



## Students' Knowledge in Citing Sources at St. Paul University

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**ABSTRACT:** This study aimed to assess the knowledge level of college students on citing sources at St. Paul University. Citing sources can solidify claims and make a research paper credible. Failing to credit the ideas of others is a form of plagiarism, which was a common problem among students in the past until today. A descriptive quantitative survey method was used in this study wherein one hundred sixty (160) college students at St. Paul University participated in a test comprising a researcher-made questionnaire based on the 7th edition of the American Psychological Association's (APA) Manual. The findings revealed that the students were proficient in both in-text citations and referencing assessments. Thus, the students have gained learning and knowledge in the activities conducted by the University's Library and Research departments pertaining on how to correctly cite sources following the APA 7th edition style. It is recommended to library and information science practitioners to sustain initiatives that enhance the students' knowledge in crediting sources by providing them with series of orientations and training workshops on APA 7th edition. Moreover, collaboration between the library and research offices of educational institutions is encouraged to improve students' citation and referencing skills. It is anticipated that the outcome of this collaboration will reduce errors on proper citations and rather promote respect to others' intellectual properties and contribution. Practitioners should also integrate the fundamental concept of crediting sources into classes to ensure that students understand the significance of acknowledging works as they support their own ideas.

**KEYWORDS:** Citing Sources, Descriptive Survey, in-text citation, referencing format, Philippines.

### INTRODUCTION

Citing sources can solidify claims and make a research paper credible. Failing to credit the ideas of others is a form of plagiarism, which was a common problem among students in the past until today. Ideas are considered intellectual property, and there can be severe repercussions if one fail to cite where you got an idea from. Plagiarism is common in academic writing because of the lack of knowledge about citing sources (University of Southern Carolina Libraries, 2021).

Academicians who have written for professional purposes may take citing, like other common behaviors, for granted (Neville, 2012). Every researcher is responsible for adequately crediting their sources. Citing sources can help scholars locate novel references for their research. Citing sources improves the credibility of a research paper. If one does not give credit for the information used in his or her study, then they are not responsible researchers and they may be described to be committing a serious crime.

Citing sources is indeed one of an indicator of good research ethics practice although it is indeed time consuming because it requires serious attention especially as we follow the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition citation style standard. According to Neville (2008), plagiarism has been a significant concern for higher education practitioners in the recent years especially in writing researches. Research writing is a complex undertaking and so we must be responsible while 'adopting' from other people's ideas and this is done by giving to them what is due as we cite them by their intellectual efforts. Although citing sources plays a simple role in research writing, it helps researchers become better researchers and writers.



Furthermore, citing sources has become increasingly difficult as a result of the widespread availability of internet materials and the proliferation of new types of content (Greer & McCann, 2018). Kargbo (2010) discovered in his study that 62.1 percent of undergraduate learners were not confident in their ability to correctly cite sources and that even those who considered themselves confident frequently produce inconsistent references.

St. Paul University Surigao (SPUS) students have attended the orientation and workshop on crediting sources and citing authors collaboratively conducted by the University Learning Resource Center and the Research office. It is indeed a responsibility of educational institutions, specifically the library and research office, to help students learn how to correctly cite their sources whenever they use information and concepts from other people to support their viewpoints and ideas. Libraries expend considerable time and effort in providing instructional resources to help students learn the “mechanics” of citation and referencing (Dawe et al., 2021). Students are expected to engage in scientific writing in many courses (Yang et al., 2019).

In higher education, students have to be responsible when using information in an ethical manner. Responsible students should have endurance in using the ideas of others to help distinguish between their own ideas and those they have encountered that have been written about by others.

This paper was hence designed to determine the level of knowledge of students in crediting sources at St. Paul University Surigao using the American Psychological Association (APA) style 7th edition as the standard. Particularly, this study had the following research objectives: (1) To determine the profile of the participants in terms of their academic year and course program; (2) To determine the level of knowledge of crediting sources among SPUS students using the 7th edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) in terms of in-text citing and bibliography making or referencing; and (3) propose possible effective recommendations based from the findings.

## METHODS

In this study, the researchers employed quantitative descriptive research design using a test questionnaire. In quantitative research, tests are frequently used to assess knowledge, aptitude, and performance (Methods of data collection, 2020). This design therefore is appropriate in this study because this paper measured the knowledge level of the students under study in citing sources at St. Paul University.

160 college students at St. Paul University in Surigao City, Philippines participated in the study. The researchers employed purposive sampling technique. Only the students who were enrolled in the research writing subject in academic year 2021-2022 were selected as samples.

The instrument used in this study consisted of three parts: Part I asked about the profile of participants such as academic year and program; Part II was the in-text citation test containing 15 items to answer; and Part III is about the reference test with 15 items to answer. The questionnaire was used to assess the students' level of knowledge in citing in-text sources and referencing.

