Review of: "Measuring researchers' success more fairly: going beyond the H-index"

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The author presents an alternative numerical measure to capture the success of a researcher. The article is easy to read, but I miss some aspects of the task that cannot be overcome by a new equation. First, not every citation is the same. It is known that articles get cited for many reasons, including when the citing article disagrees with the cited article. Therefore, we should wonder if the raw citation count is a measure of success at all. More detailed data is not widely available, but the Citation Typing Ontology allows us to start capturing this.

There is a second assumption here: the success of a researcher can be measured with only a subset of research output of the researcher. The journal article is currently indeed the mean form of research output, probably closely followed by books and book chapters, at least when it comes to citations. Data and software is acknowledged as essential forms of research output nowadays, but here too citation data is not widespread and hard to include. DataCite and Software Citations are projects set to change this, but infrastructure is still under development.

A third aspect is the weight of the authors. While it sounds logical that the weight decreases with the author, it is only one possible weighing scheme. A practice I have seen at a Swedish university in the past is the first and last author having a higher weight than all middle authors. One could also argue that advantage could be taken from the information in the author role annotation with the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) used by a growing number of journals.

Concluding, while I believe the new equation captures better the author roles than the H-index, I do not have the impression it captures well the success of a researcher.