THE WRITING OF CITATIONS AND REFERENCES IN THE DEGREE PROJECTS: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC CASE

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Abstract. The quality of an academic work is associated with the scientific rigor used in its preparation, especially in relation to the writing of citations and references. The article that we present has as a general objective to analyze the level of application of the norms of the American Psychologists Association (APA) in the elaboration of citations and references in the Degree Projects of the students of the education career of the Technological University Santiago (UTESA), Gaspar Hernández campus. The population under study is represented by 334 students, 34 teachers and the 83 Degree Projects that represent the academic documents prepared by the students, from the semester 3/2016 / to 3/2019. These include 7298 citations and 6038 references. The methodology is based on a mixed approach, by including quantitative elements and qualitative techniques. In the data collection, two questionnaires prepared ad hoc by the researcher were used, with the Likert-type scale and a Data Analysis Matrix. Descriptive statistics were used in the data analysis. The results of the study identified errors in the citations elaborated, such as, the incorrect use of punctuation marks, erroneous ordering of the elements, omission or change in the data, absence of the year of publication of the source. In the references, a combination of formats is observed, reversing the order of the components, and other more serious ones, such as incomplete URLs or omission of information from the source.

Keywords: citations; references; Degree Projects; education; APA Style.

LA REDACCIÓN DE LAS CITAS Y REFERENCIAS EN LOS PROYECTOS DE GRADO: CASO REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

Resumen. La calidad de un trabajo académico está asociado al rigor científico empleado en su elaboración, especialmente en lo relativo a la redacción de las citas y referencias. El artículo que presentamos tiene como objetivo general analizar el nivel de aplicación de las normas de la Asociación de Psicólogos Americanos (APA) en la elaboración de las citas y referencias en los Proyectos de Grado de los estudiantes de la carrera de educación de la Universidad Tecnológica de Santiago (UTESA), recinto Gaspar Hernández. La población bajo estudio está representada por 334 estudiantes, 34 docentes y los 83 Proyectos de Grado que

representan los documentos académicos elaborados por los alumnos, desde el cuatrimestre 3/2016/ hasta el 3/2019. Estos incluyen 7298 citas y 6038 referencias. La metodología se sustenta en un enfoque mixto, al incluir elementos cuantitativos y técnicas cualitativas. En la recopilación de los datos se utilizaron dos cuestionarios elaborados ad hoc, con la escala tipo Likert y una Matriz de Análisis de Datos. En el análisis de los datos se empleó la estadística descriptiva. Los resultados del estudio identificaron errores en las citas elaboradas, tales como, el uso incorrecto de los signos de puntuación, ordenamiento erróneo de los elementos, omisión o cambio en los datos, ausencia del año de publicación de la fuente. En las referencias, se observa combinación de formatos, invertir el orden de los componentes, y otros más graves, como URL incompletos u omisión de información de la fuente.

Palabras clave: citas; referencias; Proyectos de Grado; educación; Estilo APA.

Introduction

The development of academic work, according to established regulations, has become a challenge for students pursuing careers in the university of the XXI century. In the Dominican Republic, this situation is perceived in the students who follow study plans at the Universidad Tecnológica de Santiago (UTESA), Gaspar Hernández campus (UTESA/GH). Specifically, the final project, called Degree Project (PG), requires a high level of demand, which requires more effort and dedication from the students to prepare and defend it; and from the advisors, more time and dedication, so that it is successful.

Although there are different norms for the elaboration of citations and bibliographic references, and each university adopts a specific one, UTESA assumed the American Psychological Association (APA). The APA version used by the students to elaborate the PGs is the 2010 version, sixth in English and third in Spanish. In that sense, this work took that translation as a reference for the study.

In relation to the formal aspects to make the PG, the institutional document Degree Project: Guidelines states that "the format of the APA (American Psychological Association, APA) has been adopted. This model is the one commonly used in the field of psychology and social sciences" (UTESA, 2015, p. 4). These rules contribute to the development of research papers in the form of scientific articles, essays, theses, and adhere to any changes in the regulations (Peña Armijos, 2018).

In the academic field, the rigor of a research work is associated with the quality of the sources cited and the level of organization of the references. This is so, because the construction of scientific knowledge is produced by relating one research with others. "The use of citations is, therefore, a process similar to the requirement to include the method of experimentation so that others can repeat it and check the validity of the results" (Angulo Marcial, 2013, p. 103). Consequently, UTESA/GH students must be very careful when citing and elaborating the references of the documents consulted.

The general objective of the article is to analyze the level of application of the norms of the American Psychological Association (APA) in the elaboration of quotations and references in the Degree Projects of the students of the education career of the Universidad Tecnológica de Santiago (UTESA), Gaspar Hernández campus. The specific objectives are: (a) to assess the importance given by teachers and students to the correct writing of citations and references in academic papers; (b) to determine the level of education and training of students and teachers in the use of the APA standards to prepare

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citations and references in research papers; (c) to identify the most common errors that occur in the preparation of citations and references in Degree Projects; and (d) to evaluate the role assumed by the teacher in the formation of competent university students to present citations and references appropriately.

