

CHAPTER SIX
SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT,
RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY AND CONCLUSION

Suggestions for Improvement

In the process of this study, the researcher faced some difficulties when compiling bibliometric data for analysis from *JMBRAS* and its contents. To overcome these difficulties, some suggestions are given here for further improvement to the scholarliness of the Journal. With these improvements, it is hoped *JMBRAS* will become a better and more established AHSS journals of its kind in Malaysia and spearhead the promotion of Malaysian scholarship.

1. Firstly, citation styles of *JMBRAS* articles by its contributors should be standardised and uniform so as to ease collection, analysis and avoid waste of time in compiling such data. It was found that a number of articles contained different referencing patterns even though some general guidelines for authors were readily available in most back copies of the Journal.
2. Secondly, it should be emphasised to contributors of *JMBRAS* that proper documentation of references should be adhered to. Papers without any reference indicated the lack of scholarliness on the part of the authors and the publishing journal. In the present study, it was found that a total of 15 such articles exist in *JMBRAS* between 1987-1996, more than 10%.

3. Thirdly, *JMBRAS* should emphasize to authors of articles that the information provided in citations are accurate and complete. It was found that 136 citations (3.36%) were not complete. In one instance, information pertaining to a footnote of an article was missing probably due to technical error (*JMBRAS* 1991/2/3. Footnote 22, p. 98)
4. Fourthly, *JMBRAS* should indicate for prospective contributors that the Journal is being covered by international indexing and abstracting services either on the inside page or the front cover of the Journal. At the very moment, *JMBRAS* is being indexed and abstracted by two such agencies, that is *Anthropological Index* and *Historical Abstract*. This is important as to inform others for the visibility of articles published in this learned Journal. Therefore, efforts should be made to provide an abstract for each learned article along with the article by the authors concerned. The study shown that out of a total of 111 articles only two articles provided abstract as part of their articles. The inclusion of abstracts would enable a reader to review the suitability and usefulness of the articles concerned for his purpose, and help national and international abstracting and indexing services to cover the abstract much faster which will automatically ensure its world-wide dissemination.
5. Next, the volume and number of each issue together with the Journal's name, article's title and author should be printed in each alternate page concerned to ease referencing as practised by most learned journals articles. It is also wise to include the date when articles are received,

revised or accepted on the first or last page of each contribution being published.

6. Finally, biographical notes provided by contributors should be complete and up-to-date so as to ease such studies. In some instances, the researcher found biographical notes regarding certain authors were not readily available or appended in the relevant section or in earlier issues of the Journal.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. This bibliometric study of *JMBRAS* is only a preliminary one, further research and more thorough study on the journal should be carried out. For example, an in-depth citation analysis, especially with reference to journal self-citation, half-lives of the literature used, trends in coverage over a longer period, ranked list of journals cited, books cited, and other bibliometric aspects of *JMBRAS* from 1878 till the present day, needs to be carried out.
2. Apart from that, another very interesting avenue of bibliometric research would be the study of other Malaysian journals devoted to Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Science and Technology, Medicine, Agriculture, etc. Such studies, if done, would enable further investigation to see if the pattern of bibliometric data studied here are replicated. Among some established Malaysian journals are *Malaysian Nature Journal*, *Journal of Natural Rubber Research Institute* and *Journal of the Institute for Medical Research*.

3. Another interesting bibliometric topic is a more thorough study on the types, roles, potential utility and significance of acknowledgement prevailing in various types of scholarly journals as a mean to assess research performance and for disciplinary interpretation. Questions such as; how many categories of acknowledgement are there? Who are the authors acknowledging the contributions of others? and other related studies as to acknowledgement would be an added literature to bibliometrics.
4. Bibliometric profiling of certain well-known Malaysian individuals or other important figures can also be carried out to establish their citedness so as to study and evaluate their outstanding contributions in their specific field of interest. Some of these Malaysian individuals are Royal Professor Ungku Abdul Aziz , Professor Dato' Dr. Asmah binti Haji Omar, Professor of Malaysian History, Dato' Dr. Khoo Kay Kim and other intellectuals of international repute in their very field of interest.

Conclusion

The major findings of this present study supports the findings of previous citation studies by AHSS researchers. Heinzkill (1980), Stern (1983), Budd (1986), Hart (1993) and Goi (1997) in their citation studies concluded that the books and monographs are more important in humanities scholarship compared to journals. Goi (1997) in her dissertation found that 52% of total citations were to books while this study found a lower percentage of 37.3%. Another interesting finding is

the high incidence of single-authored papers among humanities scholars. The present study found that 95% of contributions in *JMBRAS* between 1987-1996 is single-authored as compared with Goi (1997) who reports that 89.94% of researchers in the humanities are single-authored. This proved beyond doubt that AHSS researchers prefer to work alone in isolation, not in collaboration with others (Stevens, 1956; Stone, 1982; Goi, 1997).

The study also reveals that the average number of words in the title of a *JMBRAS* article is 6.76 words, the average length of article 20.48 pages which contains an average 17.88 notes. However, only 36.04 percent of *JMBRAS* articles contained formal acknowledgements, 22.52 percent contained appendix or appendices and a meagre 1.8 percent contained abstracts. It is hoped with the findings of this study as to these bibliometric information which is a common practice in the field of bibliometric studies, a comparison can be made to other fields as it is believed that it varies from field to field. Apart from that, the findings of this study can also be made the base for further studies in other journals of other fields.

JMBRAS is indeed a learned and scholarly journal of international reputation in the field of AHSS published in Malaysia. The visibility and international stature of *JMBRAS* is proved by its being indexed and abstracted by two very well-established abstracting and indexing agencies, *Anthropological Index* and *Historical Abstract*. Apart

from that, the internationality of its many foreign contributors who come from such developed countries as United Kingdom, USA, France, Germany, Australia and other Asian countries showed its very credentials as an important source of scholarly communication and storehouse of knowledge. Moreover, the number of foreign contributions, around 60% of total contribution in *JMBRAS* indicates its visibility and quality as an AHSS journal.

Nevertheless, the local contribution to this important channel of scholarly communication is not very encouraging considering the fact that only 38.92% contributions are local. Hence, efforts should be made to attract and encourage Malaysian scholars to contribute papers in this journal.

Finally, from the findings of this study, *JMBRAS* can stake claim that it is the most authoritative, visible and pre-eminent AHSS journal in this part of the world, and as excellent channel of scholarly communication.