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ARTICLE

Eastern European Journals in the Scopus Communication Category

Visibility, Performance, and Editorial Boards

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The present paper outlines a comprehensive quantitative analysis of Eastern European communication journals indexed on Scopus, a largely overlooked area of global research. Drawing on Scopus, SciVal, SCImagoJR, and manual editorial board data, we assess 36 journals over the past decade, focusing on performance, visibility, internationalisation, authorship patterns, and editorial composition. Results show modest growth in indexed journals, though most remain in the lower quartiles. Journals with a higher level of international and collaborative authorship tend to have a greater impact. A small cohort of prolific authors dominates output, often with low citation impact; some of these authors also sit on the editorial boards of their preferred journals, raising ethical concerns. Our editorial analysis reveals that journals with internationally diverse boards publish more globally and rank higher. The findings also highlight both progress and persistent structural challenges in integrating EEC journals into global scholarly networks.

Keywords: Eastern Europe, communication journals, internationalisation, academic knowledge production, scientometrics

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Introduction

The field of communication research has historically been shaped by uneven global development, with marked imbalances in visibility, impact, and integration between scholars and journals from different world regions. Eastern European countries, shaped by decades of political isolation, economic upheaval, and linguistic barriers, have traditionally occupied a peripheral position in the global knowledge system (Demeter, 2018c). Despite increasing scholarly output since the political transformations of the 1990s, communication journals based in Central and Eastern Europe continue to face significant challenges in gaining international visibility, attracting citation, and achieving integration into major academic networks.

The dynamics of academic publishing are deeply tied to systemic factors such as access to global indexing databases, patterns of international collaboration, language policies, and the composition of editorial boards (Goyanes & Demeter, 2020; Lauf, 2005). Within this system, a small number of highly prestigious, Western-based journals dominate citation networks and influence academic epistemologies worldwide, whereas peripheral journals – often those published in non-Anglophone countries – struggle for recognition (Demeter, 2017; Lendvai, 2025; Erfanmanesh et al., 2017). Recent studies have pointed to modest but meaningful improvements among certain Eastern European communication journals in terms of internationalisation and performance metrics (Demeter et al., 2023; Kohus et al., 2022), yet the extent and durability of those gains remain unclear. That is, while there has been growing bibliometric interest in the visibility of peripheral scholarly communities (e.g. Teodorescu & Andrei, 2011; Sasvári & Lendvai, 2024), focused analyses of Eastern European communication journals are still limited.

This study addresses this gap by examining four interrelated research questions. First, it investigates what the performance trends of Eastern European communication (EEC) journals have been over the past decade. Second, it explores publication trends, visibility metrics, and internationalisation patterns within these journals. Third, it identifies the most prolific authors, and the most cited articles published in EEC journals. Finally, it analyses the characteristics and international diversity of EEC journals' editorial boards.

Before outlining the research agenda, we find it important to clarify at the outset that this study does not assume a rigid or essentialist definition of "communication journals". We follow the established scientometric practice (i.e. operationalisation of classification categories) to identify disciplinary categories in the field of communication based on Scopus and SCImago Journal Rank subject classifications and analyse journals that are indexed under the Communication category therein. We must underline, however, that many journals in this category are inherently multidisciplinary, often spanning linguistics, media studies, cultural studies, education, psychology, or information science. Therefore, rather than treating this hybridity as a methodological limitation, we approach it as an empirical characteristic of communication scholarship in Eastern Europe, where disciplinary boundaries are historically fluid and shaped by local institutional trajectories, and we also propose that this approach is consistent with a long-standing tradition in scientometric research that relies on database-assigned subject categories as reproducible and transparent units of analysis.

Literature review

In modern science, the "publish or perish" paradigm steadfastly persists (Erren et al., 2016). Globally, professional success, crucial for tenure and hiring decisions, hinges significantly on publications in esteemed peer-reviewed journals (Zdeněk, 2018). Consequently, high-quality journals wield substantial international influence, with journal editors and reviewers often acting as gatekeepers (Demeter, 2020a). These gatekeepers face the challenge of maintaining scientific reputation and visibility, with inclusion in prestigious international databases such as Web of Science (WoS), Scopus, PubMed, or Medline being a primary goal to enhance a journal's impact and citation rate (Astaneh & Masoumi, 2018). Consequently, there is intense competition in scientific research for visibility, with publishers and editors striving for high-impact factor journals while authors worldwide compete for publication in these esteemed outlets. Disparities, however, also exist due to non-academic factors such as economy, politics, geography, and cultural differences, leading to a division between successful countries with prominent publications and countries lacking visibility (Zanotto et al., 2016). This also means that, even if authors from developing nations manage to publish in leading journals, they often receive fewer citations compared to counterparts from developed nations (Bonitz et al., 1997). Current research suggests that for authors from developing countries to gain international recognition, they must either migrate to a more developed nation or collaborate with authors from one (Fernández et al., 2016; Schmoch & Schubert, 2008; Teodorescu & Andrei, 2011).

Performance and visibility trends of EEC journals

Eastern European communication scholarship has historically occupied a peripheral position in the global academic landscape. Decades of political and economic isolation under communist regimes delayed the institutionalisation and international integration of media and communication research in Central and Eastern Europe. Consequently, the visibility and impact of Eastern European communication journals have lagged behind those of Western Europe and North America. Demeter (2018b) estimates that at least 150 communication journals in Eastern Europe publish mostly in local languages, rendering roughly 95% of the region's scholarly output "invisible" to the international scientific community. Most of these journals were (and many still are) absent from major indexing databases (Web of Science, Scopus), which severely limits their global readership and citation counts (Demeter, 2020b). This marginalisation has led scholars to characterise EEC academia as part of the *"Global South"* or *semi-periphery* of knowledge production (Demeter et al., 2023).

Despite these challenges, recent evidence suggests a positive trajectory in international collaboration and diversity. Co-authorship networks involving EEC scholars have expanded geographically over the past two decades, indicating a "growing level of internationalization" (Demeter et al., 2023). While collaboration within the region remains relatively weak, Eastern European media scholars are increasingly partnering with Western European and other international colleagues, a development that has contributed to the gradual international visibility of EEC research. At the journal level, this shift is increasingly supported by targeted

strategies, including the recruitment of Western scholars as authors or special-issue guest editors in an effort to approximate the content and standards of high-prestige outlets (Tóth, 2018). As previous research suggests, where such internationalisation efforts extend beyond symbolic inclusion, journals tend to demonstrate improved citation metrics and stronger integration into global scholarly communication (Kulczycki et al., 2019).

One clear pattern is that internationalisation is tightly linked to performance gains. Journals that internationalise their content tend to see better metrics. Data indicates that EEC journals able to attract Western (especially U.S.) authors achieve higher ranks in Scopus, whereas those publishing mainly local authors remain lower-ranked (Tóth, 2018). In other words, *international orientation* correlates with performance: increased diversity in authorship and topics can elevate a journal's citation impact and indexing status. By contrast, journals serving primarily national audiences with local-language content continue to have limited citation impact outside their home country. In sum, the performance trends of EEC journals are characterised by slow progress – a few journals have gained international footholds and improved metrics, but most still face challenges of low visibility, limited citations, and modest impact factors on the global stage (Demeter et al., 2023; Tóth, 2018).

Given this context, an examination of the performance trends of Eastern European communication journals is warranted. We thus formulated the following research question:

RQ1: What are the performance trends of EEC journals?

Internationalisation and publication trends

Internationalisation has become a central focus for Eastern European communication journals as they seek greater visibility. Over the past decade, many EEC journals have adopted practices to appear more "international" – for instance, switching to English or bilingual publishing, inviting foreign contributors, and broadening their thematic scope (Demeter et al., 2023). Such changes have been partly driven by national research evaluation policies. In Poland, for instance, reforms to the academic journal ranking system explicitly incentivised journals to internationalise. Editors responded by implementing formal internationalisation practices (e.g. publishing more content in English, expanding editorial boards beyond the home country), yet often in a superficial, compliance-driven way. Kulczycki et al. (2019) found that Polish social science journals exhibited "ostensible internationalization" – essentially *gaming* the system – without truly globalising their author base or readership. In these cases, journals met the letter of internationalisation requirements (such as adding international board members or English abstracts) but did not substantially increase submissions or citations from abroad.

At the same time, language is a crucial factor in publication trends. Historically, most Eastern European communication journals were published in national languages, thus limiting cross-border readership (Demeter, 2020b). Recently, there has been a clear shift toward English as the primary language of publication for many leading EEC journals, as English-language content is necessary for inclusion in global indexes. Comparative studies across disciplines underscore this trend: an analysis of social science and humanities journals in the Czech Republic and Poland showed increasing use of English and contributions from

outside the home country in the 2010s, reflecting pressures to meet international standards (Daniel & Kulmiński, 2019). Nonetheless, true internationalisation remains uneven. Even when Eastern European journals attract "international" submissions, those authors often hail from neighbouring EEC countries rather than truly global sources (Tóth, 2018). Bucher (2018) observes that the international authorship of many EEC journals is largely regional (e.g. Slovak authors in a Czech journal, or Baltic authors in a Polish journal) rather than involving scholars from the U.S., U.K., or Asia. In effect, some journals have achieved *regional* internationalisation but still struggle to appeal to authors from the traditional centres of science.

