THE IMPORTANCE OF CITATION IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Citation plays a critical role in academic research by providing credibility, acknowledging intellectual property, and ensuring the integrity of scholarly work. In writing academic research (books, journal articles and other forms of academic writing), the researcher hunts for materials from various sources to generate information or ideas. These materials used for the research are referenced. Referencing is essential to research because whenever information or ideas from other works are included in any write-up, the researcher must provide details on where and how the information was sourced. Thus, referencing plays a significant role in academic research by acknowledging other people's work and demonstrating the depth of the research. Despite the importance of referencing, it is still a major challenge for researchers. Using descriptive research methodology, this paper explores the role of citation in academic research, highlighting its importance in maintaining intellectual integrity, fostering academic accountability, and contributing to the advancement of knowledge. In doing this, the paper will interrogate the meaning and nature of citation, the different referencing styles, and the importance of referencing in research. It will conclude with recommendations that ensure the proper citation of materials that guarantee the originality of ideas in research.

Keywords: Citation, Data, Information, Knowledge, Plagiarism, Referencing.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Research, as in the midst of varied definitions and explanations is a systematic process of inquiry aimed at discovering new knowledge, solving problems, or answering specific questions.[1] As an academic activity, research such as academic/legal writing involves the collecting, analysing, and interpreting data from diverse materials[2] (that provide information or facts on the subject matter under investigation) from different sources such as - books (complete works or chapters from books), peer-reviewed articles from academic or professional journal articles, statutes and case law, papers presented at academic conferences/seminars, official gazettes, international instruments, internet materials among others referred to in citation

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[1] BM Asenahabi, 'Basics of Research Design: A Guide to Selecting Appropriate Research Design.' [2019] 6(5) IJCAR, 76, 77.

[2] According to a commentary, information can come from virtually anywhere - social media, blogs, personal experiences, books, journal and magazine articles, expert opinions, newspapers, and websites - and the type of information you need will change depending on the question you are trying to answer. See: <https://library.triton.edu/research> accessed 03/09/2021

www.ijrehc.com
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analysis as 'root or cited paper.'[3] A systematic inquiry is based on data generation, observation, classification and interpretation of data.

A distinguishing characteristic of research is that it is a structured inquiry with an acceptable rigorous process that subjects data to intense scrutiny and creates verifiable knowledge irrespective of the methodology employed.[4] Research is a continuous process, typically occurring in advanced academic or industrial settings. Each new study builds on previous research, expanding knowledge and raising awareness. It can be performed across various disciplines, such as law, the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and business. Besides, research can adopt different methodologies, including qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approaches.[5] The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, opened a new vista for research in the medical sciences and socio-economic behaviours that impact the global system.[6] This also included research on legal safeguards on measures to contain the spread of the virus, including the safety of the vaccines.

Citations are the acknowledgement of the work of others in a writer's research.[7] It enables a researcher to distinguish his findings and contributions from prior contributions in extant literature/root papers. The information sourced from the root paper(s) is meant to substantiate the researcher's ideas by either affirmation or verification, refuting, analysing or critiquing the other sources. It enables researchers to give proper credit to original authors and sources, fostering a culture of academic honesty in the systematic pursuit of knowledge. It validates the outcome of research with the support of appropriate sources or materials. By tracing the origin of ideas and evidence, citations allow others to verify the accuracy of claims and follow the progression of knowledge. Also, referencing relevant literature places research within the larger academic conversation. This demonstrates an understanding of existing scholarship and provides an opportunity for constructive criticism or the ability to expand on earlier studies. It reflects the researcher's involvement with the current body of knowledge, enhancing the credibility and academic worth of their work. Thus, opinions, analysis, and findings articulated would be deemed original and attributed to the researcher in the absence of references. This is, however, not the intention of research, which is an "original and systematic investigation

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[3] HB Bilal, R Muhammad, J. Arsal, SUR Raja, M Syed, A Zubair and BA Muhammad, 'Classification of Research Citations (CRC)' available at <http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-1384/paper3.pdf> accessed 03/09/2021

[4] Descriptive or analytical, quantitative or qualitative, applied or fundamental, conceptual or empirical, doctrinal or non-doctrinal are the basic types of research methodology

[5] OA Alubo, *Contemporary Legal Research Methodology for Nigerian Universities* (Mono Expression, Jos, 2023 Reprint); C Wigwe, *Legal Research Methodology and Practice* (Princeton and Associates Publishing Co., Ikeja, 2019); MOU Gasiokwu, *Legal Research and Methodology* (Revised ed., Chenglo Limited, 2015); Osuala E. C., *Introduction to Research Methodology* (Africana FEP Publishers, Onitsha, 2000); Yomere G. O., and Agbonifoh B. A., *Research Methodology in Social Sciences and Education.* (Centrepiece Consultants, Benin-City, 1999).

