

Bibliometric Analysis of MBA Dissertations Submitted at the Open University of Tanzania Library from 2008-2011

A.S. Samzugi

Associate Director and Librarian

Open University of Tanzania

E-mail: athumani.samzugi@out.ac.tz

C.M. Mwinyimbegu

Assistant Librarian

Open University of Tanzania

Abstract: *This paper examined the citation pattern used by MBA students at the Open University of Tanzania. References from a sample of one hundred MBA dissertations from the period of 2008-2011 were examined. Specifically, the paper examined the type of sources cited, age of the cited sources, authorship pattern, geographical location, and language of cited materials. Each MBA dissertation was manually analysed and citations were extracted from the references. The data derived were analysed by using MS Excel and n 16.0. Findings reveal that MBA students preferred books to other types of resources with personal communication being the least cited source. It was also revealed that most of the cited materials were between 2000 and 2009 which means that they were current sources. Most of the cited sources emanated from the USA. Single authored sources were most cited and there was an average of fifty citations per dissertation. 99.5% of the cited sources were in English. The study recommends that, since the libraries are moving from manual to electronic libraries, library users should be encouraged to also go electronically. Therefore libraries should equip library users with information literacy skills so as to cope with the fast changing information technologies. Tanzanian authors should write learning materials in Kiswahili if we are to embark on using Kiswahili as a medium of instruction.*

Keywords: *Citation, Bibliometric, Dissertations, Business Administration, Theses, Open University, MBA, Information Seeking Behavior, Library.*

INTRODUCTION

Masters in Business Administration is among the popular programmes offered at the Open University of Tanzania through the Faculty of Business Management. The modes of delivery for the MBA programmes are threefold. The first one is Distance mode which follows the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system of delivery (OUT Prospectus 2012/13:128). Evening and Executive use a combination of distance and conventional methods (op. cite). At the end of the programme students are required to write and submit a dissertation as a partial fulfillment for their degree programme.

In order to support the information needs of MBA students, the University has subscribed to various sources of information. Such sources include textbooks, printed and online journals, reports, conference proceedings and other information rich sources. The mentioned sources are compatible to business administration and management curriculum offered by the OUT. However, despite the fact that the University Library is well stocked with current materials related to MBA programmes, their actual usage is not known. Therefore, this study was conducted in order to find out the extent to which library resources are utilized by MBA students so as to enable the Library to determine the kind of materials that are most suitable for MBA students. The findings will help the library to evaluate which materials are not used and propose measures which will provide good returns for the financial investments made by the University. The findings will also assist the University Library in the budgeting process and improve collection development decisions.

The major objective of this study therefore, was to analyze the citation patterns of MBA students at the Open University of Tanzania. Specifically, the study looked at types of materials which were cited by MBA students from year 2008 to 2011, age of materials cited, geographical distribution of cited materials, average citations made per dissertation and language wise distribution of citations. The scope of the study is limited to Masters of Business Administration dissertations accepted by the University for the period of 2008-2011.

The investigation into citation patterns and authors productivity has been an integral part of library and information science. However, Ndumbaro (2007:57) noted that, this method has not been widely used in Tanzania. In Tanzania for instance, few studies using citations analysis have been conducted. Manda (1989) used this method to examine citations patterns of economic researchers at the University of Dar-es-Salaam. The results concluded that, there is a high frequency of citations in what is termed grey literature. He argued that, with the publishing industry in Tanzania being at an infancy stage, a large proportion of documentary sources are in grey literature format.

Dulle *et al* (2004:2) analyzed the citation patterns of agricultural scientists in Tanzania. The study involved the analysis of 295 Msc and 21 PhD theses submitted at the Sokoine University of Agriculture between 1989-1999; and 309 conference proceedings articles that appeared during the same period. The study revealed that, across the publications analysed, journals were highly consulted (44.3%) of the total citations compared to other sources of literature (books 25.1%; proceedings 10.3%; theses 4.2%; reports 5.7%; and other sources 10.4%). The analytical study of the citations showed that, researchers at Sokoine University preferred to use journals for their research. This could be due to the need of scientists to have current information in their research as journals are published frequently compared to text books. Other reasons may be contributed to the fact that journals are specialized in a given field.

