

## Acknowledgement Patterns in *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology*

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### ABSTRACT

The present paper examines the generic structure of acknowledgements appearing in the *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology (DJLIT)* covering the period 1998-2013. There are 9.04 % articles which contained acknowledgements. Acknowledgements appearing in these articles have been classified using eight layer topology which reflected the composite nature of acknowledgements. Peer interactive communication (PIC) acknowledgements are highest (29.16 %) and Editorial/ linguistics support (E/LS) acknowledgements are lowest (1.04 %). Further individuals acknowledged in PIC acknowledgements along with their institutional affiliations have also been discussed.

**Keywords:** Acknowledgements, *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology*, bibliometric techniques

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgements allow researchers to reflect their gratitude for any kind of help received from others during the writing of articles. They, in general, occur in response to social expectations sharing the tendency to reflect reciprocal gift giving for all kinds of contributions (mental, physical, etc.) to the work<sup>1</sup>. They reflect a combination of interpersonal, academic, institutional, technical, financial, and moral support to the person(s) or institutions for their diverse contributions.

Acknowledgements offer writers a unique rhetorical space not only to convey their debt for the intellectual and personal assistance they received but also to promote a capable academic and social identity. They are often made to imply significant intellectual debt. However, they may be made for a number of other reasons also. Like citations, they reflect influential contribution in research publications of scientific literature. Citations are formal expression of debt whereas acknowledgements are more personal, singular or private expression of appreciation and contribution<sup>2</sup>. According to Hyland<sup>3</sup>, acknowledgements are neither strictly academic nor entirely personal; they seem to fall through the cracks of the third category and represent a 'Cinderella' genre.

The importance of acknowledgements is highlighted by results of surveys showing the frequency with which they occur in scholarly texts. They are particularly important for scholars to demonstrate their awareness of some central values such as

modesty and gratitude. They are compound entities in which authors may thank colleagues for ideas, funding agencies for support, experts for suggestions to improve the articles, etc.<sup>4</sup> It is very rare that the bibliometric techniques have been used to acknowledgement data to information science. However, there are few studies conducted on practice and pattern of acknowledgements and Blaise Cronin is pioneer in the study of acknowledgements. Three studies were conducted by Tiew<sup>5,6</sup>, Tiew & Sen<sup>7</sup> and another study by Rattan<sup>8</sup> showing the existence of acknowledgements in Malaysian learned journals and Indian journal respectively. The present study is based on the analysis—acknowledgements appearing in Indian journal *DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology (DJLIT)* covering the period 1998-2013.

### 2. LITERATURE SURVEY

Acknowledgements have been of considerable interest to genre analysts and following studies have been carried out on the same:

Mackintosh<sup>9</sup> examined acknowledgements pattern in Sociology in an unpublished dissertation. A three tier classification scheme was adopted to study acknowledgements in American Sociological Review. He further concluded that the lack of interest of Bibliometrician in acknowledgement does not indicate their irrelevance.

Cronin, Mckenzie & Stiffer<sup>10</sup> explored the significance of acknowledgements in *Journal of*

*American Society for Information Science (JASIS)* for 1970-1990. A six layer topology was developed by Cronin, namely, (a) trusted assessor, (b) moral support, (c) technical support, (d) Dogsbody, (e) paymasters, and (f) prime mover. Again Cronin<sup>11</sup> had undertaken a range of acknowledgement studies covering the journal literature of fields as History, Information Science, Psychology, and Sociology.

Giannoni<sup>12</sup> had analysed acknowledgements in English and Italian research articles for their socio-pragmatic construction and textualisation. They manifested in their move structural patterns to determine how research article writers organise and express their debts and gratitude to their peer academics. Hyland<sup>3</sup> explored the textualisation of gratitude within 240 MA and PhD dissertations from six academic fields written by non-native English speaking students at five Hong Kong universities. Hyland<sup>13</sup> in another study analysed the same acknowledgement data for their move structure. He found that instances of this genre consist of three-move components: an optional reflecting move, a main obligatory thanking move and another optional announcing move. In a subsequent study, Hyland & Tse<sup>14</sup> explored the lexico-grammatical patterns used to realise the component moves of the same acknowledgment texts.

Salager-Meyer<sup>15</sup>, *et al.* analysed the acknowledgement paratext of medical research articles written in English and Spanish in Venezuela, Spanish and the United States of America. Again, Salager-Meyer<sup>16</sup>, *et al.* analysed the acknowledgements in medical articles published in five countries (Venezuela, Spain, France, UK, and USA) from 1950 to 2010. Papers written by native speakers in the national language were included. Only 47 % of the articles carried an acknowledgement statement followed by case reports (40 %) and reviews (31 %). It was concluded that the concept of intellectual indebtedness did not only differ from one geographical context to another, but also from one academic genre to another.

Rattan<sup>8</sup> analysed acknowledgements appearing in research articles and short communications in *Annals of Library and Information Studies* covering the period 1999-2012. Acknowledgements were analysed into moral support, technical support, access to facilities, financial support and Peer Interactive Communication type. The most common type of acknowledgements related to Peer Interactive Communication, which was almost 1/3rd of total number of acknowledgements.

