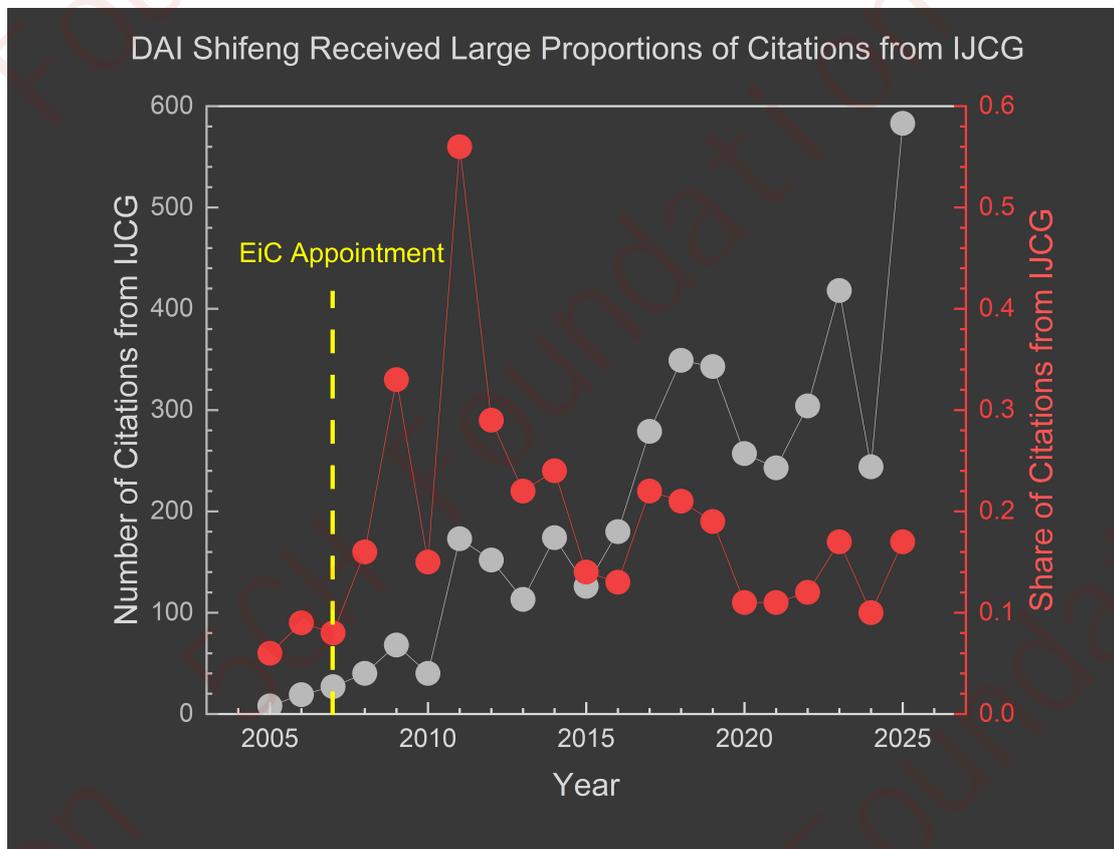


International Journal of Coal Geology Contributes High Proportions of the Citations to the Editor-in-Chief

A previous investigation [1] revealed that about 17.5% citations to DAI Shifeng (代世峰) in 2025 came from the "International Journal of Coal Geology" (IJCG), the journal for which he services as the Editor-in-Chief. However, our further investigation shows that the phenomenon was common over the last two decades.



We retrieved reference list data for all articles published in IJCG between 2000 and 2025 from the OpenAlex database. We first counted the number of cited works co-authored by DAI within these reference lists, to quantify the annual number of citations DAI received from IJCG publications. We then compared these annual IJCG-derived citation counts with Dai's total annual citations obtained from his Google Scholar profile, and calculated the annual proportion of his total citations attributable to IJCG.

Our results revealed a pronounced increase in the annual number of citations to DAI from IJCG publications, rising from 8 citations in 2005 to 583 citations in 2025. The share of Dai's total annual citations attributable to IJCG increased from 6% in 2005 to a peak of 56% in 2011, followed by a gradual decline to 17% in 2025.

In addition to a rise in the total number of articles citing DAI's publications since 2025, our analysis identified a large number of articles containing an exceptionally high volume of citations to DAI's work. For example, article [2] published in 2025 cited 66 references co-authored by DAI. Such article, which heavily cited DAI's publications, were usually not co-authored by DAI. It remains unclear whether they were coercive citations, but the necessity of such extensive citation practices is highly questionable.

Notable, about 56% of DAI's annual citations in 2011 came from IJCG. During the last two decades, from 2005 to 2025, the share of DAI's annual citations from IJCG exceeded 20% in seven years: 2011 (56%), 2009 (33%), 2012 (29%), 2014 (24%), 2017 (22%), 2013 (22%), and 2018 (21%). Such high share of annual citations from a single journal, one he serviced as the Editor-in-Chief, also raised concerns about whether they were manipulated.

We want to address that some reference data is missing from the OpenAlex database, therefore, the share of DAI's annual citations from IJCG is likely underestimated.

[1] 5GH.2026.000012.R7

[2] 10.1016/j.coal.2025.104848

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