

PATTERNS OF INFORMATION SOURCES USED BY GRADUATE STUDENTS: A CITATION ANALYSIS OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS IN THE FIELD OF ISLAMIC STUDIES.

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ABSTRACT

This article depicts the results of a study carried out to ascertain the information pattern based on the sources used by graduate students from the Islamic Studies Academy submitted at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. A total of 14377 citations consisting of 54 doctoral dissertations from the Year 2005 to 2009 were examined using the citation analysis. The highest citations per dissertation was 684, while the lowest being 105 citations. The result shows that the materials used by graduate students in this field vary and are multidisciplinary by nature. Books were cited more than other forms of sources contributing 65%, where journal articles contributed 20%. Conference proceedings contributed 11%, dissertations and thesis 3% and other categories consisted of web sites, interviews and legal documents contributing 9%. These findings corroborate with previous citations done in the Humanities discipline. Among the most popular cited journals are in-house journals namely *Jurnal Syariah* and *Jurnal Usuluddin*. In addition, graduate students used a substantial amount of Malaysian language sources at the rate of 60%, Arabic language scholarships contributed to 40% of the total citations. Approximately 30% of all sources cited are over 10 years of age. Hence, this study provides valuable insights to guide librarians in understanding the sources used and serves as an analytic tool for the development of source collection in the library services.

Keywords: Citation Analysis, Doctoral Dissertation, Islamic Studies, Malaysia, Library Sources.

INTRODUCTION

Generally in the world an academic library is the pulse to teaching and learning in institutions of higher learning. Hence, an academic library needs to provide services and information resources that are relevant, of high quality, precise and instant to users, in particular students and university lecturers. As such, information resources in print and electronic form are information resources that are of utmost importance to an academic library. Both these form of resources are very important in studies conducted by university lecturers and also students either at undergraduate or postgraduate levels..

Printed information resources are needed to enable users to refer to materials that are authentic in nature, original and authoritative. Whereas electronic information resources are provided to enable various information required by users to be easily and effectively accessed. In Islamic studies, printed information resources are the main source and choice of users in view of the limitation of said information being changed into electronic form to preserve the originality of the said materials.

Amongst academic libraries in Malaysia offering information resources in Islamic studies are the Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM) and Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) libraries. Library's collections must be reflected in the reference of research carried out in a particular university. This study is to demonstrate the availability of source information through Phd dissertations and not the quality of the sources.

Bibliographies are a very important area to reserachers and it can serve as a guide for initiating research. There are several literatures on Bibliography of Islamic studies such as John Makdisi, 1986, "Islamic Law Bibliography", *Law Library Journal*, 78(103-189); Laila al-Zwaini & Rudolph Peter, *A Bibliography of Islamic Law, 1980-1993*.; and also Aghnides Nicholos Prodromon, 1916, *Mohammedan Theories of Finance: With an Introduction to Mohammedan Law and a Bibliography*;

Interestingly, where Knievel and Kellsey have pointed out that the wide variety of subfields in religion makes this another field in which further research would be fruitful. Citation analyses however, could not give an overview of the collection use given that there are other approaches that can be used by library. While citation studies have flaws, where it can be considered as an unreliable method, however, many studies have used this approach to help librarians to make decisions on materials to purchase or to stop. p. 6, 1994, Do citation matters.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to examine the use of information sources by postgraduate research students as reflected by the references they listed out at the end of their doctoral dissertations. The study aims to answer the following questions:

- a) What is the average number of references?
- b) What is the language distribution of titles cited?
- c) What are the types of literature cited?
- d) What is the age span of literature cited?
- e) Are the inhouse journals frequently cited?
- f) Do the references cited fall within similar discipline areas or extend over other disciplines?

METHODS

This study has adopted similar methods of the previous study on citation analysis of dissertations in a single institution. The data gathered for this study are compiled based on doctoral theses submitted to the Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur for a period of 9 years from 2005 to 2009. A total of 54 theses were retrieved directly from the University of Malaya Convocation Ceremony book within the mentioned period and the library web. The study used 50% of the titles from each of the two broad disciplines in Islamic Studies for citation analyses to obtain a more controllable and yet accurate sample. This exercise provided a total of 54 theses titles (27 *Shariah* and 27 *Usuluddin*) amounting to 14377 citations. The title pages and the bibliographies sections of the 54 dissertations were photocopied. The reference used in the 54 dissertations later used SPSS to obtain a quantitative analysis of the components. Hereon, the bibliographic references can be carried out. The analysis consists of type of references, year of publication, language and subject of references. The sources cited are then categorized into several types of documents, namely monographs that include books and chapter in books; scholarly journals, electronic publications, unpublished dissertations and thesis, proceedings and other publication consist of interviews, legal cases, unpublished manuscript and also archival documents. Journals cited are ranked and cross-referenced against the sources in the campus library's holdings. This is to ascertain its availability in the database or printed form. The data collected are then presented in tables and graphs manner using various headings.

