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# A citation analysis of education dissertations at the Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

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## Keywords

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## Abstract

A total of 4,012 citations in 70 postgraduate dissertations in education submitted to the Delta State University Library between 1992 and 2002 were studied. Most post graduate students in education used more textbooks (60.3 per cent), than other forms of library materials. Four of the top ranked journals, including the most popularly used – the *West African Journal of Education (WAJE)* – are available in the library. A total of 12 (66.7 per cent) of the 18 most popularly used journals are US publications, thus creating the need for Delta State University Library to improve on its local journal collection. Of the 18 most cited journals, six (33.3 per cent) ranked among the list of significant journals in the field of education.

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## Introduction

Delta State University Library came into existence in 1992 soon after the creation of Delta State in 1991. This institution is a result of a process of metamorphosis, which started with the defunct Advanced Teachers College (ATC) library, Abraka, that was established in 1969. This library gave way to the College of Education library in 1970, when the institution was converted to a college of education. Furthermore, in 1985, this library became a university campus library when the then Bendel State government converted the College of Education, Abraka, to a Campus of the Bendel State University, Ekpoma. The library became a full-fledged university library when the Abraka campus of the Bendel State University was renamed the Delta State University in 1992 (Okiy, 2000).

All through the transition from the ATC library to the Bendel State University Campus Library, the book and journal collection of the library was mainly on education, since the main subject of focus all through this period was education. However, having attained the status of a full fledged university library, which now has several other faculties to cater to, it became necessary to inject current titles into the library collection in all these disciplines to meet the needs of users. The library has about 54,000 volumes of books and 275 journal titles.

After seven years (1985-1992) as a campus of the Bendel State University, during which postgraduate programmes were established in the Faculty of Education, and ten years (1992-2002) of existence as a full-fledged university, it became necessary to carry out a citation analysis of the theses and dissertations submitted to the Delta State University Library from 1992-2002. This is in order to determine the extent to which the journal collections of the university library are able to meet the research needs of the postgraduate students in education.

The writing of a thesis, often based on original research, is usually done in partial fulfillment of the award of a higher degree in all Nigerian universities. In doing this, postgraduate students are bound to make use of several information resources within the library. According to Gupta (1984), theses are useful as

primary sources of information, to which may be attributed the acceleration of research. In research works, the importance of journals cannot be underestimated. They are important sources through which new discoveries of research findings, theories and opinions are disseminated (Iya, 1996).

This paper will investigate the forms of the items cited by the post graduate students; the ranks of the journals cited with respect to frequency of use; the availability of cited journals and the country of origin of the journals cited. This study will serve as a selection guide to the acquisition librarians of Nigerian university libraries with regard to education journals.

## Review of related literature

In his work on science, Garfield (1978) demonstrated the importance of citation analysis as a tool for evaluation. He argued that citation frequency and impact factor could be helpful in determining the optimum makeup of special and general collections. This can serve as a guide to determine the back files, binding and retention schedules of science journals. Satarino (1978) argued that citation counting provides an indication of which materials authors used to support their efforts in intellectual inquiry. Cullers (1996) opined that citation counts may not be used in isolation in selection of library material; however, Garfield (1978) noted that citation counts can give an indirect means of knowing the structure of a given knowledge as well as a tool in the selection and evaluation of journals. This is because it is assumed that the most frequently cited journals in a given discipline are the most utilized in that field. In the opinion of Leshner and Sylvia (1995), citation analysis of students' project and theses help in the evaluation of uses of reference collections in university libraries.

In his study of research projects in education, Obokoh (1985) found that the majority of the students cited books rather than journals. He attributed this to the fact that the students still have the opinion that books are more appropriate and easier to consult than journals. Mochida (1976), in his citation study of education literature, found that there are almost

twice as many monographs as journals cited. From her own findings, Iya (1996) posited that the majority of post graduate students in education use textbooks more than other forms of library materials in writing their dissertations.

## Methodology

A total of 70 postgraduate dissertations submitted to Delta State University Library from 1992 to 2002 in education were examined. The references in the 70 theses were listed and counted. They gave a total of 4,012 citations, which is an average of 57.3 citations per thesis. The references cited were sorted out according to their formats, i.e. books and monographs, journal articles, theses and dissertations, conference papers, reports and others. These were counted according to their citation frequency. Journals cited were ranked according to their decreasing number of citations and crosschecked with the current holding of the university library to determine if they are currently available in the library. Furthermore, the *Ulrich International Periodical Directory* 31st edition, 1992-1993, was used to determine the country of origin of the cited journal titles. The data collected were presented in tables; figures aid percentages under various headings.

## Results and discussion

Table I shows the format of publications cited in all the theses submitted to the university library. It shows that 4,012 citations were recorded from the 70 dissertations analysed. Books and monographs received the highest number of citations, with a total of 2,418 or

Table I Formats of literature cited

Format	No. of citations	Per cent
Books and monographs	2,418	60.3
Journals	982	24.5
Theses/dissertations	215	5.4
Conference proceedings	116	2.9
Reports	82	2.0
Others	119	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,012</b>	<b>100</b>

60.3 per cent citations, while journals had 982 or 24.5 per cent citations. This finding corroborates the observations of Mochida (1976), Obokoh (1985) and Iya (1996), who reported that books and monographs were cited more than journals in their study of education theses. This study also revealed that authors cited other types of literature such as theses, and dissertation, conference proceedings and technical reports.