Next, the results of the literature review and the state of the question are presented in order to expose the most relevant ideas that theoretically support the research. It represents the theoretical contributions of experts in the thematic citations and references, according to APA style.

The APA Style

In the scientific community there are well-known standards for preparing citations and organizing bibliographic references, and thus facilitate their location, such as the International Standard Organization (ISO), Modern Language Associaton (MLA), the Vancouver, Chicago, or Harvard style (González Aguilar, 2018; Pairumani Ajacopa, 2020; Pérez Borges, 2010). However, a source of authority in academia, in the field of behavioral sciences and social sciences, are the standards of the American Psychological Association, better known by the acronym APA. This is a scientific and professional organization founded in 1892, which symbolizes psychology in the United States. The use of APA standards has been expanding over time. They provide useful information for those interested in preparing or submitting an academic paper to be published in a prestigious database.

In Spanish open access journals, the APA style is the most commonly used. In the field of undergraduate studies, Mexican thesis students prefer this standard to prepare citations and references in the final theses (Cancelo Sanmartín & Almansa Martínez, 2015; López Carreño & Martínez Méndez, 2015). In the Dominican Republic, the Instituto Superior de Formación Docente Salomé Ureña (ISFODOSU) through the Revista Caribeña de Investigación Educativa (RECIE), an academic publication that has been disseminating pedagogical studies since 2016, establishes in the document "Guidelines for authors to publish their writings," consult the APA when writing an article. For its part, the Protocol of external evaluation institutes as a requirement to adapt the bibliography to the international standards of the APA. Likewise, although in a more generalized manner, the Universidad Tecnología de Santiago has adopted these norms for the elaboration of Degree Projects (UTESA, 2015).

Quotations

To quote is to present the ideas, concepts or opinions of another author, to support a research being done. In other words, it is to point out or indicate that other people's words are taken or repeated and incorporated into one's own text. It must contain the source from which the information was obtained (Sabaj Meruane and Páez Muñoz, 2010).

In this way, quotations help to identify those documents or sources that contributed to the author's new study, as well as to form networks of collaboration and intellectual communication among scientists. At the same time, the work done by other researchers is recognized and valued (Huamaní and Pacheco-Romero, 2012; Sánchez, 2013).

The practice of citation has been gradually gaining a marked interest, due to the functions it performs, the regulations that are followed to scientifically accredit the work, and even the social or personal reasons that motivate to cite this or that author, instead of

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another. In this regard, Culebras-Fernández et al. (2008, p. 85), argue that "the way to know and measure the importance of a publication is based on the citations that are made of it". For this there are bibliometric indicators, which through mathematical and statistical procedures allow the study of the source described, facilitating the analysis of citations, impact indices, among others (González de Requena et al., 2015; Paz Enrique et al., 2016).

References

References are very useful in the academic field. They provide the original source from which the information was obtained, reveal the level of advancement of the topic, allow the identification of related sources or specialized authors in a branch. In addition, they show the scientific community that the author consulted a variety of documents to support his research. In this way, the reader can verify the authenticity of the source or, if interested, expand the level of knowledge on the subject (Silva Hernández et al., 2013).

For the APA (2010), one of the purposes of references is to make it easier for the interested reader to locate and use the sources. In that sense, it states that "authors are responsible for all information in their reference lists. Accurate references contribute to their credibility as a careful researcher" (p. 180). Hence, the need for the author to thoroughly review the rules for listing references, as his or her professional prestige is at stake. He/she must verify that each reference is correctly written in the list, according to the original document from which it was obtained.

Bibliometric studies include indicators to analyze references. These are considered as a fundamental element "to favor the indexing of publications in prestigious databases, they are also the formal recognition of the work of researchers. Through references, the impact of scientific publications is measured" (Paz Enrique et al., 2016, p. 2). There are specialized software, such as RefWorks, EndNote, Mendeley, and Zotero that allow collecting and storing information, so that the author can make a personal database.

Errors in making citations and references

Bibliographic references are a reference associated with the quality of an academic work, and their proper organization helps the reader to locate sources quickly. When a research paper has inaccuracies in the citations and references, the quality of the other parts of the paper is called into question, the quality of the other parts of the research is called into question. Even the existence of ethical violations, such as plagiarism, may be considered. In this sense, the elaboration of citations cannot be considered a task of little importance (Cantín and Chuhuaicura, 2016).

In addition, the presence of errors in the references makes it difficult and, in the worst case, impossible to locate the original source. An error in the names of the authors or their omission will prevent due credit being given to the cited author and the work from being retrieved. Even citation indexes use reference lists as a primary source of information, so inaccuracies seriously compromise the possibility of a scholarly work being indexed in a prestigious international journal. Each new work builds on another that precedes it, which implies the need to be extremely careful when citing it, in order to avoid spreading errors in the scientific field (Ferreira et al., 2003).

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Background

The research works are based on others previously carried out, which serve as a starting point. In this section, a review of studies related to the application of the APA norms in the elaboration of citations and references is carried out.

González Aguilar (2018) presented the results of a research with the purpose of identifying some errors on scientific writing in articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. The articles that were analyzed correspond to journals published in the branches or sciences of Education, Psychology, Law, Communication, and Architecture that have assumed the writing criteria of the APA style. A total of 16 journals and 33 academic articles were reviewed.

