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# **Awareness of Undergraduates in Western Delta University, Oghara, Delta State about Reference Management Software.**

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## **Absrtact**

*This study is on Awareness of Undergraduates in Western Delta University, Oghara, Delta State about Reference Management Software.. It aims to provide new essential information on a relatively unexplored subject, with the goal of providing background for future understanding and comparison. For the purpose of this, the descriptive study adopted a survey research design. Therefore, 200 – 400 level students from six department of the college were selected. The total population of the students in the College was 358 to which questionnaire was administered. Consequently 240 were retrieved and were used for the analysis. The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Major finding from the study is that undergraduate in western Delta University are not aware of reference management software. It is however recommended among others that adequate awareness campaign and training be provided to undergraduates.*

## **Introduction**

One of the most important aspects of academic writing is making use of the ideas of other people” (Francese, 2013a), because “quality academic writing is built upon the work of others” (North Carolina State University, 2004). In that regard, referencing is a standardised method of acknowledging all the sources of information, data, and ideas one uses in writing an article, book, thesis, etc. Spack (1998) has pointed out that “the most important skill a student can engage in is the complex activity is to write from other texts, which is a major part of their academic experience. In fact, this is an essential skill for every student.” For this reason, “any academic text will contain the voices of other writers and reference gives the readers details about the source so that they have a good understanding of what kind of source it is and could find the source themselves, if necessary. A citation is a credit or reference to another document or source which documents both influence and authority” (North Carolina State University, 2004).

“Citation allows us to acknowledge how the scholarship of others has contributed to our own work, to distinguish for our readers which ideas are our own and which are borrowed, and to give our readers a path by which they can trace the intellectual development of the ideas we present” (Bradley, 2011). In

other words, “the object of this is to supply the information needed to allow a user to find a source” (Francese, 2013b). There are many formats for the use of citations for different fields to follow, for example, American Psychological Association (APA)—used in the fields of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Psychology, Education, Anthropology; Harvard—for Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Education, Business; Chicago—for Social, Biological and Physical Sciences, Humanities; Modern Languages Association of America (MLA)—for Modern Languages, Literature; American Chemical Society (ACS)—for Chemistry; American Institute of Physics (AIP)—for Physics; IEEE—for Engineering and Technology; Vancouver—for Medicine, Humanities, etc. (Francese, 2013b, Madhusudha, 2016).

For decades, scholars, philosophers, educators, social surveyors, and academics have identified different factors responsible for the establishment of Universities and other higher institutions worldwide. The factors that have been identified to be responsible for establishment of institutions are extensive; they range from universities serving as critical components of human development; repository of knowledge; generating and transferring of knowledge to society; and enhancement of economic development, to cite a few (Olutola, 2016). Of all the reasons provided by scholars, however, preservation and dissemination of knowledge has been adjudged to be the chief. No wonder, the general belief all over the world is that these institutions ultimate goal is to play central role in the knowledge economy. Kenny (1998) observed this when he fittingly describes the central role of higher institutions as: “Higher institutions comprise of a communities of learners” bound together by the “shared goals of investigation and discovery” and that a central part of mission of these institutions is to ensure that academic staff members and all students participate in their mission. In a bid to participate in their mission, (i.e. research which is regarded as an important aspect of scholarship) some academic staff and students in the institutions around the globe have got enmeshed in the quagmire of plagiarism (Olutola, 2016).

In order to help authors in these institutions manage large sets of references, and to produce citations and references in a consistent style, a range of software packages is available. This type of software is often called ‘Reference Management Software (RMS)’, but ‘Citation managers’, ‘Bibliographic management software’, ‘Bibliographic software’, or CGC (Computer Generated Citation) are also used: common examples are EndNote, RefWorks, Zotero, Microsoft Word (Francese, 2012).

In this vein, reference Management Software is used by researchers in academics to manage the bibliographic citations they encounter in their research. With these tools, scholars keep track of the scientific literature they read, and to facilitate the editing of the scientific papers they write (Osmani, Mzah and Arif, 2016). Osmani, Mzah and Arif, (2016) stated that a Reference Management Software (RMS) enables an author to build a library of references by entering the details of each reference in a structured format. They usually support mechanisms for organizing sets of references by tagging or use of ‘folders’, and will generate references, citations or bibliographies in a range of referencing styles. Most

packages support ways of importing records from library catalogues and other bibliographic data sources in order to facilitate the generation of references.

In addition, Senarath, (2007) wrote that many packages offer plug-ins or add-ons for Word processing software which enable authors to insert references from their 'library' directly into a document as they are writing. To summarize, RMS have two main functions; (1) Building a database of citations, useful for keeping track of and organize the documents useful for one's research. (2) Formatting bibliographies and citations when writing papers.

