GOOGLE SCHOLAR: A NEW OR JUST ANOTHER TOOL TO BE USED ON FACULTY RECRUITMENT AND RESEARCH QUALITY ASSESSMENT?

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Abstract

According to the web indication ‘Google Scholar is a freely accessible web search engine that indexes the full text or metadata of scholarly literature across an array of publishing formats and disciplines’. A tool released in beta in November 2004, the Google Scholar index includes most peer-reviewed online academic journals and books, conference papers, theses and dissertations, preprints, abstracts, technical reports, and other scholarly literature, including court opinions and patents. While Google does not publish the size of Google Scholar’s database, scientometric researchers estimated it to contain roughly 389 million documents including articles, citations and patents making it the world’s largest academic search engine in January 2018. Previously, the size was estimated at 160 million documents as of May 2014. Earlier statistical estimate published in PLOS ONE using a Mark and recapture method estimated approximately 80–90% coverage of all articles published in English with an estimate of 100 million.[4] This estimate also determined how many documents were freely available on the web.

Google scholar and the corresponding tools that contains have made it lately a tool to be considered as one for the evaluation and possible recruitment of faculty members. Still it has also been heavily criticized for not vetting journals and including predatory journals in its index something declared to make it rather weak compared with some other previously existed engines. Yet, on the other hand no research is known related with the yearly number of citations produced per author and the characteristics of this author and his research quality based on the histograms during the spam of the years of his corresponding research. This work comes to bring a new angle of how the citations produced by an author in collaboration with various other parameters that do characterize the corresponding histograms could be used as a final tool that shows a specific trend on the quality of research of the researcher and the possibility to use Google Scholar citations as a methodology of evaluating career development and recruiting researchers/faculty. For that two different universities are used with their first top 100 cited authors while a comparison with some other search engines is presented compared to Google scholar to show the validity of that approach.

Keywords: Google scholar, case studies, data analysis, researcher evaluation and recruiting, career development.