Ndumbaro (2007) used citation counts to study the research trends in Dar-es-Salaam region from 1980 to 2003. The research findings showed that, large amount of data produced in Dar-es-Salaam(62%) was unpublished.

Samzugi (2012) examined the citation references of Grey Literature appearing in 67 PhD theses defended and submitted at the University of Dar-es-Salaam and the Open University of Tanzania between 2000-2008. Out of all cited grey literature, reports held the top position in ranking (4.49%), followed by unpublished conference proceedings (3.091%), theses and dissertations (3.091%), working papers (2.47%) and government publications (2.17%). What is interesting however is that, although it is claimed that theses and dissertations portray the academic rigor and are generated and deposited within the university library, their citations is not high in the rank of cited articles.

Olatokun and Makinde (2009), analyzed dissertations submitted to the Department of Animal Science, University of Ibadan, Nigeria during the period 2000-2007. Their findings showed that journals were the most utilized reference materials in the dissertations.

In a study conducted by Nkiko and Adetoro (2007), it was found that Covenant University Students cited a number of materials with books topping the list. They also found out that students mostly preferred to cite materials that were very current, 1-5 years of age.

Kushkowski, Parson (2003), conducted a longitudinal study of over 9,100 citations from 629 Masters and Doctoral theses and found out that authors favor current researchers regardless of discipline.

Machado *et al* (2012) analysed citation patterns in 30 doctoral theses in the field of education sciences at the University of Cordoba Spain between 1997 and 2002. A preference was found for citing books (56%) as opposed to journal articles (36%).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Citation analysis is one of the important and quite old branches of bibliometric study (Mahapatra, 2000) given by Eugene Garfield. According to Thanuskodi (2010), bibliometrics is a quantitative study of various aspects of literature on a topic and is used to identify the pattern of publication, authorship and secondary journal coverage to gain insight into the dynamics of growth of knowledge in the area under consideration. Citations are used in scholarly works to establish links to other works and researchers, which forms a part of primary scientific communication.

in a geographical proximity (Binwal, Chandel, & Saraf, 1990). Citation Analysis is used as research evaluation tool mostly used in library and information science.

Chikate (2008) defines citation analysis as references in one text to another text, with information on where that text can be found. That is to say, citation analysis means counting citations. According to Sharif and Mahmood (2004:172) citation

analysis represents a pool of archival knowledge from which authors retrieve established ideas and, in turn, generate new research ideas. This method is also useful for the determination of research patterns, ranking of departments and researcher productivity and core journal lists for collection management or development (Sharif&Mahmood.op.cite).

Data for citation analysis was collected from MBA dissertations submitted and available at the Open University of Tanzania Library and those found in the Institutional Repository produced from 2008 to 2011. A total of one hundred MBA dissertations were manually examined. Data was counted and recorded on a sheet. Thereafter data was organized, coded and analysed using Ms excel and SPSS version 16.0 so as to obtain tables, figures and frequencies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Type of Sources Cited

The analysis of the data obtained from 4324 citations provides insight into the type of resources preferred by MBA students. All 4324 citations were arranged based on type of bibliographic forms as shown in Figure 1 below. The result from the citations indicate that, there is high usage of books (33.9%) followed by journal articles (26.3%).