Despite these challenges, recent evidence suggests a positive trajectory in international collaboration and diversity. Co-authorship networks involving EEC scholars have expanded geographically over the past 20 years, indicating a "growing level of CEE internationalization" (Demeter et al., 2023: 1211). Demeter et al. (2023) report that Eastern European media scholars are increasingly collaborating with Western European and other international colleagues (though collaboration within the region itself remains relatively weak). This expanding network is gradually raising the profile of EEC research. Moreover, targeted strategies are emerging: some Eastern European journals have begun actively recruiting Western scholars as authors and even special-issue guest editors to boost their global visibility (Tóth, 2018). The logic, as Tóth (2018: 3) argues, is that "successful Eastern European imitation of already established high-prestige journals" requires bringing in a significant share of Western authors (especially from U.S. institutions) to approximate the content and standards of top-tier publications. In summary, publication trends in EEC journals are toward greater internationalisation – more English-language content, more foreign authors, and topics with broader appeal – albeit with considerable variation across countries and titles. Where internationalisation has been embraced sincerely (beyond token efforts), journals have seen improved metrics and integration into global scholarship (Kulczycki et al., 2019).

In light of these mixed patterns, our second research question seeks to assess the publication and internationalisation trends of EEC journals to clarify whether and how these efforts translate into scholarly impact:

> **RQ2:** What are the publication trends, metrics, and internationalisation trends in EEC journals?

Prolific authorship and citation impact

The landscape of academic excellence, particularly within communication studies, reflects a complex interplay between systemic dynamics and individual merit, as evidenced by scholars' attainment of top positions, editorial roles, and publication outputs (Burris, 2004; Cowan & Rossello, 2018; Demeter & Tóth, 2020; Erfanmanesh et al., 2017; Goyanes & de-Marcos, 2020; Lauf, 2005). Identifying the most prolific contributors and the most cited works in Eastern European communication journals, therefore, also offers an insight into the intellectual dynamics of the region. Direct literature on this specific question is sparse, therefore, we infer patterns from bibliometric studies of similar journals and general laws of scholarly productivity. In many academic journals, a small core of authors tends to

contribute a disproportionate number of articles (Petersen & Penner, 2014). We can expect similar patterns in EEC journals, where a handful of prolific authors (often from the journal's home country or institution) dominate the publication output.

The most cited articles in Eastern European communication journals are generally those that manage to resonate beyond their local context. Because overall citation rates for these journals tend to be low (due to limited international circulation), any article that garners significant citations is notable. Commonly, review articles, theoretical pieces, or studies on globally relevant topics (e.g. social media use, comparative media systems) have higher citation potential (Demeter, 2020a). However, given that "at least 95%" of EEC communication research output has historically remained uncited or unnoticed internationally (Demeter, 2020b), even the top-cited papers from Eastern European journals often have only modest citation counts relative to citation classics in major Western journals. Demeter (2018a) found that the bulk of EEC research goes uncited by Western scholars, underscoring that highly cited works from the region are the exception, not the rule. Those exceptions, when they occur, tend to be articles that bridge local and international interests – for example, studies of EEC media transformation that speak to broader theories of post-communist democratisation, or methodological papers that scholars everywhere can use (Demeter, 2018a). Indeed, some Eastern European scholars have broken through by publishing such high-impact works in international outlets (e.g. *Javnost – The Public* or *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*), which then become the most cited pieces related to the region (Demeter, 2020b).

In the absence of extensive literature on individual prolific authors in EEC journals, it is also instructive to look at institutional patterns. Certain universities and research institutes in EEC emerge as hubs of communication research productivity. For instance, the University of Warsaw and the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in Poland or Charles University in Prague host communication programmes that regularly contribute to regional journals. We can anticipate that the most prolific authors often hail from these leading institutions or national research centres, reflecting the concentration of research resources. Moreover, collaboration patterns (as noted earlier) are evolving – younger scholars with international training increasingly publish in both local and international journals (Demeter, 2020b). Such authors (often with dual affiliations or education abroad) may produce work that gets cited more widely. In summary, while a few veteran academics likely dominate authorship counts in Eastern European communication journals, an emerging generation of internationally savvy scholars is contributing research with broader citation impact. At the same time, the literature suggests that most-cited articles from the region are those that align with global research agendas or offer comparative insights, attracting citations beyond Eastern Europe's borders, albeit still far fewer than top-cited works in the West (Demeter, 2018a).

However, despite important advances in regional bibliometric research, there remains a lack of targeted analysis identifying who the leading contributors are within Eastern European communication scholarship, and which specific works have achieved meaningful citation impact. We thus formulated the following research question:

RQ3: Who are the most prolific authors, and which articles are cited most in EEC journals?

Editorial board composition and diversity

Editorial boards (EBs) are pivotal entities in the governance of academic disciplines, serving as gatekeepers of knowledge (Metz et al., 2016) and exerting significant influence on the content that informs theory development, research, and practice. Therefore, the composition of EBs is not merely a reflection of diversity but also a manifestation of world-systemic power dynamics in knowledge production and dissemination (Ganter & Ortega, 2019). In an increasingly standardised and formulaic scientific landscape (Alvesson et al., 2017), there's a growing call for scientific journals to adopt a more inclusive approach by diversifying the geographical representation within their EBs because this diversity could foster the publication of manuscripts with a broader range of research approaches and perspectives (Baruch, 2001). However, studies in scientometrics reveal the predominant presence in the EBs of major journals is of Western regions (Murphy & Zhu, 2012; Lendvai, 2025). In top communication journals globally, 87.7% of editors-in-chief are based in North America or Western Europe (Asuman et al., 2024), highlighting a stark imbalance.

Traditionally, the editorial boards of many EEC journals have been dominated by local scholars – often a small circle of academics from the journal's home country or region. This insularity was a product of both necessity (limited international contacts) and design (journals serving national scholarly communities). In recent years, however, Eastern European journals have sought to broaden their editorial boards by including international members in order to signal prestige and attract submissions from abroad (Kulczycki et al., 2019). The extent of this internationalisation of boards varies. Some journals now list numerous foreign academics (occasionally Western Europe or U.S.-based scholars) on their masthead, while others maintain largely national boards with one or two token foreigners. Importantly, studies suggest that merely expanding board size or adding a few international names does not automatically yield genuine diversity or influence (Asuman et al., 2024).

At the same time, research on journal editorship underscores the importance of geographic diversity in broadening a journal's content and reach. Empirical research by Lauf (2005) and Demeter (2018c) underscores the link between EB diversity and the diversity of published articles, revealing that journals with more diverse boards tend to feature a broader range of author affiliations. Similarly, Goyanes and Demeter (2020) found that in high-ranked communication journals, those with more geographically diverse editorial boards tended to publish more internationally diverse research (Demeter et al., 2023). The same principle likely applies to Eastern European journals: if the board includes active members from a variety of countries, the journal is more likely to receive submissions from and cite works across those nations. Yet achieving such diversity has proven challenging. "Thin" internationalisation or geographic tokenism is often evident – for instance, repeatedly inviting the same well-known foreign scholar to an advisory board role, without integrating broader international participation (Asuman et al., 2024; Cloud, 1996). Such tokenism, while creating an appearance of diversity, leaves the real decision-making core concentrated locally (Cloud, 1996). Some critics argue that Eastern European journals sometimes add Western scholars to their boards with the aim mainly of boosting evaluation points or prestige, rather than meaningfully involving them in the editorial processes (Kulczycki et al., 2019). Interviews with Polish journal editors, for instance, revealed that they implemented internationally

oriented changes only when required by policy, rather than out of any genuine strategy designed to globalise their journals (Kulczycki et al., 2019).

Another aspect of editorial boards is their *intra*-regional diversity. Given the shared post-communist history of EEC countries, one might expect regional solidarity in editorial collaborations. However, evidence also indicates that EEC journals do not feature board members from neighbouring countries heavily either – many remain nationally oriented (Demeter et al., 2023). Notwithstanding, there are some positive developments: regional associations (such as *CEECOM*) have encouraged cross-country representation on journal boards like the *Central European Journal of Communication*. As a result, newer boards are gradually mixing scholars from multiple Eastern European Communication countries, which could foster a regional identity and cooperative network. Ultimately, the characteristics of the editorial boards of EEC journals are in flux – moving from parochial, homogeneous groups toward more inclusive bodies, but not without resistance and structural constraints. Ensuring true diversity (not only geographical but also gender and methodological diversity) remains an ongoing challenge (Lendvai, 2025). What is clear from the literature is that editorial boards play a gatekeeping role that influences a journal's content and reputation (Demeter, 2020a; Ekdale et al., 2022; Metz et al., 2016; Paasi, 2005; Willems, 2014). If Eastern European journals are to increase their global visibility and impact, their boards will need to continue evolving toward greater international representativeness and more inclusive practices, rather than reinforcing the East–West divide in scholarly publishing (Metz et al., 2016).

Given the pivotal role of editorial boards in shaping scholarly discourse and the dissemination of knowledge, a systematic examination of their composition is essential. We thus formulated the following research question:

RQ4: What are the characteristics of the editorial boards of EEC journals?

