

**THE COVERAGE OF MALAYSIAN SCHOLARLY JOURNALS BY
INTERNATIONAL INDEXING AND ABSTRACTING SERVICES : AN
ASSESSMENT OF THEIR VISIBILITY AND COMMON
CHARACTERISTICS**

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ABSTRACT

Studies the extent of coverage of the Malaysian scholarly journals by 23 major international indexing and abstracting services (12 services are in science, technology and medical (STM) disciplines and 11 are in the arts, humanities and the social sciences (AHSS)). A total of 54 Malaysian scholarly journals are identified (43 in the STM and 11 in AHSS disciplines) as being covered by these services. The journals and the articles which each contains therein are categorised as being "visible" as the bibliographic information about the articles can be retrieved via published international databases on CD-ROMs or in printed versions of the indexes and abstracts which are available to most international researchers. A closer study of some "visible" journals reveals that 15 (28%) are published by the University of Malaya, 8 (15%) by Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, 3 (5%) by other universities, 6 (11%) by associations and societies, and 22 (41%) by government agencies and others. The journals possess a number of common characteristics and features such as; regularity in publication frequency (the majority are published semi-annually); appropriate printing format and style; English as the publication medium; support from international reviewers who work closely with local editorial board members, and a high proportion of foreign papers.

KEYWORDS: Scholarly periodicals; Indexing services; Abstracting services; Sciences; Technology; Medicine; Social sciences; Humanities; Periodical publishers and publishing.

INTRODUCTION

The number of active scholarly journals published in Malaysia, estimated to be about 214 (Md Sidin, 1996), is an encouraging situation. This growth of scholarly journals is an essential phenomenon in Malaysia as it is related to

scholarly endeavours and the propagation of new knowledge, which in turn may filter into practical applications for the advancement and improvement of the quality of life. Scholars are the main contributors and users of scholarly literature especially those disseminated through scholarly journals. The motivation behind

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this can generally be attributed to:

- identify similar on-going research to avoid duplication or propagate improvements or expansion of current knowledge;
- ascertain claims for research being done (stake a claim for being the first);
- quote other literature so as to negate, support or substantiate one's own research findings or conclusions;
- add to the ever increasing body of knowledge;
- niche oneself to a particular area of new research which has been identified as a priority areas so as to obtain research fundings.

Any faculty member or young researcher contemplating a career at the universities or research institutions is fully aware of the need to use and disseminate their publications especially in the form of articles to scholarly journals of some repute (Borgman,1993; Meadows,1993). Questions such as reputability, scholarliness, authoritativeness of journals are important for scholars when considering to submit his written work. A decision has to be made as to whether to submit to a local or foreign journal. A number of studies have shown that Third World scholars, especially those in the science, technology and medical (STM) disciplines, prefer to publish in foreign journals. Problems that plagued local scholarly journals exacerbated this practice (Lim, 1975; Altbach, 1987; Gopinathan 1992). A glance through large library catalogues would reveal an increasing number of choice of

scholarly journals where local STM scholars can publish their research findings. These range from those that cover broad disciplines to the more specialised journals. Instead of dwindling, the number of local STM scholarly journals have mushroomed to an extent that libraries often find it difficult to exercise effective bibliographic control on these publications. A simple breakdown of the estimated total of 214 active scholarly journals indicate that 127 (59.3%) are titles in the AHSS disciplines and 87 (40.7%) in the STM fields (Md. Sidin, 1996). Thus there should be no lack of awareness for scholars and researchers to publish their work locally. In spite of this, the persistence to publish abroad remains. Perhaps, this is related to the question of "visibility". Scholars who publish abroad feel that their work would be more "visible" because these foreign journals enjoy wider circulation and are covered by major indexing and abstracting information agencies and services. Most of these international agencies are publishing their indexes and abstracts on CD-ROMs or providing their services online to facilitate more efficient and speedy literature searching and retrieval.

The visibility of the journals covered by the international indexing and abstracting services hence, leads to an enquiry as to how many Malaysian scholarly journals have attained such 'visibility' and are being covered by the major international indexing and abstracting agencies? This paper attempts to investigate these issues.

OBJECTIVE

This paper has a twofold objective. Firstly, it attempts to investigate the “visibility” of Malaysian scholarly journals in major international indexing and abstracting services. Secondly, a selected number of these “visible” journals were studied more closely to identify common characteristics. For this study, scholarly journals refer to those journals which publish research articles. The Oxford dictionary gives the following meaning to the adjectival noun “scholarly”, as something acceptable, reliable or commanding an authoritative position. Consequently, when this noun is related to a journal it refers to a periodical which contains reliable and research articles and is concerned with a serious study within a particular discipline and follows an acceptable form of academic enquiry.

“Visibility” of scholarly journals in this context would refer to the degree of ease with which Malaysian scholarly journals and articles can be obtained and the extent to which these journals are known to international scholars. Typically, scholars use local and international indexing and abstracting services to obtain relevant literature on the areas of their research. Most of these information services adopt prudent methods of evaluating journals for indexing, and often require publishers of journals to submit a number of issues to convince them of the longevity, regularity and the quality of the journals concerned. Hence, it is expected that those journals covered by major indexing services should possess a certain degree of quality and authoritativeness to qualify as being

worthy enough to be indexed. As such, Malaysian journals indexed by these international indexing and abstracting agencies are considered to have such qualities and since the distribution of these services are worldwide, journals covered by them can be said to have achieved a certain degree of “visibility”.