[6] M Volpe, M Ralli and A Isidori, 'The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on research activities: A survey of the largest Italian academic community.' [2024] 19(6) PLoS ONE, 1-16.

[7] YS Rezeki, 'Analysis of EFL Students' Citation Practices and Problems in Academic Writing.' [2018] 2(1) IJEBP, 62

undertaken to increase existing knowledge and understanding of the unknown to establish facts and principles."[8]

Citation, therefore, is a reference to the sources of information used within the text of any research. It is the reference to published and even unpublished[9] materials consulted, from which information is sourced in developing research.[10] Formal acknowledgement of materials used in research is done through referencing.[11] This involves systematically identifying the sources of the information. Information from materials is referenced when they are cited. This information includes ideas, opinions, analysis, concepts and theories, statistical data (graphs, tables, etc.), designs, drawings, maps, images (pictures or illustrations), etc. Therefore, a researcher is obligated to properly identify any information used in his research that is sourced externally from the works of other researchers and duly give credit to the author(s). As Yomere and Agbonifoh explained, it is the responsibility of the researchers to give "credit to his sources of information and writers' views and arguments."[12]

Generally, referencing allows a researcher to acknowledge the contributions of other researchers in any research endeavour. Any information, ideas, data, or concept that is not an original idea, whether summarised, paraphrased, or directly quoted, sourced from other writers, must be acknowledged and properly cited. According to Yomere and Agbonifoh, this could be "in the body of the text, at the bottom of the page or the end of each chapter."[13] Failure to properly acknowledge information sourced from other works could be regarded as passing off the ideas of others or intellectual theft, as that of the researcher.[14] Aside from violating the authors' intellectual or academic property rights, it amounts to plagiarism, undermining academic or research credibility, integrity, and originality. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence that can lead to severe penalties, including expulsion from the institution or retraction of published work. It has been submitted that attributing "credit to the original author by citing sources is the only way to use other people's work without plagiarising."[15] On this score, Osuala explained

> It is extremely important to separate the researcher's own words and ideas clearly from those obtained from other sources. A passage drawn from article or book should be

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[8] Research: Definition, Characteristics, Goals, Approaches. Available at: <https://www.iedunote.com/research-definition-characteristics-goals-approaches> accessed 21/10/2024

[9] Unpublished research includes work in progress, work submitted for publication but not yet published, or work that has been completed but not submitted for publication. See: <https://academicanswers.waldenu.edu/faq/72964> accessed 03/09/2021.

[10] Organizing Academic Research Papers: 11. Citing Sources. Available at: <https://library.sacredheart.edu/c.php?g=29803&p=185939> last accessed [03/09/2021]

[11] See: Types of Referencing Styles: <https://www.makemyassignments.com/blog/types-of-referencing-styles/> accessed 03/09/2021

[12] GO.Yomere, and BA Agbonifoh, (n 4) 288

[13] GO.Yomere, and BA Agbonifoh (n 4) 289

[14] A Grix, *Demystifying Postgraduate Research* (University of Birmingham Press, 2001) 120-121.

[15] What Is Citation? Published May 18, 2017. <https://www.plagiarism.org/article/what-is-citation> accessed 03/09/2021

presented as a direct quotation or paraphrase, and the source acknowledged. There is nothing wrong with quoting another author as long as the source is acknowledged. On no account should another person's idea be presented as the researcher's own. This is plagiarism and is inexcusable. It is unethical and, sometimes, illegal.[16]

The exception to the rule of citing information whenever a researcher uses someone else's idea is when the information is common knowledge, which may be facts or data that anyone in a particular field is likely to know.[17] In these situations, it is unnecessary to cite this information. For instance, legal professionals recognise that a court must possess jurisdiction to hear and resolve a case. Jurisdiction refers to the legal authority given to a court to make decisions on issues within a defined scope. Without jurisdiction, any decision or judgment rendered by the court is legally invalid, meaning it has no legal force or effect and is subject to nullification on appeal. Referencing, therefore, gives adequate credit to the originator of the knowledge or information from whom the researcher borrows the ideas, opinions, concepts, theories, and data utilised in the research. In addition, the researcher is expected to supply comprehensive information on all sources consulted. This ensures that other persons interested in similar research can quickly locate the original works for further exploration without unnecessary difficulties. Incorrect or inadequate citation often blights the quality of research and casts doubts on the researcher's quality.

