

BIBLIOMETRICS STUDY OF MALAYAN LAW JOURNAL ARTICLES

Harvinder Kaur
Law Library, University of Malaya
harvinsidhu@um.edu.my

ABSTRAK

1. Artikel ini menerangkan dan mengkaji komponen utama bibliometri bagi artikel yang telah diterbitkan dalam *the Malayan Law Journal* (MLJ). Pengambilan sampel sebanyak 479 artikel telah dilakukan secara acak sederhana daripada tiga tempoh pengarang yang berlainan. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa, pada setiap tahun, penerbitan artikel telah berkembang daripada segi kandungan, jilid dan juga bilangan penerbitan. Sepanjang tempoh kajian ini dibuat, sejumlah 280 pengarang telah menyumbang 479 artikel. Artikel yang ditulis oleh kategori pengarang solo merupakan penyumbang paling tinggi berbanding kategori-kategori lain. Ahli akademik adalah penyumbang artikel yang paling tinggi. Manakala purata bagi rujukan bagi setiap artikel berubah daripada 6.47 hingga 62.4. Bidang perkara yang paling banyak ditulis adalah berkenaan undang-undang tanah.

ABSTRACT

1. This article describes and analyses key bibliometric components of articles published in the *Malayan Law Journal* (MLJ). A total of 479 articles were picked by a stratified random sampling process from three different editorial periods. The study reveals that the publication has expanded over the years in terms of content, volumes and frequency of publication. A total of 280 authors contributed 479 articles over the period of study. Single-author contributions ranked the highest among all categories.

Academicians contributed the most articles. The average citations per article varied from 6.47 to 62.4. Land Law was the most written subject area.

History of Malayan Law Journal publication

During the colonial period, the expansion of laws, judgments, legislation and the legal profession created a need for a law report in the colony in order to report cases heard in the Federal Malay States and the Strait Settlements. A law report was considered necessary to aid the administration of justice, courts, and practitioners, as well as for the members of the public, to notify them of changes made in the statute laws of Peninsular and of the decisions of courts. In 1932 Dr Bashir Ahmad Mallal (1898-1972), a dedicated and ambitious managing clerk of a legal firm, who was also well known as a self taught law scholar and researcher, came up with the idea of launching a law report in the colony. The law report, *The Malayan Law Journal*, popularly known as MLJ, was founded then in 1932. It has since become the leading and the longest surviving law report of Malaysia. The MLJ office was originally set up in Raffles Place, Singapore. Dr Bashir was the editor of MLJ. The report was first published on a monthly basis, with its first volume being published in July 1932. The journal contained articles, notes of cases, and legislation, which were usually contributed by advocates and solicitors. When articles were not forthcoming Dr Bashir would fill in the gaps, as best as he could by his own contributions. By 1937, MLJ was well established and became the leading law report for Malaysian and Singapore cases until the publication of Volume 11, January 1942. In 1942 the publication was halted for a short period of time due to the Japanese occupation of Malaya and Singapore. The publication resumed in 1946 with its 12th volume published in January 1946 after 4 years of suppression. The journal continued to perform a valuable service to the judiciary, the profession and the public. In 1964, MLJ became a division of Reed International (Singapore) Pte Ltd. and the publication was published under its own publisher called Singapore Malayan Law Journal (Pte) Ltd. In

1972, when Dr Bashir A Mallal died, his son Faizal Mallal continued his efforts for a short period of time. In December 1972 Al-Mansor Adabi (1928-1988), the dedicated assistant of Dr Bashir A. Mallal, took over as a managing editor of the publication up to September 1987. In 1987 MLJ became part of the Butterworth International Group. From September till the present, a number of persons held the post of Managing Editor of MLJ. The publication started off with printed volumes, which were published monthly (1932-1987), then bimonthly (1987- Sept 1994) and then weekly (Nov 1994 – to date). Additional series are published every fortnight in weekly parts and quarterly volumes in MLJ Law Supplement series. Annual bound volumes are also published. Beside print volumes, MLJ's full text on CD-ROM was issued in 1996. In the same year all Singapore cases were reported in a separate print volume known as Singapore Law Reports (SLR). However MLJ's CD-ROM contains Malaysian and Singapore cases and articles. With the advancement of technology, MLJ cases and articles are now available online via lexis.com after the publisher became a member of the LexisNexis Group in recent years.