METHODOLOGY

To identify the “visible” Malaysian journals 23 major indexing and abstracting services were searched. Tables 1a & 1b indicate the 23 services, either in CD-ROM or in print form (12 in the STM disciplines and 11 in the arts, humanities and social sciences (AHSS)). For this study, only major services and publications are selected on the basis that they are taken as being representative sources within major disciplines. For the CD-ROM sources, the search strategy takes the form of searching for the word ‘malaysia’ from the fields provided for publisher of sources or for country of publication of sources indexed.

For services where such search facilities are not given, the strategy adopted is to retrieve all publication by authors whose affiliation are addressed to Malaysia. In this case all records retrieved are browsed through to distinguish between Malaysian contributions to Malaysian journals with Malaysians contributing to foreign sources. It is through this means that Malaysian journals which are being indexed by the indexing services are identified. In situations where the CD-ROM versions were not available,

Table 1a. International Indexing and Abstracting Services Browsed Through for Malaysian Scholarly Journals in the Fields of Science, Technology & Medicine

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Titles*	Year	Format available (Vendor/Publisher)	Journals covered	Coverage
1. Biological abstracts (CDROM)	1994/1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SilverPlatter (CD-ROM) • Online via DIALOG - files BIOSIS, file 5, 55 • Print form 	9,600	Pure & applied sciences
2. Biotechnology citation index	1995	Institute Scientific Information	2,800	Biotechnology & related areas
3. CA (Chemical Abstracts) (CDROM)	1994/1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am. Chemical Soc • Online thro' STN (Sc & Tech Network), DIALOG files 308-312, 399 Print form 	14,000	Chemistry & related subjects
4. Compendex (CDROM)	1995/1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICR Information OnDisc • Print form 	2,600	Engineering Index
5. GeoRef (CDROM)	1986/1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SilverPlatter 	3,000	Geology, earth science, geography, geophysics, oceanography
6. Geographical Abstracts (Printed format)	1995 Cumulative issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GeoBASE (CD-ROM) • DIALOG ORBIT search • SilverPlatter • Printed format 	1,000	Physical geography, human geography, earth sciences, ecology & related fields
7. CAB abstract (CD-ROM)	1992/1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SilverPlatter 	10,000	Agriculture, animal breeding, animal diseases, biotechnology, entomology, forestry, horticulture, microbiology, nutrition, plant breeding & pathology, soil science, veterinary science & weeds.
8. Inspec Ondisc. (CD-ROM)	1994/1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UMI/Proquest • Online via Datastar, DIALOG, ESA IRS Retrieval service, STN (Sc & Tech network), ORBIT Questel 	4,200	Comprises Physics, Electrical & Electronic , Computer & Control abstracts.
9. MathSci (CD-ROM)	1992/1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SilverPlattter • Online on World Wide Web • Am. Math. Society 	3,100	Comprises Mathematical Reviews & Current Mathematical publications- Mathematics, statistics, computer science
10. Medline (CD-ROM)	1993/1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SilverPlatter • Medlars online 	3,600	Medicinal & related sciences, dentistry, veterinary medicine
11. PsycLIT (CD-ROM)	1986/1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SilverPlatter • Online Psy Infor Services by Am. Psy Assn 	1,300	Psychology & related subjects
12. Psychological Abstracts (Print version)	1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am . Psy. Assn. • DIALOG file 11 	1,400	Psychology & related disciplines

* Source: *Description by core journals & information database/* University of Wisconsin - Madison libraries, Summer 1996. <http://www.library.wisc.edu/guides/coreguide/title.html#historical>

Table 1b : International Indexing and Abstracting Services Browsed Through for

Coverage of Malaysian Scholarly Journals

Malaysian Scholarly Journals in the Fields of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Titles*	Year	Format Available (Vendor / Publisher)	Journals covered	Coverage
1. Anthropological Index (Print version)	1996	• Royal Anthropological Institute (UK)	750	Archaeology, linguistics, medical & visual anthropology, cultural studies, biological & physical anthropology, etc.
2. Arts, Humanities Citation Index (CD-ROM)	1995/1996	• Institute of Scientific Information	1,100	Humanities & related areas
3. EconLIT (CD-ROM)	1989/1996	• SilverPlatter	300	Economics & related areas
4. ERIC (CD-ROM)	1992/1996	• SilverPlatter • DIALOG file 1	825	Education, child development, classroom techniques, computer education, counseling, testing, librarianship, adult education, etc.
5. Historical Abstract (Print version)	1995	• ABC / CLIO Publisher	2,100	World history, related social and humanities studies
6. Humanities Index (CD-ROM)	1984/1995	• Wilson Disc	400	Archaeology, classical studies, folklore, linguistics, music, performing arts, philology, theology
7. LISA Plus (CD-ROM)	1995/1996	• Bowker	539	Librarianship, information science & related subjects
8. Linguistics & Language Behaviour Abstracts (Print version)	1995	-	670	Linguistics, learning behaviour disabilities, education & related areas.
9. LEXIS/NEXIS (CD-ROM)	1995/1996	• Mead Data Central	700 full text +1,000 journals	Law & related areas
10. SocioFile (CD-ROM)	1995/1996	• SilverPlatter	1,800	Sociology & related disciplines
11. Social Science Abstracts (Print version)	1995	• Sociological Abstracts Inc	580	Sociology, political science, statistics, anthropology, economics, community development, philosophy