2.0 REFERENCING STYLES

Referencing is systematic, as there are standard guidelines for properly citing materials consulted for research writings according to institutional or departmental requirements. A referencing style has its rules that dictate how to format in-text citations and reference lists or bibliographies, specifying the order of information and punctuation when acknowledging sources. Different fields of study use different referencing styles, each with its own rules for citing books, articles, websites, and other materials. Some universities and/or faculties set out their referencing style and require their students to use a specific style for referencing. According to a commentary, reference style can be classified into documentary notes, parenthetical, and numbered styles.[18] However, within these three broad categories, several slightly different variations or methods are used to reference materials such as books, journal articles, websites/internet materials, statutes, law reports, etc.

2.1 Documentary Note Style

References in documentary note style are included in footnotes at the bottom of the page or at the end of the document. A superscript number is inserted in the text to indicate where a citation is required, and the matching note presents the complete reference information at the bottom

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16 E. C. Osuala, (n 4) 291

17 See: University of Kent Academic Integrity, What is referencing? <https://www.kent.ac.uk/ai/students/whatisreferencing.html> accessed 03/09/2021.

18 See: Different kinds of reference styles <https://awelu.srv.lu.se/sources-and-referencing/using-a-reference-style/different-kinds-of-reference-styles/> accessed 03/09/2021.

of the page - footnote or after the entire chapter or research paper - endnote.[19] The digit is usually placed after the full stop, ending the sentence to which the reference belongs. The nature of the documentary note style was summed up as follows:

> In a documentary note style, references are provided in footnotes at the foot of the page or endnotes at the end of the text. In books, endnotes can be placed either at the end of the individual chapter or at the end of the book.
>
> In the text, documentary notes are identified by a numeral, usually in superscript. This numeral is placed after the concluding punctuation, unless it refers only to part of the sentence; in that case, it is placed after the relevant word or part of sentence. Attached to the numeral is a footnote at the bottom of the page or an endnote at the end of the chapter, book, etc.[20]

The Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA),[21] Australian Guide to Legal Citation,[22] Oxford Style for the Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA),[23] Legal Citation Style Guide,[24] and the Nigerian Association of Law Teachers (NALT) Uniform Citation Guides[25] come under this classification. It should be noted that a researcher cannot combine footnotes and endnotes in the same research. He must choose one or the other and apply it consistently throughout the research.

2.2 Parenthetical Styles or Author-Date Style

In parenthetical (or author-date styles) referencing style, there are in-text references with brief author-date citations given within parentheses before the full stop of the sentence containing the reference and full citations later in the reference list. Every parenthetical citation within the research matches an entry in the reference list after the document. This reference list offers additional information about the sources that have been cited. The parenthetical citation

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[19] For the difference between footnote and endnote, see: <https://library.ku.ac.ae/c.php?g=768962&p=5631781> accessed 05/09/2021.

[20] See: Sources and Referencing. Available at: <https://awelu.srv.lu.se/sources-and-referencing/quick-guides-to-reference-styles/documentary-note-style/> accessed 05/09/2021

[21] The MHRA style is commonly used in humanities, especially in the arts and literature. It relies on footnotes for citations and includes a bibliography at the end.

[22] The **AGLC** is the dominant style in Australia for citing legal materials. Published by the Melbourne University Law Review Association in collaboration with the Melbourne Journal of International Law. Available online at: <https://top-au.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=18776218> accessed 03/09/2021

[23] **OSCOLA** is widely used in legal scholarship. <www.law.ox.ac.uk/oscola> accessed 03/09/2021

[24] Published by the Faculty of Law, Chinese University of Hong Kong. Available online at: <https://libguides.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/ld.php?content_id=9965973> accessed 03/09/2021

[25] The NALT Uniform Citation Guide for legal references in Nigeria follows a documentary notes system, similar to other legal citation styles, often using footnotes for citation and a bibliography at the end. <https://nials.edu.ng/modules/mod_downloader/downloader.php?filename=Part-II-NALT-STYLE-GUIDE.pdf> accessed 03/09/2021

includes the author's last name, the date of publication, and the page number(s) relevant to the citation. For example, (Yole-Kome, 2009, p. 21). It is commonly used in the social sciences.

