

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Determination of the value of 'c' pertaining to Lotka's law

Bibliometric studies where Lotka's law is finding a place are found quite often in LIS literature nowadays. For example, in the December 2017 issue of *Annals of Library and Information Studies* two articles have appeared on Lotka's law¹⁻².

Alfred J Lotka formulated his law in 1926³. The law is algebraically represented as $x^n y = c$ where x stands for the number of articles, y for the number of authors and n and c are unknown quantities.

In a dataset the values of x and y are known. The value of c needs to be determined to find the value of n . Pao⁴ developed a procedure for determining the value of c . Pao's procedure requires complex mathematical calculation, and the values obtained are not realistic. The value of c is found to be less than 1. We know that the values of x , y and n are all more than 1. Hence, logically the value of c cannot become less than 1, but in Pao's procedure it is always less than 1. Realising this Sen⁵ devised a simple procedure for determining the realistic value of c . In their article², Shehbaz Hussain Naqvi and Nishat Fatima have followed the same method as described by Sen for determining the value of c without citing his

paper. This is a serious omission. The authors should take care in future to avoid such omission.

References

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