

Proficiency of Sophomore English Language Students on the Use of APA Citation

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.803181S>

Received: 04 July 2024; Accepted: 08 July 2024; Published: 13 August 2024

ABSTRACT

Having the ease in accessibility of information around the world with the rise of technology, the number of plagiarism both intentional and unintentional is alarmingly increasing as a form of improper documentation. This study intends to identify the proficiency level of Sophomore Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies students on the use of APA Citation. Quantitative approach specifically descriptive design was used in the study and a total enumeration was used to identify the respondents. These were the 51 sophomore BAEL students enrolled in the first semester of school year 2022-2023 at Benguet State University. The study was conducted in the month of October 2022 at Benguet State University through online Google Form questionnaire which comprises 20-items Multiple Choice Test Questionnaire or a Mini Exercise on APA Citation and 20-items Checklist Questionnaire on the factors affecting the Citation Performance.

Results showed that the BAEL sophomore students are not proficient in using the latest edition (7th) of the APA Citation. Moreover, the following are identified as the main factors behind their performance on the citation: 82.35% have not attended in any workshop, seminars, and trainings; 82.35% do not have the understanding of the concepts of the types of the different citation formats; 64.71% of them are having difficulty in recognizing the types and kinds of citation to be used; and 62.75% are not aware of the changes of the latest edition of APA Citation. Hence, the BAEL sophomore students have the probability to commit intentional and unintentional plagiarism and are more exposed to such cases.

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded: (1) All undergraduate students including the Sophomore BAEL students should be trained and should master the use of APA Citation as early as they can to prepare themselves for the academic requirements that require the use of APA. It will help them to produce quality and scholastic research and thesis works; (2) The BSU Colleges and Faculty staff members, including the College of Arts and Humanities, are suggested to conduct a regular training, seminar, and/or workshop for all students on the importance of APA Citation and on how APA Citation is used in academic requirements. This will make the students get used to applying the concepts of APA Citation that are taught in some of their major course subjects; (3) The BSU Colleges shall have an Ethics Committee that shall oversee the application of APA Citation in all academic requirements of students such as researches and dissertations; (4) The policy makers, module/course guide makers, and syllabus makers are also suggested to allot enough or longer time for intensive and interactive class discussion and task-based requirements when discussing the application of APA Citation and its related topics in subjects like English 21, research and thesis courses, and others; and (5) The future researchers are recommended to have wider scope of population for a possible comparative analysis.

Keywords: Proficiency, Literature Citation, American Psychological Association (APA) Citation, Performance in APA Citation, Sophomore BAEL Students

INTRODUCTION

Information about the world and everything around it will never be discovered and known by people if it is not because of documentations by individuals who seek for the truth. People document things even before history to record significant events and data that can help them in their daily lives. More importantly, people around the

world use documents and do documentation in almost all aspects of their life such as in business, technology, industry, sciences (natural and applied), history, education, government, law, and even in personal use. However, several related literatures reveal that most documents are not properly documented and easily stolen which results in violations of copyright such as plagiarism. Thus, this study aims to shed light on the importance of documentation, most specifically on the aspect of documentation in the academic setting which is the literature citation, through assessing the proficiency of Sophomore BAEL students on the use of APA Citation. This is since they are the ones who usually use documentation in almost all of their academic inquiries such as Language Researches.

Documents have played a crucial role in the world in general for decades and they are significant since they help in maintaining order in the world and help people understand how the world and everything around it functions. “Our history, as individuals and as societies and cultures, is inextricably and necessarily intertwined with documenting things” (Janes, 2017). Documents, being crucial to the world in general then, need to be relevant, legible, signed and notarized, legalized, accurate, up to date, monitored and secured (Future Learn, 2013).

Same is true in the case of Asia, documents and documentations play an integral part in almost all human aspects of life in the region. Specifically, according to Roe (2009), the need for documentation in the Asia/Pacific Region increases “over 7% every year” especially in the field of Information Technology (IT) and in business. Even in the midst of pandemic, the region relies on proper documentations of the COVID-19 (Asian Development Bank, 2022). However, there are still challenges faced by the region when it comes to documentation and the top three struggles identified by respondents during the Asia/Pacific Software Survey 2009 are as follows: first, “keeping content accurate and up-to-date (30.9%); second, archiving content for long-term storage and disposition (16.1%); and lastly, integrating content with enterprise applications (12.9%) (Roe, 2009).”

In addition, documentation without proper referencing to the owner of the idea borrowed is not strange even in the case of the Philippines. As a matter of fact, there are famous personalities who were accused of improper documentations like plagiarism scandals over the past years (ABS-CBN News, 2017). Even plagiarism across universities in the country is very rampant as mentioned in the study by Reyes and Ariate (2019) which centered on the 25 known cases of plagiarism committed by faculty staff and students at the University of the Philippines from the 1990s up until 2010. Despite being illegal in the field of academe and even across other fields, plagiarism and any other intellectual dishonesty are still the “worst offenses” commonly committed by individuals (Quismundo, 2011).

In one of the regions of the Philippines which is the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), documents and documentations are still important facets especially in the region’s cultural heritage and living traditions. Being the home of indigenous tribes – the Igorots, the ancestral domains and history of the past remain up to this day as made possible through documentations. Furthermore, because of its topography, the region maintains its tourist attractions because of documentation, as well, since many individuals produce online reports of their experiences and discoveries of the region’s famous historical and tourist spots. Also, the production of agricultural goods of the region, being one of the primary producers of agricultural products in the nation, is known through social media platforms (Botangen et al., 2017). Documentations are not just important in the field of business, health sector, technology, culture and tradition, tourism, and agribusiness, but in education as well.

