

## WHAT ARE WE LEARNING FROM YOU:

Research on Australian libraries and librarianship in China

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**Abstract:** Based on the data from CNKI and Wafang Data, and with comparison as the methodology and bibliometric analysis as the major method, this paper shows the historical and current use of Australian libraries and librarianship research by Chinese academics. It uses weighting Australian content against other major countries and explores the annual development, authorship, institution, source journal and paper content.

**Keywords:** Australian libraries and librarianship, bibliometric analysis, CNKI, Wafang Data, Chinese researchers.

### 1. Introduction

For all professions in all the countries, learning from foreign experience is not only feasible but necessary in this globalized era. China is definitely not an exception. As a major English-speaking country, Australia has always been the focus of the research in library and librarianship in China. If this is the case, then one question arises: What are we the Chinese learning from you? There are many ways to answer this question and the bibliometric analysis of related research output is one of the most effective and widely-applied. And the answer will definitely benefit both the learned and those who are learning.

### 2. Data Collection

When carrying out the bibliometric study of a research field, the first step should be to select an appropriate database. To serve the aim of this paper two main Chinese databases, CNKI and Wafang, are chosen as the data sources.

When comparing between Australia and other major countries/territories, the data from 2006 to 2015 in the two databases mentioned above was collected. To fully explore the research on Australian libraries and librarianship by Chinese, all the related data was retrieved without any time limit. The total number of research outputs on Australian libraries and librarianship by Chinese is 292, consisting of 283 journal papers and 9 dissertations.

### 3. Data Analysis

#### 3.1 Country/Territories Comparison: How much are we interested in you?

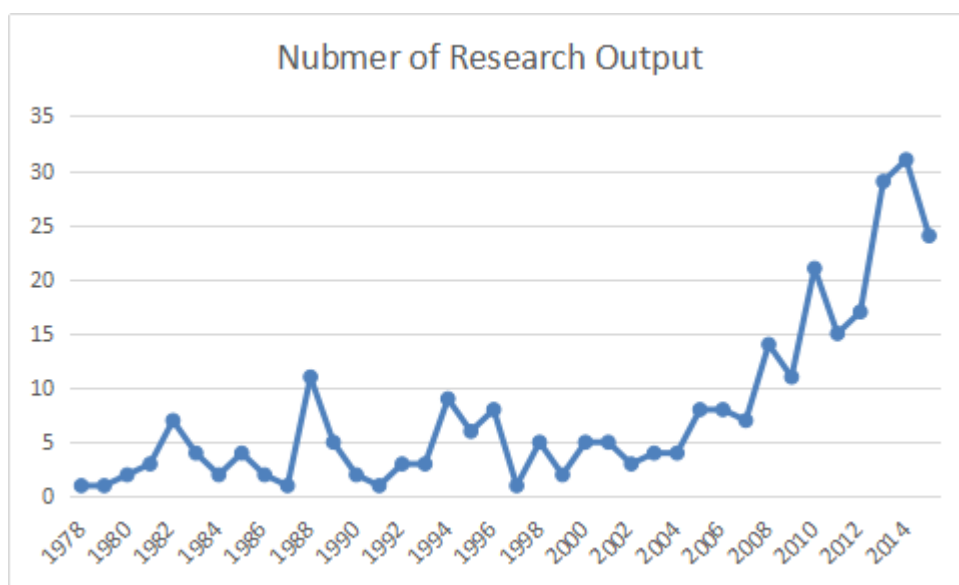
11 countries whose GDP ranks among the top 12 (except China) in 2015 were chosen. Comparing the respective research output from 2006 to 2015 of these 11 countries by Chinese researchers on libraries and librarianship, Australia (189) ranks fourth, behind USA (2666), Japan (547) and Britain (407). It is quite understandable, given the popularity of USA and Britain and Japan's geographical advantage and the relatively small Australian population and professional library community. Thus it is very fair to say that the Chinese researchers are really interested in Australian information, though not as much as in the top three.

#### 3.2 Yearly Development

Chinese interest in Australian libraries and librarianship can be traced

back to 1978, when three authors co-wrote an paper titled “The Visit to Australian libraries” and published it in Journal of the National Library of China. The 1980s and 1990s saw a slow and steady development of interest, though in some years, like 1982, 1988 1994 and 1996, there were peaks. After the turn of this century, the pace has been accelerated and more study findings have appeared. (Chart 3.2)

Chart 3.2



### 3.3 Authorship Analysis: Who are most interested in you?

13 of the 292 journal papers and dissertation are anonymous with the rest (279) are the work of 332 researchers. There are only 7 authors who have written more than three papers. 3 of the top 7 relatively prolific authors have stopped their research since 2000, perhaps as a result of their aging or shift of research interest. It can only safely decide that Yunmei Yan is so far still an active researcher (Table3.3).