The study is conclusive and assures that the articles submitted to the analysis do not comply with the regulations established by the APA. Errors were perceived when marking words and unnecessary quotation marks in the quotation of texts with more than 40 words. Similarly, some of the academic articles do not contain the French indentation, as established by the APA (2010). As can be seen in the aforementioned study, the scientific articles published and reviewed lack standardization in writing, according to the criteria established by the APA and the Royal Spanish Academy. However, it is important to point out that the errors found and described in this study do not prevent the reader from locating the original source from which the information was obtained, but rather, these are distinctive elements to differentiate the APA format from other existing standards.

Another research work, linked to the use of APA rules, was defended at the Universidad Técnica de Machala, located in Ecuador, by Peña Armijos (2018), under the title, "*Evaluation of the application of APA rules in scientific articles in the area of Accounting and Auditing.*" In the study, a review of six public academic articles in the area of Accounting and Auditing was made. It was concluded by stating that only 30% of the scientific publications under study complied with the provisions of the APA standards.

With regard to citations, the study revealed that in short textual citations, not all authors refer to the page number. In addition, when it is a corporate author or when there are more than six authors, they do not cite it correctly. It is necessary to emphasize that these errors detected in the research are considered serious. For example, not including the page number in a textual citation makes it difficult or almost impossible to locate it in the cited source. And, in addition, as mentioned above, a characteristic of a quotation is its precision.

Method

The article is positioned in the positivist paradigm, although qualitative elements were used, which implies that the research, in terms of its nature, is mixed (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2014). In addition, the deductive method was used.

The population studied is made up of 347 students, 34 teachers, and the 83 Degree Projects (PG) that, up to term 3/2019, have been defended by the students. The PGs include 7,298 citations, as well as 6,038 references. In no case we worked with a sample

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but with the totality. This was intended to give greater reliability to the research by reducing the possibility of sampling error.

In this study, two *ad hoc* survey-type questionnaires were developed, which were validated by experts, who after reviewing each item according to their personal and professional consideration, proceeded to suggest modifications in some items and eliminate or recast others. The final instrument had 28 items for students and 27 for teachers. This second version of the questionnaire was subjected to a pilot test to determine its reliability.

In addition, a Data Analysis Matrix was elaborated, which allowed obtaining information on the number of textual and paraphrased quotations, as well as the errors found in them. From the information collected, the compliance or non-compliance with the APA style for citing a source or making a reference was analyzed. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, which are presented in tables, figures, or graphs.

Results

The results are derived from the two questionnaires, as well as from the review of the citations and references in the Degree Projects. Respondents answered each item of the instrument by marking their assessment on a Likert scale with five options from highest to lowest agreement, according to the statement. The narrative of the quantitative data is made in terms of percentages and/or frequencies.

Table 1
Correct writing of citations and references, according to students

item	Option				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A1.-Contributes to the exact identification of books and works cited.	68.6%	29.9%	1.2%	0.3%	0%
A2.-It makes it easy for interested readers to locate the original source of the information used.	69.5%	29.9%	0.3%	0.3%	0%
A3.-Gives rigor and transparency to the prepared document.	58.7%	39.2%	1.2%	0.9%	0%

Note: Own elaboration, based on the data of the questionnaire applied to the students.

Looking at the most representative items in Table 1, it can be seen in A2 that 79.4% of the students strongly agree and agree, that the correct writing of quotations and references in academic papers makes it easier for interested readers to locate the original source from which the used information came from.

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In item A1, 98.5% of respondents strongly agree and agree that it contributes to the accurate identification of books and works cited. Only 0.3% disagreed.
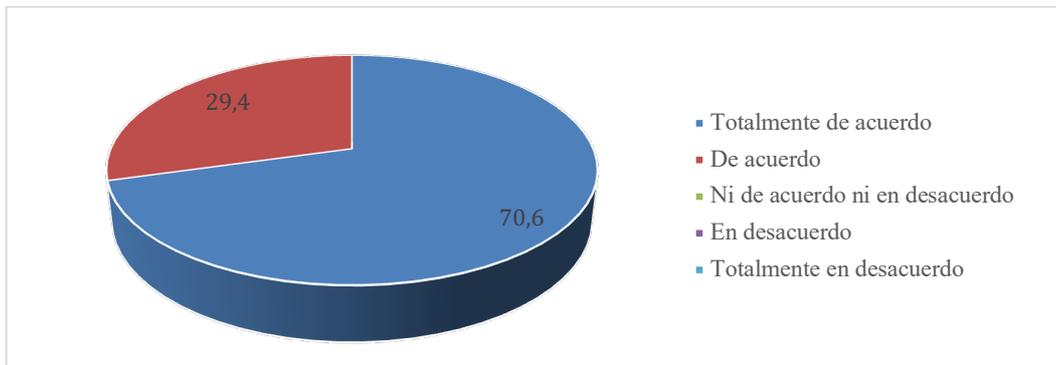

Figure 1. Correctly written quotations and references reflect honesty and professional ethics.
Note: Own elaboration, based on data from the questionnaire applied to teachers.