* Source: *Description by core journals & information database/* University of Wisconsin - Madison libraries, Summer 1996. <http://www.library.wisc.edu/guides/coreguide/title.html#historical>

the latest printed version of the indexes or abstracts were searched. Most printed formats provide a list of all journals indexed and in some cases include addresses of the journal publishers which help to identify the geographic distribution of the journals covered (examples are *Anthropological Index* and *Linguistic & Language Behaviour Abstracts*). From these exercises, a list of Malaysian jour-

nals which are being covered by the international indexing and abstracting services was obtained.

A selected number of journals in the list were then studied more closely. Each journal was checked in terms of its physical format, the composition of its editorial board members or advisers and the geographic distribution of authors who

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contributed articles to the latest 2 issues available. This has helped to indicate whether these journals possess identifiable common characteristics which can be used as an indicator of their acceptable quality, hence qualifying them to be indexed by the international indexing and abstracting services.

RESULTS

(a) The “Visible” Malaysian Journals

Tables 1a & 1b indicate that the STM indexes and abstracting services in CD-ROM or printed format cover a large number of journals. The major services are represented by *Chemical Abstracts* (CA) (14,000 journals), followed by *CAB Abstracts* (10,000 journals), *Biological Abstract* (BA) (9,620 journals) and *Inspec* (4,300 journals). None of the STM services cover less than 500 journals. This is a reflection of the growth of literature in STM disciplines and this will be shown to be true also in the Malaysian case. No similar situation is found in the AHSS disciplines. Only 3 out of the 11 abstracting and indexing services cover 1,000 journals. These are *Historical Abstracts* (2,100 journals), *Sociofile* (1,800 journals) and *Arts & Humanities Citation Index* (1,100 journals). This is indicative of the moderate growth rate of scholarly journals in AHSS areas. In Malaysia a similar situation is indicated which is the reverse of the situation found in the 1970s (Lim, 1975).

A total of 54 Malaysian scholarly journal titles were identified (43 in the STM and 11 in AHSS disciplines). Two journals are covered in both STM and AHSS services (*Sarawak Museums Journal* and *Kajian Malaysia*). Table 2 lists the titles of the Malaysian scholarly journals covered by the 23 international indexing and abstracting services. The figures show that the performance of STM journals are better than AHSS journals as reflected by the total number being covered.

Table 3 indicates that Malaysian journals perform particularly well in chemical, biological as well as life and agricultural sciences. This indicates that Malaysian contributions in these fields are increasingly significant by Third World standards. Three services did not cover any Malaysian journals and these are *Compendex*, *Psychological Abstracts* and *PsycLIT*. In the AHSS disciplines, the “visibility” of scholarly Malaysian journals are relatively low. Only 11 journals are covered by the services under study. Three journals are covered by more than one service and these are; *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, *Sarawak Museums Journal* and *Kajian Malaysia*. Although Malaysia publishes a fair share of educational journals, only the *Journal of the Science and Mathematics Education in Southeast Asia*, (published by RECSAM, Penang) is covered by *ERIC*, the major indexing and abstracting service in the field of

Table 2 : Malaysian Scholarly Journals Indexed by International Indexing and

Coverage of Malaysian Scholarly Journals

Abstracting Services

SCIENCE , TECHNOLOGY, MEDICINE	
TITLES	INDEXING SERVICES
1. ABU Technical Review	Inspec
2. ASEAN Food Journal	BA (Biological Abstracts)
3. Asia Pacific Journal of Molecular Biology & Biotechnology	CAB Abstracts (CDROM)
4. Borneo Review	Biotechnology Citation Index
5. Buletin FRIM	Biotechnology Abstracts
6. Buletin Persatuan Geologi Malaysia	CAB Abstracts
7. Bulletin of the Malaysian Mathematical Soc	CAB Abstracts
8. Bulletin of the Malaysian Ministry of Agiculture & Fisheries	GeoRef
9. Elaeis: International Journal of Palm Oil Research & Development	MathSci
10. Forest Research Report	Zentralblatt fur Matematik
11. FRIM Report	CA (Chemical Abstracts)
12. Journal of Natural Rubber Research	CAB Abstracts
13. Journal of Plant Protection in the Tropics	CAB Abstracts
14. Journal of Tropical Forest Science	CAB Abstracts
15. Jurnal Fizik Malaysia	BA (Biological Abstracts)
16. Jurnal Veterinar Malaysia	BA (Biological Abstracts)
17. Kajian Malaysia	Geographical Abstracts
18. Malaysian Agriculture Journal	Inspec
19. Malaysian Applied Biology	CAB Abstracts
20. Malaysian Forester	CAB Abstracts
21. Malaysian Journal of Agricultural Economics	CA (Chemical Abstracts)
22. Malaysian Journal of Computer Science	CA (Chemical Abstracts)
23. Malaysian Journal of Pathology	CA (Chemical Abstracts)
24. Malaysian Journal of Science :Series A- Life Sciences ; Series B- Physical & Earth Sciences	CAB Abstracts
25. Malaysian Journal of Tropical Geography	CAB Abstracts
26. Malaysian Naturalist	Geographical Abstracts
27. Malaysian Nature Journal	BA (Biological Abstracts)
28. Mardi Research Journal (previously Mardi Res. Bul.)	BA (Biological Abstracts)
	CA(Chemical Abstracts)