With the changes in editorship and publication frequency, as well as the format of the journal, it is timely to examine the changes and trends that have taken place in the articles themselves. MLJ has had a long history of publication, and is thus suitable for an in-depth study.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This research article examines the characteristics and trends of MLJ articles, from the early years of its publication till the present. MLJ contains careful criticism of local legislation, well informed articles on legal subjects, case reports, case reviews, notes, list of judges and law offices in Malaya, notices about new publications, notes on amendments and other information relevant to the legal profession. The objective of this study is to identify the characteristics of MLJ articles and determine if there were changes over time. The characteristics examined include:

- A. the quantitative growth of articles by volume and year
- B. distribution of citations by volume & year
- C. range and percentage of citations per article
- D. authorship pattern of articles
- E. authorship productivity
- F. ranked list of most prolific contributors
- G. ranked list of authors by geographical affiliation
- H. ranked list of authors by profession
- I. ranked list by subjects of articles and
- J. journal self-citation in the articles

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

In order to examine the characteristics and trends of articles published in MLJ, a total of 479 articles from the following years were collected for analysis:

- A. 1957 -1959 and 1970 - 1972 during which Baashir A. Mallal was the editor.
- B. 1973 -1975 and 1985 - 1987 during Al-Mansor Adabi was the editor
- C. 1988-1990 and 2000-2002 which is the period after Al Mansor Adabi

This study focuses only on articles published in MLJ bound volumes for the period chosen. Gaps between each period were considered. Articles published in the early years of the journal were not chosen for this study because they had no references or citations. The affected articles are few in number and their omission does not affect this study. Book reviews, cases and other information in MLJ were not taken into consideration. This study is restricted to articles. For each article, authors name, number of authorship, number of references, author's geography affiliation & profession, subject of article and the journal self-citation were noted. The data were compiled, recorded, tabulated and analyzed using a statistical analysis software package called SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version X). The software was used to generate data of frequency distribution, range and mean. and ranked list of subject distribution, the quantitative growth of articles by year distribution of citations by volume, range and percentage/mean number of citations per article, journal self-citation in the articles, authorship pattern of articles, authorship productivity, ranked list of most prolific contributor, ranked list of authors by geographical affiliation, ranked list of authors by profession and ranked list by subjects of articles. It is to be noted that this study could have some limitations although it has highlighted some beneficial points. This study does not include all the years since the journal's publication. An in depth study of the overall content and characteristic of the journal was not conducted.

FINDINGS

Quantitative Growth of Articles by Volume & Year

Table 1 shows the total number of articles published from the years under study totaling 479. The number of articles published varied each year. The distribution of articles by year shows that the number of articles was highest in 1989, with total of 53 articles followed by year 2002 with the total number of 50 articles published per year. The table also reveals that the distributions of articles are not consistent each year. The distribution

Year	Volume				No. of Articles %
	1	2	3	4	
1957	6				6 (1.3)
1958	3				3 (0.6)
1959	5				5(1.0)
1970	0	5			5(1.0)
1971	6	7			13(2.7)
1972	5	8			13(2.7)
1973	8	6			14(2.9)
1974	2	8			10(2.1)
1975	8	11			19(4.0)
1985	16	23			39(8.1)
1986	14	25			39(8.1)
1987	25	19			44(9.2)
1988	13	13	16		42(8.8)
1989	16	19	18		53(11.1)
1990	13	11	16		40(8.4)
2000	7	6	14	12	39(8.1)
2001	14	8	11	12	45(9.4)
2002	7	16	15	12	50(10.4)
Total	168	185	90	36	479(100)

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Articles by Year

varied from year to year. For example in the year 1989, when 3 volumes of the journal were published the total number of articles was 53. In year 2000 with 4 volumes of the journal publication the total number of articles was 50. This shows that although there was an increase in the number of volumes in year 2000 however the number of articles does not show an increase in number. The range of articles published per year during the period under study is between 53 and 3. Overall the table shows an increase in the number of articles and volumes since its early years of publication.