A relevant data is obtained from figure 1, which shows that 100% of the teachers totally agree and agree that when quotations and references are written correctly, reflect honesty and professional ethics of the writer by differentiating their contributions from those taken from other authors.
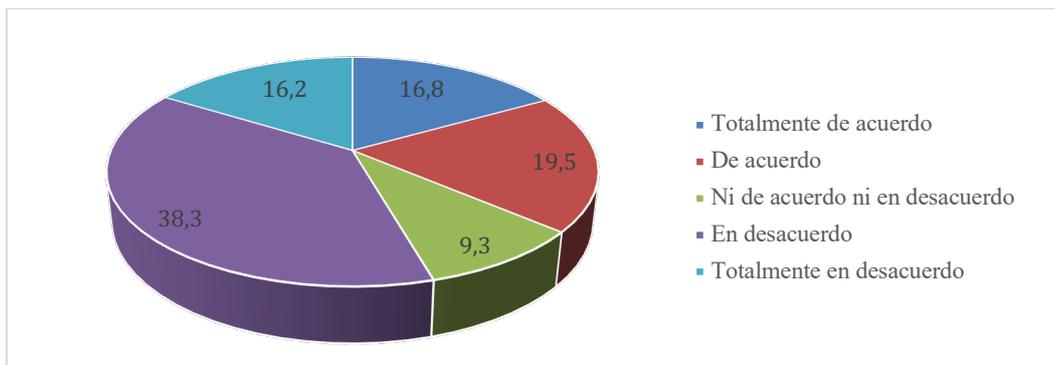

Figure 2. Students received orientations
Note: Own elaboration, based on the data of the questionnaire applied to the students.

Figure 2 shows that 54.5% of the students disagree and totally disagree with the fact that at the Baccalaureate or Secondary or High School level they received orientation and training on the use of the APA style for the elaboration of quotations and references in research papers.
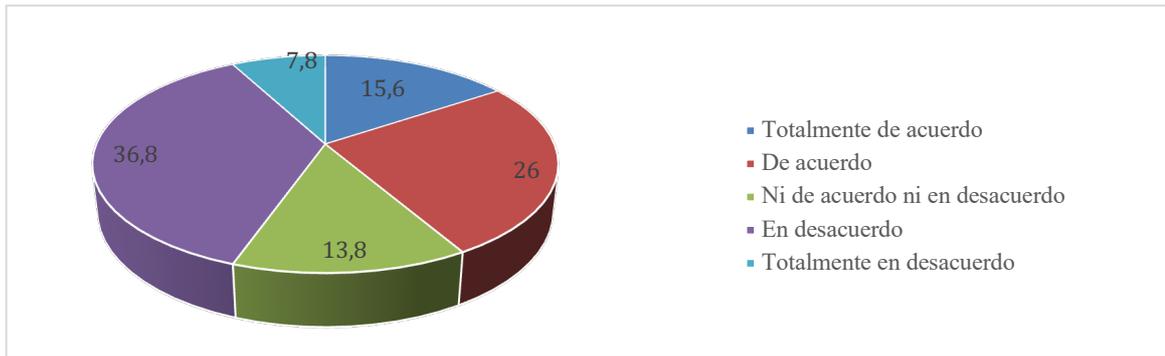
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Figure 3. Students have participated in courses or workshops.
Note: Own elaboration, based on the data of the questionnaire applied to the students.

The results of Figure 3 show a little consensual and unfavorable opinion since 58.4% of the students said they neither agreed nor disagreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed that in recent years at UTESA/GH, through the Center for Specialized Studies (CEDESE), they have participated in extracurricular courses or workshops for the knowledge and management of the APA style to elaborate citations and references. However, 41.6% strongly agreed and agreed that they had participated.
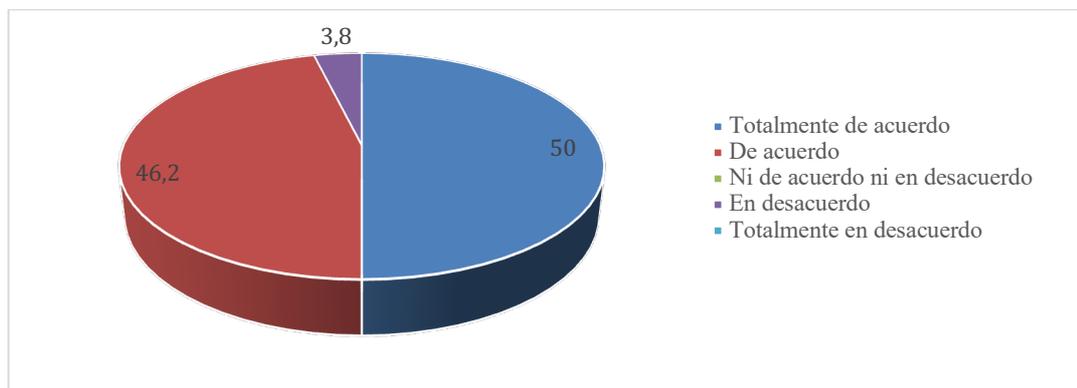

Figure 4. Teachers have developed the following competences

Note: Own elaboration, based on data from the questionnaire applied to teachers.

