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## **Analysis of Bibliographic References by Textbook Authors in Nigerian Polytechnics**

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### **Introduction**

Bibliographic references have always been an integral aspect of research. The importance of references in every research work cannot be over-emphasized. Ajala (2003) posited that as long as completed research needed to be reported in a lucid and concise manner subject to verification and amenable to replication, bibliographic reference would be effective in establishing the place of an authors' production and its value as an authentic text. bibliographic references therefore aid research by providing information about materials consulted as well as materials useful for research study. To this end, bibliographic references are therefore a useful guide to readers on the sources of information of a research project and can provide an avenue for further research or means for challenging the research or statements arising there from.

The words bibliography and references are interrelated. The capital community college (2004) observed that "bibliography is more often used to refer to a list of books which is arranged alphabetically (by author or title) classified by subject and meant for a specific purpose. On the other hand Troyka (2002) opined that "references are alphabetical list of books containing the citation used for a study. Thus the combination of the two words; bibliography and reference could be known as bibliographic references but popularly referred to as references. They are meant to indicate books that were consulted for a study or meant for further reading. The American Psychological Association (2003) observed that the purpose of references is to enable the reader to access the material used in any research. The reference list contains all sources form which material is used. It appears at the end of any textbook, paper or article but before any appendix and the biographical material. The reference list provides the information necessary for a reader to locate and retrieve any source you cite in the body of the work.

Over the years, different forms and styles of documenting references have emerged. They include the Kate Turabian style, the Modern Language Association (MLA) style, American Psychological Association (APA) style; the University of Chicago Press (CM) style; the Council of Science (CSE) style, and the Columbia Online style (COS) which is used to document electronic sources. Documentation style is a system for providing information about the source of words, information and ideas quoted, paraphrased or summarized from some source other than the writer (Neyhart and Karper, 2007).

The dynamics associated with referencing in academic work is becoming complex. This is because citations are expected to be made on conference proceedings, dissertations, interviews, films or videos, unpublished work, citing multivolume work, corporate authorship, multiple authors and electronic information such as online periodicals, online documents, computer software, article in an internet only

newsletter etc. This complexity is evident in works (books and articles) as it is at times difficult to determine what style of referencing is used by an author. Further to this, authors at times dance between two styles of referencing. The noticeable trend today is that lecturers in Nigerian polytechnics write and publish books which express concepts, principles and theories of a particular subject in their field of study. These textbooks are aimed at their students who need the materials to support their learning. As noted by Edewor (2007) textbooks constitute important learning materials, containing accumulated well thought out, human knowledge designed for learning and reference purposes. The production of these textbooks has enhanced local publishing, filling the gap of the dearth of foreign textbooks in Nigeria. These books always carry the reference pages which are a pointer to the veracity of the content of the books. bibliographic references though complex, is the crux of any good work and therefore must be separated and subject to professional analysis. There lies the reason de tre for this work.

## Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is:

- To determine the style of bibliographic references in textbooks by authors in Nigerian polytechnics.
- To find out if there are citation errors in textbooks written by authors in Nigerian polytechnic.
- To determine the qualification of the Authors involved in citation errors.
- To proffer recommendations based on the findings.

The significance of this study lies in the fact that its findings would reveal the style of bibliographic references and the types of citation errors in textbooks written by authors in the Nigerian polytechnics education system.

It is also hoped that the study would generate helpful information for further research in the area of bibliographic references.

## Methodology

Documentary research method was used in this study. It involved the analysis of reference in 102 textbooks authored by academics in Nigerian polytechnics. This was achieved by concentrating on books that were available at the Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro, library shelves at the period of study. Data for this study were obtained from the textbooks analyzed.

### Data Analysis and Presentation of Results

Table 1: Distribution of Authorship According to Qualifications

Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
Higher National Diploma	12	11.8 percent
Bachelors Degree	21	20.6 percent
Master Degree	68	61.8 percent
Doctoral Degree	6	5.8 percent
Total	102	100 percent

Table 1 above shows the analysis of textbooks in respect of authorship according to qualifications. It was discovered that 6 (5.8 percent) are doctoral degree holders, while over half of the

authors 68 (61.8 percent) had master degree. HND holders accounted for by 12 (11.8 percent), while first degree holders are 21 (20.6 percent).

