

**AUTHORSHIP CHARACTERISTICS IN SEKITAR PERPUSTAKAAN
1994-2003: A BIBLIOMETRIC STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

This bibliometric study attempts to explore the authorship characteristics in *Sekitar Perpustakaan*, one of the earliest library and information science (LIS) periodicals published by the National Library of Malaysia (PNM – Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia) since 1977. A total of 148 articles published in 20 issues of *Sekitar Perpustakaan* covering the period 1994-2003 were analyzed. Author characteristics such as name, gender, status, institutional affiliation, language preference of articles and authorship of articles were obtained, studied and analyzed. The findings reveals single-authored articles far outnumbered multi-authored articles at 79%; female contributors (65.74% or 71 authors) predominates male contributors (34.26% or 37 authors); middle-level professionals were the largest contributors of articles (59.3%); 83 (56%) of the articles published were in *Bahasa Melayu*, the national language, while 65 (44%) articles were in English; the top ranked contributor is Ding Choo Ming, Senior Research Fellow of Institute of the Malay World & Civilization, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia with nine contributions; and the most prolific institution is PNM with 41 contributing authors.

Keywords: Authorship Pattern, *Sekitar Perpustakaan*; National Library of Malaysia; Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia; Library and Information Science Periodicals; Bibliometric.

INTRODUCTION: PUBLISHING HISTORY OF SEKITAR PERPUSTAKAAN

Sekitar Perpustakaan, one of the earliest professional Malaysian library and information science (LIS) periodical is published by the National Library of Malaysia (PNM – Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia) (Tiew, 2001). It was first issued as *Sekitar, Buletin Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia* in the month of May 1977 by the PNM as a vehicle for the dissemination of information on matters concerning the National Library as well as developments at the international level of interest to the

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country. From issue Number 1, May 1977 to Number 12, January 1981, the publication was rather irregular at times one issue per year, bi-monthly, or five issues per year. However, presently it is published twice a year. Beginning from June 1981, the periodical was renamed *Sekitar Perpustakaan, Buletin Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia* and was given a new number, Number 1, June, 1981. From 1981 onwards, PNM continued coming out with its periodical and the most current issue is Number 37, 2003 which was issued in 2004. The forthcoming issue is Number 38, 2004 to be published in year 2006 which will be given a new volume number. According to Salasiah bt. Abdul Wahab (2005), Head of Publications Division, the editorial board had in a recent meeting decided that *Sekitar Perpustakaan* will be renumbered again as Volume 21, Number 1, 2004. This is because of the past erroneous numbering system of giving a new issue number to each publication of *Sekitar Perpustakaan*. since 1981. This is to say that since two issues were published, two volume numbers were given to the periodical per year resulting in the cumulating of the volume number and hence the correction. However, according to Salasiah bt. Abdul Wahab (2006), Head of Publications Division, after much deliberations among the editorial board and discussions with other publishers, it was finally decided that the numbering of the periodical would be continued. That is to say, Number 3, 2004 will be issued as Volume 38, Number 1, 2004. Moreover, if a same volume number previously issued is used, namely Volume 21, Number 1, much confusion would arise and future research on the said periodical could possibly be jeopardized. Apart from that issue Volume 39, Number 1, 2005 would also be published to keep the periodical up-to-date with its publication schedule. Even though the periodical is a year or two behind time according to its publication schedule it is still very much alive and kicking because as a government department under the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage of Malaysia, PNM faces no financial problem in coming out with its publication as it has the full financial support from the Malaysian Government. According to the former publishing coordinator of *Sekitar Perpustakaan*, Mulsalmah bt. Abdul Muiz (2005) one of the major problems in publishing the periodical is the lack of contribution of articles from practicing librarians or interested parties either from inside and outside the National Library. Besides that, editorial problems such as the sourcing of articles and workload in having to edit the articles submitted for acceptance, coupled with the fact that the editors usually having to act in an honorary capacity and on a part-time basis make sense the irregular publication dates and the high mortality rate of these periodicals. The periodical publishes articles written in both English and Bahasa Melayu. *Sekitar Perpustakaan* is listed in an international periodical directory, *Ulrich's On Disc*.