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, MEDICINE (Cont'd)

TITLES	INDEXING SERVICES
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29. Medical Journal of Malaysia	Medline
30. Menemui Matematik	CAB Abstract
31. Options	MathSci
32. Pertanika: J. of Tropical Agricultural Science	CAB Abstract
: J. of Science and Technology	BA (Biological Abstract)
: J. of Social Science and Humanities	CAB Abstract
33. The Planter	CAB Abstract
34. PORIM Buletin	CAB Abstract
35. PORIM Occasional paper	CAB Abstract
36. RIC Bulletin	CAB Abstract
37. Sandakania	CAB Abstract
38. Sarawak Gazette	CAB Abstract
39. Sarawak Museum Journal	Geographical Abstract
40. Timber Trade	CAB Abstract
41. Tropical Biomedicine	CAB Abstract
42. Wallaceana	CAB Abstract
43. Warta Geologi	GeoRef
	Geographical Abstract
ARTS, HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES	
1. Intellectual Discourse	LISAPlus
2. Federated Museums Journal	Anthropological Index
3. Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)	Anthropological Index
4. Journal of Science & Mathematics Education in Southeast Asia	Historical Abstract
5. Kajian Malaysia	ERIC
6. Kekal Abadi	Historical Abstract
7. Malaysian Law Journal	CAB Abstract
8. Majalah Perpustakaan Malaysia [<i>not published since 1989</i>]	LISAPlus
9. Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science	LISAPLus
10. Sarawak Museums Journal	LEXIS/NEXIS
11. Southeast Asian Archives	Anthropological Index
	Historical Abstract

Table 3 : The Number of Scholarly Malaysian Journals Covered by Each of the 23 Indexing and Abstracting Services

Coverage of Malaysian Scholarly Journals

SCIENCE / TECHNOLOGY / MEDICINE		ARTS/ HUMANITIES/ SOCIAL SCIENCES	
Indexing/Abstracting Services	Number of Titles Indexed*	Indexing/Abstracting Services	Number of Titles Indexed*
1. Biological Abstracts	7	1. Anthropological Index	3
2. Chemical Abstracts	6	2. Arts, Humanities Citation Index	0
3. Compendex	0	3. EconLit	0
4. GeoRef	2	4. ERIC	1
5. Geographical Abstracts	4	5. Historical Abstracts	3
6. Inspec ondisc	3	6. Humanities Index	0
7. MathSci	2	7. LISAPLus	3
8. Medline	2	8. Linguistic & Language Behaviour Abstracts	0
9. PsycLit	0	9. LEXIS/NEXIS	1
10. Psychological Abstracts	0	10. Social Science Abstracts	0
11. CAB Abstracts	27	11. Sociofile	0
12. Biotechnology Citation Index	1		

* Some titles are indexed in more than 1 services and are counted more than once

education. LEXIS/NEXIS, the legal information service, only indexes the *Malaysian Law Journal* currently.

An interesting feature emerges when looking at *Inspec*. Of the many Malaysian journals published by institutions of higher learning, only three titles are being indexed. These are *Jurnal Fizik Malaysia* (Physics Department, University of Ma-laya); *Malaysian Journal of Computer Science* (Faculty of Computer Science & Information Technology, University of Malaya) and *ABU Technical Review*

(Asian Broadcasting Union, Kuala Lumpur). This achievement is still modest compared to the performance of Singapore journals in this fast changing field. *Inspec* comprises *Physics abstracts*, *Computer and control abstracts* and *Electronic abstracts*. Table 4 indicates that *Inspec* indexes 21 journals published in Singapore. It is obvious that Singapore journal publishers have successfully niched themselves in narrow areas within this field, hence attracting world wide contributors. Most of the Singapore journals are commercially published (mainly

Table 4 : Singaporean Journals Indexed by *Inspec* (Especially in Computer and Control Abstracts and Physics Abstracts).

COMPUTER & CONTROL ABSTRACT	PHYSICS ABSTRACT
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1. Int. J. of High Speed Computing (WS)	1. Asian Pacific J. of Operational Research (NUS)
2. Int. J. of High Speed Electronics (WS)	2. IES J. Inst. of Engineers Singapore
3. Int. J. of Modern Physics A (WS)	3. Int. J. of Bifurcation Chaos in Applied Sc & Engineering (WS)
4. Int. J. of Modern Physics B (WS)	4. Int. J. of Computational Geometry & Applications (WS)
5. Int. J. of Modern Physics C (WS)	5. Int. J. of Foundations of Computer Sc. (WS)
6. Int. J. of Neural Systems	*6. Int. J. of High Speed Computing (WS)
7. Int. J. of Pattern Recognition & Artificial Intelligence (WS)	*7. Int. J. of High Speed Electronics (WS)
8. J. of the Singapore Nat. Academy of Sc. (WS)	*8. Int. J. of Modern Physics A (WS)
9. Modern Physics Letters A (WS)	*9. Int. J. of Modern Physics B (WS)
10. Modern Physics Letters D (WS)	*10. Int. J. of Modern Physics C (WS)
11. Rev. in Mathematical Physics (WS)	*11. Int. J. Pattern Recognition & Artificial Intelligence (WS)
12. Rev. of Solid State Sc. (WS)	12. Int. J. Software Engineering & Knowledge Engineering (WS)
13. Singapore J. of Physics (NUS)	13. J. Circuit Systems (WS)
	*14. J. of the Singapore Academy of Sc.
	15. Mathematical Model: a Method in Appl. Sc.
	*16. Modern Physics Letters A (WS)
	*17. Modern Physics Letters D (WS)
	*18. Rev in Mathematical Physics (WS)
	*19. Rev in Solid State Sc. (WS)