In summary, scholarly research over the past decade highlights both the persistent challenges and emerging improvements in Eastern European communication journals. *Performance* trends show slight upward trajectories in impact and indexing for a select few journals, yet the overall visibility of the region's research remains limited by Western standards (Demeter, 2020b). Efforts at *internationalisation* – through language change, policy incentives, and collaboration – have begun to pay off in terms of broader authorship and readership, although genuine global integration is still a work in progress (Demeter et al., 2023; Kulczycki et al., 2019; Daniel & Kulmiński, 2019). Analyses of *authorship and citations* suggest that while a core group of local scholars drives much of the publication output, the region has yet to produce widely cited "breakthrough" articles in its own journals (most high-impact work by EEC scholars occurs at international outlets) (Demeter, 2018c; 2020b). Meanwhile, *editorial board compositions* are slowly diversifying, recognising that inclusive and internationalised editorial governance can attract better submissions and increase a journal's prestige (Asuman et al., 2024). Given the historically peripheral status of EEC communication research, these trends signal a gradual convergence with global scholarly norms, even as gaps remain. In general, the literature underlines a central theme: *international visibility* is both the greatest challenge and the key to future growth for Eastern European communication journals.

Materials and methods

Data were collected using multiple repositories. As we were primarily investigating Scopus-indexed journals because of the wide range of publications and comprehensive data (Baas et al., 2020), we started our data collection of journals from the SCImago Journal and Country Rank, which uses Elsevier's Scopus database and includes metadata on journals and their geographical data (González-Pereira et al., 2010). For SCImagoJR, we employed the following data collection sequence: Journal Rankings > Subject Category: "Communication" > All regions / countries > Eastern Europe. We chose a 10-year period (2014–2023) and manually downloaded all journal metadata for the attributable journals. We only included journals in our analysis; consequently, every other publication type was excluded as in previous scientometric examinations (Jokić, 2020; Jokić et al., 2019; Demeter, 2017; Sasvári & Lendvai, 2024; Teodorescu & Andrei, 2011; Christián et al., 2022). Although we initially identified 37 journals, after manually checking all of them we identified a critical issue with SCImagoJR because, probably due to an error, it had listed a journal concerning Black cinema and cinematography, *Black Camera,* issued by the Indiana University Press, as a Russian journal. In total, therefore, we extracted data for 36 journals.

In line with standard scientometric and bibliometric methodology, the unit of analysis in this study is the Scopus-assigned subject category, not an a priori disciplinary assessment of individual article content. Journals were included if they were indexed under the Communication category in SCImagoJR during the examined period, regardless of whether communication constituted their sole or dominant thematic focus (Table 1).

Concerning journals, we also took into account SCImagoJR's SJR value, a reliable and widely used metric based on the number of citations received and the prestige of the journals (Colledge et al., 2010; González-Pereira et al., 2010) in addition to their respective H-indices and quartile (Q) assignments (Hirsch, 2005; Garfield, 2006). In certain cases, however, journals indexed in Scopus are not assigned to a quartile (mainly due to the lack of citation data, see Cortegiani et al., 2020); these journals were excluded in the pertaining analyses.

Table 1:
Country based distribution of communication journals indexed in Scopus

Country	Count
Poland	12
The Russian Federation	6
Lithuania	4
Croatia	3
The Czech Republic	2
Hungary	2
Romania	2
Slovakia	2
Serbia	1
Slovenia	1
Estonia	1

Source: Compiled by the authors.

After having gathered all data for EEC journals, we analysed the publications in them using Scopus and SciVal. We identified 5,939 publications and were able to extract all their metadata, including the number of citations. Regarding publications we applied bibliometric methods to analyse trends and the visibility of the outputs. This included a citation analysis with a particular focus on the Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI), a complex metric that is more comprehensive than the standard citation analysis as it is field-normalised which is based on the respective document's field of study, the type of the article, and the year of publication (Zanotto & Carvalho, 2021). For the visualisation of the co-authorship analyses (CAA) we employed VOSviewer (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). During the CAA, we ignored documents with more than 25 authors and publications with fewer than 5 citations.

Lastly, regarding editorial boards, we manually checked each journal's editorial board composition on their respective website. Following similar scientometric editorial board composition analyses (De-Marcos et al., 2024; Goyanes, 2020; Goyanes et al., 2022; Goyanes & Demeter, 2020; Lendvai, 2025) we extracted the institutional affiliations of each editorial member. We conducted the data collection manually and excluded all journals in this analysis which did not provide a comprehensive institutional affiliation outline (affiliation name and affiliation country). As editorial board compositions are listed differently in case of the majority of journals, we opted to include all members listed on the respective journals that are either: chief editors, editor(s)-in-chief, (active) founding editor(s), advisory members or advisory editors, and reviewing editors and excluded members who are either handling technical tasks (e.g. website editors, copyeditors) and language-related duties (e.g. proofreaders). To keep the scope solely on the editorial boards, we also excluded members that are listed as members of the (scientific) network of the respective journals, because it was not possible to verify whether they are taking on editorial tasks or (if listed) act as reviewers. In certain cases where members were listed twice (e.g. as board members and advisory board members), we only counted the respective members once. After filtering out journals without comprehensive data on institutional affiliation, we excluded non-examinable journals, which left us with a database of editorial boards of 31 journals, based on the lack of comprehensive or decipherable data on affiliation which included the omission of the mention of affiliation or country of board members, or the journal's website being inaccessible. We collected data concerning editorial boards on 20 February 2025.

Results

EEC journals: Performance, visibility, and metrics (RQ1)

We first examined EEC journals by count. The number of Eastern European journals indexed in Scopus increased between 2014 and 2023. Though there seems to be a stagnation in the number of indexed journals since 2019, the trend shows a rise in the last 10 years, with a slope of 3.99 (intercept = –8038.27, $R^2 = 0.86$, $p = 0.0001$ ***, standard error = 0.56). Descriptive statistics indicate a median of 28.5 of journals, a mean of 23.5, a minimum of 6 (in 2014), and a maximum of 36 (in 2021) (Figure 1).

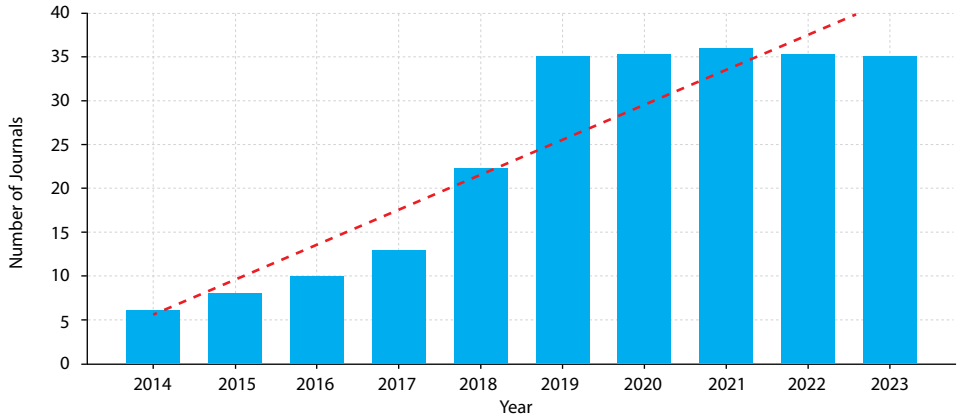


Figure 1:
Number of EEC journals by year between 2014 and 2023
Source: Compiled by the authors.

Though Q (quartile) rankings are often criticised in general and interdisciplinary scientometric analyses (Vîiu & Păunescu, 2021; Kosyakov & Pislyakov, 2024), in our case, as we specifically focused on one particular subject category, we examined the Q distribution too to see how prestigious EEC journals are.

The distribution of SJR quartiles throughout the examined period show that Q1 journals are the least common. The dominance of lower-ranked journals has been reported before (Jokić, 2020; Sasvári & Lendvai, 2024); however, it is striking that most academic publications in the region still struggle to reach Q1 status. Certain journals, however, consistently reach Q1 rankings across multiple years, including the Czech *Cyberpsychology,* which has been among the highest-ranked over time. It should be noted that not all indexed journals received a quartile ranking in every year of indexing. Of the 235 journal-year observations, 191 (81.3%) had an assigned SJR quartile. Journals typically lack a quartile in their first year(s) of indexing, as SCImago requires prior citation data to calculate the SJR score. Consequently, the following analyses are based on the 191 observations with assigned quartiles.

Given this pattern, we conducted two advanced statistical analyses to examine quartile stability and trends: Markov Chain Analysis (MCA) to review Q-transitions (Yutong, 2021) and the Cochran–Armitage Trend Test, a well-established statistical test used to detect a linear trend in proportions across ordered groups (Buonaccorsi et al., 2014).

First, the MCA evaluated how likely journals are to stay in the same quartile or transition to a different one over time. Transitions were only counted between consecutive years where both years had an assigned quartile (n = 155 transitions). The transition matrix reveals that Q1 journals have an 87.5% probability of remaining in Q1, showing strong stability at the top. Q4 journals have a 58.3% probability of staying in Q4, and Q3 journals show considerable stability as well, with a 56.1% probability of remaining in Q3. Q2 journals display the most movement, with a 38.9% probability of staying in Q2 and a 44.4% probability of dropping to Q3. Mobility between non-neighbouring quartiles (e.g. Q1–Q3, Q1–Q4, Q2–Q4) is almost non-existent.