In the field of education, documentation is very vital since it supports and enhances the teaching and learning process, monitors learner’s progress over time, and helps educators be aware of the needs of the learners and provide the best quality education the learners deserve (Gostelow, 2018). In addition, learners do documentations in almost all of their academic activities, especially in essay writing, speech performances, reporting, and researches. Also, they are required to do accurate documentation if the information they use and/or present is borrowed from other sources (Sunny Empire State College, 2022). As students reach higher education, the more academic requirements are expected from them, and the more formal standard is used in assessing these academic requirements especially at tertiary/college level. Academic institutions uphold the same values and shared attributes such as honesty, fairness, and responsibility which formed the so-called “academic integrity”. La Trobe University (2022) defines “academic integrity” as the application of the aforementioned values in all academic documentations in a certain university. A student, teacher, researcher, or any of the academic staff members of

a certain university can manifest academic integrity by using resources appropriately based on “copyright and privacy laws”, by mentioning the owner of the sources of information obtained, by not claiming somebody’s work as his own, by doing studies in line with university’s rules and standards on human research ethics, by reporting factual information, and by being ethical at all times in all academic requirements. This definition is the same as that of the University of North Carolina at the Chapel Hill (2022).

One specific academic inquiry in tertiary/higher education which requires the demonstration of academic integrity through proper documentation is the research, thesis, or dissertation. Research/thesis/dissertation is integral in higher education/tertiary level, since it is one of the courses required before students can graduate and it is a way for learners to explore and experience first-hand in real-life context the application of the ideas, concepts, theories, and information they have learned inside the classroom (Cleveland University Communications Staff, 2016). Documented researches/thesis/dissertations do not just benefit the learners themselves but also the faculty and the university. Faculty staff members who teach research in an institution can use the researches as a basis and guide in enhancing the capability and progress of the learners in general (Petrella & Jung, 2008).

In documenting researches/theses/dissertations, proper referencing is needed in order to keep academic integrity. Referencing in research is referred to as the process of acknowledging the sources of information one used in research making (University of Pretoria, 2022). One of the ways to do proper referencing is to do citations. The Oxford Language Dictionary (2022) defines the word “citation” as a noun pertaining to the excerpt or reference to a certain type of text such as books or articles and/or individuals like the authors. This definition is in line with the definition given by the Labaree (2022) and the Suny Empire State College (2020). It was mentioned that the term “citation” refers to a “formal reference” of a researcher to his/her sources of the gathered information or ideas he/she used in the academic papers (University of California Santa Cruz, 2021). In simpler words, “citation” pertains to the means by which a writer can tell his/her readers that a specific part or idea in his/her academic work came from another source and that it can help readers easily trace additional information of that source he/she obtained the idea from. In addition, there are also different kinds of citation styles which include American Psychological Association (APA) style, Modern Language Association (MLA) style, Chicago Manual, Harvard style, etc. depending on what is required by an instructor in the specific academic work or institution one belong with and each has its own rules to follow (Labaree, 2022). The APA Referencing/Citation style is one of the most commonly used citations in documentations and is commonly used in the field of education and other related fields (Massey University, 2020).

Several colleges and universities in the Philippines offer several undergraduate degree programs that students can choose from according to their interests and future dream careers. One of the top performing colleges in the country is the Benguet State University which offers one of the newest degree programs like the Bachelor of Arts in English Language (BAEL). This particular degree program was established under the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order Number 24, series of 2017. Two of the core courses required in the said degree program are Language Research I: Methodology, and Language Research II: Thesis Writing. Both entail library research that will help the learners enhance critical thinking and train them for methodical data gathering and information evaluation (CHED Order No.24, s.2017). Thus, these core courses expect the learners to demonstrate proficiently and properly the APA Citation in all the literature they will borrow during the conduct of thesis and researches. However, there are no studies yet in the country that focus on evaluating and assessing the case of BAEL students who are prone to citation when it comes to their academic works and there are no recorded studies that focus to evaluate and assess their APA Citation Proficiency Level and the factors behind it, since Bachelor of Arts in English Language is a new degree program in the country.

Though many studies nationally or globally found out the importance of demonstrating APA Citation in academic works by students to avoid consequences of plagiarism and maintain academic integrity, still, there is a lack in identifying the proficiency level among students. Also, though many researchers concluded the factors behind citation performance of students, there is still a lack in identifying the most common reasons behind their citation performance. Thus, the conduct of this research is very helpful to everyone. First, it is for the students to realize the importance of learning and applying the APA citation in all of their academic documentation works, so as to avoid the consequences of plagiarism and be mindful of their values which constitute their academic integrity. Also, it is helpful not just to the learners but also to academic stakeholders and school administrators.

They will be aware of the proficiency level of the students in APA Citation and of the struggles of the students in citation and will be able to understand the factors behind their citation performance. This will help the students to improve and exercise their academic integrity. It is also for the policy and guideline makers to ensure that academic integrity is demonstrated by all academic staff members and students at all times in their academic works. Moreover, this study encourages future researchers as well to do further research related to the research topic and monitor and assess citation proficiency among other populations who are in line with researches/theses/dissertations and find similarities and differences from the current study.

The study will focus on the Sophomore BAEL students rather than all population of BAEL students since they are the primary ones preparing to take the above mentioned core courses which require APA Citation skills once they enter their junior and senior years. Thus, this study will serve as their pre-knowledge assessment on APA Citation for them to be able to equip themselves with and master the necessary information about the specific documentation strategies like APA Citation needed on their research course subjects in junior and senior years.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Several published studies are included to support the study in relation to proficiency on APA Citation and the factors behind it.

