articles from a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches to research. It also welcomes multidisciplinary submissions from the broader fields of education and the arts concerned with learning through art and creative education.

CENTRAL ASIAN JOURNAL OF ARTS AND DESIGN

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

E Pages on Art and Design	
Affiliation	University of Palermo, Italy
Funding date	2005
Open Access	Yes
Impact score	N/D
North-South composition in the Board	65% North – 35% South

PAD publishes research findings from researchers and professionals across different countries and cultures of the Mediterranean areas and encourages research on the impact of cultural factors on design theory and practice. Critical, review and comparative studies are particularly prominent, as are contributions that draw upon other literature, such as those derived from historical, philosophical, sociological or psychological studies of technology or design, to address issues of technology concern. PAD aims to promote knowledge transfer between professionals in academia and industry in the southern areas of the Mediterranean area.



PAGES ON
ARTS AND DESIGN

F South European Journal of Architecture and Design	
Affiliation	University American College Skopje, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia
Funding date	2015
Open Access	Yes
Impact score	N/D
North-South composition in the Board	95% South – 5% North

SEEJAD promotes a wide range of research areas in architecture and design in the Eastern European region. The journal promotes the advancement of empirical and theoretical research papers through interdisciplinarity in the related fields of architecture and design, providing a link between theory and practice for researchers and practising professionals.

SOUTH AMERICA

G Strategic Design Research Journal	
Affiliation	University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos, Brazil
Funding date	2019
Open Access	Yes
Impact score	0,44
North-South composition in the Board	97% South – 3% North

SDRJ focuses on the design potentials for the elaboration of strategies and the search for innovation related to any kind of organisation, educational institution, cooperative, association or movement. It considers the strategic contribution of design in all the fields of its practice, such as product and service development, communication, fashion, social and cultural innovation, or technology. SDRJ is a cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary forum for academic discussion, debate and criticism; it focuses on the dialogue between academia and creative industries. Their approach to internationalisation has always been inclusive since they accept articles written in Portuguese, English, Spanish, Italian and French; the aim is to strengthen the Latin Network for the Development of Design Processes.



References

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Lorela Mehmeti

Her current work focuses on the analysis of scientific production and critical analyses of design cultures. During her professional experience as a researcher, she specialized in migration issues, the social inclusion of marginalized groups and minorities, and co-participation strategies. These activities have paved her way towards the analysis of project design and new co-design methodologies for strategic inclusion, through culture and creativity as tools for increasing community resilience.

Sitography

Africa Design Review Journal



Ellipses



Asia Design Journal



Central Asian Journal of Arts and Design



Pages on Art and Design



South European Journal of Architecture and Design



Strategic Design Research Journal

