

A Rational Scale of Critical Editorial Evaluation

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Summation of The International Scale of Critical Comment or Terse Index of Scientific Censure (TISC-TISC) coefficients, with appropriate weighting factor and correction term, conveniently misrepresents the value of a scientific manuscript in terms of desirability for publication.

1. INTRODUCTION

THE value of the criterion of minimum astonishment as a guide to scientific appraisal has been cited by Gilman.¹ While Gilman deplores the quasiquantitative inexactness of the criterion he offers no hope for a quantitative treatment. However, the statement of the generalized principle together with epistemological considerations have led us to quantize the parameter fundamental to its quantitative treatment in the special case of editorial scientific comment.

2. THEORY

In this context the coefficient of astonishment can be operationally defined as the anticorrelation between an author's expressed opinion and the editorial reviewer's Pavlovian response pattern. We propose The International Scale of Critical Comment or Terse Index of Scientific Censure, conveniently abbreviated TISC-TISC. The TISC-TISC coefficient of astonishment is the natural logarithm of the astonishment experienced by a reviewer upon confrontation with a particular statement from a prospective author in a specific context. Table I lists the integral values of the TISC-TISC coefficient in the normal range. It is unfortunate that data points in the negative sense are almost totally lacking because of the scarcity of corresponding observations. It is felt, however, that this lack will be felt by few editorial reviewers.

The burden of decision on publishability of a submitted manuscript may be conveniently lightened by use of the TISC-TISC coefficient to calculate the Publishability Figure of Merit, M_p , namely

$$M_p = \frac{-F}{p(R - U)} \left[\frac{A}{3} + \epsilon - N \right] + \frac{\sum^n \text{TISC-TISC}}{n} + E \quad (1)$$

where F = frequency of publication, p = number of pages in the manuscript, R = number of papers

read at the Annual Meeting, U = number of papers read at the Annual Meeting but not submitted in manuscript, A = number of equivalent pages of advertising sold, ϵ = number of pages supported by subscriptions and membership fees, N = number of

TABLE I. The International Scale of Critical Comment or Terse Index of Scholarly Censure (TISC-TISC)

TISC-TISC Coefficient of Astonishment	Mean Observation
-7	Yes, I observed this myself in 1932 (unpublished work)
-6	a
-5	a
-4	a
-3	a
-2	a
-1	a
0	So what?
1	This seems to need clarification
2	I don't quite follow this argument
3	I doubt this
4	Heavens no
5	Birds, for the
6	Perhaps another journal would be more appropriate for this interesting work
7	Is he some kind of a nut or something?b

a Insufficient data points in this range.

b We are indebted to Professor White for permission to use data gathered by him in his USA tour 1966.

equivalent pages of news and comment, n = number of TISC-TISC readings, TISC-TISC = see Table I, E = parameter arbitrarily assignable (by the editor) with values between plus and minus 10^{22} .

3. CONCLUSIONS

The need for further work in this field is not recognized.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to acknowledge the encouragement and financial support of the Atomic Energy Commission, the National Science Foundation, the Office of Naval Research and the Max Planck Gesellschaft. Unfortunately none of these would have anything to do with the project.

* The authors are presently in hiding.

¹ J. J. Gilman, personal lapse, 1966.