FINDINGS

1. Average Number of Citations Used by Islamic Studies Researchers

Table 1: Average Number of Citations by Years and Disciplines

Year	Discipline		Total	Percent	Highest number of citations	Lowest number of citations	Average
	<i>Syariah</i>	<i>Usuluddin</i>					
2005	2,212	1,718	3,930	27.3	658	153	328
2006	858	1,470	2,328	16.2	374	115	194

2007	1,688	1,179	2,867	19.9	684	116	319
2008	1,023	672	1,695	11.8	303	115	212
2009	1,513	2,044	3,557	24.7	283	105	209
Total	7,294	7,083	14,377	100.0	-	-	-
Average	261	236	-	-	-	-	-

The 58 dissertations give a total of 14,377 citations for analyses. Table 1 indicates the total number of citations based on year of the dissertations produced for both disciplines (*Syariah* and *Usuluddin*). Year 2005 shows the highest citations with 3,930 (27.3%) citations compared to the other years. While year 2008 shows the lowest citations with 1,695 (11.8%) citations only. Overall, the total number of citations for each year is quite similar.

Individually, the total number of citations is among 100-600 citations. The highest reaches up to 684 citations, while the lowest is 105 citations per each dissertation.

Out of this total, it is found that the number of citations in the Phd dissertations are extensive. In other words., the researchers can be considered as heavy resource users (Haycock – Citation analysis off education, LRTS 48(2). Although some has argued that beile et al “ a microscope or a mirror = The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 30 (5) 347 – that developing research collections which depended on postgraduate dissertation citation analyses should proceed cautiously.