OBJECTIVES

A bibliometric examination of authorship characteristics in 148 articles published in 20 issues of *Sekitar Perpustakaan* covering the years 1994-2003 was carried out to determine the following:

- (a) the authorship pattern of articles
- (b) the author's productivity of articles
- (c) the author's gender
- (d) the authors by status
- (e) the language preference of authors
- (f) the ranked list of most prolific contributors of articles
- (g) the ranked list of most prolific institution

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The study is conducted based on 148 articles published in 20 issues of *Sekitar Perpustakaan* covering the years 1994-2003. Author characteristics such as name, gender, status, institutional affiliation, language preference of articles and authorship of articles published were obtained, studied and analyzed. All the necessary data were compiled, recorded, tabulated and analyzed for making observations as indicated in the objectives of the study. Articles reprinted from earlier issues of the periodical and published in later issues were not taken into consideration. The determination of the author's status and institutional affiliation was based on the latest article of each author except for reprint articles. It should be noted that the authorship characteristics of a few articles could not be determined but other details such as language of published article and gender were included in the study. In addition, in cases where information is incomplete, checks, telephone calls and emails were made by the author to verify and obtain the necessary information not found in the articles under study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a) Authorship Pattern

Table 1 depicts the authorship pattern which showed that concentration is on single-authored articles (79%). Two-authored articles comprised 18% of the total 143 articles. Three authored articles accounted for a mere 3% or four articles only out of a total of 143 articles published in *Sekitar Perpustakaan* during the period under

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study. Thus, single-authored articles far outnumbered multi-authored articles, comprising 79% of the total articles studied. This was consistent with Cline (1982) who found that a vast number of articles published in College & Research Libraries covering the period 1939 to 1979 had no co-authors. Also, Raptis (1992) found the majority of articles (86.46%) published in five library and information science periodicals had no co-author. On the other hand, Tiew, Abrizah and Kiran (2001) in their study on the first five years of *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science* found that multi-authored articles (52.6%) outnumbered single-authored articles (47.4%).

Table 1: Authorship Pattern*

Authorship	Number	Percent (%)
1	113	79
2	26	18
3	4	3
Total	143	100

*The authorship of five articles cannot be determined as the articles contained no names of authorship.

b) Author's Productivity

Table 2 indicates the productivity of the authors of *Sekitar Perpustakaan* covering the period 1994-2003. A total of 108 authors contributed 143 articles over a span of ten years. Of these authors, 71 (65.74%) contributed one article, 27 (25%) contributed two articles, 3 (2.77%) contributed three articles, 4 (3.70%) contributed five articles, one author contributed six articles, eight articles and 9 articles. These findings validates Lotka's Law of Scientific Productivity which hold sway and applies to the field of LIS where only a small number of authors are highly productive. Much earlier, B.K. Sen and his co-authors (1996) who tested the validity of Lotka's law in the domain of LIS concluded that Lotka's law is applicable in this field but with a much higher values. Evidence from this study shows that a reduced number of authors contributed between two and nine articles (34.26%) compared to the vast majority of authors (65.74%) who contributed only one article over the period under study.

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Table 2: Author's Productivity*

No. of Contributions	No. of Authors	Percent (%)
1	71	65.74
2	27	25.00
3	3	2.77
5	4	3.70
6	1	0.93
8	1	0.93
9	1	0.93
Total	108	100

*Five articles have no authorship details and hence not included in the study

c) Author's Gender

Table 3 reveals the gender of the contributors in *Sekitar Perpustakaan* covering the period 1994-2003. The study found that out of a total of 108 authors, 65.74% or 71 authors were female compared to 34.26% or 37 male authors who had contributed articles during the period under study. In other words, female contributors predominates male contributors in *Sekitar Perpustakaan*. This finding differs much from the findings of earlier studies by Cline (1982), Raptis (1992), Alemna and Badu (1994) and Alemna (1996) which indicated the male dominance of contributions in the field of LIS. Cline (1982) in her study found male authors contributed 79.85% of articles in *College & Research Libraries* covering the years 1939-1979 compared to 20-15% for female authors. On the other hand, Raptis' study (1992) found that 76.97% of male authors contributed articles compared to 23.03% for female contributors. Alemna and Badu (1994) in their study found that female contributions to LIS periodicals are in the increase. They found 83.33% of the contributors were males while 16.67% were females. Hence, we can see the trend in years to come whereby the number of female professionals involved in research and publication of LIS will be on the increase.