A. Proficiency on Literature Citation

The Cambridge Dictionary (2022) defines the word “proficiency” as the reality of possessing the “skill or experience for doing something” or the state of acquiring and possessing a “great skill, ability, and experience”. On the other hand, the word “literature” in the field of research refers to the compilation of “published information/materials” used in a research study which includes newspapers, journals, online articles, books, magazines, etc. (Monash University, 2022). Indeed, citing sources is the center of academic works (Oddis & Lerner, 2017) Thus, proficiency on literature citation is the extent to which an individual demonstrates the skill of citing sources from published materials/information and it is important in research making.

B. The American Psychological Association (APA) Citation

The American Psychological Association (APA) citation style is just one of the popular and commonly used referencing or citation styles in the form of an “author-year-system” just like some of the other citation styles as well. It enables writers to organize their sources of information in their academic works and it helps the readers to easily locate important ideas from the sources of the academic work (Bruner, 2022; Knoll, 2012). The said citation style is commonly used in the field of psychology, social sciences, and other related fields and is also commonly taught in the field of education from secondary to tertiary levels (Tapia, 2021). Furthermore, Knoll (2012) stated that the APA Citation Style makes academic papers clearer when it comes to complicated subjects since if the sources are uniformly cited in detail, it “keep focus” on the theme and message of a certain academic work. This idea is related with that of a book written by Jackson (2014) entitled “Research Methods: A Modular Approach Third Edition” which stated that the practice of APA Citation can help readers of the published academic work identify and validate the sources of ideas and locate the published sources for additional reading.

The above-mentioned claims on the importance of APA citation is further supported by Labaree (2022) wherein he further added that citation is very valuable for a writer since it can provide a document for his/her readers. It shows the sources of information or ideas presented by the writer. Thus, the readers can critique and validate the reliability of that particular academic or formal writing and can also provide a chance to them to obtain further readings of prior studies related to the subject of the written academic work. Moreover, he added that citation is the best evidence of a writer in case of allegations or critiques of possible plagiarism since it provides a clear image of his/her thorough investigation and study.

C. Performance in APA Citation

However, the reality is that citation is not always that easy for undergraduate students because of several reasons and it is primarily reflected in their citation performances in every academic work required of them. In the study

by Bautista and Pentang (2022), they found that plagiarism, referencing, and citation affected the academic performance of learners and is evident in their General Weighted Average (GWA). According to them, their respondents who are pre-service teachers (PSTs) are not aware of the proper way to reference and cite sources. Besides, they have a “moderate” level of awareness about it so they unintentionally commit plagiarism in their academic requirements and their academic performance is greatly affected. The same findings are in the study of Jooma and Bidin (2017) which says that learners and individuals who are non-native English writers struggle in applying citations since they lack academic writing skills. They also found out that the participants’ low proficiency in the English Language and the factors caused by their first language resulted in their citation performance (Jooma & Bidin, 2017). This is evident in the study conducted by Mages and Garson (2010) wherein they stated that struggles in proper citation of Non-Native English writers includes “lack of knowledge about citation conventions” and “what constitutes plagiarism”, since some scholars argued that culture maybe a factor in learners’ citation performance.

Furthermore, Hughes et al. (2017) stated that when it comes to teaching and learning APA citation, writers struggle because they sometimes lack interest in learning the specific details and rules of the APA Citation Style, and that some are intimidated because of the details involved in using the APA Citation. Accordingly, Yap (2019) concluded that many of the students tend to pay no attention to proper citation formats because they focus more on the content of the academic work they are making and that it results in citation errors in their academic work results. Howard (1995) further mentioned that some of the learners often do not recognize and are unaware of the importance of academic papers, so they tend to just submit their works claiming that everything on it is their own property and so committing plagiarism right away.

Lewis (2008) mentioned that undergraduate students are the ones who often have poor citation performance and are unaware of the proper citation of references in general since they are unfamiliar with and they do not know the details of the APA citation style. To add, they find it hard to use because of its rules compared to the citation styles they are used to which are easy for them to utilize and apply. This finding is in accordance with the result of the study conducted by Mandernach et al. (2016) wherein they mentioned that undergraduate facilitators locate numerous APA citation errors in their learners’ submitted academic writings. Similarly, Kargbo (2010) showed a significant result wherein undergraduate students often have low confidence in their own citing abilities and performance which results in their inconsistent citations, since they struggle during the process of their academic work citations. Also, according to Chism and Weerakon (2012), one factor that affected the poor citation performance and poor citation accuracy of the learners is the fact that the mentioned skills in citation are not formally and thoroughly taught and integrated among the learners.

Moreover, Luzon (2015) mentioned as well that undergraduate college students experience difficulty in proper citation due to three evident factors: first is the lack of knowledge when it comes to the role of referencing and the value of acknowledging sources of information; second is the low language proficiency and academic competency regarding the proper citation techniques including “paraphrasing and synthesizing”; and lastly, is the fact that learners are unfamiliar with the “language of citations”. He further stated that these mentioned factors do not just affect the citation performance of a learner but also, it results in intentional or unintentional plagiarism with sanctions. This idea is further supported in the study by Selemani et al. (2018) when they argued that students commit plagiarism intentionally or not by simply summarizing and paraphrasing the idea or concept without properly giving credit to the owner or source of information so they receive less serious punishments. To simply put, if learners or writers failed to credit properly their respective sources of information, this means that they try to own every detail in the academic work thus labeling the act as “plagiarism”, even just in simple cases like using the wrong citation style or copying the exact information without quoting it (Bailey, 2017). Moreover, librarians also observed the reality that most students are confused and frustrated with the new changes of the APA citation style and that they are worried because this might reflect in and affect the future undergraduate researches, thesis, and dissertations of the students (Lewis, 2008). Accordingly, the study of Chism and Weerakon (2012) found out that the APA citation, which is supposed to be an easy task, becomes a frustrating and confusing activity for both the learners and teachers. This was supported by Rekdal (2014) when he mentioned that when learners and writers are required to use proper citation in their academic works, most of them will have the tendency to take shortcuts by committing plagiarism or go beyond their limits in source citations resulting to inappropriate citations in the end.