Table II shows the ranked list of 18 journal titles cited at least ten times or more, citations to journal titles were analysed to determine the number of times a particular journal title was cited by various authors. From this, the most cited journals were obtained. The ranking of the journal titles cited ten times and above in the 70 theses examined shows that the *West African Journal of Education (WAJE)* tops the list with 32 citations. This is followed closely by the *Journal of Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN)*, which recorded 29 citations. This finding corroborates that of Obokoh (1985) and Iya (1996), that the *WAJE* and the *STAN* were the two most cited journals in education. Table II also shows that six (33.3 per cent) of the 18 most cited journal titles as revealed by this study ranked among the list of significant

journals in the field of education earlier found by Obokoh (1985) and Iya (1996).

In order to determine the local availability of the journals cited, the journals cited ten times and above were cross-checked with the library holding to know which of them are available in the library. Out of the 18 most cited journals, 19 (50 per cent) were subscribed to by the library and as such were available for consultation in the library.

This is an indication of the fairness of the journal collection of the library with regard to education. Those journals which were heavily cited but are absent from the library collection may have been consulted from the students' personal collection or other libraries. Delta State has other higher institutions such as the colleges of education at Warri and Agbor and the Federal College of Education Technical Asaba. There are also polytechnics and universities in the neighbouring Edo State. These are all within easy reach of students in Delta State University who usually obtain letters of introduction from the university library to facilitate the use of other libraries. This has also gone a long way to provide the needed journals for these students.

Table II also shows that 13 (72.2 per cent) of the most cited journals were foreign journals,

**Table II** Availability of 18 topmost ranked journals cited at least ten times in the library

Rank	Journal title	No. of citations	Country of citation
1	<i>West African Journal of Education (WAJE)</i>	23	Nigeria
2	<i>Journal of Science Teacher Association of Nigeria (STAN)</i>	29	Nigeria
3	<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	28	USA
4	<i>Journal of Educational Psychology</i>	27	USA
5	<i>Journal of Educational Research<sup>a</sup></i>	23	USA
6	<i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology<sup>a</sup></i>	20	USA
7	<i>Journal of Marriage and the Family<sup>a</sup></i>	19	USA
8	<i>Journal of Nigerian Educational Research Association</i>	16	Nigeria
9	<i>British Journal of Educational Psychology</i>	13	UK
10	<i>Literacy and Reading in Nigeria</i>	13	USA
11	<i>Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology<sup>a</sup></i>	13	USA
12	<i>Administrative Science Quarterly<sup>a</sup></i>	12	USA
13	<i>Journal of Research in Science Teaching<sup>a</sup></i>	12	USA
14	<i>African Journal of Educational Research</i>	12	Nigeria
15	<i>Psychological Bulletin<sup>a</sup></i>	11	USA
16	<i>The Counsellor</i>	10	Nigeria
17	<i>Reading Research Quarterly<sup>a</sup></i>	10	USA
18	<i>Vocational Guidance Quarterly<sup>a</sup></i>	10	USA

**Note:** <sup>a</sup>Not available in the university library

while five (27.8 per cent) were Nigerian-based journals. A total of 12 (66.7 per cent) of the most cited journals are US publications, while one (5.6 per cent) is a British publication. This high percentage of foreign-based journals among the most cited journals in the library collections corroborates the findings of Obokoh (1985). However, it is a departure from the findings of Iya (1996) in which Nigerian-based journals were cited more by the students. A possible explanation for this is that when this institution was a college of education, it enjoyed on unrivalled status as a highly reputable college of education in Nigeria, attracting students from all over the country. It was able to maintain this status through the acquisition of foreign-based journals at a time when Nigerian-based journals were not yet popular. This tradition has been transferred to the collections of this university library.

## Conclusion

The data derived from this study show that the majority of post graduate students in education use textbooks more than other forms of library materials in writing their dissertations as indicated by 2418 (60.3 per cent) citations given to books. This result is consistent with other studies in the education discipline carried out by Mochida (1976), Obokoh (1985) and Iya (1996). It also corroborates the findings of Kirkham (1989) and Tewolde (1992) in the social sciences and sciences respectively. However, the importance of journals to post graduate researchers was also demonstrated through 982 (24.5 per cent) citations given to journals among the theses studied.

Of the journals cited, 50 per cent were available in the collection of the University library. However, there is the need for the University library to work closely with lecturers

in the Faculty of Education to improve on the collection of both local and foreign journals in education. Furthermore, the study revealed that six (33.3 per cent) of the 18 most cited journals ranked among the list of significant journals in the field of education. This finding will assist the University library in selecting journal titles to be acquired for the library.

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