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Acknowledgement Patterns in Annals of Library and Information Studies 1999-2012

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Abstract

The present paper analyses the acknowledgements appearing in the research articles and short communications in Annals of Library and Information Studies covering the period 1999-2012. The acknowledgements included in this journal are further analysed in order to find out frequency of their occurrence, types, number of acknowledgements per paper, highly acknowledged individuals, and so on. The results show that slightly more than 20% of communications contain acknowledgements and an average acknowledgement per item is 1.49. The acknowledgements are of composite nature comprising of moral support, technical support, access to facilities, financial support and Peer Interactive Communication type. The most common type of acknowledgements relate to Peer Interactive Communication, comprising of almost 1/3rd of total number of acknowledgements. Further most acknowledged individuals and their institutional affiliations have also been discussed along with list of Peer Interactive Communication individuals.

Keywords: Annals of Library and Information Studies, Acknowledgements, Bibliometric Studies

Introduction

Like apologising, condoling, greeting or congratulating, acknowledgment is an illocutionary act in response to social expectations. It is much more than a simple catalogue of indebtedness. An acknowledgement is a statement of indebtedness to others to give due recognition to individuals or parties for the successful completion of a research article, book, thesis, project or experiment. It offers insight into the persona of the writer and the practice of expectation and etiquette that is involved in the patterns of engagement that define collaboration and interdependence among scholars.

Acknowledging in research publications refers to influential contributions to the reported scientific work. These are, like citation practices and authorship, a form of academic recognition that repays intellectual debt. But citations are formal expressions of debt; acknowledgments are more personal, singular and private expressions of appreciation and contribution.

Acknowledgements do give others a perception of the many contributions by others to the work completed and reflect a rich mix of personal, moral, instrumental, financial, technical and conceptual support received from institutions, agencies, coworkers, peers, family members, subjects and mentors (Cronin et al., 1993). But, their importance in bibliometric studies have been overlooked or neglected at many times and bibliometricians show more inclination to citation studies. However, there are a few studies on the practice, norms and pattern of acknowledgements and its existence in the scholarly writings. Blaise Cronin is one of the

pioneers in the study of acknowledgements, who, as a Professor of the School of Library and Information Science Indiana University, USA has conducted quite a few studies with his colleagues on acknowledgements and their importance in the field of bibliometric studies. Three studies conducted by Tiew (1998a, 1998b, 2002) showed the existence of acknowledgements in Malaysian learned journals, namely, Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and Journal of Natural Rubber Research. The present paper is based on the analysis of acknowledgements appearing in Annals of Library and Information Studies (ALIS) covering the period 1999-2012.

Literature review

Mackintosh (1972) examined acknowledgements pattern in sociology in an unpublished dissertation. He concluded that the lack of interest in acknowledgements does not necessarily indicate their irrelevance. A three–tier classification scheme was developed for the study, viz., facilities, access to data and help of individuals to study acknowledgements in the American Sociological Review.

Cronin (1991) explored the social functions and the cognitive significance of acknowledgements figured in Journal of the American Society for Information Science (JASIS*)* for the years 1970-1990. A six-category typology was developed by Cronin as shown in Table 1, applied to 444 acknowledgements of research articles in JASIS 1970-1990. Later on the jargons were replaced with more easily understandable terms as reflected in Table 1. He concluded that bibliometricians have given more importance to citations as compared to acknowledgements.
Again Cronin (1995) carried study on acknowledgements in information science, psychology, history, philosophy and sociology.

Table 1: Typologies of acknowledgements

MacKintosh 1972	Cronin 1991	Cronin McKenzie& Rubio 1993	Cronin 1995	Tiew & Sen 1999
Access to data		Access	Editorial/linguistic support	Access
	Trusted assessor [1]	Peer interactive communication	Conceptual support@	Peer interactive communication
Help of individuals	Moral support	Moral support	Moral support	Moral support
	Technical	Technical support	Instrumental/technical support	Technical support
	Dogsbody #	Clerical support	Clerical support	Clerical support
	Paymaster*	Financial support	Financial support	Financial support
Facilities	Prime mover**		Unclassified	Unclassified

":Secretarial support, editorial and presentational guidance, assistance with routine data capture, entry and analysis".