2. References

(a) Language

Chart 1: Language of the references

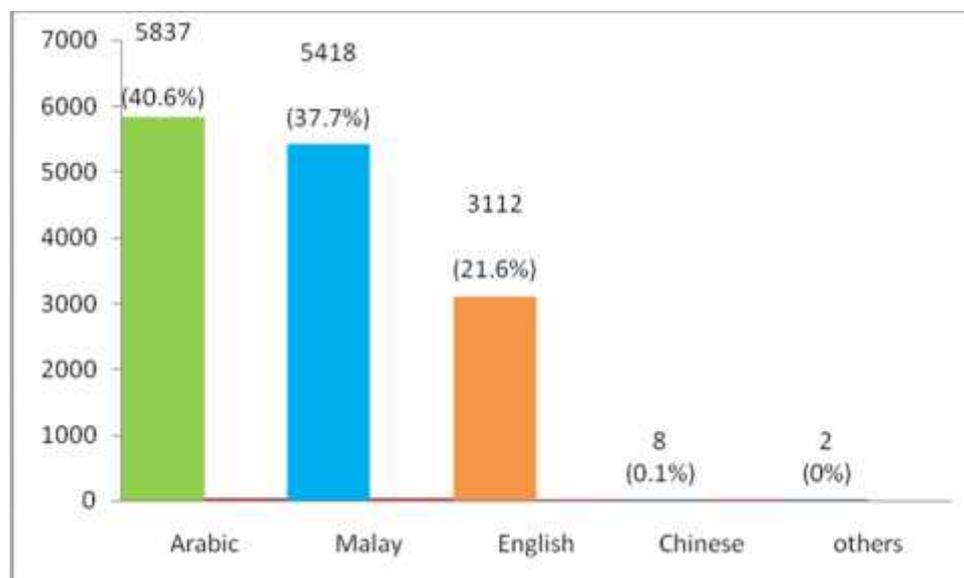
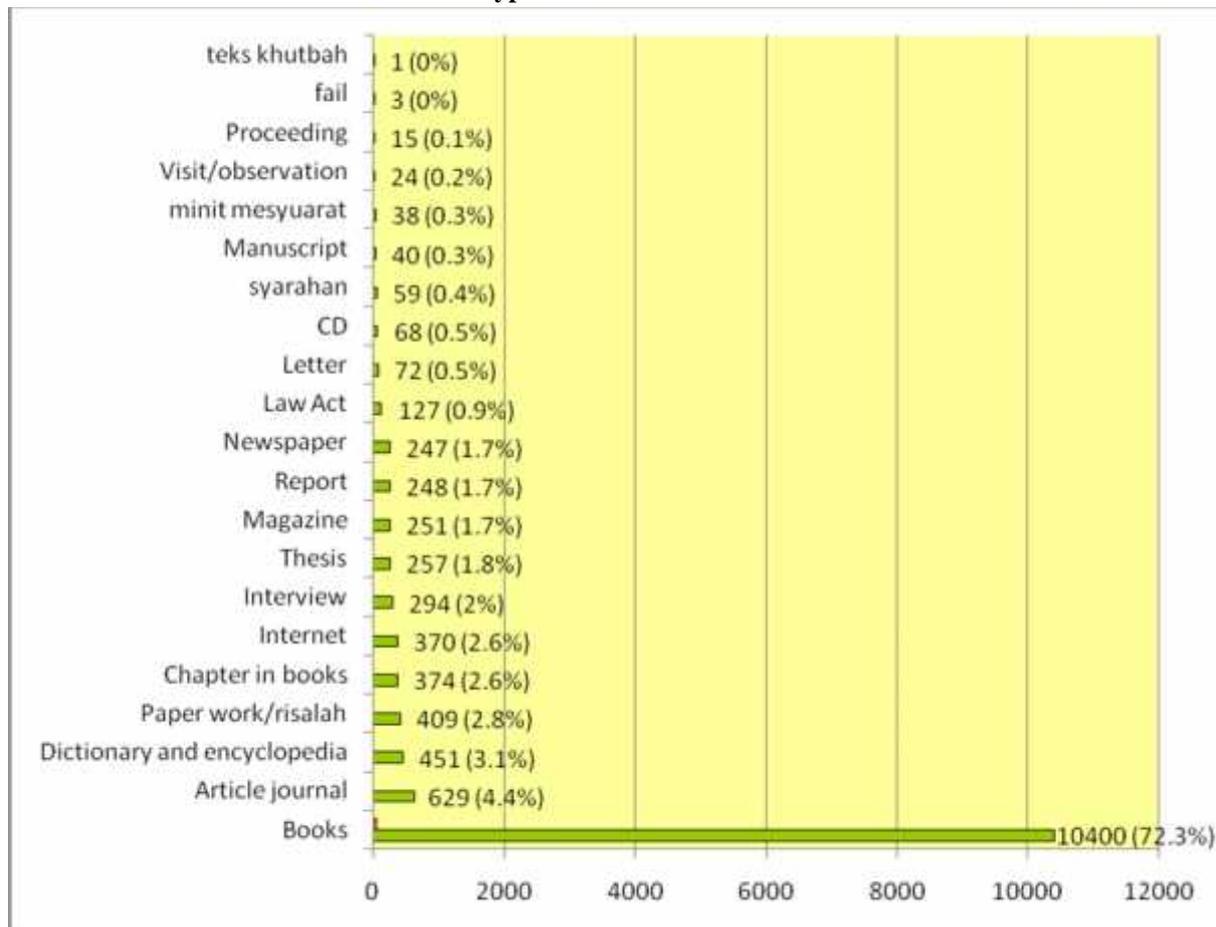


Chart 1 shows that references to Arabic sources are dominant in the area of Islamic studies. Since the dissertations are in the Malay language the references in Malay are also important to the students. Interestingly there are 8 references (0.1%) from the Chinese language. The total number of citations in the Malay language outnumber the English citations. This shows that the dissertations preferences are in the Malay language as most of the researchers are local. This finding is similar to another study in which the mother tongue language is far more than the English citation

