

A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE LITERATURE ON THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR.

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Abstract

The objective of the research is to investigate the characteristics of the literature produced on the Nigerian Civil War between 1967 and 1982. The bibliographic analysed according to format, language, authorship and growth patterns. The result shows that newspapers/magazines constitute the major format of the literature, English is the language of the literature, single authorship is predominant, the literature growth peaked in 1969 and declined thereafter reaching one (1) publication per year in 1981 and 1982. The implications of these findings on the design of an information system that would retrieve references on the Nigerian Civil War are discussed.

Introduction

The Nigerian Civil War started on May 30, 1967, was fought for thirty months and ended on January 15, 1970. The Nigerian Civil War is a topical issue in the country's chequered history as it marked a watershed in Nigeria's political stability since attaining statehood on October 1, 1960. Much has been written about this historic event and more continues to be written despite having ended the war since 1970.

The position of the civil war in Nigeria therefore justifies a study of the characteristics of the literature thus produced with a view to identifying the formats, languages, growth and authorship patterns. These characteristics will not only assist in describing the evolution of the literature but should also serve as a guide in selecting the inputs should the need arise to establish an information system on the Nigerian Civil War.

Literature review

Most bibliometric studies devoted to the study of the characteristics of subject literatures identify certain factors. These factors according to Houghton (1975) include: literature size and growth, formats, languages, subject coverage and scatter on one hand, citation patterns and obsolescence rates on the other. The former and the latter fall within the bibliometric studies of literature produced and used respectively.

Cole and Eales' study of 1917 simply identified the publication produced by country, subject and source journals. Bottle and Chase (1972) analysed the literature on music and musicology and identified subject coverage, bibliographic form, language of communication and country of origin. Historical musicology especially of the 20th century subjects dominated the literature while English Language was the dominant medium of communication. Most general studies on bibliometric characteristics of subject literatures identify these characteristics. Other examples are Donohue (1972); Sengupta (1974). Wood and Ferguson (1974).

Some other specialized studies identify specific characteristics of subject literatures. Aiyepoku (1973 a) analysed entries in *Current Geographical Publications*, 1966 – 1970 and identified the dominant language and format of the literature of world geography. English language was discovered to be the dominant medium of communication while periodicals predominated as the format of recording. The size and growth of social science literature were the specific subjects of study by Line and Roberts (1970). They discovered an exponential growth of 3.44% per annum between 1820 – 190 for serial titles, an annual death rate of 0.5% for current titles while the number of articles and pages in serials increased significantly.

They also found that there was a much more rapid growth in the number of secondary services than primary serials while social science monographs experienced the greatest and overall linear increase but with huge variations between countries.