

Chapter 27

Anatomy of Social Science Research Literature: A Scientometric Evaluation of Global Productivity

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ABSTRACT

This chapter evaluates the publication output and citation pattern of research papers in Social Sciences and Humanities based on the Science Direct Database, exclusively for the period 2006-2010. In addition to the analysis of trends in publication, the citation patterns and global publication profiles are emphasized. An extensive attempt has been also made to explore the strengths and weakness of different productive countries, affiliated organizations, and productive researchers considering their respective research productivity. The core findings indicate that the momentum in publication output has increased due to the growing participation of researchers in research and development activities, particularly in the area of social sciences at the global level and more identically in sub-fields such as: Lib. and Inf. Sc.; Sociology; Political Science; and Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bibliometrics, Scientometrics, Citation Study, and Content analysis are the concepts supplementary and complementary to each other in their respective applications in the domain of research which

are most popular tools extensively used in the field of Library and Information Science. This technique has been applied in the present study to evaluate Social Sciences research productivity at a global context for obtaining necessary inferences.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-4365-9.ch027

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study attempts to provide a more detailed account of the productivity and publication behavior of Social Scientists. The basic purpose of the study is to measure the contributions of the social scientists in the form of publication productivity to the four key domains of social sciences (relating to Education, Library & Information Science, Political Science and Sociology) during the period 2006-2010 as indicated in the *Science Direct Database (SDD)*.

The study primarily aims to achieve the following core objectives:

- To examine the growth and development of subjects as well as the research productivity of varied social scientists during 2006-2010;
- To forecast the trend of expansion of literature in past, present and future;
- Introduction of the information resources with the users' community;
- To study the subject-wise breakup of publications;
- To ascertain the year-wise break up of papers;
- To determine the authorship and collaboration pattern among social scientists with specific reference to four Social Science disciplines;
- To identify the most productive authors;
- To predict productivity of individual authors, organizations and that of an entire discipline; and
- To identify the geographical scattering of research products.

3. METHODOLOGY FOLLOWED

The following methodical steps were adhered to for the present piece of research:

- **Step 1:** The Online version of the 'Science Direct' database was scanned using Google search Engine.
- **Step 2:** For the practical visibility of the research, a total of 4000 articles (abstracts) were downloaded from 'Science Direct' bibliographic database randomly selecting four social sciences and humanities domains such as:
 - Library and Information Science;
 - Sociology;
 - Political Science; and
 - Education, with two journals from each area assimilating 500 papers per journal for the period 2006-2010.
- **Step 3:** Each items of information were then processed by developing 4 databases of each 1000 down loaded records taking from each area of study (500 records from each journal) adding essential fields viz. journal title, 1st author, number of authors, affiliation with institutions, country of origin (considering 1st author), year of publication, number of citations, etc. using MS-Excel spread sheet; and
- **Step 4:** Finally, all relevant data were then tabulated, collated, analyzed with optimum care to get inferences of the present research and to achieve the objective of the study.

4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY AND SAMPLE SIZE

- **Database used:** Science Direct Database
- **Subject coverage:** Social Science 4 subjects (Education, Library and Information Science, Political Science and Sociology)
- **Total number of Papers included:** 4000 Articles (covering 8 journals 500 papers from each adding two journals from each subject field)

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