(b) Type of references

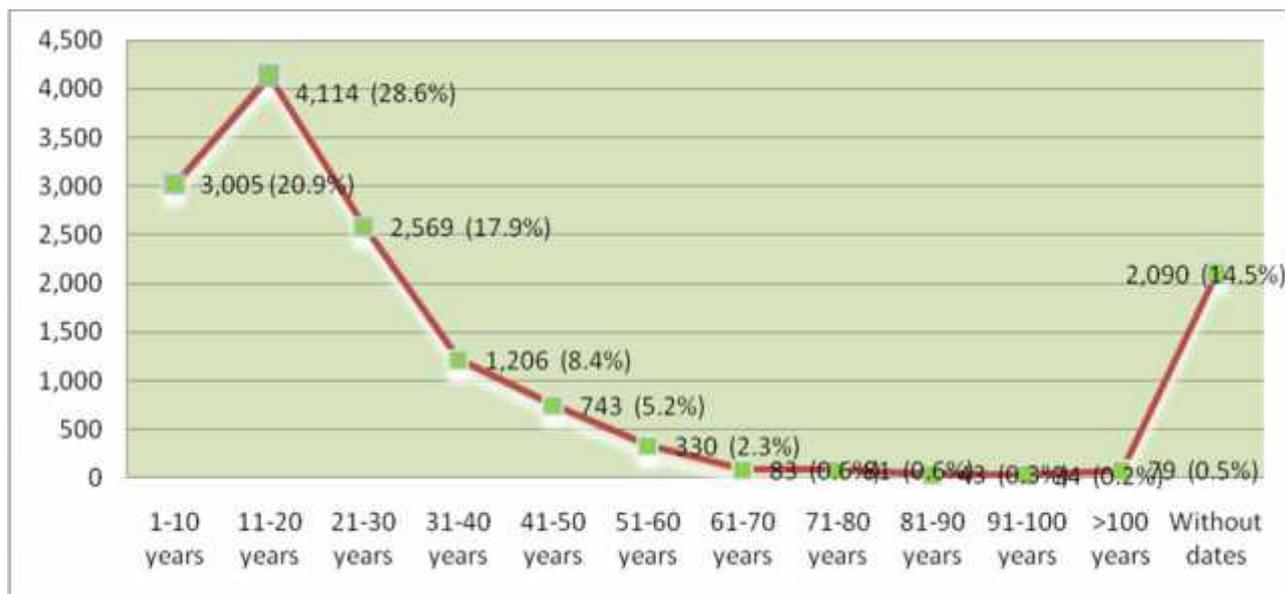
Chart 2: Type of references



There are varieties of references cited by the PhD students which consist of books, article journals, dictionaries, etc. Books are the most cited reference by the PhD students in Islamic studies (72.3%) followed by article journals (4.4%). Citations of the journals are very much different compared to the book. Although some studies in the field of Humanities indicate that the books are most referred to compared to the journals, the differences in percentage gap between books and journals used is not so big as it is in this study (Although there have been some development of e-journals and e-books, the printed materials especially the classical form is still needed for references). This mean that print sources are considered by the researchers as the main source of information for Islamic studies. Surprisingly, references to books compared to journals are comparatively voluminous of 70 % and 4% respectively. This finding is quite different from a previous study by Kyvik Svein, changing trends in publishing behaviour among University faculty. 1980-2000, scientometrics, vol 58(1), 2003: 35-48. Although books are common sources of information, but the distribution of articles in journals and books is even. (Kyvik, Svein) – This situation is due to the lack of interest or because it has not yet become a culture among Islamic Studies researchers. With this situation, the library has become the main place for physical visits in doing research and therefore needs to improve their facilities, especially the opening hours (Aamir Rasul, Singh Diljit, MJLIS 2010, 15 : 3, p

(c) Age of references

Chart 3: Age Distribution of the Citations Used by Islamic Studies Researchers



According to the age of the citations, chart 3 shows the distribution. The citations are sorted in accordance to the year of publication and then banded in 10 -year categories. The latest publication referred to was published in the year 2009. Almost 50% of the citations were of publications published within 1-20 years, and there are 14.5% citations without dates.

(d) Subject Distribution of Citations

Table 2: Subject Distribution of Citations Used By Islamic Studies Researchers

Category	Frequency	Valid Percent
Islamic jurisprudence	1,896	13.2
Politics & nation	1,212	8.4
History	1,146	8.0
General	980	6.8
Quran & Quranic exegesis	918	6.4
Education & psychology	882	6.1
Culture & society	871	6.1
Aqidah & belief	868	6.0
Law	852	5.9
Management & administration	762	5.3
Hadith & science of hadith	735	5.1
Economics	697	4.8
Da'wah	614	4.3
Language & linguistic	429	3.0
Philosophy	367	2.6
Banking & finance	321	2.2

Methodology	298	2.1
Akhlaq & tasawuf	293	2.0
Sciences	236	1.6
Total	14,377	100.0

Table 2 shows that citations used by Islamic studies researchers cover various subjects due to their field of research topics. Most of the citations used are in the category of Islamic jurisprudence (13.2%), followed by politics and history which are 8.4% and 8.0% respectively. These three categories of citations are closely relevant and synonymous with the nature of Islamic studies itself. All research cannot be separated from the aspect of Islamic jurisprudence, as well as its history. Meanwhile, 6.8% of the citations categorized as general which contain websites, interview with respondents, fieldwork observations, etc. This indicates that Islamic researchers nowadays not only do their research on the theoretical level, but also practically to obtain empirical and up-to-date data.