*Grants, scholarships, fellowships
** inspiration or drive provided by principal investigator, project director, dissertation adviser, mentor, guru.
[1] Feedback, critical analysis and comment from peers and co-workers acting as sounding boards and sources of new insight.
@"peer-interactive communication"

Cronin, Mckenzie and Stiffer (1992) conducted study on top ranking Library and Information Science journals (1971-1990). Personal acknowledgements are common in the scholarly communication. The pattern of acknowledgements varies from field to field and journal to journal. A small number of individuals are highly acknowledged while a majority is mentioned infrequently. The concentration is similar to that found in citation analyses of research productivity and positive rank order correlation between frequency of acknowledgement and citation frequency is there.

In another study, Cronin, McKenzie and Rubio (1993) investigated the scale and nature of acknowledgement behaviour in four academic disciplines; history, philosophy, psychology and sociology covering a twenty-five year period. A modified version of the typology developed by Cronin in an earlier study (Table 1) was used for this study. More than 5,600 acknowledgements were classified. Cross-disciplinary similarities and differences were observed. The frequency distributions of acknowledgements exhibited high levels of concentration and the authors' acknowledgement behaviours were highly consistent. Highly acknowledged individuals for each discipline were also identified.

Tiew (1998a) carried out study on Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in his MLIS dissertation and found out that only 36% articles contained formal acknowledgements. Tiew (1998) carried another study on Journal of Natural Rubber Research and explored the extent of acknowledgement being included in research articles and short communications. The results indicated that 75% of the articles and short communications contained acknowledgements.

Tiew and Sen (2002) analysed the acknowledged patterns of the research articles and short communications published in Journal of Natural Rubber Research (1986-1997) in respect of types, frequency of occurrence etc. Results showed that 74% of items contain acknowledgements. Average acknowledgement per item was 2.2; the most common type of acknowledgement was of technical support while peer interactive communication accounts for 44% of the total acknowledgements. A small number of individuals were highly acknowledged than the rest acknowledged infrequently.

Salager-Meyer; Alcaraz-Ariza and Berbesi (2009) analysed the acknowledgement paratext of medical research articles in English and Spanish in three countries, Venezuela, Spain and United States of America. The results showed that acknowledgements from the English-language samples were significantly more frequent and longer than those from both the Spanish and Venezuelan samples. Similarly, US had greater number of persons acknowledged and of grants received than those from both the Spanish-language corpora. There were differences in the number and types of funding sources. Moreover, in the three samples technical/instrumental assistance was more frequently acknowledged than peers' ideational input.

Salager-Meyer; Alcaraz-Ariza; Bricen˜o; and Jabbour, (2011) analysed the use of acknowledgements in medical articles published in five countries (Venezuela, Spain, France, UK and USA) from 1950 to 2010. For each country, 54 papers (18 research papers, 18 reviews and 18 case reports), evenly distributed over six decades, from two medical journals with the highest impact factors were selected. Only papers written by native speakers in the national language were included. Acknowledgments were most common in research papers accounting 40% in case reports and 31% in reviews. Reviews without acknowledgments were significantly more common than those with (31%), but there was no trend in case reports. Articles with acknowledgments predominated only after 2000. Since the frequency of use of acknowledgments remained stable over time in US and UK journals but increased in non-Anglophone journals, the overall increase is attributed to the change in non-English publications. It was concluded that the concept of intellectual indebtedness did not only differ from one geographical context to another, but also over and from one academic genre to another.

Objectives

The purpose of the present study is to examine the generic structure of the acknowledgements in ALIS journal in order to find out frequency of their occurrence, types, number of acknowledgements per paper, highly acknowledged individuals, and so on.