When citing material with one or two authors, the researcher must input the author's name(s) in every citation. For materials with three or more authors, the researcher will only input the name of the first author and add 'et al.'[26] If the research contains two or more works by the same author, then the bracketed reference should include a shortened version of the title to indicate the precise material that is being referred to. For example, (Yole-Kome, State Police, 2009, p. 21). Furthermore, the bracketed references in the body of the research are linked to full-length citations in a reference list supplied at the end of the research. This list contains the complete bibliographic information such as the author's surname, initials, date of publication, the book's title, the place of publication, and the publisher. For example, Yole-Kome, A. B. (2009) 'State Police and Federalism in Nigeria.' Warri: Grafton Publications. The American Psychological Association (APA), Harvard and Modern Language Association (MLA) methods are different variants of the parenthetical reference styles. However, footnotes can be used in MLA or APA to supply additional information.[27]

2.3 Numbered Style

In numbered style, sources are given a number corresponding to the order in which it appear in the text in square brackets. The same number is used if the same source is referred to again in the research. After the research, a reference list containing other bibliographic information comprising the works consulted is provided. The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE),[28] Vancouver[29] and Chicago[30] are variations of the numbered referencing style. The IEEE is used in engineering and technical fields, Vancouver in medical and scientific disciplines, and Chicago (numeric) can be used in various academic fields, particularly in scientific contexts. These variations are examples of how the numbered referencing style can be adapted across different disciplines, ensuring clear and organised citations of sources. An advantage of the numbered style over the parenthetical style is that it uses less space in the main body of the research.

3.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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[26] <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/basic-principles/author-date> accessed 03/09/2021

[27] See: Difference Between Footnotes and Endnotes Explained, available at: <https://www.bibliography.com/how-to/footnotes-or-endnotes-in-school-project/> accessed 03/09/2021

[28] The **IEEE** referencing style is commonly used in technical fields, particularly in electrical engineering and computer science.

[29] The **Vancouver style** is predominantly used in medical and scientific disciplines, with numbered references that correspond to a reference list.

[30] The **Chicago** typically uses documentary notes, it also supports a **numbered referencing** system for scientific and technical papers. In this style, citations appear as superscript numbers in the text and correspond to a numbered reference list.

Referencing is further supplemented by a bibliography, a comprehensive list of all the materials consulted, referenced, or cited in preparing the research.[31] A bibliography is not just a detailed list of references cited in the research paper, thesis, dissertation, or book. It includes background materials, other resources consulted, and additional readings, though not cited. It is placed at the end of the work, with the materials listed alphabetically and full publication details. When the materials are from different sources, the bibliography may be segmented into the nature of materials consulted, such as books, journal articles, internet material, government publications, thesis/dissertations, newspaper reports, unpublished materials, etc.[32] The list of references supplied at the end of a paper and bibliography are sometimes wrongly used interchangeably by some researchers. However, a bibliography is different from references in many respects, and these include the following:

   i.   a bibliography does not include specific page references;
   ii.   unlike references, the bibliography lists all the sources referenced in the research (books, journal articles, websites, legal cases, reports, etc.) and sometimes sources that were consulted but not directly cited.
   iii. unlike references, entries in a bibliography are typically arranged alphabetically by the last name of the author;
   iv.   a particular work is cited only once in the bibliography, irrespective of the number of times it was cited in the research.
   v.   while references contain materials cited in the research, a bibliography and the materials cited also contain background materials consulted but not cited.

3.1 Importance of Referencing

The primary reason for referencing is to avoid the grievous pitfall of plagiarism. Plagiarism, or 'academic theft,' is a grave offence. Properly listing all sources helps avoid plagiarism by giving credit to original authors. therefore, referencing allows a researcher to acknowledge the contributions of other writers and researchers in the research. By referencing cited works, the researcher differentiates his contributions from the works of others. This adds credibility to the research as there is nothing wrong with using the work of others as a foundation from which to make a critical evaluation and summarise informed findings and submissions. Referencing thus allows the researcher to acknowledge earlier research and their contribution to knowledge. As a commentary rightly noted, "citing sources helps your reader distinguish your ideas from those of your sources. This will emphasise the originality of your work." [33]

Citing sources properly greatly improves the credibility and trustworthiness of academic research. When researchers reference reputable and authoritative materials, they add validity to their work and indicate to readers that their arguments are based on established knowledge. This is especially critical in areas where conclusions must be evidence-based. Referencing is a method to provide proof that supports the ideas, theories, findings, and proposals within the

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[31]   This list may be titled Bibliography, Selected Bibliography, Reference List or Works Consulted as the case may be.