Koley & Sen<sup>17</sup> studied acknowledgements incorporated in research papers on electronics and related fields during period 2008-2012 in *IETE*

*Technical Review* and *IETE Journal of Research*. Results showed that nearly 35 % of papers contained acknowledgements; on an average there were 2.2 acknowledgements per article and most of the acknowledgements related to financial support. The number of articles with acknowledgements was higher in *IETE Technical Review* as compared to *IETE Journal of Research*.

### 3. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the present study is to examine the generic structure of acknowledgements appearing in *DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology (DJLIT)* in order to find out frequency distribution of acknowledgements, types, acknowledgements per article and so on.

### 4. CORPUS, METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

Each article of each issue of the volumes of DJLIT covering the period 1998-2013 is downloaded from the web page of this journal. This journal is available in print as well as e-form<sup>18</sup>. Each issue is examined to identify all research articles and short communications to find out the acknowledgements. Acknowledgements are generally found in clearly identifiable article-ending section and usually labelled as Acknowledgements. The text of the acknowledgements is scrutinised and classified using 8 part topology<sup>11,7,17</sup> as:

#### (a) Access Support

Providing access to data, infrastructure facilities, etc.

#### (b) Moral Support

Providing moral support; enthusiasm; permission to publish the manuscript; encouragement; dedication, etc.

#### (c) Financial Support

Providing recognition to funding bodies, can be in the form of scholarships, fellowships, and grants.

#### (d) Technical Support

Providing help in the use of tools, technologies, furnishing technical expertise sample preparation, etc.

#### (e) Peer Interactive Communication (PIC) Support

Advice and discussion, critical insight, intellectual guidance, valuable suggestions, assessment on the study, etc.

#### (f) Clerical Support

Secretarial services, such help in data collection/entry/management, etc.

**(g) Editorial/Linguistic Support**

Editing, proofreading, and translating the manuscript.

**(h) Unclassifiable**

When it is impossible to categorise an acknowledgement according to any of the above categories due to inherent ambiguity, vagueness or lack of contextual clues, the acknowledgement is classified under this category.

The unnamed entities are recorded and counted for all types of acknowledgements except for peer interactive communication (PIC) type of acknowledgements. For PIC, both named and unnamed entities are recorded in order to find the list of individuals acknowledged in PIC category.

The limitation of the present study is that it covers only sixteen years period. Only PIC acknowledgements are elaborated. The PDF of a very few articles are not available in the online version of this journal. So, the print version of this journal for those articles has been consulted.

**5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS****5.1 Acknowledgements in DJLIT**

It is clear from Table 1 that the practice of acknowledgements in contributions of this journal is not so common as only 9.04 % contributions contain formal acknowledgments whereas 20.61 % contributions of *Annals of Library and Information Studies* contain acknowledgements. The maximum number of articles

**Table 1. Acknowledgements in DJLIT**

Year	No. of articles	No. of articles with acknowledgements (%)
1998	24	2 (8.33 %)
1999	20	1 (5 %)
2000	14	2 (14.29 %)
2001	10	-
2002	15	1 (6.67%)
2003	19	2 (10.53%)
2004	14	-
2005	13	-
2006	18	5 (27.78 %)
2007	34	3 (8.82 %)
2008	50	5 (10 %)
2009	50	6 (12 %)
2010	47	6 (12.77 %)
2011	55	6 (10.91 %)
2012	65	4 (6.15 %)
2013	61	3 (4.92 %)
<b>Total</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>46 (9.04 %)</b>

(27.78 %) contained acknowledgements in 2006 and there are no acknowledgements in the year 2001, 2004 and 2005.

**5.2 Frequency Distribution of Acknowledgements**

The frequency distribution of acknowledgements is reported in Table 2. The highest number of acknowledgments per article (3.33) were in 2013 and on an average, each article contains 2.09 acknowledgements.

**Table 2. Frequency distribution of acknowledgements**

Year	No. of articles with acknowledgements	No. of acknowledgements in articles	Mean
1998	2	5	2.5
1999	1	2	2
2000	2	4	2
2001	-	-	-
2002	1	3	3
2003	2	3	1.5
2004	-	-	-
2005	-	-	-
2006	5	10	2
2007	3	4	1.33
2008	5	8	1.6
2009	6	11	1.83
2010	6	17	2.83
2011	6	11	1.83
2012	4	8	2
2013	3	10	3.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>2.09</b>

**5.3 Acknowledgements by Category**

Table 3 shows the acknowledgements of the journal under study by categories. The highest number of acknowledgements is in the PIC (29.16 %), followed by MS (26.04 %), UC (13.55 %) and so on.