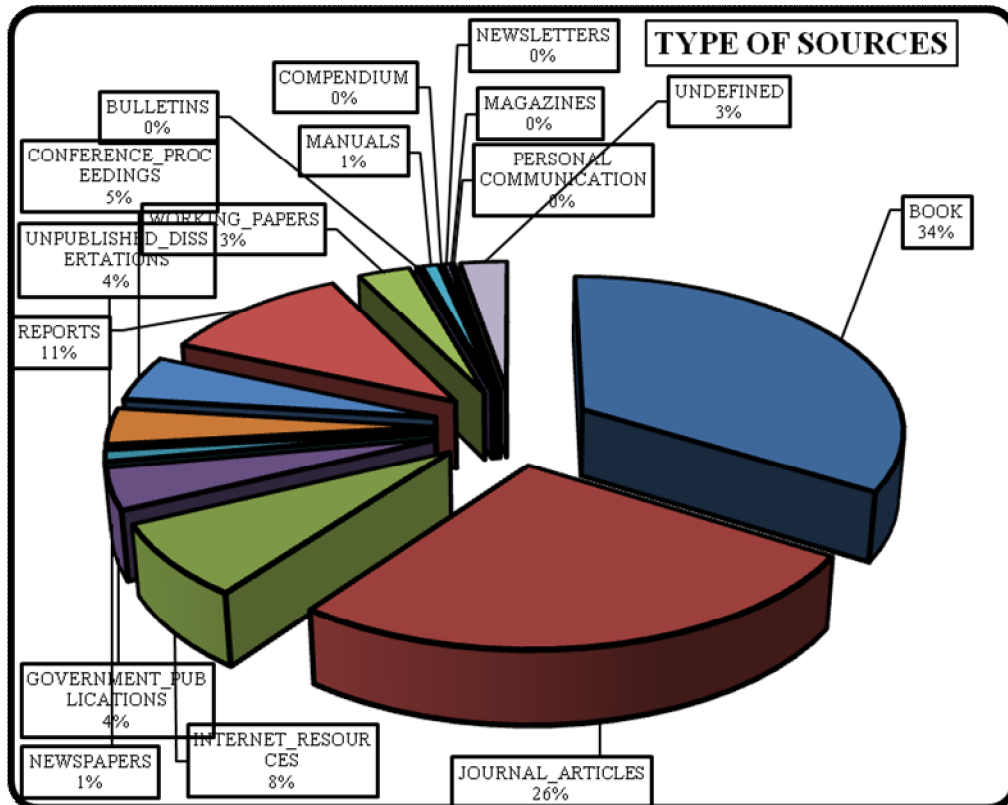


Figure 1: Type of Sources Cited by MBA Students at OUT
Source: Data Collected 2013

The general picture which comes out clearly from the results is that MBA students prefer to use books than other sources. This is in line with Nkiko and Adetoro (2007) and Machado (2012) who found that books were the most cited sources of information. However, a very interesting phenomenon is that journals (26.3%) have started to gain prominence in MBA cited works.

As seen in Figure 1 above, there are a variety of types of publications that are cited. Books are the most frequently cited type followed by journals. This signifies that most researchers publish their research in these two formats. These findings are also in line with Keat, Y. C. A and Kaur, K (2008) who found that journals and books are still the most used sources for information and that there is a steady increase in the use of e-media. However, with books topping the list, it is clear that, researchers still consider books as the most authoritative source of information. Findings further imply that, MBA students are aware of and use a variety of information sources in their work. This is encouraging as due to the fast changing technological advancement, information users are required to be information literate so that they can not only select usefully materials but also be able to evaluate and use them ethically.

Country wise Distribution of Cited Sources

Geographical analysis of citations basically provides information about the countries activeness in the production of knowledge in a particular field. In view of that, the study intended to establish the origins of documents cited by MBA students. Figure 2 below presents the geographical distribution of 4324 citations in MBA dissertations according to the country of origin.

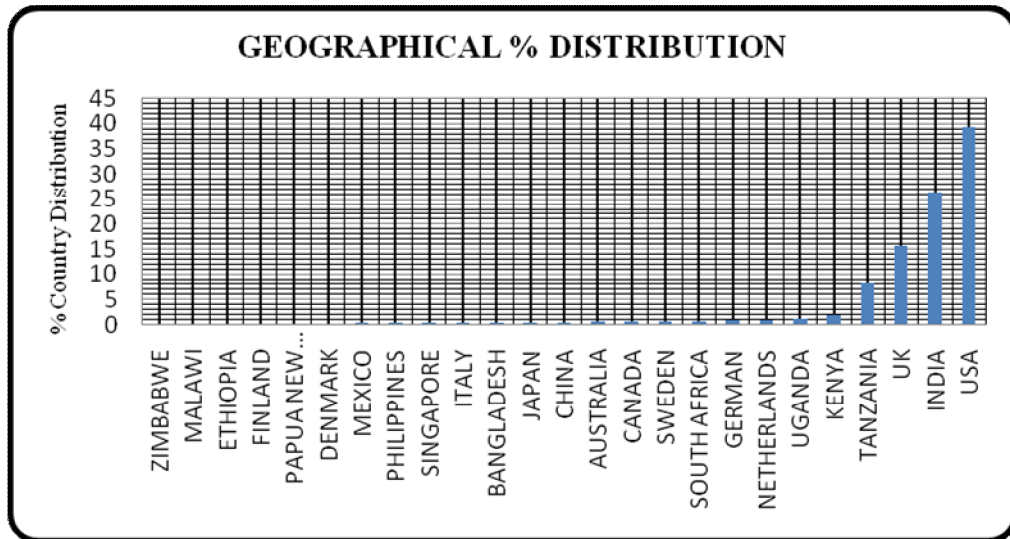


Figure 2: Geographical Distribution of Citations
Source: Data Collected 2013

Figure 2 above shows that 39.4% of the citations are from the USA followed by India (26.4%) and UK (15.6%). Tanzania contributes (8.3%) of the cited sources.