Methodology and scope

The present study attempts to analyze bibliometrically all formal acknowledgements carried by research articles and short communications appearing in the Annals of Library and Information Studies for the years 1999-2012. The journal is one of the oldest and established journals in the field of Library and Information Science published from India. All research articles and short communications are scrutinized to discover any acknowledgement. This section is found in clearly identifiable article-ending section and is labeled. Acknowledgements may be "compound entities" (Cronin et al 2004) where authors may, for example, thank for ideas, federal and/or industrial funding agencies for financial support and colleagues for moral support.

Results and discussions

Acknowledgements in Annals of Library and Information Studies

Table 2 reports that the practice of acknowledgements in research articles and short communications is not so common in this journal. Only 74 articles (20.61%) out of 359 articles contain formal acknowledgements. The maximum number of articles (38.46%) contains acknowledgements in the year 2006, and minimum number (7.14%) in 2007.

Table 2: Acknowledgements in Annals of Library and Information Studies.

Year	Number of articles	Number of articles with acknowledgements	Percentage
1999	16	2	12.5
2000	17	6	35.29
2001	17	4	23.53
2002	18	5	27.78
2003	19	5	26.32
2004	21	4	19.05
2005	23	4	17.39
2006	26	10	38.46
2007	28	2	7.14
2008	35	5	14.28
2009	34	1	2.94
2010	42	12	28.57
2011	36	10	27.78
2012	27	4	17.81
	359	74	20.61

Frequency distribution of acknowledgements

Table 3 reveals the frequency distribution of acknowledgements. The highest number of acknowledgements per article (2) is found in 2009 and 2012 and lowest in 1999 and 2007. On an average each article contains 1.49 acknowledgements.

Table 3: Frequency distribution of acknowledgements

Year	Number of articles with achnowledgements	Number of acknowledgements in articles	Mean
1999	2	2	1
2000	6	10	1.67
2001	4	5	1.25
2002	5	8	1.6
2003	5	7	1.4
2004	4	5	1.25
2005	4	6	1.5
2006	10	14	1.4
2007	2	2	1
2008	5	6	1.2
2009	1	2	2
2010	12	18	1.5
2011	10	17	1.7
2012	4	8	2
	74	110	1.49

Acknowledgements by Category

Table 4 shows acknowledgements by categories. Here, the distribution is on the basis of number of categories in one article. The largest number of acknowledgements are in the Peer Interactive Communication (PIC) category (33.64%) followed by moral support category (28.18%), clerical support (8.18%), financial support (6.37%), access and technical support (5.45% each). About 12.73% of the acknowledgements could not be classified under the categories mentioned due to inherent ambiguity, vagueness or lack of contextual clues.

Table 4: Category of acknowledgements

Year	Number of acknowledgements in articles	Moral Support	Financial Support	Access	Clerical Support	Technical Support	PIC	Unclassified
1999	2						1	1
2000	10	5			1	1	3	
2001	5	2					3	
2002	8	4			2		1	1
2003	7	4		1			1	1
2004	5	2		1			2	
2005	6	2					3	1
2006	14	3		1	1	1	6	2
2007	2				1		1	
2008	6	2		1	1		2	
2009	2	1			1			
2010	18	3	4	1	1	2	4	3
2011	17	1	2	1		2	8	3
2012	8	2	1		1		2	2
Total	110	31	7	6	9	6	37	14
		28.18%	6.37%	5.45%	8.18%	5.45%	33.64 %	12.73%

PIC Acknowledgements

Table 5 shows the distribution of PIC acknowledgements. The highest number of PIC acknowledgements (80%) is seen in 2011 while there is no PIC acknowledgement in the year 2009 and mean is 50%. This figure is close to Information Processing & Management (49.5%), lower than Journal of Documentation (56.5%), Journal of American Society of Information Science (54.9%) and higher than College & Research Libraries (46.2%), The Library Quarterly (42.6%).