A letter of permission was sent to the Vice President for Academics of the University to conduct the study. The questionnaire was subjected to the validation by experts. It was administered in printed and online platforms where consent from the participants was also asked. Afterwards, it was retrieved, analyzed, and interpreted using statistical tools. Moreover, the study maintained ethical considerations by requesting the participants to sign informed consent and data privacy forms attached in the printed and online questionnaires. The personal information and responses collected were treated with utmost confidentiality and were only used for academic and research purposes.

To analyze the results gathered in the study, the following statistical tools were used: (1) *Frequency Count and Percentage Distribution* were used to quantify the profile of the student-participants; and (2) *Mean and Standard Deviation* were used to determine the knowledge level of the students in citing sources. Moreover, this study used a scoring parameter to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of data. For students' knowledge:

Score Parameter	Interpretation
12 – 15	Very Proficient
8 – 11	Proficient
4 – 7	Less Proficient
0 – 3	Not Proficient



**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

*Profile of the Participants*

Presented in Table 1 is the profile of the participants in terms of academic year and program. All students under study were enrolled in the research writing subject during the academic year 2021–2022.

**Table 1.** Profile of the participants

Program	f (n=160)	%
AB Philosophy	5	3.13
AB Political Sciences	4	2.50
Bachelor of Elementary Education	24	15.00
Bachelor of Library & Information Science	2	1.25
BS Civil Engineering	1	0.63
BS Criminology	4	2.50
BS Accountancy	11	6.88
BS Accounting and Info Sci	6	3.75
BS Business Administration	8	5.00
Bachelor of Secondary Education	15	9.38
Bachelor of Physical Education	1	0.63
BS Hospitality Management	1	0.63
BS Nursing	25	15.63
BS Psychology	22	13.75
BS Tourism Management	10	6.25
Master of Arts in Educational Management	15	9.38
Master in Business Administration	4	2.50
Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management	2	1.25

Students from the eighteen (18) programs participated in answering the questions. In terms of the highest and lowest frequencies, 25 of 160 participants or 15.63% were Nursing students and 24 or 15% were Elementary Education students. There was only 1 or 0.63% participant respectively coming from the Mining Engineering, Civil Engineering, and Hospitality Management programs.

*Level of students' knowledge in citing sources in terms of in-text citation*

**Table 3.** Level of students' knowledge in citing sources in terms of in-text citation.

Score Range	Interpretation	f (n=160)	%
12-15	Very Proficient	43	26.88
8-11	Proficient	73	45.63
4-7	Less Proficient	42	26.25
0-3	Not Proficient	2	1.25
<b>Overall Mean of Students' acquired scores from the test:</b>		<b>9.33</b>	
<b>Standard Deviation</b>		<b>:</b>	<b>2.87</b>
<b>Interpretation</b>		<b>:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

Table 3 shows the students' knowledge in doing in-text citations. The overall mean of students' acquired scores from the test is 9.33, which shows that the students were *proficient* in citing in-text sources and that out of 160 participants, 73 or 45.63% got the majority score of 8–11 out of 15 questions in the in-text citation test. On the other hand, only 2 or 1.25 % got the lowest score of 0-3 which is verbally interpreted as *not proficient*. Therefore, majority of the research students under study were proficient in doing in-text citations.



Furthermore, in the in-text citation test, majority of the participants or 143 out of 160 (89.38%) students gave the correct answer on item number 4 in the test which stated: *A parenthetical citation is a type of citation in which the author and date are in parentheses and place at the end of the sentence. What is the correct parenthetical citation in the given example below?* This was a significant knowledge information on in-text citing since parenthetical citation is easy to identify and is basic for doing in-text citation. In-text parenthetical citation consists of a parenthesis with the author's name and the year of publication. However, item number 12: *how will you cite a source found in another source in both narrative and parenthetical citation?* only got 63 out of 160 (39.38%) student researchers getting the correct answer. This shows that the students barely know about citing a source found in another source.

**Level of students' knowledge in citing sources in terms of referencing**

**Table 4.** Level of students' knowledge in citing sources in terms of referencing

Score Range	Interpretation	f (n=160)	%
12 - 15	Very Proficient	21	13.13
8 - 11	Proficient	86	53.75
4 - 7	Less Proficient	47	29.38
0 - 3	Not Proficient	6	3.75
<b>Overall Mean of Students' acquired scores from the test:</b>		<b>8.45</b>	
<b>Standard Deviation</b>		<b>: 2.76</b>	
<b>Interpretation</b>		<b>: Proficient</b>	

Table 4 shows the students' knowledge on how to do referencing. The overall mean of students' scores from the test is 8.45 which implies that the students are *proficient* in terms of referencing. Out of 160 participants, 86 or 53.75% got the majority score of 8–11 out of 15 questions in the referencing test. On the other hand however, 6 or 3.75 % got the lowest score of 0-3 points which is verbally interpreted as *not proficient*. Therefore, majority of the research students under study were proficient in terms of referencing.

Furthermore, in the referencing test, the majority of the participants or 126 out of 160 (75%) gave the correct answer for item number 12: *Reference list shows the complete details of everything you cited in your research and appears in an alphabetical list on a separate page, at the end of your work.* This was a significant knowledge information on referencing since the alphabetical arrangement in references for APA format is a basic knowledge when doing reference listing. However, item number 4: *This is a reference for a print journal that isn't complete. What do you think is missing?* Only got 30 out of 160 (18.75%) student researchers getting the correct answer. This shows that the students barely thought that the issue volume number is not an important part of the print and e-journal references.