Table 2: Distribution of Authorship According to Subject Background

Subject background	Frequency	Percentage
* Business Studies	38	37.3 percent
Computer Science	17	16.7 percent
Engineering	14	13.7 percent
Art/Humanities	12	11.7 percent
Pure Science	9	8.8 percent
Agriculture	8	7.8 percent
Fine & Apple Arts	2	2.0 percent
Fashion & Design	2	2.0 percent

\*Business Studies includes accountancy, Business Administration, Insurance, Auditing, Secretarial Studies, Marketing, Banking and Finance.

Table 2 above shows the distribution of authorship according to subject background. The analysis was in rank order. It was discovered that Business studies ranked highest with 38 (37.2 percent). Next to this were textbooks on Computer Science with 17 (16.7 percent). One very interesting feature in the analysis of textbooks is that Business Studies 38 (37.3 percent) Computer Science, 17 (16.7 percent) and Engineering 14 (13.7 percent) were on descending order, which shows that these are subject areas with majority of textbooks than other fields in Nigerian polytechnics.

Table 3: Distribution of Authorship According to Institutional affiliations

Institution Affiliations	Frequency	Percentage
Kaduna Polytechnic	5	3.9 percent
The Polytechnic Ibadan	15	14.7 percent
Federal Polytechnic, Auchi	9	8.9 percent
Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro	16	15.7 percent
Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-uku	10	9.8 percent
Delta State Polytechnic, Otefe,Oghara	5	4.9 percent
Federal Polytechnic, Oko	11	10.7 percent
River State Polytechnic, Bori	9	8.9 percent
Yaba College of Technology	4	2.0 percent
Institute of Management Technology	4	3.9 percent
Rufus Giwa Polytechnic	4	3.9 percent
Federal Polytechnic, Ede	13	12.7 percent
Total	102	100 percent

Information on blubs, forward and the preface of the textbooks were critically analyzed. It was discovered that more of the authors are form DSPZ with 16 (25.5 percent). This is p-probably due to that fact most authors in DSPZ, where the study is carried out have their textbooks in the institution's library;

hence there is high preponderance of DSPZ textbooks. 15 (14.7 percent) of the authors were from the Polytechnic, Ibadan, 2. (2.0 percent) of the authors were from Yaba Tech and 4 (3.9 percent) from IMT.

Table 4: Distribution of Textbooks According to Style of Referencing

Style of Referencing	Frequency	Percentage
Modern Language Association (MLA)	7	6.9 percent
American Psychological Association (APA)	92	90.1 percent
Kate Turabian Style	2	2.0 percent
University of Chicago Press (CM)	-	-
Council of Science Editors (CSE)	1	1.0 percent
Columbia On-line style (COS)	-	-
Total	102	100 percent

Table 4 reveals that the APA style of referencing is mostly used by authors in Nigerian polytechnics. This is accounted for by 92 (90.1 percent). This could be as result of APA's flexibility and dynamism. More so, the MLA is also used as accounted for by 7 (6.9 percent). It is interesting to note that all the textbooks that used MLA style are in the Arts/Humanities. The only single title that used the CSE style was a Biology textbook. The Turabian style accounted for 2 (2.0 percent).