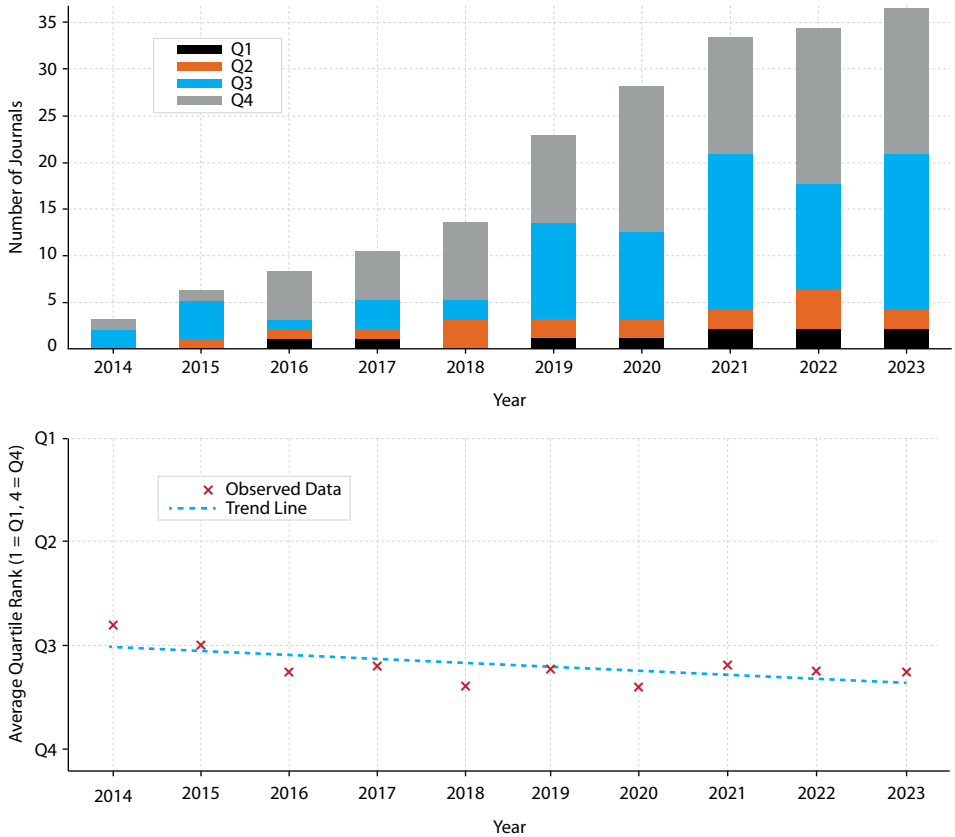


Figure 2:
Combined analysis of the quartile assignments of EEC journals between 2014 and 2023
Source: Compiled by the authors.

Second, the Cochran–Armitage Trend Test examined whether there is a statistically significant trend in quartile rankings over time. The regression model used was:

$$Quartile\ Rank = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times Year$$

where β_0 (intercept) = −69.76, β_1 (slope) = 0.036, R^2 = 0.38, and p = 0.059.

All in all, these analyses reveal strong stability across quartile rankings: Q1, Q3, and Q4 journals tend to remain in their respective quartiles, while Q2 journals show the most movement. The trend test did not find a statistically significant change in average quartile rankings over the examined period (p = 0.059), suggesting that the overall distribution of journal quality has remained largely stable between 2014 and 2023 (Figure 2).

The distribution of H-indices over time exhibits substantial variation, with noticeable fluctuations in median values, outliers, and spread. The highest median H-index was recorded

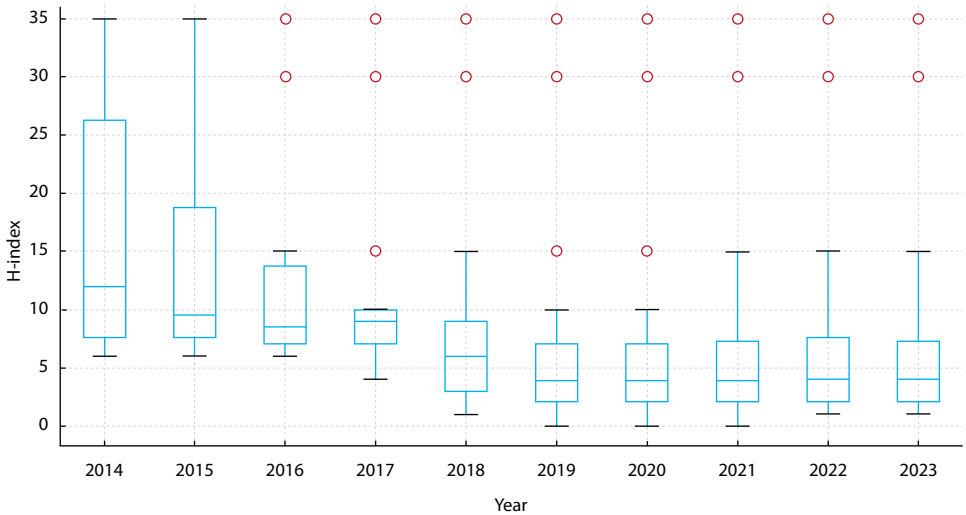


Figure 3:
Changes in H-index assignments of EEC journals between 2014 and 2023
Source: Compiled by the authors.

in 2014, reaching 12, while the lowest median H-index was observed in 2019, with a median value of 4, a level that remained stable through 2023. The interquartile range (IQR) remained relatively stable across most years, but 2014 and 2015 displayed a broader spread, suggesting a greater disparity between high-impact and lower-impact journals during those periods. The maximum H-index recorded in the dataset was 35 in 2014, while the lowest recorded H-index was 0 in 2019 and 2020, emphasising the disparity in journal influence across time. The standard deviation of H-indices was highest in 2014 (12.5), reflecting greater variability in journal rankings, whereas 2019 and 2020 had the lowest standard deviation (7.4), suggesting a more uniform distribution of journal impact in those years. However, the apparent decline in median H-index from 2014 to 2019 should be interpreted with caution, as it is largely a composition effect: in 2014, only 6 well-established journals were indexed, whereas by 2019, 35 journals were indexed, including many newly added journals with naturally lower H-indices (Figure 3).

With regard to the SJR scores, it can be stated that EEC journals display, generally, a rather low score which implies lower significance in international research visibility. There has not been a case in the 10-year period where an EEC journal was able to step over the 1.00 threshold which is generally regarded as the indication of balance prestige of a journal (Olmeda-Gómez & De Moya-Anegón, 2016). Furthermore, the highest median SJR score was recorded in 2014 (0.240) where only 5 of 6 journals was indexed (the lowest number in the examined period), while the lowest median SJR score appeared in 2018 (0.123), indicating a general decline in impact rankings over time. The mean SJR values varied, with 2014 having the highest average (0.255) and 2018 the lowest (0.188), while 2017 exhibited the widest dispersion (standard deviation: 0.210). The journal with the highest recorded SJR score was *Informatics in Education* in 2021, with an SJR of 0.956, followed by *Cyberpsychology* in 2021 (0.916) and again in 2022 (0.903).

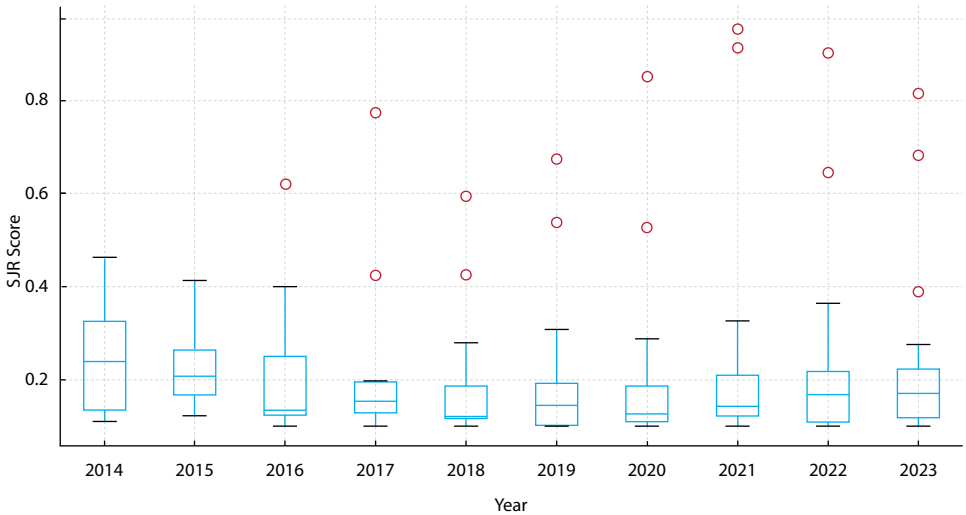


Figure 4:
Changes in SJR scores of EEC journals between 2014 and 2023
Source: Compiled by the authors.

For this analysis, a quantile regression was also applied to estimate relationships at different percentiles of the SJR distribution rather than just the mean/median values. We ran regressions at the 10th, 50th (median), and 90th percentiles, using the formula "*SJR ~ Year*", to examine how impact trends differ across journal tiers. The results reveal that lower-ranked journals (10th percentile) show virtually no change over time (slope ≈ 0.000, p = 0.999), and median journals (50th percentile) similarly show no significant trend (slope = 0.002, p = 0.359). At the 90th percentile, the slope was −0.020 (p = 0.055), suggesting a slight, non-significant decline in SJR scores among the highest-ranked journals. Overall, the quantile regression indicates that SJR scores have remained largely stable across all tiers over the examined period, with no statistically significant trends at any percentile (Figure 4).