Today's packages offer more sophisticated functionalities, and their basic functions are extended through advanced features which vary from software to software. Some of them allow managing the actual full-text document together with the reference (e.g. PDF files), often including ways for annotation. Most of them take the best of the web environment providing APIs which allow integration with other software's or other virtual environments, sharing and enriching the data, collecting them from different sources. As technology allows seamless transmission of documents from the web to the desktop, it allows in the same way cooperation between users. In this way a RMS can also become a virtual research environment, or a platform for a collaborator (Bos, Zimmerman, and Olson et al, 2007, Wusteman, Eden and Voss, 2009). Reference management software products inherit the features already adopted in virtual web collaboration networks, such as academic social bookmarking [Alhoori and Furuta, 2011, Fourie, 2011).

## **Research Question**

The study aims to answer the following question

- (i) What is level of awareness about Reference Management Software (RMS) exists among undergraduates in Western Delta University, Oghara?
- (ii) What Reference Management Software are Undergraduates in Western Delta University, Oghara aware of?

## **Literature Review**

### **Awareness about Reference Management Software (RMS)**

There is no consensus as regard factors influencing academic failure in academia, but the fact remains that failure occurs when factors predisposing students to the menace are not addressed. In his view, Olutola (2016) wrote in his paper "towards a more enduring prevention of plagiarism in Nigeria" that social research have shown that lack of requisite academic writing skills by students in Nigerian universities is a vital determining factor for high incidence of plagiarism due may be to lack of awareness. The lack of writing skill may include factors such as lack of awareness about bibliographic management software that can aid them in their academic write ups. Olutola (2016) went further to state that academic writing remains one of the ways in which students are to be assessed in universities, to this end; students are expected to acquire this important but rigorous skill including that of bibliographic management software. The fact that many students lack this skill explains why rate of plagiarism in academia is on the rise in Nigeria.

In another study, such as the survey by, Francese(2012) from Tallinn University show shallow and generic awareness and usage of bibliographic management software which is low and not supported by a proper knowledge. this suggests that many students are not aware of such tools as such scholars seem to be not fully aware about the potentials and the features of the RMS. The university library, in charge of the acquisition and distribution of licenses of RefWorks bibliographic management software, could not achieve a strong impact in reaching all its members, even though its role was very appreciated by those who received communications and training.

A similar lack of awareness as shown by Ollé & Borrego, (2010). According to their research at Catalan Universities, information management is an area that poses problems for researchers which can be done with the aid of bibliographic management software. Ollé & Borrego, (2010) found from their study that researchers who used some kind of bibliographic management software were about 25% of their sample while those who continued to use the traditional method of folders (now electronic folders) and those who used no information management system at all were higher.

To help increase knowledge of bibliographic management software by libraries as one their function and services, they provide license copies of the reference management tools, train and make users aware of their roles and importance and how it can make them accomplish their academic writings easily. In contrast, According to Ollé & Borrego, (2010), there is no deep knowledge of the up-to-date digital tools that could enhance research and information management among researcher even if the library is perceived as a potential source of help, it is disconnected from the user's perspective.. The researchers understand that it is the responsibility of libraries to organize access to information, but it is not something they reflect on. Neither is it something that generates contact with the libraries with questions concerning provision of information. The researchers visit the physical library more or less frequently, but often prefer to manage on their own. They seldom contact the library by phone, but e-mail is sometimes used. They do not consider contacting the library as the obvious thing to do neither do they even perceive it as something that would be easy as an attempt to boost their knowkwdge and skill on bibliographic management software (Haglund & Olsson, 2008).

Finally, in their survey conducted in 5 American universities, Niu et al. (2010) find that half of the researchers maintain a personal bibliographic database. Their usage can be related to the marketing and support activities provided by their institutions, but they admit that “information-seeking and information-handling habits of researchers are very personal” and inconsistent behaviours can emerge. They stated further that, in these co laboratories they find the presence of online sharing bibliographic databases and annotations. This implies that researchers in America are aware and used bibliographic management software and therefore enjoys its benefit.

## **Reference Management Software known by undergraduates**

Meredith, (2013) in her paper titled “critical review of referencing software when used with OSCOLA” where she took a survey of academics and research students in the Oxford Law Faculty were completed by 65 people: 51% were academics, 41% were Doctoral students and 8% were Masters Students. The main question in the survey was: 'Which of the following do you use to manage citations? That is, to record bibliographic information about sources/references/citations, and put that information into footnotes and bibliographies, and perhaps even into reading lists. The options were: index cards; handwritten notes; notes in a word processor; Excel or Access; Endnote; Refworks; Zotero; MLZ Zotero; Mendeley; Other. The survey also asked participants to note which methods of recording citations they had known and tried, and the advantages and disadvantages of the software.

