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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rebuttal to: Wang et al. "Global trends in soil monitoring research from 1999 to 2013: a bibliometric analysis" vol. 65, pp 483–495

Recently, Wang et al. (2015) published a paper entitled 'Global trends in soil monitoring research from 1999 to 2013: A bibliometric analysis'. In Data and methods, authors mentioned that 'The data were derived from the database of the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-Expanded) and Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) published by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), Philadelphia, USA'. There is no more Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) but Thomson Reuters only. In the same section, authors noticed that:

> a bibliometric analysis was performed by Microsoft Excel 2013 to reveal patterns of soil monitoring research on a global scale in terms of the following aspects: types of publications and languages, scientific output characteristics, journals and subject categories, author productivity, geographic distribution of countries and institutes, international collaborations of authors and institutions, and temporal evolution of keyword appearance.

In 1997, Katz and Hicks reported that 'the latest releases of PC software, such as Microsoft Excel, make it possible to develop graphical user interfaces into complex bibliometric data for a wide spectrum of researchers and policy analysts. (Katz and Hicks 1997)' Microsoft Excel has also been applied in the last decade by Ho and co-workers for analysis of scientific outputs, subject categories, journals, authors, countries, institutes, and keywords (Li and Ho 2008; Xie et al. 2008; Zhang et al. 2010).

In Hot topics, authors mentioned that 'We divided the 15-year period into five parts, with 3 years each, then analysed the evolution trends of the author keywords'. and 'The top 50 most commonly used keywords were shown in Table 6'. In point of fact, in recent years, my co-workers and I have proposed on examining the distribution of words in article titles, abstracts, keywords, and *KeyWords Plus* at different time periods in order to evaluate trends in research topics (Li et al. 2009; Zhang et al. 2010; Fu et al. 2013; Ho and Ho 2015). Furthermore, the method named 'word cluster analysis' was also proposed to find the research hotspots in a specific research topic (Mao et al. 2010; Tanaka and Ho 2011; Sun et al. 2012).

It is generally accepted that citing the original paper is not only respecting authors who presented a novel idea in research but also to read the original idea in detail of the work (Ho 2014). An evidence was found that the original papers even published about 100 years ago, still have extremely high citations in the recent years (Ho and Kahn 2014; Fu and Ho 2014). When a scientific publication duplicate previously published idea, text, equations, or figures without any citations, it frequently is regarded as a sign of possible plagiarism (Hunter 1994; Noè and Batten 2006). In my view, Wang et al. (2015) should have cited the original paper for what they mentioned in their paper and thereby provided greater accuracy and information details about the idea and the methods that they employed.

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