Table 5: Distribution of Books according to publisher

Publishers	Frequency	Percentage
Justice Jeco	18	17.6 percent
Kuba Press	3	2.9 percent
J.F.C. Publication	3	2.9 percent
Longman	8	7.8 percent
Unilorin Press	4	3.9 percent
Spectrum	6	6.0 percent
Kabaka press	3	2.9 percent
Krisbec	9	8.8 percent
Royal pace	4	3.9 percent
CMD	3	2.9 percent
Pearl	3	2.9 percent
Oktek	5	4.9 percent
Lolson Faith	3	2.9 percent
Africana-Feb	5	4.9 percent
Heinemann	6	6.0 percent
Tony terry	4	3.9 percent
Fourth Dimesion	6	6.0 percent
UPL	6	6.0 percent
Gobaveran Ultimate	3	2.9 percent
Total	102	100

Table 5 shows that all the textbooks were published locally. The analysis also revealed that majority of the publishers is relatively unknown. More so, publishers of textbooks written by academics in Nigerian polytechnics are domiciled in the same state or locality with the authors. This is one of the reasons why such books are out of reach; except within the locality of such institutions. This does not portend well for the book industry in Nigerian.

Table 6: Common Citation Errors in Textbooks

Citation errors	Frequency	Percentage
Omission of place of publication	18	17.6 percent
Omission of publisher	7	6.9 percent
Placing publisher before place of publication	30	29.4 percent
Placing date of publication before publisher	5	4.9 percent
Omission of place of publication and publisher	2	2.0 percent
No references at all	6	5.9 percent
Error free references	21	20.6 percent
Placing edition after publisher	1	1.0 percent
No definite order	3	2.9 percent
Only author(s) and title	4	3.9 percent
Irregular underlining	5	4.9 percent
Total	102	100 percent

Table 6 reveals that the commonest type of citation error significantly made by authors is placing publisher before place of publication. 30 (29.4 percent) accounted for placing publisher before place of publication. The reason for this could be linked to the fact that most authors are not grounded in the act of referencing. Furthermore, some of the textbooks had no references at all as accounted for by 6 (5.9 percent). This may be due to the fact that such authors do not know how to cite sources from which materials are used or are completely ignorant of the strategic importance of references. However it is important to note that 21 (20.6 percent) textbooks had error free references.

Table 7: The Extent of Involvement According to Levels of Qualification of Authors in Different Types of Citation Errors

Qualification of Authors	Omission of place of publication	Omission of publisher	Placing date before publisher	Placing date before publisher	Omission of place of publication and publisher	No reference at all	Error free references	Placing edition after publisher	No definite order	Only authors and title	Irregular underlining	Total	percentage
HND	3	4	10	3	1	2	-	1	3	3	3	33	32.3 percent
Bachelor Degree	6	2	9	2	-	3	5	-	-	-	-	30	29.48 percent
Master Degree	5	1	8	-	1	-	12	-	-	-	-	27	26.5 percent
Doctoral Degree	4	-	3	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	-	12	11.8 percent
Total	18	7	30	5	2	6	21	1	3	4	5	102	100 percent

Table 7 shows the extent to which all the levels of education are involved in the different types of citation errors. It was discovered that those with lower qualifications are mostly involved in citation errors as accounted by HND; 30 (29.4) for bachelors degree, 27 (26.5 percent) for master degree while 12 (11.8 percent) represents Doctoral degree holders. This finding corroborates Ajala (2003). This may be due to the fact that the higher an individual climbs in the education ladder, the more exposed to the rudiments and essentials of publication including referencing patterns. The apparent inability to correctly write

references is borne out of the unserious consideration given to referencing pattern at the first degree and HND levels.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

An analysis of references cited in textbooks by authors in Nigerian polytechnics revealed that the APA format of referencing is widely used. The study showed that a significant number of textbooks had citation errors, while others had no references at all.

An analysis of the textbooks also showed that only nine textbooks cited electronic information. This could be as a result of the complexity associated with citing electronic information or such materials were not used. The analysis revealed that there are more books written by masters degree holders and more business-related textbooks, followed by computer- and engineering-related texts.

It is therefore recommended that:

- Bibliographic references should be taught in Nigerian polytechnics. It could be made a part of the General Studies programme.
- Editors and publishers should enforce strict adherence to the organization and writing of standard bibliographic references.
- Researchers should be encouraged to carry out research on bibliographic references.
- Workshops and seminars should be held to change the orientation of authors and to inculcate the habit of writing standard bibliographic references.

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