The vast majority of respondents took notes in a word processor and/or by hand. Some 65% of respondents only used these methods: they didn't use referencing software at all. One in five had tried referencing software (mostly Endnote) and abandoned it. (The figures were the same for academics and research students.) Reasons for not using referencing software varied: some found it complicated, others found it tedious, several found they couldn't insert footnotes into their documents or that the footnotes they inserted needed a good deal of correction. Most reported that using word-processed and handwritten notes to record reference information was satisfactory although some said it was time-consuming. Several thought referencing software would be useful but didn't have time to learn how to use it or to put their existing references into it. Some used Endnote for storing records, but not for inserting reference information into footnotes or creating bibliographies.

## **Methodology**

This study aims to provide new essential information on a relatively unexplored subject, with the goal of providing background for future understanding and comparison. For the purpose of this, the descriptive study is adopted as survey research design. A stratified sampling technique was used to select participants from the college of social and management science of Western Delta University, Oghara. Therefore, 200 – 400 level students from six department of the college were selected. The total population of the students in the College was 358 out. Since the population is small, there will be no need for population sample. Consequently, total enumeration sampling technique is adopted. However, 240 questionnaires were retrieved and used for analysis which is 67% of the population. The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Table 3, on level of awareness about reference management software (RMS)**

<b>Awareness on RMS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>mean</b>
I don't have knowledge of RMS	3	1	7	215	14	2.02
I don't use RMS	5	10	15	195	25	2.19
Microsoft Word is RMS	2	1	3	229	5	2.03
RefWork is RMS	2	1	3	229	5	2.03
Mendely is RMS	2	1	3	229	5	2.03
Reference Manager is RMS	2	1	3	229	5	2.03
RMS help me organize references	1	2	7	10	220	1.14
It can help in citation when writing assignment, seminar and project	1	2	4	5	228	1.10
RMS can help collaborate with researches in my area of study	1	2	5	7	225	1.12
<b>Weighted mean</b>						<b>1.74</b>
<b>Criterion Mean</b>						<b>3.0</b>
<b>Standard Deviation</b>						<b>0.08</b>

From table 3, undergraduates in Western Delta University, Oghara stated that they don't use reference management software and that they don't have knowledge of it with mean 2.19 and mean 2.02 respectively. The weighted mean of 1.7 compared against the criterion mean of 3.5 suggest that undergraduates in Western Delta University are not aware of reference management software. The implication is that they are not taking advantage of the RMS software to improve their scholarly work. This finding corroborates Francese (2012), Ollé & Borrego, (2010) who wrote that few researchers used some kind of bibliographic management software while others continued to use the traditional method of folders and most respondents are not supported by a proper knowledge of reference management software.

**Table 4, Reference Management Software known by undergraduates in Western Delta University**

<b>RMS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Microsoft	4	2	6	9	219	1.18
EndNote	0	5	5	6	224	1.13
Zoterf	3	2	2	0	233	1.09
RefWork	0	2	4	5	229	1.08
Mendely	1	4	7	10	218	1.67
Bookends	4	2	6	8	220	1.18
Citulike	4	6	6	9	215	1.23
Reference Manager	1	0	1	1	237	1.03
Procite	3	2	6	12	217	1.18
Bibtex	4	6	6	8	216	1.23
Others	3	6	4	6	221	1.18
<b>Weighted Mean</b>						<b>1.20</b>
<b>Criterion Mean</b>						<b>3.0</b>
<b>Standard Deviation</b>						<b>0.07</b>

From table 4, undergraduates in Western Delta University, Oghara don't seem to know reference management software as Microsoft and bookends reference management software are the options with the highest mean of 1.18 which is on the lower side. The weighted mean of 1.2 compared against the criterion mean of 3.5 suggest that undergraduates in Western Delta University have low knowledge of reference management software. The implication is that awareness campaign on RMS need to be carried by the University especially the library so that students can take advantage of the RMS software to improve their scholarly work. This finding is line with that of Meredith, (2013) who wrote that the researchers she studied have low knowledge of reference management software.

## **Conclusion**

The following conclusion was reached on this study

1. Undergraduates in Western Delta University, Oghara have low level of awareness about Reference Management Software (RMS).
2. Undergraduates in Western Delta University, Oghara do not know Reference Management Software packages(RMS).

## **Recommendation**

I therefore recommend that

1. Reference Management software should be provided and made available in the University.
2. Proper instruction and training on RMS, citation styles should give to undergraduates.
3. Computer skill of student should be enhanced and as well be provided with technical support majorly from the university library.

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