WS -- World Scientific Publishers * Also Indexed in *Computer & Control Abstracts*

NUS – National University of Singapore

by World Scientific Publishers) and the articles are mainly from foreign contributors. To achieve better “visibility” Malaysian scholarly journals should emulate this strategy. An example of such an attempt is the *Asia Pacific Journal of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology* (Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Malaya) which is indexed by *Biotechnology Citation Index* (Institute for

Scientific Information USA) even though it is a fairly recent publication. Table 5 shows institutional performance as publishers of scholarly journals. It clearly indicates that the University of Malaya far outperforms other institutions as a single publisher in publishing 15 (28%) of the total 54 “visible” scholarly titles published by local institutions. Universiti Sains Malaysia, International

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Islamic University of Malaysia and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia account for 3 (5%). Universiti Pertanian Malaysia publishes 8 (15%) of the “visible” titles. Professional associations and societies account for 6 titles (11%) and the largest group of publishers are the semi-governmental and governmental institutions (22 titles, 41%). Figure 1 gives the breakdown of publications by institutions.

(b) Characteristics of the Visible Malaysian Scholarly Journals

Ten of the “visible” Malaysian scholarly journals have been examined individually (Table 6). Observations are made based on the following characteristics; i) their physical format and style, ii) the composition of the editorial board members and reviewers and iii) the geographical distribution of contributors of the latest two issues of each title.

i Physical Format and Style of the Scholarly Journals

Cover, Editorial Information and Notes to Contributors

All the 10 journals examined provide the necessary information on its cover, such as a clear title statement, ISSN numbering, volume, number and year of issue. Most have maintained the same cover design throughout their life span with a few exceptions where the size of the journals have changed, either from

the typical 7” x 10” to an A4 format or vice versa. More of the STM journals have greatly improved their cover designs. Some examples are the *Malaysian Journal of Science* which has adopted a more attractive format, when it split into two separate series (*Series A: Life Science* and *Series B: Physical and Earth Sciences*), *The Planter*, *Malaysian Nature Journal* and *Malaysian Naturalists*. Editorial information, policy and scope of the journals are clearly indicated by most of the 10 journals studied. Instructions to authors are usually provided in varying degree of detail and is often placed on the inside page of the back cover.

Text Format

All 10 journals studied:

- provide a running journal title on the first page of each article (abbreviated or full form);
- start each article on an odd page to ensure easier duplication of reprint articles;
- print a running author(s) name on subsequent even pages for each article and a running short title on the odd pages; providing author(s) affiliation(s) either after each author(s) names(s) on the first page or at the end of each article.
- Provide column page layout; provide abstracts (some in both English and Malay);

Table 5: Institutional Performance as Publishers of “Visible” Scholarly Journals

INSTITUTIONS	JOURNAL TITLES N=54 (100%)	FREQUENCY
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UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA		
1. Institut Pengajian Tinggi - for Mal. Soc. for Molecular Biology & Biotechnology - for Working Group on Trop.Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia Pacific Journal of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology • Wallaceana 	Quarterly (Mar/Jun/Sep/Dec) 3 times a year
2. Geography Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mal. J. of Trop. Geography 	Semiannual
3. Mathematic Department - for Mal. Math. Soc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulletin of the Mathematical Society 	Semiannual
4. Faculty of Computer Sc. & Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menemui Matematik 	3 times a year
5. Geology Department -for Persatuan Geol. Mal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaysian J.of Computer Science • Malaysian J. of Lib. & Infor. Sc • Buletin Persatuan Geologi Mal. 	Semiannual Semiannual
6. Faculty of Medicine - for Mal Soc. of Pathologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warta Geologi • Mal. J. of Pathology • Tropical Biomedicine 	Semiannual Semiannual
7. Jabatan Fizik - for Mal. Inst. of Phy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jurnal Fizik Malaysia 	Quarterly
8. Science Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mal J. of Sc.: Series A Life Sc. • Series B Physical & Earth Sc. 	Semiannual Semiannual
9. Library UM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kekal Abadi 	Quarterly
SUB-TOTAL	15 (28%)	
UNIVERSITI PERTANIAN MAL.		
1. Dept. of Plant Protection - for Mal.Plant Protection Soc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Plant Protection in the Tropics 	3 tmes a year
2. Dept. of Vet. Medicine & Animal Sc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Veterinar Mal. 	Semiannual
3..Agricultural Univ. Press & others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASEAN Food J. • Pertanika: J. of Trop. Agric Sc • Pertanika: J. of Soc.Sc & Hum. • Pertanika:J of Sc. Tech. • Options • Mal. J. of Agric. Economics 	Quarterly 3 times a year Semiannual Semiannual Semiannual Annual
SUB-TOTAL	8 (15%)	
OTHER UNIVERSITIES		
1. Universiti Sains Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kajian Malaysia 	Semiannual
2. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mal. Applied Biology 	Semiannual
3. International Islamic University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual Discourse 	Semiannual
SUB-TOTAL	3 (5%)	
Table 5 (Continued)		
ASSOCIATIONS / SOCIETIES		
1. Mal. Branch Roy. Asiatic Soc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Mal. Branch Roy. Asiatic Soc 	Semiannual
2. Incorp. Soc of Planters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Planter 	Monthly
3. Mal Nature Soc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaysian Naturalists 	Quarterly