2. Distribution of Citations by Volume and Year

Some articles had citations cited within the articles and these articles were not taken into consideration for citation analysis. As most articles written or discussed refer highly to judgments in Law Reports and legislations most of the legal citations in the articles are mainly cases from law reports and statutes. Table 2 presents the distribution of citations appended to the articles under study. The 479 articles contained a total of 9303 citations. The distribution of citations in the table shows

Year	No of Articles	No of Citation by Volume				No of Citations	Average No of Citation Per Articles
		1	2	3	4		
1957	6	258				258	43
1958	3	126				126	42
1959	5	312				312	62.4
1970	5	120				120	24
1971	13	62	127			189	14.5
1972	13	49	77			126	9.69
1973	14	84	58			142	10.1
1974	10	16	138			154	15.4
1975	19	50	73			123	6.47
1985	39	225	439			664	17.02
1986	39	273	412			685	17.56
1987	44	435	396			831	18.88
1988	42	215	161	340		716	17.04
1989	53	187	358	268		813	15.33
1990	40	192	223	283		698	17.45
2000	39	179	183	299	323	984	25.23
2001	45	300	128	274	276	978	21.73
2002	50	226	388	487	283	1384	27.68
Total	479	3309	3161	1951	882	9303	19.42

Table 2: Distribution of Citations by Volume

that the maximum number of citations totaling 984 was in 2000 and the lowest was in 1970 with a total of 120 citations. The number of citations per year ranges from 120 to 984 with a mean of 864. Year 1959 marked the highest number of citations per article (62.4). The average citation per article varied from 6.47 to 62.4 with an average of 19.42.

3. Range and Percentage of Citations Per Article

Table 3 indicates the range and percentage of citations per article. A total of 121 (25.26%) articles top the list with between 11-20 citations. This is followed by 110 (22.96%) articles having between 1-10 citations, 97 (20.25%) articles with between 21-30 citations per article, 37 (7.72%) articles with between 31-40 citations, 25 (5.22%) articles with between 41-50 citations, 13 (2.71%) articles with between 51-60 citations, 4 (0.84%) articles with between 61-70 citations and finally 3 (0.63%) articles each between 61-70, 71-80, 81-90 citations per article. 63 articles had no citations.

No of Citations Per Articles	No of articles	Percent %
0	63	13.15
1-10	110	22.96
11-20	121	25.26
21-30	97	20.25
31-40	37	7.72
41-50	25	5.22
51-60	13	2.71
61-70	4	0.84
71-80	3	0.63
81-90	3	0.63
91 and above	3	0.63
Total	479	100

Table 3 Range and Percentage of Citations Per Article

4. Authorship Pattern of Articles

Table 4 reveals the authorship pattern of the journal articles. Single-author contributions amount to 446 articles (93.1%) and ranked the highest among all other categories. Joint work by two authors produced a total of 30 articles (6.3%). Articles written by three authors mark the lowest with a total of 3 articles (0.6%). The year 1989 marked the highest number of contributors from single authors. Their overall contributors totaled 53 articles. The lowest number of contributors from single authors was in 1958. The highest number of articles from two joint authors was in 1988 and the lowest was in 1971. Contributors by three joint authors began in 1990.

Year	Single Author	Two Authors	Three Authors	Total
1957	6	0	0	6
1958	3	0	0	3
1959	5	0	0	5
1970	5	0	0	5
1971	12	1	0	13
1972	13	0	0	13
1973	14	0	0	14
1974	10	0	0	10
1975	17	2	0	19
1985	39	0	0	39
1986	34	5	0	39
1987	40	4	0	44
1988	36	6	0	42
1989	52	1	0	53
1990	33	4	3	40
2000	39	0	0	39
001	42	3	0	45
2002	46	4	0	50
Total	446	30	3	479
Percent (%)	93.1	6.3	0.6	100

Table 4: Authorship Pattern

5. Authorship productivity

Table 5 presents the productivity of the authors. A total of 280 contributed 479 articles over the period under study. Of these authors 183 contributed one article each, 53 authors contributed 2 articles each, 24 authors contributed 3 articles each and 11 contributed 4 articles each. Three sets of two different authors contributed 5, 6 and 7 articles each. Lastly three sets of different authors contributed 9, 10 and 19 articles each.

