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# Citation analysis and user studies: its importance in library management

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## ABSTRACT

*Giving references by way of footnotes or citations facilitate the establishment of the genealogy of the thought content and be regarded as a part of intellectual communication. This can be used as a means of exploring user behaviour and requirements and therefore citation studies provide a unique indirect method of user study. This article discusses the origin of citation practice, various aspects of citation analysis techniques, its advantages and limitations. It concludes that citation analysis techniques are of extreme importance to librarians in identifying user needs and planning and organizing library services to meet such needs.*

## 1. ORIGIN OF CITATION PRACTICE

The origin of giving references by way of footnotes, or citation practice can be traced to the beginning of scientific writing, when the early periodicals started about three centuries ago. Derek de Solla Price has found that the earliest name of the footnote was scholia which means relating to scholarship, thus indicating that the practice of footnoting was considered to be a scholarly practice.<sup>1</sup>

Linda C. Smith, in her overview of citation analysis for the bibliometrics issue of *Library Trends* explained the two kinds of citation

as "A reference is the acknowledgement that one document gives to another and a citation is the acknowledgement that one document receives from another"<sup>2</sup>. It is a relationship implied between the cited document and the citing document, all or in part, and Smith further explained the technique of citation analysis as "that area of bibliometrics which deals with the study of their relationships."

Bibliographic citation has been defined as "A sequence of items of information needed for enabling a reader to identify the document referred to. It may also include when required, the character, scope, publisher, place of publication, price etc., of the

document."<sup>3</sup>

A bibliographic citation is made up of various bits of information about the publication cited, to facilitate a reader getting it for use. It may include the author, title of the document, name of periodical, year of publication, volume, pages etc. The details required are determined by the nature of document referred to, such as a book, part of a book, an article in a periodical, etc., and the nature of information to be conveyed for purposes of location, identification, evaluation, bibliographic description, etc. Generally, it may occur as a footnote or at the end of the text or its chapter or any section or in the body of the text.

## 2. REASONS FOR GIVING CITATIONS

Citation represents a relationship between the cited and citing documents, and yet it is somewhat difficult to characterize this relationship. Weinstock has stated fifteen characteristics governing this relationship in the following manner:

- (I) Paying homage to pioneers.
- (II) Giving credit to related work.
- (III) Identifying methodology, equipment, etc.