



Variety (at a high standard) is the spice of life



One of the aims that an Editorial Board of an internationally accredited journal (such as that of the SAIMM) aspires to achieve is to present to its readers novel, high-quality scientific and technological information. This requires papers submitted to the journal to be vigilantly reviewed and evaluated and, once published, assessed in terms of the citations arising from them. The number of citations affects the journal's Impact Factor and related publishing evaluation norms. The Impact Factor of the journal in turn directly affects the professional standing of academics associated with the papers printed in that journal.

For a journal to be successful for all parties concerned, it is essential that it features only the highest level of research showing uniqueness, relevance, and previously unknown information.

However, there comes a time when young professionals, whether in their final years of study or early in their professional lives, are obliged to submit papers in order to build their own reputations and, more relevantly, to meet the requirements for graduation. For example, a doctoral student is required to publish at least two papers in an internationally accredited journal in order to be awarded his or her degree, while a master's student is required to produce one such paper. The question then arises as to where to submit such papers for publication and whether the papers meet the journal's publication criteria.

Given the high standards that journals set, and that senior students need to publish despite their limited experience or highly focused research topics, it is often difficult to reconcile these two requirements. However, the Editorial Board of this Journal believes it has found common ground in this dilemma by hosting an annual student conference at which senior students are invited to present their completed mining and metallurgical topics. From that event, the best papers are invited to be submitted for review. Once the papers have been reviewed and have met the criteria of the Journal they are selected for publication.

On this basis, the SAIMM Journal has, for many years, published one or more of its monthly editions featuring such top student papers. Readers will note the wide variation in topics and the nature of the research, all of which address issues of concern within the greater mining and metallurgical value chains worldwide.

In summary, may I refer to the previous month's Commentary which called for industry to provide suitable research topics for senior mining and metallurgical students to undertake in order to meet the criteria for publication in journals such as this one.

The Editorial Board looks forward to many more student-based research papers in future, papers that will benefit the industries and communities in which the students are destined to serve and which will enhance the students' own professional careers.

This month's topics include an investigation of the ability of yielding rockbolts to resist multiple impact loads, which has considerable bearing on underground construction and safety. Research concerning the socioeconomic factors that influence women's engagement on boards in the mining world led to significant recommendations based upon the findings. Another investigation found that the reduction of willemite in the presence of CaO showed considerable metallurgical benefit, with improved zinc extractions of up to 93%. In yet another paper a new model is presented for computing dimension stone operational costs during the cutting phase. This is significant as dimension stone is gaining rapidly in popularity because of its widespread use in construction.

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