No of Articles	Number of Authors	Percent (%)
1	183 authors	65.3
2	53 authors	18.9
3	24 authors	8.6
4	11 authors	3.9
5	2 authors	0.7
6	2 authors	0.7
7	2 authors	0.7
9	1 author	0.4
10	1 author	0.4
19	1 author	0.4
Total	280	100

Table 5: Author Productivity

6. Ranked List of Most Prolific Contributor

Table 6 shows that the most prolific authors are Ahmad Ibrahim who contributed 19 articles, followed by Teo Keang Sood with 10 articles, David Marshall and Tan Sook Yee both with 7 articles each. Walter Woon and Loh Hop Bing & K C Lau are at the fifth rank with contribution of 6 articles each followed by E K Teh and Soon Choo Hock with 5 contributions each. Ranking at 7 are eleven authors who contributed 4 articles each followed by 24 authors with 3 contributions each, 53 authors with 2 articles each and lastly 183 authors with 1 article each. It is noted that most of the top 6 rank authors were affiliated with higher learning institutions namely National University of Singapore and University of Malaya.

Rank	Author's Name	No of Contribution (Articles)
1	Ahmad Ibrahim	19
2	Teo Keang Sood	10
3	Poh Chu Chai	9
4	David Marshall	7
4	Tan Sook Yee	7
5	Loh Hop Bing & K C Lau	6
5	Walter Woon	6
6	E K The	5
6	Soon Choo Hock	5
7	11 authors	4
8	24 authors	3
9	53 authors	2
10	183 authors	1

Table 6: Ranked List of Most Prolific Contributors

7. Ranked List of Authors by Geographical Affiliation

Table 7 presents the ranked list of authors by geographical affiliation. Out of 479 authors, the majority were from Malaysia with a total of 257 (53.7%), followed by Singapore 194 (40.5%), Australia 9 (1.9%), UK 5 (1.0%), Borneo, Hong Kong and U.S 2 (0.4%) each. Geographical affiliation of eight authors could not be ascertained.

Rank	Countries	Frequency	Percent
1	Malaysia	257	53.7
2	Singapore	194	40.5
3	Australia	9	1.9
4	United Kingdom	5	1.0
5	Borneo	2	0.4
5	Hong Kong	2	0.4
6	United States	2	0.4
	NA	8	1.7
	<i>Total</i>	<i>479</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Table 7: Ranked list of Authors by Geographical Affiliation

8. Ranked List of Authors by Profession

Table 8 reveals the distribution of authors' based on their profession. Author's occupational status was divided into six categories namely academicians, lawyers, judicial officers, legal officers and others. It reveals that a total of 263 (54.9%) academicians working in higher learning institutions contributed most articles. Lawyers ranked second with a total of 138 (28.8%) and followed by Judicial Officers with a total of 39 (8.1%). Other professions ranked fourth with a total of 20 (4.2%). Those classified under this category include engineers, tax officers and directors of company. The professional status of 13 authors could not be ascertained. A total of 6 lawyers ranked as lowest contributors.