The study observed that most of the cited sources from Tanzania and other African countries consisted of grey literature such as reports, government publications and conference proceedings. Citing documents emanating from relevant contextual settings helps to get reliable examples because applications in one setting may not be viable in another. The fact that 99% of the cited sources are from other contexts, a really picture of the African/Tanzanian setting is not depicted. The main reason for using foreign sources, may be due to the nature of our publishing industry which is still at an infancy stage and therefore more publications remain as grey literature or authors prefer to publish their works to renown publishers worldwide because of prestige or it is easier to identify and acquire materials from other countries rather from Africa. The results are in line with the findings of Manda (1989) and Samzug (2012). Therefore, as a country, there is a need to revamp our publishing industries and encourage authors to transform their works from unpublished (grey literature) to published ones in order to improve their visibility.

Age of Cited Sources

Age is the number of years that a reference material has existed from the publication date. Basically, researchers prefer to cite current information in their studies because citing of recent literature has been regarded as an indication of the growth of a particular field. This is no exception to MBA works. Figure 3 below shows that 50.1% of the cited sources were between 2000-2009. Since the analyzed dissertations were of 2008-2011, it is therefore definite that authors have portrayed use of current resources.

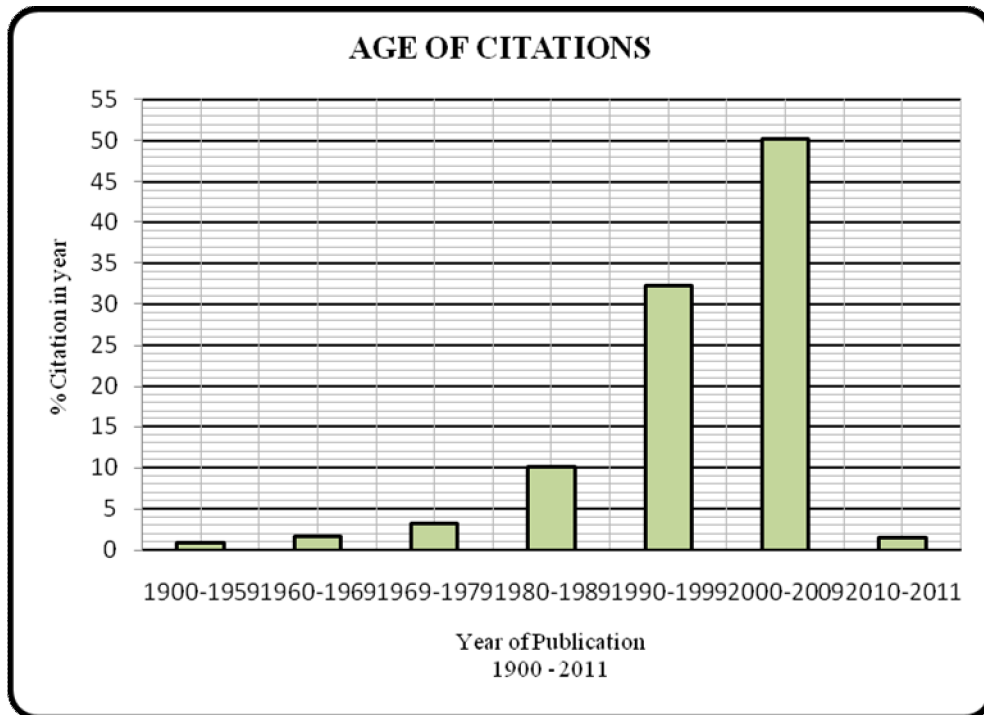


Figure 3: Age of Citations
Source: Data Collected 2013

Language Distribution of Citations

In Tanzania, the medium of instruction in higher learning institutions is English while Kiswahili is a national language. Results show that most of the sources that MBA students cited were in English language, 100%. The presence of Kiswahili, French and other languages is insignificant. For details refer to Table 1 below.

