

Citation False Practices in the Library and Information Science Theses: A Case Study of Shodhganga ETD Database

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Abstract

Citations symbolize the conceptual association of scientific ideas published by researchers and authors. By the references they cite in their papers, authors make explicit linkages between the current research and prior work in the universe of scientific literature. The practice of citing has been there for a long time. A form of citation index was first found in 12th century Hebrew religious literature. The present study has been conducted using Shodhganga, one of the most popular theses and dissertations databases in India. The study was conducted to assess the use of popular style guides in Library and Information science theses, as library fraternity are known to be well versed with the style guides. The study was conducted by downloading the theses submitted by the departments of Library and Information Science of seven state universities in Karnataka. There are a total of 208 theses uploaded onto Shodhganga ETD database. The results show that the department of LIS, Karnatak University, Dharwad, has uploaded 89 theses. A total of 1000 referencing faults were found. 136 theses used American Psychological Association (APA) and 72 theses used Chicago reference styles. There were 32.73% spelling mistakes (mostly in the titles and headings), 25.45% numbering and 41.82% mentioning year faults found among all the theses. On a whole, it is found that theses from Karnatak University, Dharwad have more number of both in-texts as well as end-text referencing faults.

Keywords: American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago, End-text Reference, In-text Reference, Reference Faults, Shodhganga, Theses

1. Introduction

The practice of citing references by authors has been around for a long time. A citation is a reference to a published or unpublished source. Citation patterns have been studied extensively by researchers across the globe on various aspects of universe of knowledge. The people give credit to the researchers after using their work by citing that work in the form of references in their scholarly publication, and hence citations represent importance of a work. A citation is an abbreviated alphanumeric expression woven in the body of an intellectual output in the form of a work such as a book, journals article, review and so on, which denotes an entry in the bibliographic references section of the work for the purpose of acknowledging (Wikipedia,

2018). Therefore, the combination of both the in-text (in-body) and end-text citation provided in the form of a bibliographic entry signifies a citation.

Citations have several important purposes such as, to attribute prior or unoriginal work and ideas to the correct sources, to allow the reader to determine independently whether the referenced material supports the author's argument in the claimed way, to adhere to copyright compliance, to avoid plagiarism, and to help the reader gauge the strength and validity of the material the author has used (Horkoff & McLean, 2015).

There are drawbacks and shortcomings of citation practices, including for example, honorary citations, circumstantial citations, and discriminatory citations, selective and arbitrary citations (Wikipedia, 2018) and so on.

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2. Citation Analysis

It is the examination of the frequency and patterns of citations in documents. It uses the pattern of citations, links from one document to another. The main aim of analyzing the citations is to identify the most important documents in a collection (Kappetein et.al., 2012) of a subject. The judgments produced by judges of law to support their decisions refer back to judgments made in earlier cases (Hyland, 2004). Another example is provided by patents which contain prior art, a citation of earlier patents relevant to the current claim (Jaffe, & Rassenfosse, 2017) by the inventor. A form of citation index was first found in 12th century Hebrew religious literature. Legal citation indexes are too found in the 18th century and were made popular by citators such as Shepard's Citations (1873).

3. Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Theses and dissertations are known to be rich and unique sources of information. Most often the only sources of research work that does not find its way into various publication channels are theses and dissertations. Theses and dissertations remain an un-tapped and under-utilized asset, leading to unnecessary duplication and repetition of work (Dhanavandan & Tamizhchelvan, 2013).

4. Shodhaganga

Shodhganga, set-up by the INFLIBNET Centre (Bhat et.al, 2014), is a reservoir of PhD theses by research scholars of all disciplines across universities in India.

The UGC Regulation (2016) Notification on (Minimum Standards & Procedure for Award of M.Phil. / Ph.D Degree, Regulation, 2016) dated 5th May 2016 mandates submission of electronic version of theses and dissertations as online availability of electronic theses and dissertations through centrally-maintained digital repository ensures easy access and archiving of Indian doctoral theses (Lal, 2012). This would overcome serious problem of duplication of research and poor quality in research output.