Publication performance of EEC journals (RQ2)

First, we investigated the yearly change in the count of publications in EEC journals. Between 2014 and 2023, the number of publications grew significantly, increasing from 142 in 2014 to 956 in 2023, with a mean publication count of 593.9 and a standard deviation of 378.93, indicating substantial variability in growth ($R^2 = 0.88, p = 0.00005$ ***). The correlation (r) of 0.999 between the journal count and publication count shows that the rise in publications was closely mirrored by an increase in journal outlets. The data distribution shows that publication output accelerated particularly after 2017, with the median count at 691.5, indicating that half of the years had a lower and half had a higher publication output. The interquartile range also highlights that most of the rapid growth occurred post-2018, where the 75th percentile reached 945.75 publications (Figure 5).

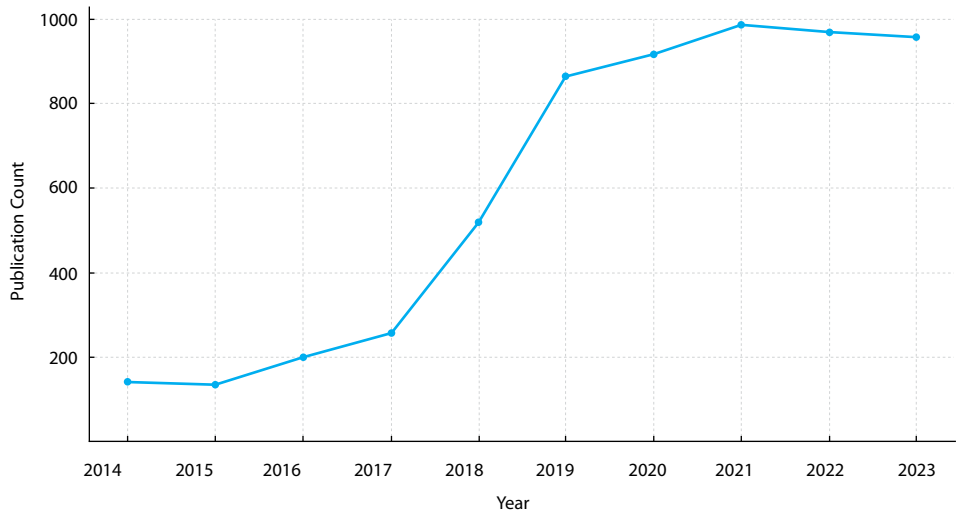


Figure 5:
The number of publications in EEC journals between 2014 and 2023
Source: Compiled by the authors.

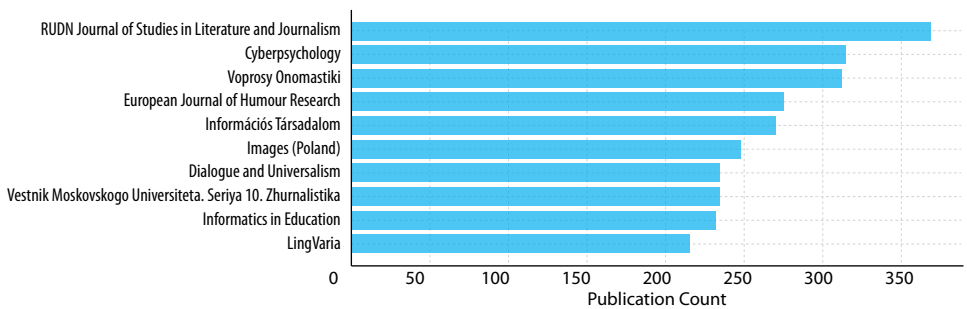


Figure 6:
Most productive EEC journals by publication count
Source: Compiled by the authors.

We also examined the most productive sources. The journal with the highest publication counts in the dataset is *RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism,* with 369 publications. *Cyberpsychology* follows closely with 315 publications, making it the second most frequent source. *Voprosy Onomastiki* ranks third with 312 publications, showing a minor difference from *Cyberpsychology*. The *European Journal of Humour Research* appears in fourth place, contributing 275 publications to the dataset. *Információs Társadalom* rounds out the top five, with a total of 270 publications (Figure 6).

The yearly analysis of citations and FWCI revealed interesting trends in scholarly impact over time. In the starting year, 2014, the mean citation count was relatively high at 12.43, with an FWCI of 0.52, indicating a strong initial impact of publications from that year. However, in 2015, citations dropped to 8.56, while FWCI declined to 0.41, suggesting

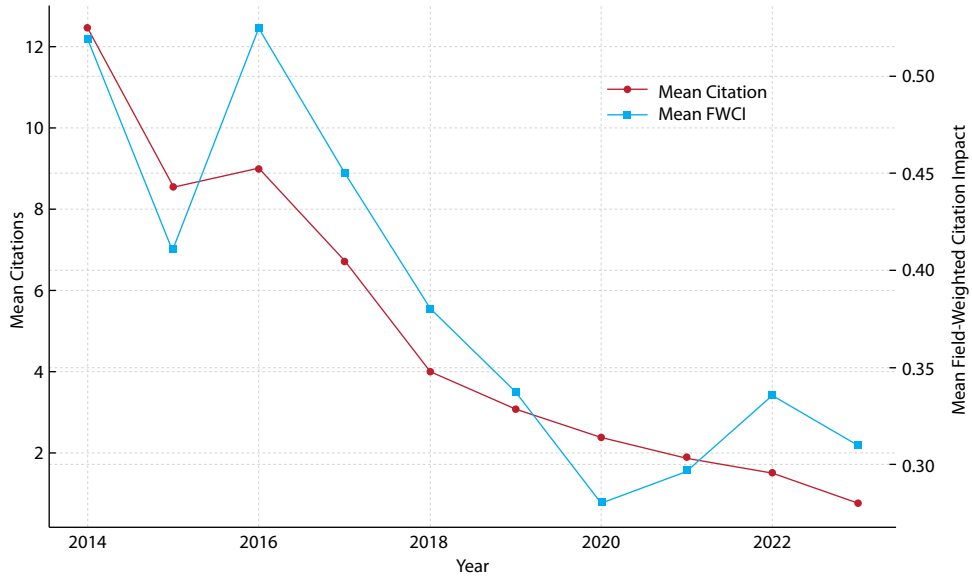


Figure 7:
Mean citation and FWCI value analysis of publications in EEC journals
Source: Compiled by the authors.

a decrease in both absolute citations and relative citation performance. The year 2016 saw a slight recovery in FWCI, rising to 0.52, while mean citations remained stable at 9.00. In 2017, citations experienced another drop to 6.73, and FWCI decreased slightly to 0.45, indicating a declining trend in research impact. By 2018, mean citations had decreased further to 3.99, marking a significant decline in the number of times publications from that year were cited. The FWCI in 2018 also dropped to 0.38, reinforcing the trend of diminishing impact. This downward trajectory suggests that articles published in later years tend to accumulate fewer citations on average which can be due to the fact that the volume of publications have grown significantly in the examined period; this phenomenon is well-known in scientometrics (Daruka, 2014; Larivière & Costas, 2016; Parolo et al., 2015; Varga, 2019; Chu & Evans, 2021). The similarity in decline between absolute citations and FWCI is also noteworthy. From 2017 onward the decline in FWCI implies that the relative influence of these publications was weakening compared to global benchmarks. Future research could explore whether this decline is field-specific or part of a broader trend in academic publishing (Figure 7).

Following Demeter et al.'s (2023) foundational paper on the internationalisation of "peripheral", Central and Eastern European communication scholars' collaboration pattern, we were interested in seeing whether that internationalisation is manifested in journals and publications, first, before seeing individual collaboration patterns. Using SciVal's country assignment we established three categories:

1. Domestic publications (DP): the journal's country and the publication's author(s) are assigned to the same country. For example, *KOME* is a Hungarian journal, if the publication is authored by a Hungarian author(s), it is a DP.

2. International collaborations (IC): the journal's country and at least one of the publication's author(s) are assigned to the same country, other authors, however, are from a different country. Naturally, this category only applies to co-authored papers. For example, if a publication in the Hungarian *KOME* is authored by two Hungarian author(s) and a Slovenian author, it is an IC.
3. International publications (IP): the journal's country and the publication's author(s) are not assigned to the same country. For example, if a publication in the Hungarian *KOME* is authored by two Slovenian authors, it is an IP.

With regard to this analysis, for 341 publications we found no country data, thus, we excluded them.

We found that higher internationalisation signified via the higher rates of IC and IP publication reflect the higher prestige expressed in quartile assignment of a given journal. This is particularly true regarding journals that generally rank in the upper segments of quartiles such as *Cyberpsychology* which is the most international journal with 92.38% of its publications being published by international authors (similarly, the Lithuanian *Informatics in Education* shows an IP rate of 91.77%). These results confirm Sasvári and Lendvai's (2024) findings which suggested that internationalised journals in social sciences in the Visegrád region tend to receive higher prestige and international visibility, which then also converts to impact elevation. What is intriguing, however, that there the IC rates are extremely low, which shows a fragmented authorship pattern: most EEC journal publications are either fully DP or IP which, again, confirms Sasvári and Lendvai's (2024) claims that these publication venues often fail to be platforms for international collaborations. We also found "quasi" EEC journals that are assigned to an EE country, however, solely publish ICs or IPs. Other than the two aforementioned journals, the most striking example of a quasi-EEC journal is the *Iberoamerican Journal of Science Measurement and Communication,* a mainly scientometrics-related journal which is Estonian in name but, however, did not publish any work by an Estonian author during the examined period (Table A in Appendix).