Table 3: Gender of Authors*

Gender	Number	Percent (%)	Cline (%) 1982	Raptis (%) 1992	Alemna & Badu (%) 1994	Alemna (%) 1996
Male	37	34.26	79.85	76.97	83.33	73.9
Female	71	65.74	20.15	23.03	16.67	26.1
Total	108	100	100	100	100	100

*Five articles have no authorship details and therefore not included in the study.

d) Authors by Status

Authors by status in Alemna and Badu (1994) and Alemna (1996) were put into three categories namely top-level professionals, middle-level professionals and junior professionals. Professors, associate professors, chief librarians and their deputies have been categorized as top-level professionals whereas middle-level professionals refer to principal librarians, senior librarians or their equivalents including senior lecturers and lecturers. Others not in the list constitute junior professionals. For this study, the author has used the same categorization but expanded the lists in the three categories to include some other designations not found in earlier studies those who have contributed to the periodical under study. Some of these designations were related to LIS professions while others were indirectly related. For example, in this study, the author has added ambassadors, director-generals of national libraries and their deputies, state library directors, chief knowledge officers, deans of universities faculties as top-level professional. As for middle-level professionals, the author has included, head of divisions, head of units, head of department, senior research fellows, deputy and assistant state library directors, consultants, editor consultants, managers and school resource centre coordinators. In the junior professionals, the author has included assistant librarians, tutors and post graduate students.

Table 4 reveals the distribution of authors according to their status. The present study shows that most of the authors belong to the middle level professionals' category with 64 (59.3%) while 32 (29.6%) constitute the top-level professionals and the junior professionals 12 (11.1%). This findings is very similar to previous studies by Aina (1991), Alemna and Badu (1994) and Alemna (1996). Aina (1991) found top-level professionals were the largest contributors with 59.77% while 34.48% middle-level professionals and 5.75% junior professionals. On the other hand, Alemna and Badu (1994) found 55.56% of the contributors belong to the middle-level professional category while 27.78% constitute the top-level professionals. As for Alemna's findings in 1996, middle-level professionals were the largest contributors (68%) followed by the top-level professionals (25.3%) and junior professionals (6.7%).

Table 4: Authors by Status*

Status	Number	Percent (%)
Top	32	29.6
Middle	64	59.3
Junior	12	11.1
Total	108	100

*Five articles have no authorship details and hence not included in the study

e) Language Preference of Authors

Table 5 reveals the language preference of authors contributing articles to *Sekitar Perpustakaan* covering the period 1994-2003. A total of 148 articles contributed by 108 authors were published in the journal under study. In all, 83 (56%) of the articles published were in *Bahasa Melayu* whereas 65 (44%) articles were in English. It is not surprising a revelation as *Bahasa Melayu* is the medium of communication in Malaysia and the usage of *Bahasa Melayu* enables the audience to understand better the contents of the articles. However, the number of articles in English is not too low a number at 44% indicating the mastery of the English Language by Malaysian LIS professionals and the importance of the English Language as an international language especially in the dissemination of LIS know-how.

Table 5: Language Preference of Author

Language Preference	Number of articles	Percent (%)
Bahasa Melayu	83	56
English	65	44
Total	148	100

f) Ranked List of Most Prolific Contributors

Table 6 presents the ranked list of most prolific contributors of articles to *Sekitar Perpustakaan* 1994-2003. Topping the list is Ding Choo Ming, Senior Research Fellow of Institute of the Malay World & Civilization, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, with nine contributions, followed by Shahar Banun Jaafar, formerly the Deputy Director General of PNM, with eight articles. In third place is Tiew Wai Sin, School Resource Centre Coordinator of SMK Hulu Kelang who contributed six articles. Mariam Abdul Kadir, also a former Director General of PNM, Siti Aishah Sheikh Kadir, Deputy Director of the Information Literacy Division, PNM, Wan Abdul Kadir Wan Dollah Lecturer, Faculty of Information Studies, University of Technology MARA, and Zawiyah Baba, the previous Director General of PNM each contributed five articles whereas Norkhayati Hashim Director Library and Information Technology Division, PNM, Rosham Abdul Shukor Deputy Director Research Division, PNM and Shaharom TM Sulaiman Librarian, Technical Service Division, PNM each contributed three articles. Altogether these 10 authors contributed a total of 52 articles or 36.36% out of the 143 articles. Of these 10 prolific contributors, seven are attached to PNM, the institution that publishes the periodical under study.

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Table 6: Ranked List of Most Prolific Contributors*

Rank	Author's Name	No. of Contributions	Cumulative Total
1	Ding, Choo Ming	9	9
2	Shahar Banun Jaafar	8	17
3	Tiew, Wai Sin	6	23
4	Mariam Abdul Kadir	5	28
4	Siti Aishah Sheikh Kadir	5	33
4	Wan Abdul Kadir Wan Dollah	5	38
4	Zawiyah Baba	5	43
8	Norkhayati Hashim	3	46
8	Rosham Abdul Shukor	3	49
8	Shaharom TM Sulaiman	3	52

*The authorship of five articles is not known due to lack of information.

g) Ranked List of Most Prolific Institution

Table 7 presents the ranked list of most prolific institution of the authors of *Sekitar Perpustakaan* 1994-2003. For this study, only the latest institutional affiliation of each contributing author is taken into consideration if there is any change of work place or occupation of the author during the years under study except for reprint articles.

