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## Library and Information (LIS) Research Topics in Indonesia from 2006 to 2017

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## **Library and Information (LIS) Research Topics in Indonesia from 2006 to 2017**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Library and information research (LIS) has grown significantly as more and more library and information science programs were established. The oldest LIS program in Indonesia is the Library and Information Department at the University of Indonesia (DIP UI) which was established in 1942. Since then, LIS at University of Indonesia has become a barometer for many other LIS programs in Indonesia. Other reputable LIS programs are Library & Information Science (JIIP) at Padjadjaran University, Department of Information and Library (DIIP) at Universitas Airlangga, and Library and Information Science at Diponegoro University, which are all located in big capital cities in Java Island. The development of LIS programs has a big contribution to the development of LIS research areas. Through their undergraduate theses and other scientific papers, LIS students have also had significant contributions to the development of LIS topics. Thesis is a compulsory unit for the bachelor degree in LIS in Indonesia, and so far there have been thousands of research in LIS conducted since the 1950s up to 2010s. However, there have not been many papers discussing the research trends in LIS in Indonesia. The aim of this chapter is to investigate the LIS research trends in Indonesia from 2006 to 2017. We took 5 reputable universities in Indonesia that have LIS programs as the sample, namely Universitas Airlangga-Surabaya, Diponegoro University-Semarang, Padjadjaran University-Bandung, North Sumatera University-Medan, and the University of Indonesia-Jakarta. The research samples are undergraduate theses that are available online in the institutional repositories of those five universities. The popular student's research topics are library and information resources, library and information services, information society, and information systems.

**Keywords:** Research topics, Library topics, information society, library services, information systems, information literacy

### **Introduction**

Research of library field in Indonesia has developed along with the development of department of Library and Information Science, particularly at undergraduate level (S1) where students are required to write a scientific research paper (thesis) before gaining the bachelor of library science degree. Library education at undergraduate level was commenced in 1942 at the University of Indonesia (Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, 2009). Then, the same discipline at undergraduate level was launched by Padjadjaran University in 1983 (Directorat of Higher Education, 2013), by North Sumatera University in 2001 (Universitas Sumatera Utara, 2007), and by Airlangga University in 2003 (Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Politik, 2009), while library education at the postgraduate level was initiated by Diponegoro University in 2005 (Directorat of Higher Education, 2013). As the discipline of library science was flourishing in those periods, it had contributed a

significant body of scientific works focusing on library and information with various sub-topics (Anna, 2011). Nevertheless, the accumulated works are meager in number compared to those of other fields (Syafei, 2010). Thesis topics of library at Universitas Airlangga are mostly about human resources, information behaviour, and library services (Anna, 2011). On the other hand, in Indonesia between 2009 and 2011 the topics in general were about information behaviour and information systems (Setyowati, 2011). Internationally, in 1985, research topics of information storage and retrieval, library and information services were the most popular ones (Rochester & Pertti, 2003)

The wealth of research topics in library science is influenced by its nature; that is an integration of social, humanities, technology, management, statistics, and communication sciences (Chowdurry, 2008). Library science departments across Indonesia embrace various academic approaches, depending on what faculty they belong to.

Topics studied by library and information science have been discussed by White and McCain (1998) through citation studies, and by Hawkins (Pendit, 2003). Various studies in Library Science and Information have employed several theories and disciplines, indicating its multidisciplinary nature. Those bodies of research lead to something called specialties within the discipline of library and information science.

Library and Information science includes studies of the science of information, documentation, library and archives focusing on the analysis of information systems, organization, environment, and channels, whose fields and subject matters are continuously developing. Using library science as a reference, it could be said that information science emerged later after World War II along with the emergence of computer science. Nevertheless, activities related with information science have started since the late 1940s, and the term "information science" has come into view formally since the 1960s (Bates & Maack, 2009).

In Indonesia alone, library and information science is a relatively new subject and has developed quickly since the 2000s with the establishment of the discipline's study programs in several universities. The Indonesian term "*ilmu informasi dan perpustakaan*" or "*ilmu perpustakaan dan informasi*" is a direct translation from the English term "library and information science" (LIS) (Pendit, 2003).

### **Research method**

This is a quantitative research in that the data presented are in numbers resulting from calculating subjects of theses written by undergraduate students at Information and Library Science departments in five state universities in Indonesia. This research uses a descriptive approach aimed to explore and clarify a phenomenon or social fact (Sanapiah, 2008) related to thesis subjects chosen by undergraduate students at Information and Library Science program of study.

Data were collected through library study on thesis reports obtained from digital repositories of each university. The data collected from each university were of different years of publication ranging from 2006 to 2017. The numbers of titles are 1436. Titles of the theses were then analysed and classified based on the Library of Congress subject headings, and then the subjects were displayed in tables based on the year of publication and the publishing university.