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4. Mal. Medical Assn 5. Asian Broadcasting Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaysian Nature J. • Medical J. of Malaysia • ABU Technical Review 	Quarterly Quarterly 6 times a year
SUB-TOTAL	6 (11%)	
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES / OTHERS		
1. Palm Oil Research Inst. Mal (PORIM) 2. Forest Research Inst. Mal (FRIM) 3. Rubber Research Inst. Mal (RRI) 4. Reg. Educ. Centre Sc & Math (RECSAM) 5 Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PORIM Occasional paper • PORIM Bulletin • Elaeis : Int.J. Palm Oil Res & Dev. • Buletin FRIM • Trop Forest Science • FRIM Report • J. of Nat. Rubber Research • J. Sc. & Math. Edn in SEA <p>>14 titles</p>	Monographic series Semiannual Semiannual 3 times a year Monogr. series Quarterly Semiannual Varies
SUB-TOTAL	22 (41%)	

Figure 1: Summary of Institutions as Publishers of Visible Scholarly Journals

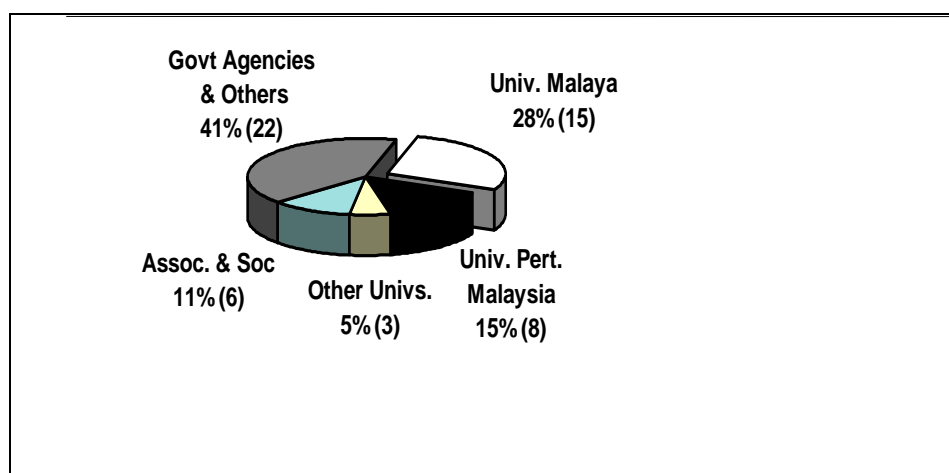
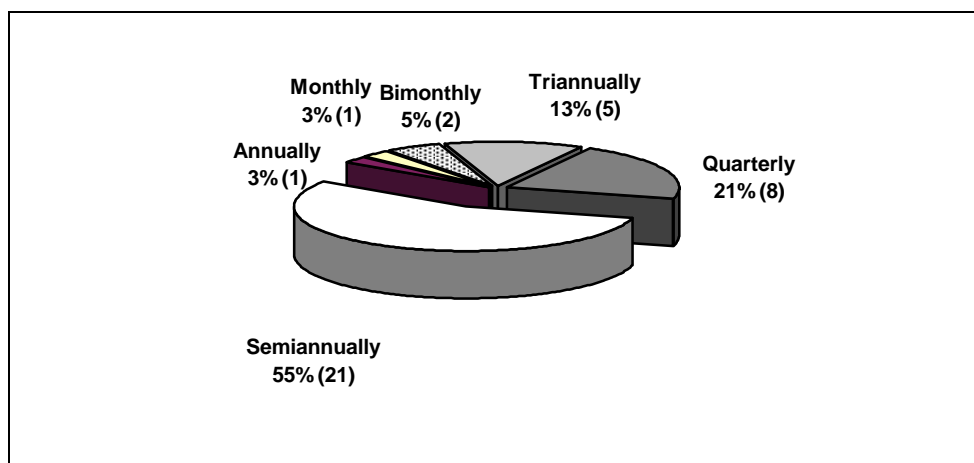


Figure 2: Summary of Frequency of Publications Based on 38 Visible Titles

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- provide keywords for each article;
- referencing styles are fairly consistent (either chronological by citation numbers or alphabetical by author(s) name(s)).

Advertisements

A number of journals have included advertisements which obviously help to relieve some publication costs. This is especially true for the journals published by research institutions. *Bulletin of the Geological Society of Malaysia* and *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)* clearly indicate their advertisement rates, ranging from RM1,000 for a black and white full page and RM1,500 for a coloured full page advertisement.

