

ABSTRACT

ANALYSING THE RESEARCH TRENDS AND USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES AMONGST POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE HUMANITIES

by

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This study attempts to analyse the research trends and use of information sources amongst postgraduate students in the humanities. The data for the analysis is based on master's and doctoral dissertations submitted to the University of Malaya Library between 1984 and 1994.

A total of 259 dissertations were submitted during the 11 year period under study. Dissertations submission pattern shows that the trend in local research in the humanities is on the increase with a slight drop in 1994. The main contributors are postgraduate students enrolled at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Education. Within the former faculty, the top three contributors are the Department of Malay Studies, Islamic Studies and English Studies. Researches are focused on local studies and the highest research activity is indicated by researchers in language and literature.

A random sample of 5,610 citations were selected from 104 dissertations (40% of total dissertation sample). Citations were categorised by source type (books, journal articles, conference papers, theses, book chapters, government documents, newspapers and others); authorship pattern, age, language, geographical and subject distribution. The findings were then compared to other citation studies in the humanities.

Results from the citation analysis show that 52% of the documents used by the postgraduate researchers were monographs and single-authored papers. The scattering of literature used by researchers in the humanities covered a wider range of subjects. The age dispersion of citations used in the humanities spread over 170 years and the useful life of the documents is 18 years. The preferred language of postgraduate researchers is English rather than the Malay language. More than 40% of the documents used were published in the Asian region. Postgraduate researchers in the humanities cited a high percentage of documents within the discipline itself.

Results from the trend and citation study helped to identify the humanities research trends, characteristics of information sources used for effective resource allocation and formulation of research collection policies in order to meet the information needs of humanities researchers.