### **The Interdisciplinary Nature of Library and Information Science**

Library and information science is interdisciplinary in that it can be studied from various academic perspectives. According to Pendit (2003), interdisciplinary subjects of LIS include (a) Information retrieval and relevance concept, (b) Information system, scientific communication, information society, (c) Bibliometrics, Scientometrics, Informetrics, (d) Documents, access, and utilization of information, (e) Information seeker and user.

This section will discuss data finding and analysis. Data of undergraduate students' thesis titles in five state universities were obtained from each university's institutional repository. The data generated varied in terms of publication dates ranging from 2006 to 2017, based on the available data in the repositories. The result of the database searches in the institutional repositories is that there is a total of 1436 thesis titles from five state Information and Library Programs in Indonesia.

Data discrepancy of thesis titles is due to unavailability of data in the institutional repositories. Airlangga University and Diponegoro University own a well-organized institutional repository, while University of Indonesia, Padjadjaran University, and North Sumatera University have yet to have good information architecture so that obtaining appropriate data is somewhat difficult.

In 2008 there were 20 theses which mostly (25%) discussed 'books and reading' in Airlangga University. In the subsequent year (2009), more topics were investigated, and 'information society' topic, which included information seeking behaviours, was the most popular one (35%) until 2017. Similar to the previous year, in 2010 the topic of information society remained the most studied subject of theses. Many theories used by students were those from sociology, due to the fact that the program is under the faculty of social sciences and politics.

In 2011, the topic that attracted students the most was information resources, such as library collection management or library materials and the utilization of information from various media. Another interesting topic was information literacy. Starting from 2011, thesis topics have become more diverse. Up to 2013 there had been 18 topics under investigation. In 2013 alone, there were two predominant research topics, namely library and information services and information society.

Research topic in Diponegoro University has a strong emphasis on library services, 24%. Other research topics were books and reading 14%, information resources 14%, information retrieval 11%, information societies 11%, and library management with only 4%. The year 2007 admitted new research topics by students of the LIS department of Diponegoro University, covering communication with 7%, human resources 11%, library building 18%, library science 4% and user satisfaction 7%. Library services remained a dominant topic researched by students in that year.

As for 2008, the samples became larger (60 thesis titles) due to a rise in the quantity of graduating students in that year. Out of these 60 theses, human resources was the first most researched topic by students (30%), followed by library services as the second most popular topic (11%). In this year, the topics of communications and library science were no longer researched by the students, while information systems, libraries and archives were the new entries in 2008.

The students' thesis topics at the library science department of Diponegoro University became more wide-ranging from year to year. In Diponegoro University, several topics were quite popular, such as library services in 2006 to 2007, and human resources in 2008. From 2009 until 2016, the research topics are remain the same, and library services still become the most popular topic, followed by human resources, information systems, library building and design, information resources, and information retrieval respectively.

The Library and Information Department of Padjadjaran University is the only program under the Communication Science Faculty. This fact has influenced research topics in the department highly, in which theses with communication topics steadily increased from year to year culminating in from 2007-2012. Theses with this topic were mainly concerned with the use of mass communication media in library, interpersonal communications among librarians, and public relations. In addition, research topics of archive and library resources were quite prevalent among Padjadjaran University students, particularly during 2010/2011. This might have been triggered by some of the lecturers who have background in archiving. Research on archives includes archive management and documents and archive services. Meanwhile, research topics on library resources are concerned with the types of library collections, collection utilization, and collection development. The subject of information resources was also of high interest to the students, focusing on the utilization of information sources such as the Internet.

There was a significant difference between research topics in 2007 and those in the years of 2010-2012, that is, while topics of archives increased, the topics of book and reading (covering the sub-topics of

interests in reading, story telling, and book publishing) decreased. Similarly, research on human resources and their performance declined in 2010-2012. Research on information society, a topic which consists of information finding, information searching and information needs kept on rising, peaking in 2012. Research on management and total quality management, which include service quality, was not so popular in 2010-2012. Research on information technology was not popular either at Padjadjaran University because their curriculum mainly focuses on communications. It can be said that there was a trend shift in research topics from 2007 to 2010-2012, the years when library resources, total quality management and book and reading were the most popular topics. Next, in 2010, research focusing on archives and information resources was prevalent, but in 2011 the topics of archives and library resources dominated research reports. Finally, in 2012 the topics of communication and information society prevailed.

From 2009 to 2010 the most desirable topic in University of Indonesia was library services, followed by human resources, and information resources. After 2010, new topics emerged as students' research topics, namely information literacy, library building, library materials, total quality management, and vandalism. Apart from that, there was a decline of interest in several research topics such as bibliometrics, copyrights, knowledge management, communication and user education, all of which were no longer investigated by students.

The subject of information resources was the second top topic investigated by students in 2009, but was in decline in 2010, and recovered as the most researched topic in 2011 (17%). The topic of library services dropped from 16% in 2009 and 2010 to 11% in 2011. Similar to the previous years, in 2011 the students' research topics varied considerably and there was a fluctuation. The topic of information systems and information library networks began to be researched by students in 2011, while the topics of library building and management were no longer appealing to students.