When it comes to citation performance and proficiency, another factor causing citation errors among learners is the reality that some of the students frequently find it hard to identify the types of resources they use causing them to inaccurately cite their sources in the appropriate and proper citation format required (Park et al., 2011). This reality is reflected in the actual experience and observation of Greer and McCann (2018) wherein they said that most students have a hard time creating citations for online sources most specifically “journal articles, e-books, and websites.” They mistakenly tend to cite improperly some journals they retrieved online. Based on their data from undergraduate college students enrolled in “writing-intensive courses” who had gone through a Google Form survey and were required to provide a citation for each given online resource, a significant finding shows that only 27% of the responses provided a correct APA citation. Furthermore, Jackson (2006) argued that students are confused in properly documenting the source of information they obtained from the ideas and concepts. In addition, Chism and Weerakon (2012) added that some of the students are confused about applying the details and rules of APA in their final citation.

On the other hand, Jackson (2006) further found out that only some of the learners believed that citation is “absolutely necessary” in the field of the academe since most of them view plagiarism as less offense resulting from the frequent negligence of proper citation in any academic texts. Additionally, Knoll (2012) emphasized that using ideas or studies by other people without properly citing and acknowledging the sources of the information one obtains means that one is taking credit for the sources’ work which is literally a form of cheating and/or worse, plagiarism. Therefore, he added that proper citation can help a writer or researcher avoid the lawful consequences of plagiarism, since citation shows “professional courtesy” and strengthens the validity, reliability, and credibility of one’s academic work. Thus, it can be favorable enough and worth the trust of readers because a researcher’s ideas are more convincing with factual evidence and properly cited references. This idea is further elaborated in simpler words by the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (2022) stating that citation is very significant, since it does not just give credit to the owner of the sources of information that a researcher borrowed from and does not just provide the reader an opportunity to know and learn more about the sources of information that a researcher used in his/her academic work, but it also reflects a researcher’s credibility and stops him/her from the possibility of committing the unlawful act of plagiarism.

Furthermore, Horbach et al. (2021) added that acknowledgment of sources or the so-called “references” served as “rhetorical tools” used by researchers to convince their community of the essence and importance of their scholastic works which generally neglects the purpose of citation as “performance measures”. In simpler words, citing references is a way used by researchers to show factual evidence that their work contains truth and facts from “authoritative works” of other people (Moed and Garfield, 2004). In the study conducted by Roman (2018), he found out that respondents resort to plagiarism because of the following reasons: fear of failing the research subject, no enough time to meticulously cite all sources, have more important things to do in other subjects, have no interest in the citation, being annoyed in citing, and laziness in doing research works required by the school. Also, the said study also proved that plagiarism is an easy practice among students since the pressure of having more academic activities given to them made them copy-paste sources in their research works, without proper acknowledgment of their sources of information (Roman, 2018).

Especially in today’s pandemic where blended learning is employed in schools, plagiarism cases increased up to a “35 to 45 percent” average in academic works when classes become online (Schaffhauser, 2021; Ebarido 2018). This data is further proven by Quieta (2020) when she stated that the usage of the internet and the dependence people have developed on using the internet in almost all aspects of life, especially in academic and research works resulted in students committing unintentional plagiarism. Moreover, on the same website, it stated that The Center for Academic Integrity figured out that “almost 80% of college students cheat at least once” which falls under “contract cheating” as a form of plagiarism (University of the People, 2021). Plagiarism is therefore a part of academic integrity wherein one dishonestly uses other peoples’ ideas and works without proper acknowledgment to the owner (Arizona State University, 2021). Accordingly, the term “plagiarism” is defined as the act of “deliberate or reckless” usage of other peoples’ words, concepts, and ideas as one’s own without proper credit to the owner or real sources of the said pieces of information (Instrument of Judicial Governance, 2017). Lastly, there are also other factors resulting in a learner or author’s citation performance aside from unawareness of the details and rules of proper APA Citation, low proficiency in English, low proficiency in academics and writing, the first language effects, pressure, etc. Such factors are “practice, conceptual issues, and personal style preferences” (Chism & Weerakon, 2012).

D. Sophomore BAEL Students

In Benguet State University, Sophomore BAEL students refer to the enrolled Second Year students of Bachelor of Arts in English Language/Studies (BAEL/S) under the Department of English in the College of Arts and Humanities (CAH). They are the ones who are required to do accurate documentation in most of their academic works, specifically their thesis and research subjects like EL 199 – Language Research I: Methodology and EL 200 – Language Research II: Thesis Writing (CHED Memo Order No.24, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

The research ought to determine the proficiency level of Sophomore BAEL students regarding the use of APA Citation. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the proficiency level of Sophomore BAEL students on the use of APA Citation?
2. What are the factors that influence the APA Citation performance of the Sophomore BAEL students?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study is quantitative, specifically descriptive in nature that depicts the proficiency level of Sophomore BAEL Students when it comes to the use of APA citation. Descriptive Research was used because the study aims to describe the extent and level of Sophomore BAEL Students on the use of APA citation in their academic works such as research, thesis, and dissertations. Descriptive research design is used in research to depict clearly and define or give meaning to a certain situation which occurs naturally (Burns et al., 2013). Kakkar (2015) added that descriptive design is usually used by researchers to describe and explain the events happening around us. Thus, the descriptive design is suitable since the study described and explained the level of the respondents on the use of APA citation.