[32]   VF Peretomedo, and AE Ibeh, *Basic Research method in Education and the Social Sciences* (Totan Publishers, Owerri, 1992) 114; E. C. Osuala, (n 4) 43

[33]   What is Citation? (n 11)

research. It supplies the essential backing for the claims and arguments made in the study. By citing relevant literature, researchers can strengthen their claims with evidence, which makes their conclusions more solid. Typically, researchers rely on facts or data to support their arguments or points being discussed. For instance, legal research necessitates pertinent legal provisions (including both statutes and decisions from appellate courts in earlier cases due to the principle of *stare decisis*) related to the subject of investigation to address legal questions and solve legal issues. Thus, referencing is a way to provide evidence to support assertions in any research.

A well-referenced paper indicates that the author has engaged thoroughly with existing literature, making the research more persuasive and trustworthy. Relying on and citing the ideas or opinions of other researchers is proof that substantial research has been done and shows the range the researcher has thoroughly examined, critiqued systematically, and summarised scholarly discourse and general development - existing substantive literature on the subject of investigation. Furthermore, it shows an awareness of development (that the subject has been adequately researched) in the subject matter and the ability to conclude existing works to strengthen the research quality.

Referencing enables readers/users of the research to trace and find the sources cited. According to a commentary, the "aim of a citation is to provide enough bibliographic information for the reader to identify and, if necessary, obtain the original resource. Complete, correct, and consistent citations are therefore significant."[34] An important part of referencing is that it allows readers to check the information used in the research. When sources are correctly cited, readers can go back to the original works to verify the accuracy of the claims. This level of transparency is essential for academic discussions, as it enables others to engage with the research on a deeper level, evaluate its credibility, and possibly expand upon it. Verification also encourages collaboration within academia since scholars can discuss and critique each other's work grounded in verified and accessible sources.

Books and various materials are recognised as intellectual property, and if a researcher does not properly cite the source of an idea, there may be important legal consequences.[35] Referencing displays a basic respect for intellectual property. When researchers acknowledge the work of other scholars, it illustrates their awareness of how knowledge is produced collaboratively. This acknowledgement nurtures goodwill within the academic community and creates an atmosphere where ideas can be shared and advanced freely. In the end, proper referencing lays the groundwork for scholarly discussions and innovation, as it honours the contributions of others and opens up pathways for new insights and discoveries.

3.2 The Challenges Citation in Academic Research

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[34] References and Citation. Available online at: <https://www.managers.org.uk/~/media/Files/PDF/Study%20Support/References-and-Citations.pdf> accessed [03/09/2021]

[35] <https://library.sacredheart.edu/c.php?g=29803&p=185939> accessed 06/09/2021

Wrong citation or referencing is a common issue researchers face in academic studies.[36] These challenges can affect the overall quality and reliability of scholarly work. An important obstacle is grasping and properly using different citation styles. Researchers often encounter citation formats like APA, MLA, Chicago, Harvard, OSCOLA, and others, each with rules for referencing various sources. Many researchers find it hard to grasp the details of APA, MLA, Chicago, and other citation formats. Following the referencing rules can be time-consuming, resulting in inconsistencies or formatting mistakes when switching styles. Citation standards are not static; they often change with new academic trends and technological advancements.[37] Researchers must remain knowledgeable about developing citation rules, which can vary based on the year of publication, geographic location, or specific academic discipline.[38] For example, the increasing significance of digital resources has altered how online materials are cited. This complexity grows for interdisciplinary research, where different sections of a paper may necessitate distinct citation methods. This type of confusion may result in inconsistencies regarding referencing and can also bring up plagiarism-related issues.

One major challenge is citing non-traditional sources, particularly materials from the internet. With the increase in the variety of resources available, it has become more challenging to cite different modern sources. In the past, traditional academic research primarily relied on books, journal articles, and conference proceedings. Today, however, researchers are incorporating online materials into their references.[39] The internet has added new complexities to citation practices since current guidelines often do not adequately address how to cite these sources, resulting in growing concerns. Nevertheless, advancements in information and computer technology have enhanced research, with citation management tools such as EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley, Reference Manager or ProCite commonly used to organise references.[40] Despite their benefits, these tools have their limitations. They may not consistently format citations accurately, especially for non-standard or emerging source types.[41] Besides, some software platforms require subscriptions, limiting access for researchers, particularly in environments with fewer resources. Researchers must also carefully check the outputs of these citation tools, as automated systems can sometimes produce errors.