Meanwhile, in 2009 the dominant thesis titles of undergraduate students at North Sumatera University were about information resources and bibliometrics reaching 20%. Several themes on the information resource topics are collection utilization, collection development, and collection availability. On the bibliometrics topic, some selected themes were citation analysis, subject analysis, subject indexes, and document analysis. This state was different from that of 2010 in which the prevalent undergraduate thesis titles were about library services, 28%. Several themes under the library services topic are service utilization, service effectiveness, collection availability and collection lending. Next, the table above also shows that in 2011, many undergraduate students' theses at the Library Science Department discussed information society with 10 titles (40%) out of 25 topics. Some of the topics dealt with information needs, information culture, user needs, user interests, and information seeking behaviours. By looking at year 2010, students' propensity to choose information society subject was also high at the time, reaching eight titles (25%), some of which discussing information seeking behaviours, information culture, and information needs.

The interest dynamics of students at Library and Information Science from 2009 to 2011 in choosing topics of their theses indicate that there is a continuous changing trend in conjunction with the development of library and information science. An interesting trend in North Sumatera University within the period is a topic that was once highly attractive (2009), but it then declined in the following years. For example, in 2009 many theses discussed the topics of information resources and bibliometrics (20%), but from 2010 to 2011 the topics were no longer chosen. This can be seen in the table where the topic of information resources dropped from five to four and then finally only one. Even in 2011 the topic of bibliometrics was not used as a thesis title anymore. Likewise, the topic of library services that once saw a rise in 2010 with nine titles dropped to six titles in the following year.

In contrast, the topic of information society increased significantly. In 2009, this topic was raised by merely one thesis title, and then there were eight titles in 2010, and it finally became 10 titles in 2011 (40%). This is an interesting phenomenon because from the curriculum point of view, the number of lecture subjects that helped students understand information society topic were quite limited compared with that of information resources or bibliometrics. Actually, all lecture subjects were mutually supportive in

shaping students' theoretical framework when writing a thesis, but the provision of special lecture topics that specifically discuss certain subjects will be very useful in aiding students to focus on the relevant theories. In the Library and Information Department of North Sumatera University, there is only one lecture subject directly relevant to the topic of information society, which is Indonesian Society and Cultures, which weighs two credit points. Looking at the increasing trend of students using this topic as their thesis titles, it might be the case that the students who now live in an information society have more and more appreciated the significance of information. Because of that, research titles with information society topics (in terms of searching, finding, and using information) became appealing to students.

Table 1. The popular students' thesis topics of library and information science

Year	Topics
2006	Library Services Book & reading, Information Resources
2007	Library Services Library building, Information resources Book & reading, Total quality management
2008	Book & reading, Information society, Human resources, Library services, Archives
2009	Information society, Book & reading, Library services, Human resources, Information resources, Bibliometrics,
2010	Information society, Information resources, Library services Archives, Communication,
2011	Information resources, Information society, Information literacy Archives, Library services Library resources, Total quality management
2012	Communication, Information society, Library resources
2013	Information resources, Information society, Library services
2014	Information Society Information Literacy Library services Marketing and promotion

2015	Information society Library services Information systems
2016	Information literacy Information society Personal information management Internet
2017	Library services Information society Information systems Internet

The table above summarizes the mapping results of undergraduate students' theses at the Library and Science Departments at five state universities in Indonesia. From the results above, the authors were still unable to suggest a research topic trend in general. However, as can be seen in the table, theses discussing library services and library resources appeared in all the above departments of library and information science. The information society topic is very popular at Universitas Airlangga, but not at Diponegoro University and at University of Indonesia. The reason is probably because the Library and Information Science Department of Universitas Airlangga is under the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences and the information society subject has adopted a lot of sociological theories. On the other hand, the library science department at Diponegoro University and University of Indonesia are under the Faculty of Humanities. On the other hand, Padjadjaran University has a strong passion for the subjects of archives and communication, while University of Indonesia has the subject of library services as one of the most popular subjects because it is the first university that established a library science department and its teaching staff have long been known to have a strong competency in librarianship.

#### **Solutions and Recommendations**

Research findings on students' thesis topics at library and information departments above reveal that the prevalent topics were library services, library resources, information services, information society, and information systems. Other librarianship topics should be promoted as undergraduate students' thesis topics among library and information science departments, such as information technology, bibliometrics, information retrieval, and information sharing.

#### **Future research directions**

Future research can map the general trends of research topics in library and information science thoroughly and comprehensively so that the trends in this field can be generalized.

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## PRIMARY SOURCES

<b>1</b>	<b>New Library World, Volume 117, Issue 1_2 (2016)</b> Publication	<b>1</b> %
<b>2</b>	<b>Cristina Gomes de Souza, Marta Lúcia Azevedo Ferreira. "Researchers profile, co-authorship pattern and knowledge organization in information science in Brazil", Scientometrics, 2012</b> Publication	<b>&lt;1</b> %

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