**Summary of the level of knowledge of students in citing sources in-text and referencing**

**Table 5.** Summary of the level of knowledge of students in citing sources in-text and referencing

Proficiency Level	M	SD	Interpretation
<b>In-text Citation</b>	9.33	2.87	Proficient
<b>References</b>	8.45	2.76	Proficient

Table 5 shows the summary of the results of the participants' level of students' knowledge in citing sources in terms of in-text and referencing. The result of the test implies that the students are both proficient in doing in-text citation and referencing. Based on the results, the overall mean of students' acquired scores from the test in-text citation had the highest mean value of 9.33 with a standard deviation of 2.87; while the test of doing references had a mean of 8.45 with a standard deviation of 2.76. These imply that in-text citations are much easier to learn and do for the student-researchers since only the author and the year of the sources are the only elements to consider, whereas in making reference list, there are four components to consider: author, date of publication, title, and source. Moreover, It also considers the punctuation that is to be used and it is challenging for students to remember everything that needs to be taken into consideration in preparing the reference list at the end of their research papers.



**Proposed Intervention Program**

Citing sources is a crucial element in research writing in order to solidify your claims in your research. Academic integrity is an important etiquette as a researcher. When conducting research, it is essential to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty. It is not a sign of intellectual dishonesty to borrow ideas from other people. In fact, the citations and references you include will make your paper more credible.

This study proved that the knowledge level of crediting sources of students at St. Paul University Surigao is proficient. In order to enable them to become very proficient in crediting sources, they must attend activities organized by the school’s learning resource center or the library and the research office.

The researchers wanted to share the study's findings with SPUS management in order to improve students' knowledge in citing sources. Thus, the researchers are proposed this intervention plan. This plan provides valuable information indicating that the knowledge level of students in crediting sources at SPUS is proficient, but needs to be improved. This indicates that the need to provide reinforcement to raise their knowledge is very much recommended.

**PROGRAM GOAL:** To improve the citing sources knowledge and skills of all student researchers in the University.

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>SUCCESS INDICATORS</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>PERSON INVOLVED</b>
1.To improve faculty and students citing sources skills (in-text citation and referencing ) using APA 7 <sup>th</sup> edition citation style	At the end of AY 2022-2023, 100% of the students will be very proficient in crediting sources using the APA 7 <sup>th</sup> edition format	The library will conduct a series of workshops (face-to-face and online) on APA citation style in terms of in-text and referencing per program.	Students, Librarian and faculty
2. To integrate in the classes of faculty as part of their lesson to deliver to the students the basic knowledge on citing sources	At the end of the academic year, 100% of the students will be very proficient in crediting sources using the APA 7 <sup>th</sup> edition format	The faculty will consider including in the rubrics the complete list and correct citation of sources used in the assignment, projects, and research.	Faculty and student
3. In the Information Literacy module, additional concrete activities are added to the citing and referencing content	Expected that the students will be very proficient in crediting sources using the APA 7 <sup>th</sup> edition format	Enhance and redesign the information literacy module used by librarians	Librarian
4. To produce and disseminate leaflets or brochures addressing proper crediting of sources so that students are reminded of the correct citation format using APA when citing sources.	It is expected that the patrons will have the basic knowledge of crediting sources	Printing of leaflets or brochures and disseminate to students and faculty	Librarians, student, faculty

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, this study showed that students in private institutions such as in St. Paul University had proficiency in citing sources in terms of in-text citations and referencing. Thus, the students have gained learning and knowledge in the activities collaboratively conducted by the school library and the research offices on how to correctly cite sources and follow the correct format of the APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition citation style. Additionally, if teachers strictly implement and include citations in all academic requirements, students can also improve their knowledge in citing sources since they will always be doing it.



Taking into consideration the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended to the library and information science practitioners to sustain initiatives that can enhance the students' knowledge in crediting sources by providing them with series of orientations and training workshops on APA 7th edition citation format. Moreover, collaboration between the library and the research offices of educational institutions is encouraged to improve students' citation and referencing skills. It is anticipated that the outcome of this collaboration will reduce student-errors on proper citations and rather promote respect to academic and intellectual properties and contribution. Practitioners should also integrate the fundamental concept of crediting sources into all classes to ensure that students understand the significance of acknowledging original works as they support their own ideas and arguments. The researchers are also encouraged to apply the essence of this study to their future academic works and that the valuing of others' intellectual works and property is promoted to very much extent. In the Information Literacy module of the Library Science and Research subjects, additional concrete activities may be added in terms of teaching the knowledge and skills on citing and referencing content. The libraries may also consider distributing flyers or brochures on proper formats of citing sources to remind the students of the value of recognizing the original works of others. Lastly, future researchers may conduct an evaluation of the citation quality of students' research output at private institutions in Surigao City.

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