Table 1: Language of Cited Sources

Language	No. of Citations	Percentage
ENGLISH	4314	99.5
SWAHILI	15	.3
GERMAN	1	.0
SWEDISH	1	.0
FRENCH	3	.1
Total	4334	100

Source: Data Collected 2013

As seen in Table 1 above 99.5% of the citations were in English language. The results are similar with other fields of research. This can be explained by the fact that English speaking countries such as USA and UK have contributed much to the growth of business administration studies as well as the fact that many reputable publishers are based in those countries. In Tanzania, English is used widely in secondary schools and in higher learning institutions. English is also an international language used by different races to communicate with each other (Keat and Kaur (2008)). Many authors residing in various parts of the world, Africa and Tanzania included prefer to publish in English Language so that they can be recognized worldwide.

The excessive use of foreign books might also be due to the non-existence of local monographic literatures. Findings show a devoid of materials written in Kiswahili language and therefore, a very insignificant number of materials in Kiswahili were cited, only 0.3%. This implies that there are no scholarly materials written in Kiswahili language in this field and if there are, then may be the students are not aware of them. While there is a debate going on to make Kiswahili a medium of instruction in all levels of education in Tanzania, findings show that there are no relevant scholarly materials in the Business Administration field that are written in Kiswahili language. Therefore, in order to embark on the usage of Kiswahili as a medium of instruction, then sufficient resources should be made available in all subjects and at all levels.

Authorship Pattern

Figure 4 below presents the authorship pattern of citations of the studied MBA dissertations. The data indicates that 2074 citations, (47.9%) were single authored and 2260 citations (52.1%) were co-authored. The results imply that co-authorship is much preferred by MBA students. It can be concluded that in modern research, authors prefer to collaborate because of the multidisciplinary nature of the research. Collaborative research aids in improving the quality of articles contained in any

journal. Similar results were gained by Thanuskodi (op cite) who found that multi-authored papers are maximum in number accounting for 68.68% percent of total journal citations.

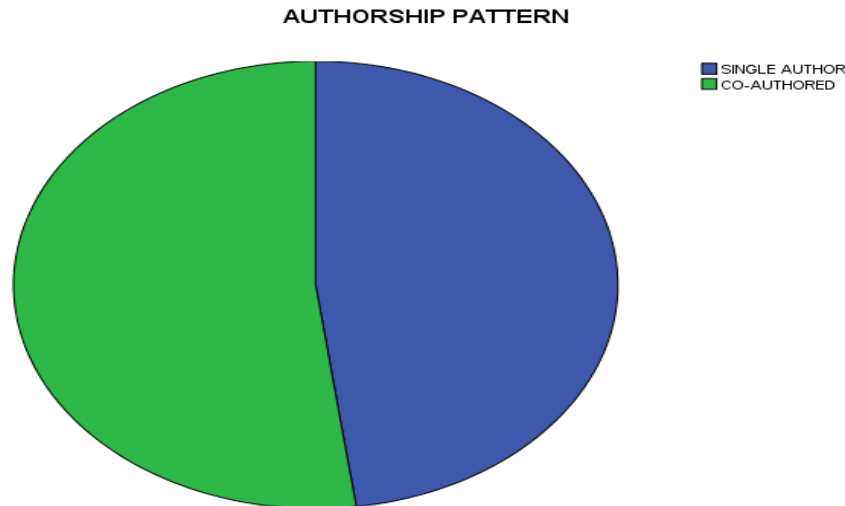


Figure 4: Authorship Pattern
Source: Data Collected 2013

CONCLUSION

The study serves as a baseline indicator of resources used by MBA students. Such findings help libraries to focus on collection development to support research needs. Moreover, these findings offer unobtrusive and cost-effective method of evaluating the collections ability in supporting library users. `

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has revealed that the resources used by MBA students in writing their dissertations follow the same pattern as those in other studies. The preference resources are books followed by journal articles which are mainly in English and originate from USA, India and UK. Though the cited sources are quite current, there is a need to increase awareness on the use of electronic resources of which the University has invested a lot. The library as well as the teaching staff therefore need to promote use of e-resources.

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