Sampling

The respondents of the study were all the 51 Sophomore Bachelor of Arts in English Language/ Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies (BAEL/BAELS) students who are enrolled in the First Semester of the Academic Year 2022-2023 under the Department of English in the College of Arts and Humanities (CAH) of Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet. To gather the necessary information as well as to measure the overall extent to which proper APA citation was employed by the Sophomore BAEL Students, the participants were identified through total enumeration. According to the study of Alkassim et al. (2016), total enumeration or total population sampling is a sampling method used when a whole of a certain population who meets the needed characteristics or specifications of the study is included during the conduct of the said study. Moreover, this sampling technique is most suitable and commonly used if the population of the study is only a few in number.

Data Gathering Procedures

In administering the survey-questionnaire, the researchers asked permission first to conduct the said study among the respondents through a request letter from the Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities (CAH) as well as to the Department Head of the Department of English which the respondents belonged to. Next, the researchers included in their data a gathering instrument (Google Form) that contained a request letter to the Sophomore BAEL students asking permission to have them as their respondents. Then the researchers sent the Google Form link to the respondents' class Facebook Group Chat, and the respondents were provided enough time to answer the questionnaire. After this, the researchers expressed their gratitude to the respondents and assured them that all information collected were to be treated confidentially and to be used for academic purposes only.

Instrumentation

The study used a Survey-Questionnaire composed of two parts: the first one is a Multiple-Choice Assessment Test/ APA Mini Exercise constructed by the researchers which served as a simple exercise to measure the

proficiency level of the respondents when it comes to applying APA Citation and the second part is an Alternate Response (Yes or No) Checklist adapted from the Skills Inventory Survey Checklist by Prater et al. (2014) and modified by the researchers asking the possible factors that affected the respondents' citation performance.

The questionnaire is composed of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire is a Multiple-Choice Assessment Test composed of close-ended questions, specifically simple and basic twenty (20) questions about the proper application of APA Citation in all possible literature references such as books, newspapers, journals, internet, etc. with four given choices each to choose from. The second part is an Alternate Response Yes or No Checklist having 20 given statements about the possible reasons behind the citation performance of the respondents which the respondents could agree/disagree with.

Data/Analysis

The first statement of the problem that aims to assess the Proficiency Level of Sophomore BAEL Students on the use of APA Citation was integrated in Part 1 of the Survey-Questionnaire (20-points Multiple Choice Test on APA Citation/APA Mini Exercise). Each question is equivalent to 1 point to produce a total score of 20 points (100%). This was used to find the individual scores of the Sophomore BAEL students. The individual raw scores of each Sophomore BAEL student were interpreted based on the 5-Point Proficiency Level Indicator constructed by the researchers themselves labeled as: Not Proficient as the lowest followed by Slightly Proficient, Moderately Proficient, Proficient, and Highly Proficient as the highest extent/degree. To further explain the 5-Point Proficiency Level Indicator that was used, the researchers developed their own scale as their basis adapted and modified from the Level of Proficiency table stated in the DepEd Order No. 31 series of 2012 (DepEd, 2012).

Score	Numerical Equivalent Value	Description	Extent/Proficiency Level
14 points and below	74% and below	The learner has not yet acquired or has not yet developed knowledge, understanding, and skills on the rules and strategies of Proper APA Citation and he/she is struggling to apply it thus needing much help from his/her instructor or someone who is proficient	Not Proficient (NP)
15 points	75-79%	The learner has little knowledge, understanding, and skills on the proper APA Citation but he/she still needs guidance and help from his/her instructor or someone who is proficient	Slightly Proficient (SP)
16 points	80-84%	The learner possesses the fundamental knowledge, understanding, and skills in proper APA Citation and needs a bit of guidance from his/her instructor or someone who is proficient.	Moderately Proficient (MP)
17 points	85-89%	The learner possesses the fundamental knowledge, understanding, and skills in proper APA Citation and can already work individually without the guidance or help from his/her instructor or someone who is proficient.	Proficient (P)
18 points and above	90% and above	The learner possesses the fundamental knowledge, understanding and skills in proper APA Citation that exceeds the expectations of his instructor and the requirement which the academic inquiry expects of him. Thus, he/she is confident in applying the proper APA Citation in any academic work given to him/her.	Highly Proficient (HP)

Figure 2. Scale of Measuring Individual Proficiency Level of Sophomore BAEL Students

Furthermore, to assess the individual proficiency level of the respondents, the researchers used the formula:

$$\text{Percentage or \%} = (\text{value} \div \text{total value}) \times 100$$

To assess the overall proficiency level that represents the whole population, the percentage was ranked according to the highest to lowest. Whichever proficiency level had the highest rank would be the general/majority proficiency level of all Sophomore BAEL students.

