

# *Evidence of bad practices in the criticisms of bibliography and bibliographic references*

## *Evidencias de malas prácticas en las críticas a bibliografía y referencias bibliográficas*

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**Abstract:** Critically stated are the bad practices that are carried out during the evaluation of the quality of the bibliography and bibliographic references in scientific research. Its ambiguity is demonstrated and it is proposed how this justification should be done correctly. This is intended to contribute to the suppression of these procedures. Methods such as observation, analysis, synthesis, and deduction were used.

**Keywords:** Bibliography; References; Evaluation references; Evaluation bibliography; Citation

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**Resumen:** Se enuncian de manera crítica las malas prácticas que se llevan a cabo durante la evaluación de la calidad de la bibliografía y de las referencias bibliográficas en los trabajos de investigación científica. Se demuestra su equívoco y se propone cómo debe hacerse correctamente este justiprecio. Con ello se pretende contribuir a la supresión de dichos procedimientos. Se utilizaron métodos como la observación, el análisis, la síntesis, y la deducción.

**Palabras clave:** Bibliografía; Referencias bibliográficas; Evaluación de referencias; Evaluación de bibliografía; Citación

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### **Introduction**

When evaluating any scientific work, criticism of the bibliography and bibliographic references is essential, which, as weighed, can be positive or negative. The evaluation of these two elements is relevant because they show the level of information and update that the authors have about the scientific theme they deal with in their work.

The correct collection, discrimination, analysis, synthesis and signing of the bibliographic sources of information visualize the maturity they have reached in the research. It should be added that a meticulous reference to the works chosen as sources of information confers scientific rigor to the research work in question and, in addition, he predicts it as a source for further research.

All of the above demonstrates the importance of bibliography and bibliographic references, which is why, in the context of science, the exercise of criticism is also transcendental. But, unfortunately, the latter is very affected in Cuba, where bad practices are evident in the criticism

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of the bibliography and the bibliographic references that must be modified because they are sometimes inventive.

The field of criticism of bibliography and bibliographic references is studied. It is suspected that as scientific dissemination of the good practices alleged in this essay increases, then its application in practice will increase. Therefore, the responsibility of confirming the suspicion is left to the readers and their actions.

First of all, it is necessary to clarify the difference between bibliography and bibliographical references or references. The first is a list of documents that served as sources of information, but the arguments or facts mentioned in the scientific work are not necessarily supported on the content of these sources, and therefore may not appear quotes from some of them in the text. For their part, bibliographic references or references only include the sources that were used as support to support the arguments or facts mentioned. Then it follows that the references are part of the bibliography, however, some documents of the bibliography do not appear in the references.

Having clarified this, we begin by explaining how the critique of bibliography and references should be made. In the first instance, technical and ethical aspects must be taken into account. Technically it must be deep, clear, concise, precise and meticulous; and from the ethical point of view it must be respectful, without exaggeration, and above all just. The person is not criticized, but the part of the document presented that contains the objects of this essay.

Most of the published research on indicators to evaluate bibliography and references is ambiguous, and variables such as exhaustiveness are defined, which behaves well if the researcher manages to examine all the cardinal documents that exist on the subject (which could be impossible), without taking into account that the subjectivity of each person influences in applying a qualifier or another to a source of information. For some, completeness will be achieved and for others not, and then the debate would be endless.

The controversy about the scientific evidence on the quality with which the criticisms of the bibliography and the references are developed has been prolonged for several years, and its cause

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is mainly that the majority is based on an *argumentum ad antiquitatem* in this regard, stating that What is being done is correct.

However, the relevance of the criticism of the aforementioned objects is precarious, and its strenuous use because it takes into account indicators such as language, typology and support, which often detracts from the quality of the bibliography and references.

Thus, for example, it has become mandatory that they appear as citations of works published in English, which is a great mistake if we take into account that there are topics in which the highest quality and topical publications are not necessarily in this language. In addition, much less sensible and lacking scientific foundation is to demand a certain percent in this regard.

It is also often demanded that hundreds of books, articles, or essays, among other types of documents. This is unprofessional, because depending on the research carried out, one or another type of document may predominate, and even one of them may not be taken into account for any justified reason. For example, there are topics on which books have not yet been published.

It is worth highlighting the value that a scientific work is despondently given for referring citations or internet bibliography, or of a compact disc of a scientific event. Does the type of support attach importance to the documents it contains? Obviously not. A document is not more or less valuable because of its support.

Similarly, to the previous one, when it comes to cited scientific articles, there is a tendency (although to a lesser extent), to assess the sources cited according to the group to which the journal that published the document belongs. In these cases, thesis opponents or referees of scientific papers state the percentages of these journals according to references or bibliography.

With respect to the above, there are also those who explicitly argue the databases where these journals are located, as if they confer quality to the article. It should be clarified that the groups have been created in Cuba, many times without taking into account all the necessary criteria to place a base on a higher level than the other. Therefore, the quality of a scientific article does not depend on the database where it is located, or where someone places that database.

The number of citations is another aspect that is evaluated according to percent in five-year periods, which speaks in favor of the citations being important for those who carry out this practice according to the five-year period to which they belong, rounding the absurdity that the years add value to appointments, especially if they appear in the last five years.

Supporters of this bad practice deny the current thinking of scientists, politicians, writers, and other thinkers of past centuries, because although it is true that many epistemes raised previously have already been denied, so it is that many remain in force.

Seen in another way, if the actuality of a document depends on how young it is in time, then the writings of people like José Martí (19th century), and Albert Einstein (20th century) should not be cited in a scientific work, which no educated person would be able to admit.

This procedure means the annulment of the past in the worst of events, and the lack of consideration of the oldest in the best event.

Now, the question to answer is: how to determine the actuality of a document? It is enough to measure the validity of the epistemes that are taken from these documents to be included in the written report of the investigation that is carried out. In this case it is important to assume that even if an appointment is made to be censored, that idea should not have been previously criticized and modified by new epistemes.

Another bad practice is the almost unanimous approval that in the master's thesis or in the doctoral thesis inexorably there are citations to the works published or not by tutors or members of the academic committee. Likewise, in many courts positive appointments to other theses defended in the same or another specialty are almost obligatory. I believe that these quotes should only appear if they are essential.

The post hoc analysis that preceded the writing of this essay has also revealed that the results offered are generally distorted because in the evaluation of the documents that are part of the bibliography or references there are generally no important aspects for this expert opinion, such as:

- Detection of citations that must be criticized, and the author does not make them.

- Identification of appointments or self-dating that are irrelevant and unnecessary.
- Use of citations as argumentum and verecundiam.
- Citation of articles from the same magazine where the work is intended to be published.
- Quality of the translations of the citations whose original language is different from the one used in the work.
- Welcome to an idea of a certain author without an explicit demonstration that the quotation used contains the most appropriate thought.
- The role of each quotation in relation to the purposes and scientific tasks proposed by the author.
- Identification of citations that should have been included in the work by the author.
- Detection of possible contradictions in citations that the author assumes as not contradictory.
- Adjustment of the citation and bibliographic settlement to the required standards, and their correspondence with the review of previous studies.

The attention and introduction of the treated elements will contribute to the fact that the bad practices related to the criticism of the bibliography and the bibliographical references are modified.