What is even more interesting is that despite the rather low citations and FWCI rates (Figure 7), ICs and IPs tend to be more visible and impactful than DPs which underlines why it is extremely unusual for peripheral regional journals to invite international authors (see Demeter, 2017). DPs receive a mean citation of approximately 1.2, while ICs and IPs receive significantly more (IC ≈ 3.43, IP ≈ 5.21). These results are reflected in the mean FWCI as well (DP ≈ 0.2, IC ≈ 0.47, IP ≈ 0.51) (Table 2).

Table 2:
Mean and median citation and FWCI scores by internationalisation categories

Publication type	Mean citations	Median citations	Mean FWCI	Median FWCI
DP	1.205	0.0	0.201	0.0
IC	3.434	1.0	0.470	0.14
IP	5.208	1.0	0.508	0.19

Source: Compiled by the authors.

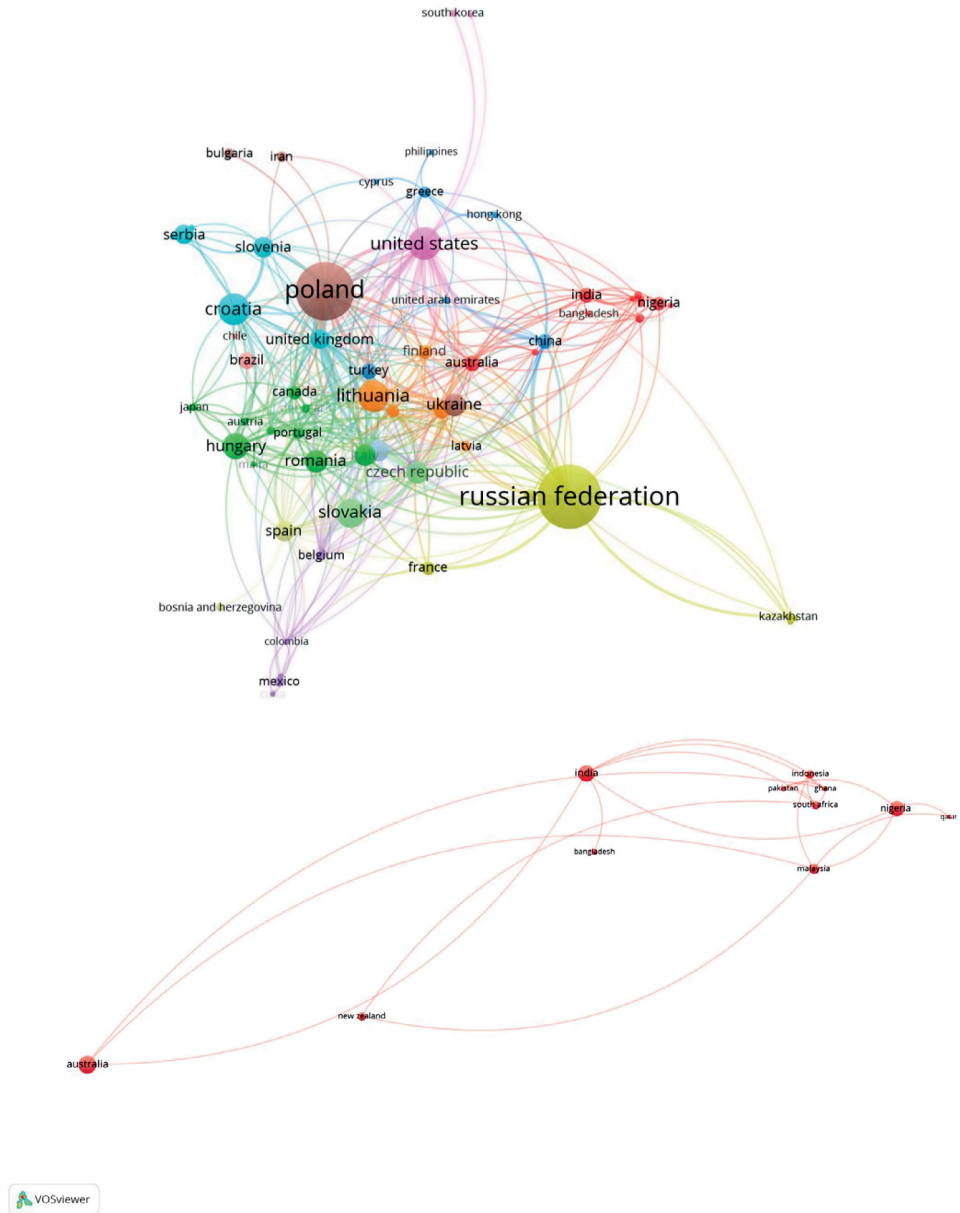


Figure 8:
Co-authorship analysis of publications in EEC journals with VOSviewer

Top figure: holistic overview, bottom figure: visualisation of Cluster 1. Nodes represent countries based on affiliation; edges represent co-authorship connections. On the bottom figure, in red, Cluster 1 is highlighted due to the fact that it is one of the bigger clusters without any involvement from any European-institution-affiliated authors.

Source: Compiled by the authors.

As for collaboration patterns, our CAA by country shows a highly interconnected network (items: 67, clusters: 13, links: 390, total link strength: 684). The largest nodes are Russia, Poland, and the United States. The majority of the network of co-authors is represented by regional countries which are positioned centrally in the network with larger nodes being Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, and Croatia, though the latter is more peripherally positioned with no connection to the Russian cluster. We have discovered a distinct Global South cluster too (Cluster 1) which we have visualised individually. This cluster (items: 11, links: 21) is a particularly interesting cluster as it composed of countries that are highly peripheral in the full network and their distribution can be described as the "Global South cluster" with only two countries, namely, Australia and New Zealand, being represented therein. The reason why we singled out this particular cluster for display is to show that there is a minimal representation of the scholarship of the Global South in EEC journals, however, it is highly interconnected, meaning that when Global South scholars publish in EEC journals, they prefer to do so with other Global South scholars (cf. Kohus et al., 2022) (Figure 8).

Most prolific authors in EEC journals

We used fractionalised counting to detect the most productive authors. To do this, we fractionalized the counts equally as there were no indication of the share of work in the papers. We also took into account the journal that was most preferred by the respective author, as well as the fractionalised citation counts and the total number of citations of all publications. Leading contributors, such as Mojžišová M. and Hendrykowski M., have the highest number of fractionalised publication counts (15 and 14, respectively), yet their citation impact is minimal, with only 2 total citations each, also implying that no co-authored publications papers were published by them. In contrast, scholars like Demeter M. and Levchuk P. rank lower in fractionalised publication count (7.36 and 7.17, respectively) but exhibit significantly higher citation influence, with 71 and 65 total citations. The Hungarian scholar, Márton Demeter ("Demeter, M."), has a particularly high citation-to-publication ratio, which implies that his work resonates strongly within the academic community.

Moreover, it is also worth highlighting an intriguing factor, specifically with regard to top publication venues. At the time of the writing of this paper, 7 out of 10 top authors are either the editor-in-chief or the senior editor of their most preferred EEC journal, and all the authors are members of the respective editorial board of their top publication value. While editorial participation can indicate expertise and commitment to a field, this pattern hints at structural self-reinforcement: those with publishing power also wield curatorial authority. This practice is not unethical *per se,* nor is it in any way novel in Eastern European journals (Bošnjak et al., 2011). However, this issue also raises rather uncomfortable questions about the balance between meritocracy and editorial privilege, particularly when top contributors repeatedly appear in journals they help in managing (Helgesson et al., 2022; Rosenblum et al., 2020). Nonetheless, another aspect must also be highlighted. It is proposed that the phenomenon of "self-publishing" be interpreted within the context of Eastern Europe as a peripheral academic region. As mentioned above in considerable detail, this region is often excluded from dominant circuits of global knowledge production and in such a systemically marginalised

scholarly field, scholars may rely on tightly-knit national or regional networks – including editorial positions – as "survival strategies" in a global hierarchy that disproportionately favours Western institutions and Anglophone publishing venues (see Demeter, 2020b). Therefore, what may appear as self-serving behaviour in core academic regions might, in this particular context, also be interpreted as a form of institutional resilience or even resistance (Table 3).

Table 3:
Top authors in EEC journals

Rank by count	Author	Fractionalised count	Top publication venue	Fractionalised citations	Total citations
1.	**Mojžišová, M.**	15	*Slovenske Divadlo (15)*	2	2
2.	**Hendrykowski, M.**	14	*Images (Poland) (14)*	2	2
3.	**Rotar, N.Z.**	13.3	*Medijska Istrazivanja (13)*	0	0
4.	**Czarnocka, M.**	12.5	*Dialogue and Universalism (13)*	4	4
5.	**Rak, M.**	11	*LingVaria (11)*	4	4
6.	**Shilina, M.G.**	8.75	*RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism (16)*	6.6	10
7.	**Pop, D.**	8.5	*Ekphrasis (9)*	4	4
8.	**László, Z.K.**	8	*Információs Társadalom (9)*	10	10
9.	**Demeter, M.**	7.36	*KOME (8)*	61.75	71
10.	**Levchuk, P.**	7.17	*Cognitive Studies (9)*	49.17	65

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Analysis of editorial boards (RQ4)

To examine editorial boards, we first conducted a statistical analysis of the 31 EEC journals included. The investigation revealed a moderate association between editorial board internationalisation and key performance indicators. For this analysis, we also assigned values to Q rankings to calculate averages: D1 = 4.5, Q1 = 4, Q2 = 3, Q3 = 2, Q4 =1. We used the best quartile rank for each journal. Internationalisation was operationalised via affiliation countries.