In answering the second statement of the problem that focused on the factors that influenced the citation performance of the respondents, the Part 2 of the survey questionnaire (20-items Alternate Response Checklist) was utilized. The researchers counted and tallied the number of students who answered “Yes” and those who answered “No” in each factor identified. Afterwards, in each factor, the number of respondents who answered “Yes” was converted into its percentage equivalence as well as the number of respondents who answered “No” using the formula:

$$\text{Percentage or \%} = (\text{value} \div \text{total value}) \times 100$$

Later on, the researchers ranked the factors’ percentage to know the top three factors affecting the respondents’ citation performance.

To further check if the data collected and percentage equivalence were correct, the researchers solved for the overall Weighted Mean Average of the percentage of those who answered “Yes” and those who answered “No” using the formula of finding Weighted Mean:

$$WM = \frac{\sum f}{N}$$

Where:

WM = Weighted Mean

\sum = Summation

F = Frequency (Percentage of each Factors)

N = Total Number of Factors

The sum of the overall Weighted Average Mean of the percentage of those who answered “Yes” and the overall Weighted Average Mean of the percentage of those who answered “No” must total to 100% when added to prove that the statistical treatment used was correct.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The chapter discusses the results and discussions of the study. It primarily discusses the proficiency level of Sophomore BAEL students on the use of APA citation, the factors that influence the APA citation performance of the Sophomore BAEL students, and if there is a significant relationship between the overall APA Citation proficiency level and factors that affect the Sophomore BAEL students’ citation performance.

Proficiency Level of Sophomore BAEL Students on the Use of APA Citation

This part discusses the over-all proficiency level of Sophomore BAEL students on the use of APA citation derived from the result of the first part of the study’s questionnaire, specifically the 20-points Multiple Choice Test/APA Mini Exercise. The results of the APA Mini Exercise conducted among the respondents revealed that the majority of them were Not Proficient (NP) (84.31%) on the use of APA Citation.

Table 1 shows the proficiency level of Sophomore BAEL students on the use of APA Citation with their percentage equivalence and the percentage ranking of the said proficiency level. It also shows that 43 (84.31%) out of all the 51 Sophomore BAEL students have a score of 14 points or below out of 20 total points in the APA

Mini Exercise. It means that as to their proficiency level on the use of APA Citation, they were not proficient. Meanwhile, only 7 (13.76%) of the respondents have a score of 15 points out of 20 total points which means that they were Slightly Proficient (SP) on the use of APA Citation.

Table 1. Proficiency level of sophomore BAEL students on the use of APA citation

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	POINT SYSTEM	EXTENT/ PROFICIENCY LEVEL	PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE RANKING
43	14 points and below	Not Proficient (NP)	84.31%	1
7	15 points	Slightly Proficient (SP)	13.76%	2
0	16 points	Moderately Proficient (MP)	0%	4
1	17 points	Proficient (P)	1.96%	3
0	18 points and above	Highly Proficient (HP)	0%	5
TOTAL: 51			100%	

Lastly, there is only one (1.96%) from the Sophomore BAEL students who was Proficient (P) on the use of APA Citation since the respondent has a score of 17 (85-89%) out of 20 total points.

The finding rejects the first hypothesis of the study which states that the Sophomore BAEL students are slightly proficient in the use of APA Citation since the data show that Sophomore BAEL students were not proficient.

The said finding further suggests that the majority of the Sophomore BAEL students did not yet acquire or were not yet able to develop their knowledge, understanding, and skills on the rules and strategies of Proper APA Citation. They were struggling in applying it and thus, need much help from their instructor or someone who is proficient in APA Citation.

This finding was strongly supported by Mandernach et al. (2016) who found out that facilitators identified numerous APA citation errors in the academic works of undergraduates. Most of the respondents in this study got a score of 14 points and below over the total 20 points APA Mini Exercise with 20 questions on basic details and application of APA Citation in sample references.

Moreover, the finding was substantiated by Lewis (2008) when he noted that undergraduate students frequently performed poorly in terms of citations due to various reasons. The sophomore BAEL students were also ones of the undergraduate students of Benguet State University who showed that the majority of them performed poorly on the use of APA citation. Furthermore, from the APA Mini Exercise, most of the often-overlooked questions were more on the application part of APA citation in the Reference Section of a thesis or research paper. This indicates that the respondents had poor citation performance as to the application of the concepts of APA citation.

Meanwhile, only seven from the respondents were Slightly Proficient (SP) on the use of APA citation. This reflects that only few from the Sophomore BAEL Students had a little knowledge, understanding, and skills on the proper APA Citation but they still needed guidance and help from their instructor or someone who is proficient.

Factors that Influence the APA Citation Performance of the Sophomore BAEL Students

This part discusses both the objective and affective factors that affected and influenced the APA citation performance of the Sophomore BAEL students. It was derived from the result of the second part of the study's questionnaire, specifically, the 20-item Checklist Questionnaire on Factors of Citation Performance.

Objective Factors that Influence the APA Citation Performance of the Sophomore BAEL Students

Table 2 discusses the objective factors that positively affected the APA citation performance of the Sophomore BAEL students, particularly, the items 1 to 9 of the Checklist Questionnaire. It also shows that the highest in percentage, 78.43%, is the first factor; “The rules of the APA Citation 7th Edition are taught to the respondents in some of their current course subjects.” Moreover, it shows that the second highest in percentage, 72.55%, is the factor; “The respondents are aware of the rules of APA Citation 7th Edition.” Meanwhile, the third highest percentage of 68.63% from the results is the factor, “The rules of APA Citation were taught to the respondents way back Junior and/or Senior High School.”

Table 2 also shows the other objective factors with a percentage of 60.78%, two indicators have a percentage of 37.25%, and two have a percentage of 17.65%.