Figure 4 shows that 96.2% of the teachers totally agree and agree that in the courses, through practices and exercises, the necessary competences to elaborate citations and references according to the APA style are reached and developed. On the other hand, 3.8% disagreed.

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Table 2

Most common errors in the elaboration of quotations in Degree Projects

Aspects	Quotations
Incorrect	Dr. Gómez (2010) states that the nursery is the place where the infant can refine before entering school, it is where children begin to learn so that later they can hold the pencil to color and trace.
Error Description	Add the title Doctor to the in-text citation. APA states that professional titles should be omitted, both in citations and in references (see APA Manual, 2010, page 174).
Incorrect	Palella and Martins (2012 p. 106) express that the sample "is the extraction of a representative part of a population, whose characteristics it reproduces as accurately as possible. The sample is part of the population, it is statistically proportional to the size of the population, which guarantees its reliability."
Error Description	The quotation has 40 words and was not placed in a block. When a quotation has 40 words or more, it should be displayed in a block independent of the text, omitting quotation marks (see APA Manual, 2010, page 171). They must separate the year of publication from the page number with a comma. In addition, the *express* word must be in plural, so that there is agreement between the subject and the verb because there are two authors (see APA Manual, 2010, page 78).
Incorrect	In this sense, when referring to technical training, the Chilean Ministry of Education (2016) states that "Technical training is a vocational alternative for many students who find in technical studies the necessary tools to develop as individuals. Higher-level technical careers can be taught in universities and professional institutes. "
Error Description	The page number was not given to the textual quotation. When a textual quotation is less than 40 words long, the page number should be specified. When the material is not numbered, the paragraph number is noted (see APA, 2010, page 170).
Incorrect	Kotler, Bowuen, et al. (2011), in their book marketing for tourism, define the notion of marketing as that which occurs when people decide to satisfy the needs and wants...
Error Description	They cited two authors out of five and used the words '*and others'*. When a source has three to five authors, all authors are cited for the first time and in subsequent citations, only the last name of the first author is included, followed by the abbreviation et al., with a period after al. and the year of publication (see APA, 2010, page 175).

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Incorrect	Fixed assets are those of tangible nature and long life, such as land, buildings, furniture, machinery, and equipment used for the proper functioning in the operation of the entity (Horgren and Harrison, 2003).
Error Description	A period was used at the end of the quotation and another one after the last parenthesis. In this case, it is correct to place a single period after the final parenthesis (see APA, 201 page 171).
Incorrect	In the same vein, Kerin, Hartley, and Rudelius (2009) state that a "Product is an item, service, or idea consisting of a set of tangible or intangible attributes that satisfies consumers and is received in exchange for money."
Error Description	They opened a quotation mark and did not close it. The quotation shown causes confusion as the reader cannot definitely identify whether the author presents it verbatim or paraphrased. If it is textual, the quotation marks should be closed, and the page or paragraph number should be placed (see APA, 2010, page 171).
Incorrect	This concept in other words means to immerse the body in waters to restore and maintain health; it is considered an important component in the daily life of people who visit these centers (Rivera, 2012, p.15).
Error Description	The quote is not enclosed in quotation marks. When a quote is less than 40 words long, it is placed in quotation marks (see APA, 2010, page 170).
Incorrect	UPEMOR (2014) states that the expenditure budget is the means by which to organize the procedures, by which the income will be distributed to achieve the objectives of the company.
Error Description	The corporate author's name was not spelled out in full. Corporate authors' names are usually spelled out in full in the first citation and abbreviated in the following citation (see APA, 2010, page 176).

Note: Own elaboration, based on the analysis of the citations with errors in the Degree Projects. On the other hand, "incorrect" represents the erroneous way in which the citation is written in the Degree Project, while the description of the error explains what the error is and the page of the APA Publication Manual (2010), sixth edition in English and third edition in Spanish, where it can be checked.

It can be seen in Table 2 that in the Degree Projects a series of errors were found in the quotations presented. Among the most common are adding academic title to the author's surname, quotations with more than 40 words and not placed in block, textual quotations with less than 40 words without page number and without quotation marks. In other cases, they do not put the author's last name or surnames. In addition, incorrect use of the abbreviation *et al.* to refer to others.

Other common errors found are the improper use of semicolons and quotation marks. A very repetitive weakness is not fully describing the corporate name but only the acronym of the same. It was also found that in subsequent citations with three authors

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they do not use the words *et al*. and often reverse the order of the authors of the original source.

