

**A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY ON THE RESEARCH TRENDS
OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE SCIENCES**

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Abstract

The study analyses trends in research activities in the sciences using data from theses submitted to the University of Malaya between 1971 and 1995. A total of 101 theses in nine disciplines in the sciences were studied during the 25-year period (1971-1995).

The study is divided into two parts. Part 1 is based on the information obtained from the 'Acknowledgement' section of all the 101 theses. It looks at the year of theses submission by discipline, distribution of theses submitted by race and gender of the researcher, and distribution of scholarship/grants and tutorship tenure by discipline.

Part 2 of the study is based on the information obtained from the 'Bibliography' section. The sample for this part of the study is confined to 51 of the 101 theses randomly selected from the nine disciplines. The study employed the proportionate stratified sampling method to ensure that the sample is representative of the total. A total of 10386 citations from the 51 theses formed the raw data for this part of the study.

The findings show that the discipline with the most number of theses submitted during the period of study is Botany (25 theses). The discipline with the least number of theses is Physiology (4 theses). The findings also show that there are more male postgraduate students (71) compared to the female postgraduate

students (30) in the sciences. There are more Chinese postgraduate students in the sciences when compared to the Malays (11) and Indians (18). The two disciplines with the most number of scholarships/ tutorship tenures are Botany and Zoology.

A study of the distribution of citation by discipline shows that the discipline with the most average citation per thesis is Biology. The type of document most frequently used by the science postgraduate researchers is the journal (7800). Books are a distant second with 1227 citations. The preferred language in the sciences is English (7353 citations).

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