Table 2. Objective factors that influence the APA citation performance of the sophomore BAEL students

FACTORS	YES	PERCENTAGE	NO	PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE RANKING
1. The respondents are aware of the rules of APA Citation 7 th Edition.	37	72.55%	14	27.45%	2
2. The respondents can easily apply the rules of APA Citation 7 th Edition.	25	49.02%	26	50.98%	5
3. The rules of APA Citation 7 th Edition were taught to the respondents way back Junior and/or Senior High School.	35	68.63%	16	31.37%	3
4. The rules of APA Citation 7 th Edition are taught to the respondents in some of their current course subjects.	40	78.43%	11	21.57%	1
5. The respondents are trained on how to use the APA Citation 7 th Edition through seminars, webinars, workshops, and trainings.	9	17.65%	42	82.35%	8.5
6. The respondents are used to applying APA Citation 7 th Edition, since they always use it in any of our academic activities and works.	31	60.78%	20	39.22%	4
7. The respondents are familiar with the concept of most types of citation such as APA, MLA, Harvard Style, etc., and they know their differences.	9	17.65%	42	82.35%	8.5
8. The respondents can easily recognize what kind of sources they are use, so they	19	37.25%	32	62.75%	6.5

can easily cite them using APA Citation.					
9. The respondents are aware of the changes of the latest edition of APA Citation.	19	37.25%	32	62.75%	6.5
Overall Mean:		48.80%		51.20%	

The findings imply that the nine objective factors shown in table 2 affected the performance of the sophomore BAEL students negatively (51.20%) rather than positively (48.80%).

Moreover, from the findings, the objective factors shown in the results negatively affected the citation performance of the Sophomore BAEL students since the overall average of those who answered “No” for the objective factors is 51.20%. The finding also revealed the top three main reasons as to why BAEL Sophomores committed improper and uncited references.

On the other hand, the nine objective factors positively affected the citation performance of the Sophomore BAEL students since the overall average of those who answered “Yes” for the objective factors is 48.80%. Specifically, the top three positive objective factors that influenced how the Sophomore BAEL students cite in their sources in the APA Citation Mini Exercise are: The rules of APA Citation 7th Edition are being taught to the respondents in some of their current course subjects; The respondents are aware of the rules of APA Citation 7th Edition; And, the rules of APA Citation 7th Edition were taught to the respondents way back Junior and/or Senior High School.

First, 82.35% of the Sophomore BAEL students mentioned that they did not attend any workshop, seminars, lessons, and training related to APA citation. This resulted in why they could not properly cite their sources or had a hard time doing so. This finding was supported by Luzon (2015) who stated that the undergraduate college students struggle with correct citation since they did not have a thorough knowledge of how to properly cite their sources. Also, this is similar to the study of Bautista and Pentang (2022) that revealed that students accidentally plagiarized, since they were unaware of how to properly reference and cite sources.

Second, having another 82.35% of the population depicts that the Sophomore BAEL students did not have the understanding of the concepts on the types of the different citation formats. This finding is similar to the statement of Parker et al. (2011) that students usually struggled in choosing the appropriate citation style, which caused them to improperly cite their sources. Furthermore Lewis (2008) and Rekdal (2014) noted that students primarily could not do the proper citation due to unfamiliarity of the general details of citation and, they resorted by doing shortcuts and inappropriate citation/ referencing formats. Where Roman (2018) further detailed that most academic papers of the students were improperly cited due to lack of interest in learning and gaining knowledge in referencing.

Also, having an overall of 64.71%, the said population also had a difficulty in recognizing the types and kinds of citation to be used which resulted in improper citation to their sources. This finding was aided by Jackson (2006) who found out that students were confused about the proper documentation of the idea and papers they obtained. It was also what Greer and McCann (2018) found out and observed wherein students had difficulties in citing sources most specifically journals, e-book, and websites. This was similar to the statement of Howard (1995) saying that the learners did not recognize the citation and referencing committing plagiarism in their academic work.

Lastly, 62.75% of the BAEL sophomores are not aware of the changes of the latest edition of APA Citation. This finding shows a similar idea to that of Chism and Weerakon (2012) who mentioned that some of the students had the prior knowledge about the concept of APA citation but some of them were confused on how to apply the details and rules of APA citation. It was the same with the results of the study conducted by Lewis (2008). Undergraduate students were the ones who often had poor citation performance and were unaware of the proper citation of references in general, since they were unfamiliar with it and they did not know the details of the proper APA citation style. Moreover, with the study of Yap (2019) in the same content he stated that many

students were not interested in knowing the citation process which resulted in unawareness of the up-to-date format of citation.

Affective Factors that Influence the APA Citation Performance of the Sophomore BAEL Students

Table 3 discusses the affective factors that positively affected how the Sophomore BAEL students cite their references, particularly, items 10 to 20 of the Checklist Questionnaire. It shows that the indicators with the highest percentage of 98.04% are the factors; “The respondents know the fact that if they do not cite their sources, they can be accused of intentional/unintentional plagiarism,” and “The respondents know and recognize that proper citation to the owner of the idea they borrowed from is very important.” Moreover, from the said table, it is shown that the second highest percentage of 96.08% are the factors; “The respondents value their sources and they always want to give credit so they cite them properly;” “Even if plagiarism is much easier, faster, and convenient than proper citation, the respondents still prefer to cite all their sources;” “Even if many people do plagiarism, the respondents always try their best to cite all their sources;” and “Even if citing sources requires a lot of work, the respondents still cite all their sources properly.” Meanwhile, factors with the third highest percentage, 94.12%, as shown in table 3 are the following, “Despite technological advances and the presence of internet, the respondents always cite their sources,” and “Even though the respondents are not academically competent especially in formal writing-related subjects, they can still properly cite their sources.”