Table 3.3

<b>Author Name</b>	<b>Author Affiliation</b>	<b>Number of Publication</b>	<b>Time Period of Publication</b>
Yang He	Library Bureau <sup>1</sup> , Ministry of Culture	6	1989-1994
Bo Gao	School of Economics & Management, South China Normal University	6	2008-2013
Guobin Huang	Business School , Beijing Normal University	3	2011-2012
Jiazhen Liu	School of Information Management , Wuhan University	3	1998-2000
Jianzhong Wu	Shanghai Library	3	1995-1996
Yunmei Yan	Guangzhou Library	3	2013-2015
Dan Li	National Library of China	3	2008-2012

The affiliations of 53 authors cannot be identified by information provided on their papers. As for the other 279 authors, 105 are from university libraries, 90 from university college/school/departments (72 are from the university college/school/departments directly related to library or librarianship, like Department of Information Management; 18 are from university

<sup>1</sup> It is the once-used name and now Public Culture Bureau

college/school/departments with indirect or no connection, like the College of Literature), 59 are from public libraries, 17 are from research institutes, and 8 are from other institutions such as company, government department, museum, hospital, design institute, etc.

### 3.4 Institution Analysis: Which institutions are most interested in you?

The 7 prolific institutions comprise public libraries, universities college/school/departments and government departments, all of which located in Chinese major cities. Library Bureau and Peking Library seem to have been quiet for a long time. However, the rest are still active, with 3 institutions still contributing their findings since 2014 (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4

	<b>Institution Name</b>	<b>Number of Publication</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Time period of Publication</b>
1	School of Information Management, Wuhan University	12	Wuhan	1998-2015
2	National Library of China	9	Beijing	2007-2014
3	School of Economics & Management, South China Normal University	8	Guang zhou	2008-2014
4	Library Bureau, Ministry of Culture	7	Beijing	1988-1994
5	Shanghai Library	5	Shanghai	1995-2010

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Department of Information				
5	Management, Peking University	5	Beijing	1988-2013
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7	Peking Library	4	Beijing	1994-1999

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### 3.5 Source Journal Analysis: Are the papers about you good?

In all research output, 283 are journal papers and 9 are dissertations. These 283 papers are distributed among 89 journals. And 196 papers, that is 69.26%, are published in core journals<sup>2</sup>, indicating the overall high quality. However, the median citation times is 1.01 and only about 6% are cited at least once, which means they are not widely referenced in spite of the good quality.

### 3.6 Content Analysis: What aspects are we most interested in?

The main aim of Chinese researchers who study Australian libraries and librarianship is to learn or “borrow” something, especially something practical, which makes most of the research is based on case studies and practice-oriented.

Generally speaking, Australian public libraries draw the majority of Chinese researchers’ attention, which ends in 125 journal papers and dissertations on them, followed by university libraries (52), library unions (20) and Library Information and Science education (11). The rest concern general description of library and librarianship development, visiting experience and news reports on China-Australia professional communication.

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<sup>2</sup> This is a Chinese term for categorizing journals and highlighting the quality, referring to the best of all journals.

By further analyzing the content, services, resources, management, library & law, and education are the subjects discussed most. (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6

Services (69)	Information/reference/subject service, basic patron service, service regulations, diversification of service
Resources (56)	resource development, resource sharing, resource promulgation, data management,
Management (43)	management concepts and practice, quality management, risk management, standardized management, librarian professional development
Library & Law (26)	library and intellectual property right, library and right of privacy, library and copyright, library law, library and legal deposit
Education (16)	professional/accredited LIS education, information literacy education

These research outputs focus on introducing what Australian libraries and librarians are actually doing to learn advanced experiences and advise Chinese counterparts how to improve their performances. However, there is little follow-up research and trial-and-error reports on whether such 'borrowed' experiences can be localized, and if so, how well they are assimilated in China. Furthermore Chinese research on Australian libraries and librarianship pays too much attention to practice and rarely probes the concepts, principles

and/or theories behind experiences. Therefore, for better understanding and more feasible application, more theoretical research and empirical study on how China will learn from Australia should be encouraged and carried on.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

The comparison and analysis above demonstrate: a) Australia is one of the most important countries for Chinese researchers whose research interest lies in library and librarianship; b) such interest started almost 40 years ago and has steadily developed; c) there are only relatively few prolific authors and institutions, and a few keep on actively studying; d) in terms of source journals the journal papers' quality is good, but the median citation frequency and the percentage of the cited papers are low; e) Chinese researchers focus mainly on the services, resources and management of Australian libraries and librarianship; f) and Chinese researchers devote mainly, even solely to the 'what' aspect of Australian libraries and librarianship and the 'how' question should be asked if China hopes to learn more and deeper from Australia.

#### References:

1. <http://www.cnki.net/> ,2016-04-30.
2. <http://q.wanfangdata.com.cn/> ,2016-04-30.