Table 3
Most common errors in the elaboration of references in Degree Projects

Aspects	Examples
Incorrect	Leclerc, I. (2015). *Stays drive better parenting. Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic*: Listín Diario. Retrieved from: http://www.listindiario.com/ estancias-impulsan-una-mejor-crianza Accessed: 07/19/2016.
Error Description	They placed the year but not the date, in addition, the title of the article is in italics, as well as the city and country, but not the name of the newspaper, and they also placed the date of access. In addition, they placed a colon after in Retrieved from. In the reference of an online newspaper article, the day, month, and year of publication are placed, and the title in italics. It is no longer necessary to place the date of access to the document (see APA, 2010, page 198).
Incorrect	Zabala, P. (2007). *Definition of income statement (*Undergraduate thesis). Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Mexico. Retrieved from fcasua.cont ad.unam.mx/apuntes/interiores/docs/2012/contaduria/.../conta bilidad_1.
Error Description	The Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is incomplete, the protocol is missing, data in the server's name is missing. In addition, there is an ellipsis and a full stop (see APA example, 2010 page 188).
Incorrect	Figueroa, D. (2007). *La arqueología funeraria y la masonería. La Zaranda de Ideas, Revista de Jóvenes Investigadores en Arqueología*. Buenos Aires, Argentina. Publisher: Red Sociedad Argentina de Antropología.
Error Description	The reference entry for this journal is made by omitting data and adding information that is not necessary. They even present it as if it were a printed book (see format for a journal reference in APA, 2010, page 200).
Incorrect	Palomio, J. (2013). *Gerencia educativa.* Chimbote, Peru. Retrieved from: www.es.calameo.com. Palella S. and Martins, F. (2004). *Metodología de la investigación tipos y diseños de la investigación.* Venezuela: FEDUPEL.
Error Description	Two sources with different authors and titles link it as if it were one (see example of references in APA, 2010, page 202).

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Incorrect	Avila, B. (2006). *Introducción a la metodología de la investigación: Definición de limitación.* Spain: Eumed. Net. Retrieved from: https//bibliotecavirtualudgvirtual.udg.mx/eureka/pubviral/introducción %20a%20a%20la%20metodologi
Error Description	They position the website as a publisher and present the electronic document as a printed book (see example for referencing an online paper in APA, 2010, page 205).
Incorrect	Soscue et al. (2013). *Capacidad requerida.* Mexico: Panapo. Retrieved from https://clubensayos.com/Informes-de-Libros/CapacidadRequerida/1321308htm
Error Description	They used the Latin expression *et al.* in this reference. In the references, the names of all authors are written, except if there are eight or more (see APA, 2010, page 184, section 6.27).
Incorrect	Blanco, N., & Alvarado, M. (2005). *Definición de escala de Likert.* Redalic Social Sciences Journal. Retrieved from www.redalic.org/pdf/280/28011311.pdf
Error Description	They changed the name of the journal since it is spelled Redalyc. In addition, they do not make the reference for a journal as indicated by the APA, 2010, page 198.
Incorrect	Gabriel Baca Urbina (2001). *Evaluación de Proyectos.* Mexico: McGraw Hill/Interamericana Editores, S.A de C.V. Retrieved from: https://ianemartinez.files.wordpress.com/ .../project-evaluation-gabriel-baca-urbi.
Error Description	They made the reference with the author's full name and then placed the surnames. In addition, they added a full stop to the URL and capitalized the first letter of the word projects. They added a colon after Recovered from (see APA, 2010, page 192 and 101).
Incorrect	Silva (2009). *Metodología de la Investigación.* Validity and Reliability of the
Error Description	There is missing information in the reference. The source is incomplete, and they did not place the initial of the author's name. In addition, they capitalized the first letter of the words in the title (see APA, 2010, page 174).
Incorrect	Victonica (4/4/2013) *Nuevo estudios sobre el colesterol.* Tu salud magazine, vol.13 pag.2.
Error Description	The author of this journal article is missing in the reference. In addition, the layout of the entry does not correspond to the regulations as they write the abbreviation of volume and page, which is unnecessary (see APA, 2010, pages 186 and 200).

Incorrect	Chase, R., Jacobs, F. and Aquilano, N. *Administración de Operaciones. Producción y Cadena de Suministros*. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/17355706/ Administracion-de-operaciones-y-produccion-12-ed-chase-aquilano-jacobs-11
Error Description	The year of publication is missing (see elements of a reference in APA, 2010, page 185).

Note: Own elaboration, based on the analysis of the references with errors in the Degree Projects. On the other hand, "incorrect" represents the erroneous way in which the reference is written in the Degree Project while, in the description of the error, it is explained what it consists of and the page of the APA Publication Manual (2010), sixth edition in English and third in Spanish, where it can be checked.

The analysis of Table 3 shows the most frequent mistakes made by students when preparing the references in the Degree Projects. The inclusion of the date on which the source was accessed stands out, with which they mix elements of the 2002 version of the APA with the 2010 version. In addition, they omit the year of publication of the journal. They add information to the title of the document without this being in the original source.

It is also observed that sometimes they do not separate some elements of the references and use words such as *others* and *et al.* Punctuation marks such as period, comma, colon, are used incorrectly. In the same way, they present references with the order of location of the components inverted, and in other cases, they omit data.

Another situation detected is the existence of incomplete URLs. On other occasions, they cut them incorrectly and add suspension points, which makes it difficult and often prevents the location of the document. There are cases in which the source entry is made as if it were another, for example. They present a magazine that is a periodical publication as if it were a printed book.

In addition, you see two different sources joined together as if it were one and web pages as if it were the publisher of a physical book. When references are not spelled correctly or information is omitted, it makes it difficult for the reader to locate them.