**5.4 PIC Acknowledgements**

PIC acknowledgements along with total number of articles with acknowledgements are depicted in Table 4. Looking closely the year-wise distribution of PIC acknowledgements, it is found that it is highest (100 % each) in the years 1998, 1999 2002, 2003, 2008 and 2013. At the same time there are no PIC acknowledgements in the years 2000, 2001, 2004, 2005 & 2007 and mean is 60.87 %. This figure is much higher than *IETE Technical Review* (11 %), *IETE Journal of Research* (35 %), *Annals of Library and Information Studies* (50 %), *College and Research Libraries* (46.2 %), *Library Quarterly* (42.6 %), and *Information Processing & Management* (49.5 %). But this figure is low from *American Sociological*

**Table 3. Category of acknowledgements**

Year	Access support	Moral support	Financial support	Technical support	Peer interactive communication support	Editorial/ linguistic support	Clerical support	Unclassifiable	Total
1998	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	1	5
1999	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
2000	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	4
2001	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2002	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	3
2003	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	3
2004	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2005	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2006	1	3	-	1	4	-	-	1	10
2007	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	4
2008	1	-	-	-	5	-	-	2	8
2009	-	5	2	-	3	-	-	1	11
2010	3	4	1	2	2	-	1	4	17
2011	1	2	-	1	4	-	1	2	11
2012	2	2	1	1	1	-	-	1	8
2013	-	2	1	3	3	1	-	-	10
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>10 (10.42%)</b>	<b>25 (26.04 %)</b>	<b>5 (5.21 %)</b>	<b>10 (10.42 %)</b>	<b>28 (29.16 %)</b>	<b>1 (1.04 %)</b>	<b>4 (4.16 %)</b>	<b>13 (13.55 %)</b>	<b>96 (100 %)</b>

**Table 4. Peer interactive communication acknowledgements**

Year	No. of articles with acknowledgements	Peer interactive communication (%)
1998	2	2 (100 %)
1999	1	1 (100 %)
2000	2	-
2001	Nil	-
2002	1	1 (100 %)
2003	2	2 (100 %)
2004	-	-
2005	-	-
2006	5	4 (80 %)
2007	3	-
2008	5	5 (100 %)
2009	6	3 (50 %)
2010	6	2 (33.3 %)
2011	6	4 (66.67 %)
2012	4	1 (25 %)
2013	3	3 (100 %)
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>28 (60.87 %)</b>

*Review* (92.6 %), *American Historical Review* (83.7 %), and *Psychology Review* (78.1 %).

### 5.5 Number of Acknowledgements Per Individual

The study also reveals the number of acknowledgements per individual. There are 35 individuals who were acknowledged in 28 PIC acknowledgements. Only one individual was acknowledged twice and rest of the individuals are acknowledged once.

### 5.6 Individuals Acknowledged

List of individuals acknowledged in PIC category is shown in Table 5. One individual from this category, Mohinder Singh from DESIDOC (Defence Scientific Information and Documentation Centre), New Delhi has been acknowledged twice. Out of 35 individuals acknowledged, five are from DESIDOC, New Delhi; 4 are from BARC (Bhabha Atomic Research Centre), Mumbai; 3 are from Electronic Publishing Trust; 2 are from Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory, Cochin; 13 from different academic and research institutions and institutional affiliation of 8 individuals is not available. A further investigation of the institutional affiliation of individuals acknowledged indicates that most of the individuals are from library

**Table 5. List of individuals acknowledged**

Name	Acknowledgement score
Mohinder Singh	2
A.L. Moorthy	1
Abdul Rahman Kamaruddin	1
Aida Slavic	1
Ashok Kumar	1
B.K.Sen	1
Barbara Kirsop	1
César Carreras	1
D.C. Gupta	1
Dr Khan	1
Edward A. Fox	1
G.P. Kothiyal	1
G. Prathap	1
G. R. Mahajan	1
H.N. Prasad	1
J.V. Yakhmi	1
K.C. Garg	1
K.V. Rajasekharan Nair	1
Leslie Chan	1
M.N. Kadapatti	1
M.R. Vishnubhatla	1
Ms Abdul Rahman Kamaruddin	1
N. Sididiqui	1
S. Arunachalam	1
S.M. Shaffi	1
S. Parasuraman	1
S.S. Murthy	1
S. Sen	1
S.K. Chaudhuri	1
Sharon Reeves	1
Anonymous staff and referee for comments	3

and information technology institutions. So, it can be deduced that the individuals from library and information technology play important role in the growth of literature of the journal under study.

## 7. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Acknowledgements provide a valuable space to writers to present themselves as thankers and indebteders having a professional and social identity. This structure of the writers enable them to express gratitude as well as display an appropriate scholarly competence<sup>19</sup>. Hence, it is often advised to writers to pay attention to the appropriate wording and staging of these 'special textual constructs' whose 'formation is governed by conventions which are

different from those of the main text'<sup>20</sup>. From this study the following facts have been concluded:

- The practice of acknowledgements in *DJLIT* is not so common as only 9.04 % communications include acknowledgements.
- Average number of acknowledgements per article is 2.09.
- The most common type of acknowledgement is peer interactive communication category accounting 29.16 % of the total acknowledgements. The mean percentage of the peer interactive communication acknowledgements is 60.87 % which is higher than *Annals of Library and Information Studies* (50 %) and Lower than *Library Quarterly* (42.6 %).
- Only one individual Dr Mohinder Singh from DESIDOC, Delhi has been acknowledged twice out of 35 individuals acknowledged in PIC category.

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