Table 7: Ranked List of Most Prolific Institution*

Ranking	Institution	Number of author
1	Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia	41
2	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	10
3	MARA University of Technology	5
3	International Islamic University of Malaysia	5
5	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia	3
5	Universiti Utara Malaysia	3
5	Sabah State Library	3
6	Universiti Putra Malaysia	2
6	Universiti Sains Malaysia	2
6	Perlis State Library	2
6	Pustaka Peringatan Kuala Lumpur	2
12	30 others institutions	1

*The institutional affiliation of 6 articles authors could not be determined due to lack of information.

Authorship Characteristics In Sekitar Perpustakaan 1994 - 2003

With regards to the most prolific institution, the study reveals that the PNM topped the list with 41 authors, followed by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia 10 authors, University of Technology MARA and International Islamic University of Malaysia five authors each respectively. On the other hand, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Universiti Utara Malaysia and Sabah State Library had three authors each while Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Perlis State Library and Pustaka Peringatan Kuala Lumpur two authors each. Thirty others institutions have only one contributing author each. The institutional affiliations of six articles authors' could not be determined due to lack of information.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions are drawn from the study:

- a) Single-authored articles far outnumbered multi-authored articles at 79%; Cline (1982) found 90% of the article had no co-author while Raptis (1992) found the percentage of single-authored articles was 86.46%.
- b) Female contributors (65.74% or 71 authors) predominates male contributors (34.26% or 37 authors) in *Sekitar Perpustakaan*. This finding differs much from previous studies by Aina (1991), Alemna and Badu (1994) and Alemna (1996) where female contribution is much lower but there is a trend towards more contributions from females in the coming future.
- c) Middle-level professionals are the largest group of contributors at 59.3% which is rather similar to the findings of Alemna and Badu (1994) at 55.56% and a much higher of 68% as in the case of Alemna (1996).
- d) *Sekitar Perpustakaan* publishes more articles in *Bahasa Melayu*, the national language of Malaysia. It was noted that 83 (56%) of the articles published were in *Bahasa Melayu* while 65 (44%) articles were in English. Nevertheless, the percentage of articles in English (44%) is not too far behind considering the fact that English is an important international language for information interchange among LIS professionals.
- e) The top ranked contributor is Ding Choo Ming, Senior Research Fellow of Institute of the Malay World & Civilization, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia with nine contributions.
- f) The most prolific institution is the National Library of Malaysia (PNM) with 41 contributing authors. It is important to note here that *Sekitar Perpustakaan* is published by the PNM to cater for the professional needs of librarians and to promote the exchange of ideas and experience. Therefore, it is only appropriate for PNM professionals to lead the way by continuing writing articles as a form of scholarly communication and to continue publishing *Sekitar Perpustakaan*.

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RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are suggested as to improve the current status of the periodical under study:

- a) *Sekitar Perpustakaan*, the official periodical of the National Library of Malaysia (PNM) should make itself more visible to the outside world by identifying international indexing and abstracting agencies to cover its publication. Therefore, the editorial board should ensure some degree of international visibility by providing details and other necessary information required by these major international indexing and abstracting such as *LISA* or *Library Literature* in order to seek coverage. Once this is accomplished, this information must be clearly noted in future publications to make known the fact to future contributors.
- b) Editorial information, policy, scope of the periodical and guidelines for contributors should be clearly indicated either on the inside front cover or the inside page of the back cover of *Sekitar Perpustakaan* to provide instructions to future contributors a clear picture as to how to prepare their manuscripts for submission. In addition, it is hoped that the editorial board should comprise other LIS professionals among the academics both from local or foreign LIS faculties either to act as editorial board members or as reviewers so as to make the periodicals more scholarly.
- c) A running author name on subsequent even pages for each article and a running short title on the odd pages should be included to make the periodical more scholarly. Apart from that author's affiliation, occupation and status should be provided after each author name on the first page. Not forgetting too, if possible the date of receiving, revision and acceptance of article is included in the relevant section of the article itself.
- d) Finally, authors should be encouraged to provide abstracts and keywords for their articles in both *Bahasa Melayu* and English to make easier the editorial board's efforts to seek coverage in international indexing and abstracting agencies.

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