The percentage of non-domestic (international) editors showed a positive Pearson correlation of $r = 0.49$ ($p = 0.005$ **) with better quartile ranking. In this regard, though we acknowledge that quartile rankings are based on a plethora of factors, we find that the fact that journals with more internationally composed editorial boards tend to occupy higher quartiles (Q1 being the most prestigious) is still an important finding. This trend is reinforced by two additional findings: a positive correlation of $r = 0.61$ ($p = 0.000311$ ***) between the percentage of international editors and IP, and a negative correlation of $r = -0.61$ ($p = 0.000269$ ***) between the percentage of international editors and DP share.

These relationships paint a significant portrait: as seen from previous research (De-Marcos et al., 2024; Goyanes, 2020; Goyanes & Demeter, 2020), international

editorial representation is not only statistically associated with journal prestige, but also with a higher share of international contributions. Top-ranked journals like *Cyberpsychology* (Q1 D1, 77.8% international editors) and *Informatics in Education* (Q1, 95.3%) illustrate how internationalisation supports broad visibility and integration into global knowledge circuits. In contrast, journals like *Medialni Studia* or *Z Badan nad Ksiazka,* which have no editors from non-domestic institution, remain confined to Q4 rankings and exhibit low international engagement. It should be noted, however, that not all journals with fully domestic editorial boards are confined to lower quartiles, see *Slovenske Divadlo* and *Tekst, Kniga, Knigoizdaniye*, journals that despite having 100% domestic editors, held Q3 rankings at one point. Concerning higher best quartiles, while exceptions do exist (such as *Medijske Studije* [Q2, 100% domestic]), they are rare.

Lastly, we investigated editorial diversity by Q rankings as well. Estonia and Hungary both exhibit strong performance, each with an average quartile score of 3 (Q2) and high international editor percentages (100% and 62.5%, respectively), but both of them are represented by only one journal which largely limits generalisability. Lithuania and Poland stand out as more structurally important. Lithuania averages 67.55% international editors across 4 journals, while Poland contributes the largest volume (12 journals) with a respectable average internationalisation rate (55.93%) and a consistent quartile score of 1.92. The Czech Republic also performs well, despite a lower internationalisation rate (38.9%), with an average quartile of 2.75 (Q3 leaning Q2) across 2 journals. This result is bolstered by the exceptional performance of one of the most successful journals in the region, *Cyberpsychology* (Q1, D1). In contrast, countries with lower international editorial participation, particularly Russia (37.74%) and Croatia (14.3%), show lower average quartile scores (2.0, respectively). Romania contributes two journals with a moderate internationalisation rate (43.55%) and an average quartile score of 1.50. Serbia and Slovakia remain outliers; Serbia contributes only one journal with less significant impact (Q4) and moderate international engagement (48.2%), while Slovakia's sole journal (Slovenske Divadlo, Q3) has no international editorial representation, pointing to structural limitations in global integration. In sum, Poland and Lithuania emerge as the most balanced contributors to the region's scholarly output, while countries like Estonia and Hungary, despite excellent scores, remain symbolically strong but institutionally light (Table B in Appendix).

Discussion

Our study's findings across the four RQs proposed offer a comprehensive analysis of the structure, performance, and potential limitations in visibility of Eastern European communication journals. Regarding RQ1, the results point to a modest yet consistent growth in the number of Scopus-indexed EEC journals over the past decade. However, the journals remain predominantly in lower SJR quartiles, with Q1 publications being rare and largely concentrated in a few "standout" journals. With regard to prestige, while top- and bottom-tier journals demonstrate stability, mid-tier ones exhibit more mobility, albeit without clear upward trajectories, pointing to a structural inertia. Concerning RQ2, the publication metrics depict a notable growth in article output, especially post-2017.

However, this growth has not translated into higher impact, in fact, quite the opposite is apparent. Both citation counts and FWCI have declined over time, moreover, journals with less local input and higher international collaboration and international authorship rates were found to be significantly more cited. Findings regarding RQ3 show that the most prolific authors are concentrated in specific journals and often have modest citation counts, suggesting limited cross-border academic influence. However, certain individuals, notably those affiliated with higher-impact journals demonstrate a more substantial reach. Finally, RQ4 revealed stark disparities in the composition of editorial boards: journals with a high percentage of international editors tend to publish more international work and rank in higher quartiles. Conversely, journals with mostly domestic boards correlate with low internationalisation and limited impact.

To synthesise our endeavours, the findings of the present paper across the RQs point to a structurally interdependent dynamic underlying the performance of Eastern European journals classified under the Scopus Communication category. We found that journal-level performance indicators (RQ1), such as quartile stability and SJR trajectories, are not merely outcomes of publication volume or time-bound citation accumulation but emerge from the joint configuration of editorial governance (RQ4), authorship structures (RQ3), and internationalisation patterns (RQ2). All in all, we can assert that journals with internationally diversified editorial boards are more likely to attract international publications and non-domestic authorship, which in turn is associated with higher citation impact and field-weighted visibility. Conversely, journals characterised by predominantly domestic editorial boards (i.e. internal bias as described by Sasvári & Lendvai [2024]) tend to reproduce concentrated authorship patterns, often involving prolific contributors embedded in the same editorial networks, and exhibit lower levels of international collaboration and impact. In this sense, authorship concentration and what we understand under editorial self-reinforcement as mentioned above do not solely operate independently from internationalisation but also function as mutually reinforcing mechanisms that either facilitate or constrain journal performance. These dimensions thus collectively constitute a structural ecosystem through which peripheral journals either gain limited integration into global citation circuits or remain locked into nationally bounded publishing cycles (see Sasvári & Lendvai, 2024). From the perspective of critical publishing studies, these interdependencies can be interpreted as practical manifestations of structural gatekeeping and epistemic injustice within global academic communication. Building on Bourdieu (1988; 1989, also see Kim, 2023), academic and symbolic power (Demeter, 2020b) is exercised, shaping whose knowledge is rendered visible, legitimate, and citable across international circuits. In the present, peripheral contexts, "concentration" – whether it be through authorial or editorial practices – represent the very economy of the current academic knowledge production system, in which constrained access to global evaluative infrastructures incentivises reliance on locally embedded networks rather than open competition (Demeter, 2020b). Seen this way, the patterns identified in this study are not anomalies but rather predictable outcomes of hierarchically organised knowledge production regimes.

As mentioned earlier, the count, type, language, and topical focus of academic publications produced in a given country, as well as the journals in which these works are published, and the nature of the collaborations involved, all reflect on the respective country's national, cultural, and political history (Petr et al., 2021). In the field of communication

studies, which often transcends national borders, leading international journals are structured to encompass current global trends in the discipline. In this context, the findings of the present study align with those of Ianoş and Petrişor (2020), indicating that communication research in the region has made significant progress in integrating into the international academic sphere compared to the past. However, this process still faces various structural limitations and regional inequalities. We find that the fundamental issue faced by EEC journals is not merely the matter of their peripheral positioning within the core–periphery framework (Demeter, 2017; Sasvári & Lendvai, 2024). Much rather, the main dilemma lies in their epistemological attachment to regional or local themes in knowledge production. This attachment functions as a structural constraint. These journals are often filled with studies conducted by local researchers on topics that are tightly bound to the local context. Such a focus frequently conflicts with international academic norms that prioritise knowledge deemed "generalisable," "transferable," or "theoretically contributive" (cf. Mazenod, 2018), making it difficult for these journals to ascend to higher quartiles. On the other hand, this structural limitation also ensures a stable reader–author cycle for these journals because the focus on regional issues may sustain their appeal among a specific readership. Nonetheless, the cycle of producing local knowledge by local scholars for a mostly local readership confines most EEC and emerging journals (see Meneghini, 2012) to a narrow area in terms of scientific impact and visibility.

In addition, despite the fact that most EEC journals provide open access and do not charge authors article processing charges (APCs), these policies have not necessarily brought them closer to the category of scientific "excellence" (cf. Demeter & Istratii, 2020). This is because open access and APC-free publishing, while reflecting an ethical and equitable approach to academic dissemination, are not in themselves indicators of quality (Demeter & Istratii, 2020; Ili, 2025; and also cf. Van Vlokhoven, 2019). Although such practices represent a commitment to fair publishing, they are insufficient for achieving high-level visibility in international academic circulation, as academic prestige is shaped not only by accessibility but also by a vast multitude of factors, including citation networks, author diversity, language policies, the quality of peer-review processes, and the international composition of editorial boards (Wang & Barabási, 2021).