(e) Most Cited Journals

Table 3: Most cited journal

Rank	Journal	Frequency	Percent	Index by ISI	Index by SCOPUS	Availability
1	jurnal syariah	41	6.5	x	x	
2	Journal of Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic	20	3.2	X	x	
3	jurnal usuluddin	19	3.0	X	x	
4	jurnal penyelidikan islam	18	2.9	X	x	
5	jurnal AFKAR	9	1.4	X	x	
6	jurnal islamiyyat	8	1.3	X	x	
6	the american journal of islamic social sciences	8	1.3	X	x	
7	majalah muslim mu'asir	7	1.1	X	x	X
8	intisari	6	1.0	X	x	
8	journal in islamic studies	6	1.0		x	X
8	jurnal dakwah	6	1.0	x	x	X
8	jurnal IKIM	6	1.0	X	x	
8	jurnal pendidikan islam	6	1.0	X	x	

Table 3 shows the most cited journal by the PhD students at the University of Malaya. As shown in chart 2 there are only 629 references cited from article journals. The most cited journal is *Jurnal Syariah* with 6.5%. *Jurnal Syariah* is the journal published by the Academy of Islamic Studies since 1993 (Raihanah & Asmak, 2009). Most of the journals cited are available at the library of University Malaya except few as shown in the table. Most of the journals referred to is in printed form. This shows that the researchers are not widely using the electronic facilities journal or database in the course of their research. Interestingly, there are also references to

non-Islamic Studies Journals. And this shows that the PhD dissertations of Islamic Studies at the University of Malaya reflect the multidisciplinary nature in research. (Haycock – citation analysis of education – LRTS – 48(2)...

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study is to examine the pattern of citing behaviour of a Phd thesis in the field of Islamic studies at the Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya. In order to have a full picture on the library collection use, a combination of analyses methods are important. However, by using this method, at least, this study is able to understand the pattern of collection use in the area of Islamic studies. Out of 14377 citations, this study has shown that

books are the main references. The results in this study support previous studies, especially in humanities, that books are the most commonly cited. Despite books, journals have become important sources. However, this study shows that journals are not widely referred to although they are readily visible in the online access databases to full text as well as indexed in indexing and abstracting services.

The citations show that, the study of Islamic studies is now considered as multidisciplinary in nature. Various sources from different disciplines used in the citations. This finding is corroborating with another study in which the specific discipline is interdisciplinary, as demonstrated through its sources used (Bradley Brazzeal and Robert Fowler, 2005, 26(2): 91 – Science & Technology Libraries 91-106). It was found in this study that the citations used materials from outside of their discipline, such as law, economics, history, management and politics. Therefore, librarians who work with the discipline of Islamic studies must ensure that the needs for multidisciplinary sources are adequate as the graduate students have access to other useful materials such as legal documents, cases, archives materials and others.

Perhaps in the future, researchers in the field of Islamic studies will then increase their behaviour in citing journals. This coincides with Butler's view that at present there is an indication that the fields of social science and humanities have been actively publishing their articles in the indexed and high impact journals, especially in the Web of Science. Recently many journals in the fields of social science and humanities have emerged and researchers in these fields have made the indexed and high impact journals as an important avenue in their publications. There is no exception in the field of Islamic Studies, when several journals in the field have recently been indexed in the Web of Science among others such as *al-Shajarah*, *Islam and Muslim Christian Relations*, *al-Qantara*, *Journal of Shia Islamic Studies*, *Muslim World*, *Welt Des Islams*. Apparently this development has attracted many researchers in the field of Islamic Studies to use the index to search for articles in the field. With the emergence of this wave, the library will need to consider a special database in the field of Islamic Studies such as *Index Islamicus*, as what has been suggested by Zainab.

In promoting the use of database among the postgraduate students pursuing a doctorate programme, it is also necessary for information literacy programmes to be held periodically, especially in the quest for materials in the field of Islamic studies. This will include the use of the web for information or even as a curricula and also increase the information literacy programs.

Some possibilities of infrequent use of journals are due to the location in the library, completeness of cataloguing records, and the availability of electronic access and numbers of articles published per year.

It cannot be ascertained whether the finding in this study is something that is unique to the field of Islamic studies in the University Malaya. As the field of Islamic Studies has attracted interest many researchers around the world, several universities/institutions have offered graduate programmes in the field of Islamic Studies among others such as the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, National Centre for Excellence for Islamic Studies Australia, Melbourne University, Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Edinburgh, Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Georgetown University, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, University of Oxford, and also state Islamic Universities in Indonesia. Therefore similar studies can be made regarding these institutions and centres to learn about the patterns and collection of information sources through their postgraduate dissertations.

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