Letter to the editor

Comments on “State of the art on food waste research: A bibliometrics study from 1997 to 2014”

Recently, Chen et al. (2017) published the paper entitled “State of the art on food waste research: A bibliometrics study from 1997 to 2014”. In 3.4 Research emphasis: author keywords, authors mentioned “These keywords were calculated and ranked using six-year intervals to minimize year-to-year fluctuations.” without any references (Xie et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2010; Ho et al., 2010). In fact, Ho and coworkers firstly proposed the method using author keywords in different intervals to reveal the research emphases and trends in 2008 (Xie et al., 2008). Later, a series of studies were conducted by Ho and coworkers to investigate various research topics (Li et al., 2009; Fu et al., 2010; Ho et al., 2010; Li et al., 2011) using this method, which has been widely accepted in the scientific world, receiving more than two hundred citations in Web of Science.

Since some journals don’t have author keywords information, title words, abstract words, and KeyWords Plus were also quantitatively analyzed to monitor the development of science (Li et al., 2009; Ho et al., 2010). Statistical analysis of words in title, author keywords, and KeyWords Plus in different periods, for example 4-year (Li et al., 2009), 5-year (Ho and Ho, 2015), and 6-year (Ho et al., 2010) interval has been developed only in recent years, and has proved to be significant in evaluating trends of research fields (Li et al., 2009; Zhang et al., 2010; Mao et al., 2010; Fu et al., 2013). The analysis including words in title, author keywords, and KeyWords Plus together could minimize some limitations, such as the uncompleted meaning of single words in title, the small sample size for author keywords, and the indirectly relationship between KeyWords Plus and the research emphases (Fu and Ho, 2013). These kinds of words were examined by time periods to show the trends, as well as to minimize the year-to-year fluctuations. Chen et al. (2017) presented the 30 most frequently used author keywords in three six-year intervals in Table 3. According to statistical analysis, the most frequently author keywords in 4-year (Li et al., 2009), 5-year (Ho and Ho, 2015), and 6-year (Ho et al., 2010) intervals has been illustrated in several research topics. Furthermore, only author keywords were used by Chen et al. (2017) to obtain research emphasis of food waste research, and it might cause some biases due to the lack of statistical samples from the journals without author keywords information. In addition, similar rebuttals have also been published in Environmental Earth Sciences (Ho, 2016a) and Scientometrics (Ho, 2016b).

Citing the original paper is not only respecting authors who presented a novel idea in research but also to read the original idea and method in detail of the work (Ho, 2014). In my view, Chen et al. (2017) should have cited the original paper for what they mentioned in their paper and thereby provided greater accuracy and information details about the concept and the methods that they employed.

References