Poor research habits can worsen citation challenges. Many researchers have difficulty organising their research notes and do not accurately record source information during the research process. This can create problems in properly referencing information, increasing the risk of unintentional plagiarism. Besides, citing ideas and information is an important

[36] D Ochieng, 'The Progress of Digital Technologies in Solving Chronic Education Challenges: The Case of Citation and Referencing Errors.' 2019, 4(2) JLTDA 33, 34; Kargbo, J. A. (2010). Undergraduate Students' Problems with Citing References. TRL, 51(3), 222–236.

[37] Points of Reference: Changing Patterns of Academic Citation: <https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/id/eprint/66294/1/Accepted_manuscript.pdf> accessed 26/10/2024

[38] RB Lamptey and H Atta-Obeng, 'Challenges with Reference Citations Among Postgraduate Students at The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana.' [2012] 32(3) JST, 69,74

[39] M Joy and SK Toor, 'Investigative Study about Errors in References and Citation in the Work of Students in Higher Education.' <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/dcs/people/m_s_joy/resources/projectideas/referencing-paper-draft.pdf> accessed 26/10/2024

[40] D Ochieng (n 36) 35

[41] Ibid

responsibility in academic research, but accurately determining when and how to cite can be difficult. The process of integrating citations into writing poses challenges for researchers. Many individuals struggle to integrate cited information smoothly into their arguments. This can involve difficulties paraphrasing, quoting, and synthesising information from various sources.[42] Researchers must balance giving appropriate credit to sources and avoiding excessive citation of common knowledge or widely accepted facts. Failing to cite sources, even unintentionally, can lead to allegations of plagiarism, which can harm a researcher's reputation and academic integrity. Accurately paraphrasing and quoting sources without distorting their original meanings is another challenge requiring careful attention.

Citations can present additional challenges for researchers dealing with foreign texts or non-English sources. Translating a source while preserving the accuracy and intent of the original work is complicated, and deciding whether to include the original language in the citation adds another level of difficulty. Also, non-English sources may adhere to different publication standards or lack easily accessible citation details, making it hard to apply standard citation practices. This creates challenges in ensuring proper attribution across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Errors in this area can lead to ethical violations and negatively impact the researcher's credibility, emphasising the ongoing need for clarity and diligence in citation practices.

In academic research, there is no justification for poor referencing. Researchers need to master how to reference correctly to address citation challenges and maintain academic integrity. Accurately citing sources acknowledges the work of original authors and enhances the credibility of a researcher's findings by enabling readers to locate the information sources. Learning proper citation techniques helps avoid problems such as plagiarism, which can weaken scholarly work. In addition, knowing the various citation styles (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) allows researchers to present their work consistently and professionally. Familiarity with referencing tools can also make the process more efficient, minimising errors and improving the quality of research outputs.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This paper has reviewed a critical component of the research - referencing. It found that every research, such as an academic project (thesis or dissertation), writing books or articles, relies heavily on prior works. A researcher may draw from different sources, and it is essential to acknowledge these sources. When a researcher refers to the materials of others, he must acknowledge the source of information. It allows for the citation of all materials referred to in research and confers credibility on the research. Poor referencing could diminish the quality of research and lead to the accusation of plagiarism.

The paper further found that there are standards for referencing materials consulted, though there is no universal referencing style as different researchers use different styles. Each style provides the basic principles of properly citing materials or a list of references using a bibliography at the end of the research. In addition, methods for citing sources vary among different fields of study. However, a particular academic discipline prefers a specific

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[42] YS Rezeki (n 7) 70-71.

referencing style because it requires information that can easily be captured and adequately cited. For instance, OSCOLA is adopted by legal researchers to deal with the resources consulted, including statutes and case law, textbooks, articles, official reports, and internet materials. On the other hand, the Vancouver style is sometimes used in the sciences; APA style is commonly used in Education, Business, and some Social Sciences and Humanities; MLA style is often used in English and Media Studies, while the Oxford style is predominantly used in History, Philosophy, and Classics. Irrespective of the referencing method, all citations should match the style adopted and applied throughout the research. Therefore, it is incumbent for every researcher to respect intellectual property and avoid plagiarism by referencing all sources of information used in every research.

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