Information About Coverage in Indexes

Only *Pertanika* and the *Asia Pacific Journal of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology* indicate that they are being indexed by international indexing services (*Biological abstracts* and *CAB Abstracts* for the former and *Biotech-*

nology Citation Index and *Biotechnology Abstracts* for the latter). This is an important piece of information and should be clearly indicated on the inside page of the front cover to inform future authors of their possible “visibility” should they wish to publish in the journal title concerned.

Frequency and Language

Table 5 shows the frequency of the journals covered by the international indexing services and Figure 2 provides the appropriate summary. Out of the 54 “visible” titles, the frequency of 38 titles could be clearly ascertained. Only *The Planter* is issued monthly. Twenty-one of the 38 titles are published semi-annually, 8 on a quarterly basis, 1 annually, 5 titles are published 3 times a year and 2 titles are published 6 times a year. All the 10 journals publish predominantly in the English language.

ii □ □ Composition of the Editorial Members

All the 10 scholarly journals adopt a “combined approach” of having editorial

board members comprising faculty members from various departments within a faculty and academic staff from similar disciplines from other local institutions of higher learning. The most prominent feature is the large panel of editorial advisers and reviewers comprising a high number of foreign members. The editorial board members of the *Asia Pacific Journal of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology* comprises 66 members, of whom 21 are from Malaysia (from various institutions), and the rest are from Japan, Thailand, Australia, Singapore, United States of America, Philippines, Mexico, Chile, Taiwan, Columbia, United Kingdom, India, Korea and China. The editorial board members of the *Journal of Plant Protection in the Tropics* comprises 33 reviewers out of which 10 are from Malaysia and the rest from the Netherlands, United Kingdom, USA, Japan, Australia and Indonesia. This seems to be a characteristic exhibited in most STM journals covered by the international indexing and abstracting services. It is not certain whether the international composition of editorial board members has any relation to the high percentage of foreign paper contribution to these journals. This needs further analysis which is beyond the scope of this paper. One important role is that of the Business Editor. Most journals with a high circulation rate (*Pertanika*, *Journal of Plant Protection in the Tropics*, *Malaysian Journal Tropical Geography*) clearly identify such a role.

iii) Geographical Distribution of Papers

All the 10 scholarly journals exhibit a high proportion of foreign contributors (Table 6). Out of a total of 146 papers from at least 2 issues of the 10 journals studied closely, 79 (54%) are from foreign contributors and 67 (46%) comes from local institutions. The number of foreign contributors are especially high in the biological, life and agricultural sciences as well as mathematics. The Malaysian contributions are well distributed amongst the four established universities (University of Malaya, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia).

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to (a) find out the number of Malaysian scholarly journals which have been covered by major international indexing and abstracting services as an indicator of “visibility”; and (b) identify the characteristics displayed by a sample of these “visible” journals. A number of factors have emerged from this study. Firstly, the number of Malaysian scholarly journals in the STM areas has increased and this is the reverse of the situation found in the 1970s (Lim, 1975), when the spread of titles in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences predominated. That the STM journals published in Malaysia have reached an acceptable level of quality is

Table 6 : Geographical Distribution of Papers Published in the 10 Selected “Visible” Scholarly Journals Based on Contributions to the Latest Two Issues Available

JOURNAL TITLES	MALAY-	FOREIGN	ISSUES
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	SIAN PAPERS	PAPERS	
1. ABU Technical Review	0	7	no 162 (1996) no 163(1996)
2. Asia Pacific J. of Molecular Biology & Biotechnology	13	7	V.4(1&2) 1996
3. Bulletin of the Malaysian Mathematical Society	2	7	16(1&2)1993
4. Bulletin of the Geological Society of Malaysia	16	1	25 (1994)
5. Int. J. Plant Protection in the Tropics	4	14	9(1&2)1992
6. Malaysian Nature Journal	5	15	49(1&2)1995
7. J. of the Mal. Branch Roy. Asiatic Soc.	4	11	18(2)1994 & 19(1) 1995
8. Jurnal Fizik Malaysia	8	3	15(1&2)1994
9. Mal. J. of Trop. Geography	4	11	26(1&2)1995
10. Mal. J. of Sc. Series A Life Sciences	11	3	10(1&2) 1995
TOTAL (N=146)	67 (46%)	79 (54%)	

reflected by the fact that they are being indexed by major international indexing and abstracting services. As such, 43 STM titles are being covered by 10 of the major STM indexing agencies and 13 of the titles are indexed by more than one indexing service (Figure 4). Most of the 43 Malaysian STM journals fall within the category of biological, life and agricultural sciences. Thirty-one Malaysian STM journals are currently being covered by *CAB Abstracts* and 14 titles are covered by *Biological Abstracts*. This situation should help provide a conducive environment in stimulating quality local contributions, since publishing in these 44 STM journals should ensure visibility for the authors. It would ensure that journal articles published in these “visible” journals can be “picked up” by scholars in similar

discipline worldwide and this would gradually increase their potential for being cited. The frequent notes bemoaning the poor quality of papers submitted to local STM scholarly journals (Lim, 1975, Pang, 1996) would hopefully lessen.