5. Need for the Study

Citations are an acknowledgement of authors by citing their work. Researchers may or may not give credit adequately (Gorman, 2008). The first and foremost reason for wrongful citation is lack of knowledge on reference styles among researchers. This study is aimed at finding wrongful citing patterns in the references in Library and information science theses uploaded by the departments of Library and information science of the state universities of Karnataka. The reason for choosing the LIS theses for the study is because of the awareness among LIS professionals of various citation styles and also LIS professionals are the ones who are expected to guide researchers in using the citation styles.

6. Objectives of the Study

1. To find the awareness of citation styles among the LIS researchers,
2. To find the popular citation styles used by the LIS researchers, and
3. To identify wrongful citations in the LIS theses.

7. Scope of the Study

The study is confined to theses submitted by and uploaded onto Shodhganga repository by the LIS departments of the state universities in Karnataka only. The Karnataka state universities covered are; Bangalore University, Gulbarga University, Karanataka University, Akkamahadevi Mahila University, Kuvempu University, Mangalore University and Mysore University.

8. Methodology

The investigation has used a check-list to assess the citation mistakes such as in-text, end-text references, false citation practices, and others such as crooked citation practices. The investigation identified total 208 theses uploaded onto shodhganga. The extent of use of citation styles by the researchers includes various editions of American Psychological Association (APA) and Chicago style manuals.

9. Data Analysis

The study considered all the 208 theses to assess the faults in reference styles (Table 1).

Table 1. Universities under study

Sl. No.	University Name	Year of Establishment of the University	Year of Establishment of Dept. of LIS
3.	Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura	2003	2003
2.	Bangalore University, Bangalore	1964	1973
4.	Gulbarga University, Gulbarga	1980	1991
1.	Karnataka University, Dharwad	1950	1962
5.	Kuvempu University, Shivamogga	1987	1993
6.	Mangalore University, Mangalore	1980	1985
7.	University of Mysore, Mysore	1916	1965

Karnatak University, Dharwad is the earliest university in Karnataka to establish the DLIS and Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura established in year 2003 is the youngest (Figure 1).

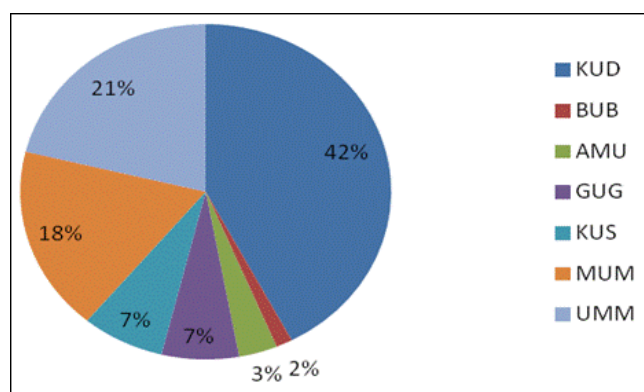


Figure 1. Theses available in Shodhganga.

Karnataka University tops the list; Surprisingly, Bangalore University, which established a DLIS quite early, has uploaded only 3 theses in LIS (Table 2).

Table 2. General faults found

University Name	Spelling		Numbering		Year		Total
	Fault	%	Fault	%	Fault	%	
Akkamahadevi Women's University	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
Bangalore University	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
Gulbarga University	2	3.64	0	0.00	5	9.09	7
Karnatak University	3	5.45	2	3.64	2	3.64	7
Kuvempu University	1	1.82	1	1.82	8	14.55	10
Mangalore University	11	20.00	5	9.09	4	7.27	20
University of Mysore	1	1.82	6	10.91	4	7.27	11
Total	18	32.73	14	25.45	23	41.82	55 (100)

The data shows distribution of different kinds of errors found (Spelling, Numbering & Year). Maximum number of errors was found in the theses submitted by LIS department, Mangalore University.

Figure 2 displays the faults in the references found in the theses.

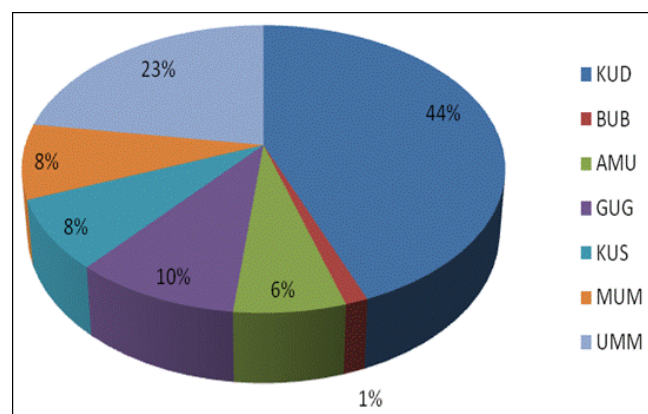


Figure 2. Reference faults in theses.

