SELF CITATIONS BY INDIAN LIBRARY SCIENTISTS

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The study is based on the citations appearing in the *Annals of Library Science* (afterwards *Annals of Library Science and Documentation*) during 1954-1975 (Vols. 1-22). Of the 1545 citations appeared in the journal, 231 were self citations (books-121, periodical articles-100, conferences proceedings-8, and theses-2), accounting for 14.9% of the total citations. Of the self-citing authors, S.R. Ranganathan tops the list with 174 self citations.

0. INTRODUCTION

Citation analysis is said to be an effective tool to decide the use of literature in a specific field. No document can be adjudged fully valid and authentic if it is not supported by citations. It has been studied and found that the number of most cited titles is very small in the "Annals of Library Science and Documentation."

The analysis has been made about the recall and self citations, which means how many self citations have been really used to support the context. Fussler's (1) study, for example, showed that in Chemistry and Physics, a single important journal in each field contained 5% of self cited references of useful literature.

Similar studies had also been made by Brown (2) and Morgan (3), where they had shown, that in the field of Physiology there was a marked tendency to cite earlier works by most authors and hence, 30-35% self citations become essential in the field.

It had been noted earlier in 1937, that Dalziel (4) did not include the self citations in his study, arguing that their inclusion would distort the final results by not showing the relative usefulness of different journals. Most researchers, however, believed that this type of citation should be included in the final tabulation, since, it too represents actual library or literature use. In agreement with this argument self citations have been included and is treated as attested true copies of the past work in support of the present.

It had been said that any new information must be properly fixed in the fabric of woven knowledge by adequately citing the previous works. New achievements are daily made in the ever growing universe of knowledge and if they are not recorded they will be lost. Unless we relate the new to the old, no one is going to accept the newness of the work. That is why theses or statements without citations have to face severe criticisms. If the relationship is not established with the past, there may be good reason to doubt the alleged newness of present works.

Citation index is one of the latest and effective tools based on the inter relationship of papers through their citations. It appears, there are many library science papers without reference to the available literature. Fein-chel (5) studied the citation pattern in information science and found a tendency for like documents to cite each other.

Taylor (6) believes that the citation pattern in the area of library science is much less clear and definite than that of many scientific disciplines. Gilchrist (7) studied the field of documentation by measuring the coverage of primary journals by secondary journals. He was able to identify the 'key' journals in the field documentation by this method.

One important aspect of a citation is its relevance or appropriateness in the specific context. This study has revealed that in a number of cases the whole book has been cited when only a chapter of the book is really relevant in the context. At times, even apparently irrelevant materials have also been cited which are likely to lead to false retriev-
al so far as the readers are concerned. At times, about 30% of citations were of such non-relevant nature which gave negative results. For example, while discussing 'obsolescence' some authors had cited articles where only the word 'obsolescence' was present which increased the number of citations but did little to support the text.

1. METHODOLOGY

For the present study the "Annals of Library Science and Documentation" had been taken as the sample. Vols. I-22 from 1955-1975 were taken into consideration. A total of 302 articles were scanned and the citations given at the end of articles were noted down on slips in the same form as given by the author. For each citation one slip was prepared. A total of 1545 slips were prepared and they were arranged in different sequences for different studies.

Out of these slips the self-cited citations were taken out and analysed.

2. OBSERVATIONS

When the total sample was analysed, out of 587 books cited only 121 were self-cited that came to about 20.9% of the books cited and 7.8% of overall citations. Similarly in the case of periodical literature it was observed that 100 out of 567 items were self-cited i.e. 17.6% of the total periodical citations and 6.5% of overall citations. For other types of documents 8 out of 125 conference proceedings and 2 out of 8 theses and unpublished documents were self-cited. Thus, out of 1545 citations only 231 were self citations which was calculated as 14.95%. In comparison to the findings of Fussler, Brown and Morgan where the highest percentage was 30, the present percentage of self-citation is quite low. Table 1 gives the details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Types of documents</th>
<th>No.of self citations</th>
<th>% of self citations</th>
<th>Overall self citations % of 1545</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Books</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Periodical Articles</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Conference Proceedings</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Theses/Unpublished documents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>TOTAL</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>231</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of 217 citations of articles in Indian periodicals, 110 articles were from the same periodical, i.e. the Annals of Library Science and Documentation, which had the largest number of citations. This indicates that the self-cited periodical articles were largely confined to a single periodical. The tally was about 50%. The reason might be that as a journal is said to be specialised in a particular field so an author also is specialised in a particular field.

21. Self Citation by a Particular Author

Out of 231 self citations of books, periodicals, conference proceedings, theses and unpublished documents it was quite surprising to note that S R Ranganathan alone was responsible for 174 citations. Other authors together self-cited 57 items in all. These 57 self citations included Indian as well as foreign contributions. The details are given in Table 2.

From the above Table, it is clear that S R Ranganathan alone cited 75.3% of the total self citations to Indian periodicals or 11.2% of the total self citations. Rest of the authors cited 24.7% of the self citations i.e. 3.7% of the total self citations.

3. CONCLUSION

i) Authors have to cite their own works as evidence, or in support.

ii) Authors have to use self citations to interlink the development of thoughts or ideas of past, present and future to avoid criticisms on validity.

iii) Non-relevant items should not be cited to make the citation list long. Let the citation list be up to date and contain only relevant reference to avoid noise and false retrieval.

iv) Self citation in the same journal is often high. This reveals a publishing preference by most authors. Usually, a scientist prefers his papers to be published in the same journal which he reads.
v) A journal may be particularly renowned for publishing papers in a speciality. So an author will continuously send his articles to the same journal if he is working in this speciality.

vi) Self citations are more, because the scientists generally tend to carry on research within one basic field. One may pursue the study of a specific avenue of research within the main body since some of his work may be based on earlier observations.

vii) Ranganathan made the maximum number of self citations and thus his method of writing and citing was more scientific and authentic. He linked the arguments with past and present works, to make his contributions authentic.

4. REFERENCES

1. Fussler H H: Characteristic of research literature used by chemists and physicists in United States-Pt. I Lib Qly 1949, 19, 19-35.

2. Brown C H: Characteristic of research literature used by chemists and physicists in United States-Pt. II Lib Qly 1949, 19, 112-16.