More could be done to achieve better visibility of scholarly journals in the AHSS disciplines. A number of AHSS journals not covered by the indexing services were studied and it was found that these journals indicate an equally high standard of production, and receive a number of international contributions. The onus must then fall on the shoulders of editorial members to be aware that it is their responsibility to make their journals “visible” which would improve the journal circulation and frequency

Coverage of Malaysian Scholarly Journals

rate. This entails identifying major local and international indexing and abstracting services which appropriately cover the scope of these journals.

The editorial board members need to ensure that 5 copies of each issue are deposited with the National Library which maintains an index database of periodicals published in Malaysia. This would ensure that paper contributors have some degree of national visibility. In order to achieve foreign “visibility” co-pies should be sent to (a) the publisher of *Ulrich’s International Periodicals Directory* which lists about 190,000 current titles providing details such as subscription rates, frequency and indexing status of a particular title and (b) to chief editors of international indexing services to seek coverage. Once this is achieved, this information must be clearly noted in future publications (usually on the inside front cover) to make this fact known to future paper writers.

The 10 “visible” journals examined, exhibit several common characteristics. The most notable is the fact that these journals publish in the English language. For STM journals, it is important to convey research results in the most commonly used language to ensure an effective dissemination of knowledge. Another characteristic is the fairly consistent publication frequency, most adopting the semi-annual (June/December) approach. The importance of a consistent frequency practice is of utmost importance to paper writers as most would shun journals which are issued irregularly. The

consistent frequency rates adopted also ensure authors whose articles have been accepted that they would get to see their articles in print sooner. Perhaps, it is wise to consistently include the date when articles are re-received, revised or accepted on the first page of each article being published.

The inclusion of the role of business editors and the international nature of the panel of reviewers constitute another distinct feature of the “visible” Malaysian scholarly journals. The local composition of the chief editorial members (spread over several institutions or departments) help to ensure speedier processing of articles for publication which in turn helps improve frequency rates. An international panel of reviewers provide local editors with not only an invaluable source of editorial expertise but also help confer a certain degree of “authoritativeness” to the journals concerned. The international nature of authors who contributed to each of the 10 journals, indicates that some Malaysian scholarly journals have somehow “arrived” at the desired level aspired by most editorial board members, that is, having a constant supply of contributions from both local and foreign scholars. With this comes the pride in seeing that foreign contributors have begun to regard Malaysian journals as “authoritative” enough to warrant their repeated contributions.

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Coverage of Malaysian Scholarly Journals

**MALAYSIAN SCHOLARLY
JOURNALS : THEIR
VISIBILITY AND
CHARACTERISTICS**

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JOURNAL PUBLISHING
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Sintok, Kedah

Coverage of Malaysian Scholarly Journals

Table 1a. International Indexing and Abstracting Services Browsed Through for Malaysian Scholarly Journals in the Fields of Science, Technology & Medicine

Titles*	Year	Availability format & Vendor/Publisher	Journals covered each year	Indexing/Abstracting Service	Year	Availability format & Vendor/Publisher	Records	Fields of Study
						DIALOG, ESA IRS Retrieval service, STN (Sc & Tech network), ORBIT Questel		engineering, electronics, communication, computers & computing & IT
1. Biological Abstracts (CDROM)	1994/1996	>SilverPlatter (CDROM) >Online via DIALOG - files BIOSIS, file 5, 55 >Print form	9,600	9. MathSci-Coverage (CDROM)	1992/1996	>SilverPlatter >Online on World Wide Web	3,100	Comprises of Mathematical Review & Curricular publications- Mathematics, statistics
2. Biotechnology Citation Index	1995	Institute Scientific Information	2,800	10. Medline (CDROM)	1993/1995	>SilverPlatter >Medlars online	3,600	7 million records. - anatomy, physiology, dentistry, microbiology, pathology, parasitology, pharmacology, public health, reproduction veterinary medicine
3. CA (Chemical Abstracts) (CDROM)	1994/1996	>Am. Chemical Soc >Online thro' STN (Sc & Tech Network), DIALOG files 308-312, 399 >Print form	14,000	11. PsycLIT (CDROM)	1986/1996	> SilverPlatter > Online Psy Infor Services by Am. Psy Assn	1,300	Psychology & related subjects
4. Compendex (CDROM)	1995/1996	>ICR Inform. OnDisc >Print form	2,600	12. Psychological Abstracts (Print version)	1995	>Am . Psy. Assn. >DIALOG file 11	1,400	Psychology & related disciplines
5. GeoRef (CDROM)	1986/1995	>SilverPlatter	3,000	Comprises Engineering Index				
6. Geographical Abstracts (Printed format)	1995 Cum. issue	>GeoBASE (CDROM) >DIALOG ORBIT search >SilverPlatter >Printed format	1,000					Geology, earth science, geography, geophysics, oceanography
7. CAB Abstract (CDROM)	1992/1996	>SilverPlatter	10,000					Physical geography, human geography, earth sciences, ecology & related fields
8. Inspec Ondisc. (CDROM)	1994/1996	>UMI/Proquest >Online via Datastar,	4,200					Agriculture, animal breeding, diseases, biotechnology, entomology, forestry, horticulture, microbiology, nutrition, plant breeding & pathology, soil sci. veterinary science & weeds.