References are a major component of these. The above graph shows that 440 reference issues were found in the theses by DLIS, Karnatak University, from 89 theses. The main aim of the study is to find the reference faults from the theses of LIS disciplines.

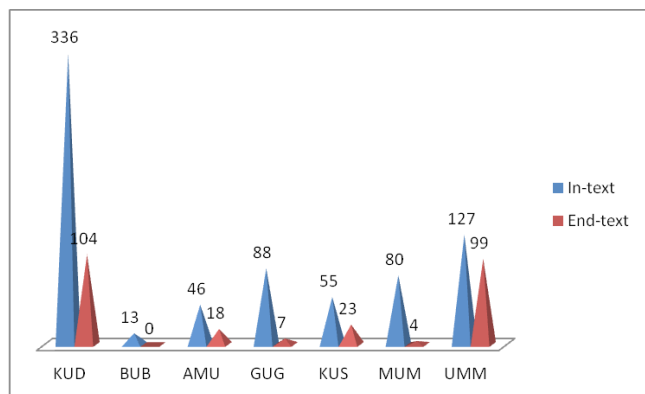


Figure 3. Total In-text and end-text referencing faults.

Cited in-text and end-text references are used in computing citation counts for the original author. Faulty references to the original work will lead to inaccurate citation data and thus inaccurate computation of all citation-based indices. Data from the Figure 3 shows that, a maximum 76.36% of reference faults in rendering the In-text references were found in the theses by Karnataka University, Dharwad. 23.63% End-text referencing faults were found in theses uploaded by the Karnataka University.

Table 3. APA and Chicago styles used in theses

University	APA	Chicago	Total
Akkamahadevi Women's University	6 (85.71)	1 (14.28)	7
Bangalore University	1 (33.33)	2 (66.66)	3
Gulbarga University	13 (92.85)	1 (7.14)	14
Karnatak University	36 (40.44)	53 (59.55)	89
Kuvempu University	8 (53.33)	7 (46.66)	15
Mangalore University	32 (86.48)	5 (13.51)	37
University of Mysore	40 (93.02)	3 (6.97)	43
Total	136 (100.0)	72 (100.0)	208

Over 380 reference styles are in use in the world today. Out of which APA and Chicago style manuals are most popular style guides. APA Manual appears to be the most used manual in the field of Library and Information Science.

Data from the Table 3 shows that, out of 208 theses considered for the study, 136 used APA style and 72 used Chicago style manual. Majority of 93.02% theses from University of Mysore followed APA style. It is found from the study that, there is no consistency in the use of style manuals in the Karnatak and Kuvempu universities theses.

10. Salient Findings

- 208 theses were uploaded onto shodhganga in the field of Library and Information Science from the seven university LIS departments from Karnataka,
- The department of LIS, Karnatak University, Dharwad being the oldest among all the LIS departments established in the state of Karnataka, has uploaded 89 theses only,
- There were a total of 1000 referencing faults found from 208 theses averaging around 5 reference faults per thesis,
- Out of 208 theses, 136 theses used APA reference style and 72 theses used Chicago reference styles,
- There were 32.73% spelling mistakes (mostly in the titles and headings), 25.45% numbering and 41.82% year faults found,
- LIS department, Mangalore University theses recorded 36.36% faults considerably higher in terms of reference styles such as Spelling, Numbering and Year,
- Even though library professionals are expected to be well aware of style guides, yet there are many citation faults in LIS theses, and
- It is found from the study that, there is no consistency in the use of style manuals among universities in Karnataka.

11. Suggestions

A more systematic approach in citation practices needs to be adopted. Authors should be more restrained and selective in their referencing habits, to ensure greater consistency in referencing practices. It is recommended that LIS departments of the state universities ensure use of style guides to reduce citation errors.

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