Loet Leydesdorff, primus inter pares

Ronald Rousseau, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Antwerp, Antwerp BELGIUM;
Centre for R&D Monitoring (ECOOM) and Department MSI, KU Leuven, Leuven BELGIUM
(ronald.rousseau@uantwerpen.be; ronald.rousseau@kuleuven.be)
Yahui Liu, National Science Library, Chinese Academy of Sciences,100190, Beijing, CHINA;
Department of Information Resources Management, School of Economics and Management,
University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, 100190, Beijing, CHINA. (liuyahui@mail.las.ac.cn)

Abstract

Among all Derek de Solla Price Memorial Medal awardees, the late Loet Leydesdorff has the highest h-index.

Key Words: bibliometrics, Price awardees, citations, h-index, Leydesdorff

Main Text

We determined the h-index (Hirsch, 2005) in the Web of Science (WoS) for all Price awardees, using the following protocol. Start with an author search such as:

AU = Leydesdorff, L*

Then analyze the result according to affiliations and use the affiliations of the person you are interested in. In this case, this is University of Amsterdam, Dept. Sc. Technol Dynam, Dept Sci Dynam, Ascor, Sci Technol Dynam, and Amsterdam Sch Commun Res.

Then ask for a citation report, leading to the awardee's h-index. We then checked if indeed all publications in the h-core are written by the awardee. This method worked for all awardees except for Howard White, where we searched for White, HD, and Ben Martin, where we searched for Martin, BR.

Occasionally we applied some minor corrections. For instance, two of Ben Martin's highly cited publications were published as Martin B. Using Clarivate's algorithmically generated author record, sometimes also helped. To find Robert Merton's h-index the WoS version from 1900 on (Century of Science) was really needed.

Of course, only the awardees themselves can correctly determine their h-index (you may inform us if we are wrong by three or more units), but we are sure that the main point of this exercise, namely to show that Loet Leydesdorff has the highest h-index among all Price awardees is correct.

Following the chronology of the awards, see e.g. (Rousseau et al., 2018, p. 339), we found (by the end of March 2023) the following h-indices.

Awardees	h-index
Moravcsik Michael. J.	17
Braun, Tibor	35
Nalimov, Vasiliy V.	3

Awardees	h-index
Small, Henry	33
Narin, Francis	32
Brookes, Bertram C.	10
Vlachý, Jan	6
Schubert, András	39
van Raan, Anthony F.J.	49
Merton, Robert K.	32
Irvine, John	16
Martin, Ben R.	32
Griffith, Belver C.	12
Glänzel, Wolfgang	58
Moed, Henk F.	46
Egghe, Leo	30
Rousseau, Ronald	40
Leydesdorff, Loet	72
Ingwersen, Peter	26
White, Howard D.	23
McCain, Kate	24
Zitt, Michel	20
Vinkler, Péter	25
Persson, Olle	25
Cronin, Blaise	34
Thelwall, Mike	66
Bar-Ilan, Judit	34
Bornmann, Lutz	56
Waltman, Ludo	43

Eugene Garfield, the first Price awardee (Moravcsik, 1985), is not included in this list as there are many errors in his citation counts (in the WoS). The results above show that awardees from Eastern Europe and generally the earlier ones have a lower h-index because there is a general increase in citations over time due to an increase in coverage of the WoS (Hu et al., 2020) as well as in the length of reference lists (Petersen et al., 2019).

As a confirmation that Loet Leydesdorff has indeed the highest h-index, we determined the h-index of Eugene Garfield, Loet Leydesdorff, and Mike Thelwall (the second in the above list) in the database Dimensions.

Here we found:

Awardees	h-index
Garfield, Eugene	36
Leydesdorff, Loet	86
Thelwall, Mike	69

These data confirm Leydesdorff's leading position.

We conclude that Loet Leydesdorff is not only recognized by his peers (by assigning him the Derek J. de Solla Price memorial award in 2003) but also a basic citation indicator such as the h-index places him on top of his colleagues.

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