Table 4

The teacher's role in the formation of competent students, according to the students.

item	Option				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
C1.-Continuously promote the APA norms for citing and referencing research papers.	41.9	44.6	8.7	4.2	0.6
C2.-Orient on plagiarism as a lack of ethics in research work.	61.4	33.8	2.1	2.1	0.6
C3.- For citations and references, the use of reliable sources of access to scientific knowledge is recommended.	63.5	32.6	1.5	1.8	0.6

Note: Own elaboration, based on the data of the questionnaire applied to the students.

Table 4 shows that the totally agree and agree ratings are the most predominant. Item C3 shows that 63.5% strongly agree and 32.6% agree that teachers for citations and references recommend the use of reliable sources of access to scientific knowledge. C2 shows that 61.4% of the respondents strongly agree and 33.8% agree that teachers give guidance on plagiarism as a lack of ethics in research work. Although 2.1% remained undecided and another 2.1% disagreed.

Discussion and conclusions

The study showed that UTESA/GH teachers and education students value the correct writing of citations and references in academic works as something transcendental and valuable. They consider this because it contributes to the accurate identification of books and works that are cited, in addition, it makes it easier for interested readers to locate the original source of the information used. Other reasons are that the correct writing of citations and references gives rigor and transparency to the document produced, provides a valuable source of data for the study of numerous bibliometric characteristics of scientific development, such as author and most cited source. At the same time, it greatly favors the indexing or registration of the publication in prestigious databases. At the same time, the writer reflects honesty and professional ethics, by differentiating their contributions from those taken from other authors, which gives credit to the author and credibility to the publication.

Undoubtedly, reference indexing in a database becomes impossible if the data are not written correctly, are omitted, or the order is reversed. This occurs because the process is automated, by means of algorithms in specialized software for such purposes. Consistency in the style of the references must always be maintained. This is corroborated by Paz Enrique et al. (2016) when they highlight its usefulness by valuing it as an essential element "to favor the indexing of publications in prestigious databases, in addition to being the formal recognition of the work of researchers. Through references, the impact of scientific publications is measured" (p. 2).

The data obtained also show the conception that the professors and students participating in the study have of the need to maintain high ethical principles in the elaboration of citations and references in research papers. This has great relevance if we start from the concern that academics and university representatives have about plagiarism and the rejection of publications that present it. Developing citations and references attached to ethical standards is a very important task as expressed by other authors, such as Cantín and Chuhuaicura (2016), and prestigious institutions, such as the APA (2010).

Regarding the level of education and training of students and teachers in the use of the APA norms for the elaboration of quotations and references in research works, the study revealed a very significant fact: at the Secondary or Baccalaureate level, most of the students did not receive orientation and/or training on the use of the APA style for the elaboration of quotations and references. The situation described above was acknowledged by both the students themselves and the Utesian teachers. This lack of prior knowledge limits and delays them considerably in the development of academic writing skills.

This data shows a warning and indicates the possible origin of the weaknesses that students present in the use of the APA norms, and that is reflected when they enter Higher Education, when they have to prepare research papers. In the Dominican Republic, the foundations for future learning are laid at the Initial, Primary, and Secondary levels, but especially in Pre-university, students should be introduced to the use of the APA norms. This is established in the curricular design for the Secondary Level, especially in the area of Spanish Language.

It was also determined that education students participate less, compared to teachers, in continuing education programs through the Center for Specialized Studies (CEDESE), either in courses or extracurricular workshops for the knowledge and management of the APA style to elaborate citations and references.

It is necessary to point out that these continuing education courses imply an investment on the part of the student to be able to participate in them. This situation could be the limiting factor for their application and enrolment in them. The precarious economic condition of many of the students makes it impossible for them to enroll in them. The University as an institution should consider this situation and look for solutions that allow the opening of these courses and the students to enroll in them, without implying an excessive expense for the participants.

Similarly, the research showed that both educators and students consider that UTESA/GH promotes that they exercise the indispensable skills for the elaboration of citations and references. A relevant element to highlight is that they frequently consult the APA Manual to elaborate citations and references. This is transcendental, especially

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if it is based on the conviction that they are using the original source, from which the rules originated and which produces the changes according to the needs of researchers and other interested parties. There is a lot published on the Web about these regulations; however, contradictions are often found when comparing them with the official APA web pages or with the institution's Publications Manual.

On the other hand, significant differences were found among those investigated on the use of bibliographic managers, such as Zotero and Mendeley as an electronic tool to organize citations and references of research papers, as a higher percentage of students have received more guidance than teachers. This could be associated with the fact that young people tend to define themselves as digital natives and self-taught in the use of the Internet. At the same time, many of them have more leisure time to spend looking for tutorials on YouTube on the use of these computer programs. Also being born in the Digital Age favors them to have a better command of software developed especially for citing and referencing research papers.

Regarding the most common errors that occur in the elaboration of the citations in the Degree Projects, the study identified the incorrect use of punctuation marks, erroneous ordering of the elements, omission or change in the data, absence of the year of publication of the source. Similarly, it was found an inadequate use of the Latin abbreviation *et al.* and sometimes substituted by the words *and others*.

In addition, there are notable citations with more than 40 words with quotation marks, other times they are not in block, and even textual citations of less than 40 that are not in quotation marks, authors cited, but not placed in the references, inappropriate use of corporate names. Likewise, subsequent citations with three or more authors are presented incorrectly. Other situations encountered, but less frequent, are adding the title of academic training, for example, "Doctor" to the author's last name.