Table 5: PIC Acknowledgements

Year	Number of articles with	PIC	Percentage

	acknowledgements		
1999	**2**	**1**	**50**
2000	**6**	**3**	**50**
2001	**4**	**3**	**75**
2002	**5**	**1**	**20**
2003	**5**	**1**	**20**
2004	**4**	**2**	**50**
2005	**4**	**3**	**75**
2006	**10**	**6**	**60**
2007	**2**	**1**	**50**
2008	**5**	**2**	**40**
2009	**1**	**NA**	
2010	**12**	**4**	**33.33**
2011	**10**	**8**	**80**
2012	**4**	**2**	**50**
	74	**37**	**50**

Number of acknowledgements per individual

Table 7 reveals the number of acknowledgements per individual. There are 37 acknowledgements in PIC category but there are total of 59 individuals acknowledged. Out of 59 PIC acknowledgements 3 individuals have been acknowledged twice, 42 have been acknowledged once. There is eleven numbers of anonymous referees, reviewers and editors.

Table 6: No of acknowledgements per individual

No. of times acknowledged	No. of individuals
1	**42**
2	**3**

Individuals acknowledged

Dr Chaitali Dutta from DLIS Jadavpur University Kolkata, Professor B K Sen from Information and Communication Society of India has been acknowledged twice. Again Dr Usha Mujoo Munshi has been acknowledged twice; she was former Chief Librarian of Indian Statistical Institute as well as Librarian Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi. A further investigation of the institutional affiliation of individuals indicates that almost all the individuals are from library and information technology institutions. Hence, it can be deduced that the individuals from library and information technology play important role in the growth of library literature as reflected in the journal under study.

Table 7: List of individuals acknowledged

Name	Acknowledgement score
Chaitali Dutta	2
Usha Mujoo Munshi	2
B K Sen	2
Alexander Pudovkin	1
A P Mishra	1
B Ramesh Babu	1
G J Chintawar	1
Gangan Prathap	1
H Shivananda Murthy	1
J P Srivastava	1
Jaideep Sharma	1
K C Garg	1
K P Majumdar	1
Krishnapada Majumdar	1
Lokesh Pandey	1
Nabi Hasan	1
Neeraj Chaurasia	1
R Lahiri	1
S Chattopadhyay	1
S M Zabed Ahmed	1
S R Mediratta	1
T N Athmaram	1
T Prem Kumar	1
William Nwagwu	1
Eugene Garfield	1
John Willinsky	1
Bidyarthi Dutta	1
Manoj K Joshi	1
Nagender Nath Dutta	1
S M Shahbuddin	1
Shanker B Chavan	1
Aruna Karanjai	1
Renu Arora	1
Nico Rasters	1
A Arunachalam	1
B D Gupta	1
C V Ranjan Pillai	1

Grant Lewison	1
R G Rastogi	1
Raf Guns	1
Check Thomas	1
R C Gupta	1
Soren Paris	1
R P Sharma	1
Subbiah Gunasekaran	1

Findings and Conclusion

The practice of acknowledgements in ALIS research communication is not so common as only 20.61% of items contain acknowledgements. The average acknowledgement per communication is 1.49 and there is composite nature of acknowledgements comprising of moral support, technical support, access to facilities, financial support and PIC. The most common category of acknowledgement found is PIC category accounting for about 1/3rd of the number of acknowledgements.

The mean percentage of the PIC acknowledgements is 50% which is close to Information Processing & Management (49.5%), lower than Journal of Documentation (56.5%), Journal of American Society of Information Science (54.9%) and higher than College & Research Libraries (46.2%), The Library Quarterly (42.6%). As most of the individuals acknowledged are from Library and Information Technology, so it can be deduced that the individuals from library and information technology play important role in the growth of library literature as reflected in the journal under study.

Acknowledgements are sophisticated textual constructs which bridge the personal and the public, the social and the professional, and the academic and the lay. Their use in research papers reflects the considerable significance of different persons associated with scholarly discourse. This is perhaps the most explicitly interactive genre of the academy whose purpose obliges writers to represent themselves more openly.

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