Table 3 also shows that of the other objective factors, two received 92.16%. One indicator has the lowest, which is 82.35%.

Table 3. Affective factors that influence the APA citation performance of the sophomore BAEL students

FACTORS	YES	PERCENTAGE	NO	PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE RANKING
1. The respondents know the fact that if they do not cite their sources, they can be accused of intentional/unintentional plagiarism.	50	98.04%	1	1.96%	1.5
2. The respondents know and recognize that proper citation to the owner of the idea they borrowed from is very important.	50	98.04%	1	1.96%	1.5
3. The respondents value their sources and they always want to give credit so they cite them properly.	49	96.08%	2	3.92%	3.5
4. Even if the respondents don't have enough time to cite all their sources of information, they still make sure to cite them all.	47	92.16%	4	7.84%	9.5
5. Even if plagiarism is much easier, faster, and convenient than proper citation, the respondents still prefer to cite all their sources.	49	96.08%	2	3.92%	3.5

6. Even if many people do plagiarism, the respondents always try their best to cite all their sources.	49	96.08%	2	3.92%	3.5
7. Even if citing sources requires a lot of work, the respondents still cite all their sources properly.	49	96.08%	2	3.92%	3.5
8. Even if the respondents have a lot of sources, they still cite them all.	42	82.35%	9	17.65%	11
9. Even though the respondents don't know all the aspects of the English Language, they can still properly cite their sources.	47	92.16%	4	7.8%	9.5
10. Despite technological advances and the presence of internet, the respondents always cite their sources.	48	94.12%	3	5.88%	7.5
11. Even though the respondents are not academically competent especially in formal writing-related subjects, they can still properly cite their sources.	48	94.12%	3	5.88%	7.5
Overall Mean:		94.12%		5.88%	

The findings imply that the 11 affective factors shown in table 3 affected the performance of the sophomore BAEL students positively (94.12%) rather than negatively (5.88%).

The 11 affective factors positively affected the citation performance of the Sophomore BAEL students as proven by the overall average of those who answered “Yes”, with the objective factors receiving 94.12%. Specifically, the top three positive objective factors that influenced how the Sophomore BAEL students cite in their sources in the APA Citation Mini Exercise are: The awareness of the respondents of the consequences of improper and not citing sources; The knowledge and recognition of the respondents that proper citation to the owner of the idea they borrowed from is very important; And, The valuing and giving credit of the respondents to their sources. Despite many people being engaged in plagiarism and citing sources is a lot of work, even with technological advancements, the majority of the respondents still consistently acknowledged their sources. Even though the respondents lack academic proficiency, particularly in subjects that were relevant to formal writing, they could still cite their sources.

On the other hand, the 11 objective factors shown in table 3, negatively affected the citation performance of the Sophomore BAEL students. The overall average of those who answered “No” for the objective factors is 5.88%.

The findings also revealed the top three main affective factors as to why BAEL Sophomores committed improper and uncited references. It shows that an average of 5.88% BAEL Sophomores still intentionally plagiarized and improperly cited their references and citation. This finding was supported by the statement of Jackson (2006) that learners overlooked the offenses of plagiarism and the importance of citation, and that affective factors contributed to the students’ performance in their citation (Chism and Weerakon, 2012). Also, it agreed with the

study conducted by Roman (2018), that students resorted to plagiarism because of having not enough time to meticulously cite all sources, having more important things to do in other subjects, having no interest in citation, and laziness.

The Sophomore BAEL students were knowledgeable of the reasons and implications of citation of sources but did not know the proper application of citation and referencing of sources.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the conclusions:

1. Sophomore BAEL Students are not proficient when it comes to the use of APA Citation and there are various reasons or factors that influence their performance in applying the concepts and ideas of APA Citation in their academic works and/or requirements. Moreover, the affective factors positively affect the citation performance of the Sophomore Students and objective factors negatively affect the proficiency level of Sophomore BAEL students on the use of APA Citation.
2. The top main factors that influence the APA citation performances of BAEL sophomores are the following: have no proper trainings on APA based citation, have no familiarity with the concepts of the different citations, have no awareness when it comes to the changes in the APA citation format, and have no recognition to the sources. Also, objective factors are the key source of their improper citation and referencing, not the affective factors. Hence, the sophomore BAEL students have a high probability of doing and being exposed to plagiarism.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

1. All undergraduate students including the Sophomore BAEL students should be trained and should master the use of APA Citation as early as they can to prepare themselves for the academic requirements that require the use of APA Citation such as in the subjects like EL 199 Language Research I: Methodology and EL 200 Language Research 2: Thesis Writing. It will help them to produce quality and scholastic research and thesis works.
2. The BSU Colleges and Faculty staff members, including the College of Arts and Humanities, are suggested to conduct a regular training, seminar, and/or workshop for all students on the importance of APA Citation and on how APA Citation is used in academic requirements. This will make the students get used to applying the concepts of APA Citation that are taught in some of their major course subjects.
3. The BSU Colleges shall have an Ethics Committee that shall oversee the application of APA Citation in all academic requirements of students such as researches and dissertations.
3. The policy makers, module/course guide makers, and syllabus makers are also suggested to allot enough or longer time for intensive and interactive class discussion and task-based requirements when discussing the application of APA Citation and its related topics in subjects like English 21, research and thesis courses, and others.
4. The future researchers are recommended to have wider scope of population for a possible comparative analysis.

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