Rank	Profession/Occupation	Total	Percent %
1	Academicians	263	54.9
2	Lawyers	138	28.8
3	Judicial Officers	39	8.1
4	Others	20	4.2
5	Legal Officers	6	1.3
	Not Available	13	2.7
	<i>Total</i>	<i>479</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 8: Ranked list of Authors by Profession

9. Ranked list by Subjects of Articles

Table 9 shows the ranked list by subjects. Of the 70 subjects involved the top 31 subjects are listed in the table below and the remaining were categorized under others. Of the 479 articles analysed, 38 articles belonged to the subject Land Law. Second highest number concern Tort with total of 31 articles followed by Company Law, Criminal Law, Intellectual Property, Civil Procedure, Tax, Family Law & Contracts with 21 articles each, Constitutional Law, Criminal Procedure, Administrative Law, Banking; Evidence & Miscellaneous with total of 12 articles each; Arbitration, General, Islamic law & Malaysian Legal System with 11 articles each; International law, Environment & Legal System with 6 articles each, Legal Profession, Industrial Law & Securities 4 articles each, Admiralty, Cyber Law, Equity, Human Rights, Medical Law, Public Corporation 3 articles each and others. Where articles dealt with more than one subject, only its main subject was considered.

Rank	Subject	Frequency
1	Land Law	38
2	Tort	31
3	Company Law	30
4	Criminal Law	27
5	Intellectual Property	26
6	Civil Procedure	23
7	Tax	22
8	Family Law	21
9	Contracts	21
10	Constitutional Law	18
11	Criminal Procedure	16
12	Administrative Law	13
13	Banking	13
14	Evidence	12
15	Miscellaneous	12
16	Arbitration	11
17	General	11
18	Islamic Law	11
19	Malaysian Legal System	11
20	International Law	9
21	Environmen	6
22	Legal System	6
23	Legal Profession	5
24	Industrial Law	4
25	Securities	4
26	Admiralty	3
27	Cyber Law	3
28	Equity	3
29	Human Rights	3
30	Medical Law	3
31	Public Corporation	3
32	Others	60
Total		419/479 = 87.5%

Table 9: Ranked List by Subject

10. Journal Self-citation

Table 10a shows the extent of journal self-citation during the period under study. It shows that out of 479 articles, 284 contained journal self-citations. 195 articles had no journal self-citation.

Journal Self-citation	Frequency	Percent %
Yes	284	59.3
No	195	40.7
Total	479	100

Table 10a: Total Journal Self-Citation

Table 10b shows that from a total of 9303 citations, 1559 citations are journal self-citations.

Year	No of Citations	No. Of Self Citation
1957	258	34
1958	126	18
1959	312	67
1970	120	17
1971	189	44
1972	126	32
1973	142	29
1974	154	17
1975	123	24
1985	664	109
1986	685	113
1987	831	121
1988	716	123
1989	813	140
1990	698	113
2000	984	150
2001	978	141
2002	1384	267
Total	9303	1559

Table 10b: Total of Journal Self Citation

Conclusion

Malayan Law Journal has indeed established itself as the oldest and leading legal report in the country. The publication has expanded over the years in terms of content, volumes and frequency of publication. It is now available not only in print format but also in electronic format. This reference analysis reached the following conclusions. In general the volumes and number of articles in the publication has increased and this shows a great expansion of the publication over the years. The analysis reveals that no fixed rule as to the number of articles MLJ will publish in a year. The articles studied on many different subjects of law and it can be concluded that the publication is open in its selection of topics. The results shown in this article provide the MLJ editors with a better understanding of the characteristic and trends of the articles published in the journal. Almost all the articles were written in English although during the recent years a few articles written in Bahasa Malaysia (Malaysian National Language) were published. One particular subject area that ought to be considered and included as a part of the journal is the subject pertaining to Law Librarianship, and Legal research as we do not have a Law Library Association or a particular Law Library Journal in the country as in Australia, United Kingdom and New Zealand. This would help law librarians to share their ideas as well as provide guidance to law students, legal researchers, librarians and lawyers to conduct legal research and to conduct it efficiently.

References

[1932] 1 Malayan Law Journal title page

Obituaries: Mallal, The Late Dr. Bashir Ahmad (1972) 2 Malayan Law Journal xxviii

Bashir A. Mallal, 'Law and Law Reporting in Malaya' (1959) 1 University of Malaya Law Review 81

(1965) 1 Malayan Law Journal title page

'In Memoriam: The late Mr Al-Mansor Adabi' (1988) 3 Malayan Law Journal xliv