A more concrete example of these structural inequalities can be observed in the positioning of journals originating from Eastern Europe within the global academic publishing system. As seen from our analysis and the previous research (Demeter, 2020b; 2017), in terms of visibility, citability, and impact factor, these journals frequently rank in the lower quartiles and assume a "secondary" or "peripheral" role in global knowledge circulation. This condition cannot be explained solely by academic performance; it has systemic and historical roots (Demeter, 2020b). First, the majority of articles published in these journals are authored by researchers from the same region, resulting in a largely homogeneous national or regional author base (Sasvári and Lendvai [2024] term this phenomenon "internal bias"). This homogeneity contradicts expectations of scientific pluralism and global dialogue, and moreover, poses barriers to access for international readers (Sasvári & Lendvai, 2024). Furthermore, the language barrier also plays a critical role. Although most of the EEC journals indexed in Scopus have begun to publish in English, they often struggle to meet the linguistic and academic standards upheld by journals based in core countries. This difficulty is not only linked to

individual competence but also to structural deficiencies in resources, for instance, in the limited access to professional language editors, lack of translation support, and exclusionary norms within the publication process. All of these issues are directly linked to the very essence of modern academic knowledge production: the functioning of capitalist academic publishing (cf. Bourdieu, 1984). The contemporary academic ecosystem is built upon a system that commodifies knowledge production and renders publishing a profit-oriented enterprise (Ili, 2025). In this system, visibility is not merely a reflection of scientific quality, but also a product of integration into publishing networks and databases, the capacity to conform to publication standards (including paying for APCs), and access to international prestige. As a result, many journals in Eastern Europe are subject to the exclusionary logic of the system; both because they remain outside these networks and because they structure knowledge production in response to local needs. This reflects a publishing regime in which knowledge production is increasingly centralised, dominated by Anglo-American epistemologies, and alternative forms of knowledge are marginalised (Demeter, 2020b). Within such an environment, the limited visibility or low impact factors of EEC journals should not be seen as a deficiency, but rather as a structural issue that reveals the inherent inequalities of the global publishing system. Subsequently, the determining factor is not how "good" or "prestigious" these journals are, but to what extent they can "conform" to the existing system as those unable to conform are met with invisibility, exclusion, and devaluation.

To conclude our examination, the dilemma faced by EEC journals is largely multilayered. While their commitment to local knowledge production imposes epistemological limitations, their open access policies render them ostensibly more democratic. Nonetheless, the existing hierarchies within the scientific system do not transform this openness into a marker of excellence; on the contrary, they place these journals into a category that is "accessible yet excludable". Therefore, the solution cannot be achieved through technical adjustments alone. It requires the construction of a more equitable academic publishing system; one that recognises the value of pluralism in knowledge production and affirms the legitimacy of locally grounded epistemologies.

Limitations

With regard to limitations, although this study aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of Eastern European communication journals, three agenda-based limitations must be acknowledged. First of all, the analysis was limited to Scopus-indexed journals, excluding potentially influential regional outlets not included in this database. This may inadvertently underrepresent the diversity of scholarly activity within the region. Moreover, citation-based metrics, such as FWCI and SJR, may not fully capture the qualitative impact or regional relevance of publications, particularly those addressing local or culturally specific issues (see Scelles & Teixeira da Silva, 2025). Moreover, the classification of editorial board members relied on available online data, which may not always reflect active participation or decision-making roles. With particular attention to the analysis of editorial board composition, some journals were excluded due to the absence of sufficiently detailed or decipherable information on editorial members' institutional affiliations and countries. These exclusions were driven

by data transparency constraints rather than any substantive selection criteria. As a result, the observed associations between editorial board internationalisation, authorship patterns, and journal performance should be interpreted as lower-bound estimates rather than inflated effects.

Lastly, as mentioned earlier, our study relies entirely on Scopus subject classifications, which are known to involve overlapping and sometimes heterogeneous disciplinary assignments, particularly for multidisciplinary journals (Thelwall & Pinfield, 2024). While this may result in the inclusion of journals whose thematic focus extends beyond communication narrowly defined, our approach reflects prevailing practices in scientometric research and ensures analytical transparency and reproducibility.

Data availability statement

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are not publicly available due to need of institutional Scopus and SciVal access but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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Appendix

Table A:
Analysis of internationalisation of publications in EEC journals by DP, IC, and IP categories

Journal name	Journal country	Total publications	Included	DP (%)	IC (%)	IP (%)
Anafora	Croatia	108	99	47.47	0.0	52.53
Central European Journal of Communication	Poland	160	149	20.81	5.37	73.83
Cognitive Studies	Poland	95	93	34.41	9.68	55.91
Communication Today	Slovakia	158	151	42.38	5.3	52.32
Cyberpsychology	The Czech Republic	315	315	2.54	5.08	92.38
Dialogue and Universalism	Poland	235	209	15.31	1.91	82.78
Ekphrasis	Romania	104	101	38.61	0.99	60.4
European Journal of Humour Research	Poland	275	272	4.41	1.84	93.75
Iberoamerican Journal of Science Measurement and Communication	Estonia	58	58	0.0	0.0	100.0
Images (Poland)	Poland	248	240	80.0	2.08	17.92
Imagologiya i Komparativistika	The Russian Federation	166	163	87.12	2.45	10.43
Informacijos Mokslai	Lithuania	100	98	79.59	2.04	18.37

Journal name	Journal country	Total publications	Included	DP (%)	IC (%)	IP (%)
Információs Társadalom	Hungary	270	169	71.01	1.78	27.22
Informatics in Education	Lithuania	231	231	5.63	2.6	91.77
KOME	Hungary	115	109	18.35	2.75	78.9
Knygotyra	Lithuania	147	129	64.34	2.33	33.33
Komunikacija i Kultura Online	Serbia	79	73	68.49	0.0	31.51
LingVaria	Poland	215	211	92.42	1.42	6.16
Medialni Studia	The Czech Republic	65	57	21.05	1.75	77.19
Medijska Istrazivanja	Croatia	151	122	66.39	4.92	28.69
Medijske Studije	Croatia	154	142	45.77	6.34	47.89
Poznanskie Studia Slawistyczne	Poland	208	190	44.74	1.05	54.21
Psychology of Language and Communication	Poland	176	175	30.29	6.29	63.43
RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism	The Russian Federation	369	365	80.0	7.95	12.05
Res Rhetorica	Poland	164	161	77.64	1.86	20.5
Respectus Philologicus	Lithuania	153	152	40.13	0.66	59.21
Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations	Romania	122	121	42.98	4.13	52.89
Slovenske Divadlo	Slovakia	156	141	82.27	0.71	17.02
Social Science Forum	Slovenia	112	99	84.85	1.01	14.14
Tekst, Kniga, Knigoizdaniye	The Russian Federation	165	164	90.85	3.05	6.1
Theoria et Historia Scientiarum	Poland	44	41	39.02	2.44	58.54
Token	Poland	78	77	12.99	1.3	85.71
Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta. Seriya 10. Zhurnalistika	The Russian Federation	234	233	94.42	1.72	3.86
Voprosy Onomastiki	The Russian Federation	312	304	73.03	2.3	24.67
World of Media	The Russian Federation	73	73	32.88	6.85	60.27
Z Badan nad Ksiazka i Ksiegozbiorami Historycznymi	Poland	124	111	61.26	0.9	37.84

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Table B:
Multi-analysis of editorial boards by highest Q ranking, publication count, and editorial diversity in %

Journal name	Journal country	Highest Q	Total	% Domestic editors	% International editors
Iberoamerican Journal of Science Measurement and Communication	Estonia	Q2	25	0	100
Cyberpsychology	The Czech Republic	Q1 (D1)	45	22.2	77.8
European Journal of Humour Research	Poland	Q2	38	13.2	86.8
Informatics in Education	Lithuania	Q1	43	4.7	95.3
Token	Poland	Q3	31	32.3	67.7
Dialogue and Universalism	Poland	Q3	28	10.7	89.3
KOME	Hungary	Q2	16	37.5	62.5
Medialni Studia	The Czech Republic	Q4	4	100	0
Central European Journal of Communication	Poland	Q3	17	41.1	58.9
World of Media	The Russian Federation	Q2	51	25.5	74.5
Psychology of Language and Communication	Poland	Q3	42	31	69
Ekphrasis	Romania	Q4	28	42.9	57.1
Respectus Philologicus	Lithuania	Q3	17	47.1	52.9
Theoria et Historia Scientiarum	Poland	Q3	18	27.7	72.3
Cognitive Studies	Poland	Q2	17	35.3	64.7
Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations	Romania	Q3	25	60	30
Poznanskie Studia Slawistyczne	Poland	Q4	18	38.9	61.1
Anafora	Croatia	Q4	14	71.4	28.6
Medijske Studije	Croatia	Q2	18	100	0
Z Badan nad Ksiazka i Ksiegozbiorami Historycznymi	Poland	Q4	8	100	0
Knygotyra	Lithuania	Q3	21	47.6	52.4
Komunikacija i Kultura Online	Serbia	Q4	37	51.4	48.2
Voprosy Onomastiki	The Russian Federation	Q3	31	54.8	45.2
Res Rhetorica	Poland	Q3	16	37.5	62.5
Informacijos Mokslai	Lithuania	Q3	23	30.4	69.6

Journal name	Journal country	Highest Q	Total	% Domestic editors	% International editors
RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism	The Russian Federation	Q4	19	47.7	52.3
Images (Poland)	Poland	Q4	6	100	0
Slovenske Divadlo	Slovakia	Q3	3	100	0
Tekst, Kniga, Knigoizdaniye	The Russian Federation	Q3	13	100	0
LingVaria	Poland	Q3	18	61.1	38.9
Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta. Seriya 10. Zhurnalistika	The Russian Federation	Q3	12	83.3	16.7

Country	Average (%) International editors	Average quartile score	Journal count
Estonia	100.00	3.00	1
Hungary	62.50	3.00	1
The Czech Republic	38.90	2.75	2
Lithuania	67.55	2.50	4
The Russian Federation	37.74	2.00	5
Croatia	14.30	2.0	2
Slovakia	0.00	2.0	1
Poland	55.93	1.92	12
Romania	43.55	1.50	2
Serbia	48.20	1.00	1

Source: Compiled by the authors.

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