As can be seen in the results presented, serious errors were found in the elaboration of the citations, such as the omission or changes in the source that make it impossible for the interested reader to locate the original document. This is because the APA, when making references in publications, uses the author-date citation system in the text. In this way, the reader identifies the author's surname and the date of publication in the text citation, which will make it easier to locate the document entry in the alphabetical list containing the references at the end of the article. When this does not occur, with the exception of classic works and personal communications that do not need to be referenced, the reader will not be able to locate the original source that served as the basis for the writer to make the citation.

The study also found another serious error and that is the non-inclusion in the list of references of some sources from which the information was taken to elaborate the citation. This situation may be associated with carelessness, lack of experience, or lack of knowledge of the regulations by the author. Frequently, one of the first actions of the reviewers of the Degree Projects is to verify the organization of the list of references, whether or not it is in accordance with what is established by the APA and if the cited authors are registered in it. When this correspondence is not perceived, the writers will have to correct the error, which will involve extra work and bear the tutor's perception that they do not check the references before handing in the assigned work. APA Style (2010) strongly emphasizes that the source is placed, both in the citation presented in the body of the paper and in the references, at the end of the paper.

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Regarding the errors identified in the references, the study revealed a combination of APA formats, specifically from 2002 and 2010, namely when adding the date of access to the document. It is also perceived the addition of information to the title of the source, incorrect use of period, colon, and comma to separate the elements of the reference. In other cases, they invert the order of the components of the references, incomplete URLs, entry of one source (journal) as if it were another (printed book), as well as omission of information. These results correspond to a similar study conducted by Peña Armijos (2018).

In general, 214 citations and 343 references with errors were found in the 83 Degree Projects (PG) reviewed, some of which are serious, making it almost impossible for the interested reader to locate the source. Each PG has a minimum of one error and a maximum of ten, both in references and citations. As for the source, the error is recurrent and consists of not referencing scientific journals according to APA regulations. Sometimes, if the journal has two or more publications in the year, the volume is omitted, but the most serious is not including the issue number and pages, which makes it difficult or impossible to locate it. These results are similar to those found by González Aguilar (2018).

These data revealed by the research regarding the errors that are presented in the Degree Projects when students try to reference academic journals should lead to reflection. This is because these sources are one of the most effective for promoting scientific knowledge due to their reputation and prestige in databases. Students need to learn how to handle them and, above all, to be able to reference them appropriately. Otherwise, as Sánchez (2013) explains, the chances of being able to publish their work in one of them will be extremely difficult.

In relation to the role assumed by the teacher in the formation of competent university students to present citations and references in an appropriate manner, the study showed that educators constantly promote the APA norms for citing and referencing research papers, at the same time, they provide guidance on plagiarism as a lack of ethics in research papers. In addition, for citations and references, they recommend the use of reliable sources of access to scientific knowledge. However, errors in citing or referencing are still present in the PGs reviewed.

The study also revealed that the teachers teach that the student is responsible and autonomous in the elaboration of citations and references, and at the same time, they demand that the academic papers contain in the references all the sources cited in the research. At the same time, they make sure that students do not make mistakes, either by excess or omission, when they elaborate citations and references, according to the APA Manual. At the same time, they follow up the academic papers, making sure, for example, that the citations and references have been done correctly. They also promote the participation of students in training programs to apply the APA style in citations and references.

The results shown above show that teachers are fulfilling their role in the formation of competent students to develop citations and references in the Degree Projects as established by the APA Style and required by the educational authorities of UTESA/GH. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that this should be a systematic work where all teachers are involved. The APA Style Manual incorporates changes periodically. The first edition was in 1952, and the most recent is the seventh edition in

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English, launched in 2019. From the latter comes the fourth in Spanish in 2021. This implies the need to keep updated, as UTESA/GH teachers suggest to students.

APA also has a variety of resources to keep in constant contact with stakeholders. On its website, https://apastyle.apa.org/, it keeps users informed about topics of interest, new products, shares style updates, and responds to inquiries. In addition, users can subscribe to the monthly APA Style newsletter. Here you can receive news, updates, and resources to the email address provided. On the institution's blog, https://apastyle.apa.org/blog, people can quickly and easily get answers to questions about citations and references. They can even ask questions in the comments that are later answered by the specialists. At the same time, they continue to answer questions through Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and email. These resources should be known by teachers and used frequently by students.

Future studies could be oriented to know the causes associated with the low level of education that pre-university students in the municipality of Gaspar Hernández present at the end of their secondary level studies. Knowing this reality, concrete actions can be developed that contribute to minimizing the problem.

In addition, it is pertinent to develop studies with action research methodology, including the use of pretest and posttest. In this way, it would be possible to identify the specific weaknesses that teachers present in the elaboration of citations and references and work on their solution. Something similar can be done with Utesian students.

Finally, it would be relevant to replicate it in the other UTESA campuses in the country as well as in other contexts, such as, for example, the other universities that operate in the Dominican Republic. In this way, it would be possible to work together to solve the problems studied.

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