



**SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**HANDBOOK ON GUIDELINES FOR
THE PREPARATION OF RESEARCH
PROJECTS, DISSERTATIONS AND
THESES**

October 2025

Copyright Page

Designed and printed by:

NOUN Press
Plot 91, Cadastral Zone
Nnamdi Azikiwe Expressway
Jabi- Abuja

Published by:

The School of Postgraduate Studies
National Open University of Nigeria
Email: spgs@noun.edu.ng
Website: <https://spgs.nou.edu.ng/>
Telephone: +234 810 618 0130, +234 811 503 2088

This “Handbook on Guidelines for the Preparation of Research Projects, Dissertations and Theses” shall be in operation from the Date approved by the Senate of the National Open University of Nigeria, and subject to a review every five (5) years.

FOREWORD

By the Vice-Chancellor

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the Handbook on Postgraduate Guidelines for the Preparation of Research Projects, Dissertations, and Theses. This new edition represents a significant milestone in our institution's ongoing commitment to excellence in research and scholarship.

As an institution, we recognise the importance of providing our postgraduate students with the necessary guidance and support to produce high-quality research that contributes meaningfully to their respective fields. These Guidelines represent a critical component of that support, offering comprehensive guidance on the research process, from conceptualisation to completion.

The Handbook has been carefully crafted to reflect contemporary best practices in research and scholarship. It incorporates fresh perspectives, updated guidelines, and enhanced resources to support our postgraduate students in their research endeavours. As such, I am confident that this manual will serve as a valuable resource for our students and research supervisors.

I commend the Dean of the School of Postgraduate Studies and the entire team involved in the development of these guidelines, for their dedication and hard work. Their efforts have resulted in a manual that is not only comprehensive but also user-friendly and accessible.

As we launch this Handbook, I encourage our postgraduate students to utilise it fully as they embark on their research journeys. I also urge our lecturers and research supervisors to continue providing guidance and support to our students, using this Handbook.

Once again, I congratulate the team involved in the revision process and express my appreciation for their commitment to excellence.

Professor Olufemi Peters
Vice-Chancellor

PROLOGUE

By the Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies

The Handbook on Postgraduate Guidelines for the Preparation of Research Projects, Dissertations, and Theses is an effort of the School of Postgraduate Studies to augment the quality and significance of postgraduate research at the National Open University of Nigeria.

The past few years have witnessed tremendous changes in the landscape of higher education, driven by advances in technology, shifting societal needs, and evolving disciplinary boundaries. In response to these changes, we recognised the need to review and upgrade our existing manual to ensure that it remains aligned with contemporary best practices in research and scholarship.

This Handbook is the culmination of a thorough process, involving input from our faculties, students, and external examiners. The new edition incorporates fresh perspectives, updated guidelines, and enhanced resources to support our postgraduate students in their research endeavours.

The Handbook structure and content have been carefully designed to provide clear guidance on the research processes. We have also included new sections on emerging topics, such as research ethics, Dos and Don'ts on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and publications of research findings.

As Dean of the School of Postgraduate Studies, I am confident that these guidelines will serve as a worthy resource for our students, lecturers, and research supervisors. We are committed to continuing our support for innovative and high-quality research and presentation, and these Guidelines represent an important step in that direction.

I hereby extend my sincere appreciation to all those who contributed to the development of this Handbook. Your expertise, insights, and dedication have been invaluable in shaping this manual.

We hope that this manual will motivate and guide our postgraduate students as they undertake their research pursuits. Together, we can cultivate a vibrant culture of research excellence and innovation.

Professor Sonnie J. Oniye

Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The School of Postgraduate Studies acknowledges with profound appreciation individuals and institutions whose contributions made the development of this Guidelines on Project, Dissertation, and Thesis Writing possible.

We gratefully acknowledge the postgraduate colleges and schools of the University of Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and the Nasarawa State University, Lafia, whose guidelines informed and guided the preparation of this document.

Special appreciation goes to the Deans of Faculties at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) for their invaluable inputs and constructive feedback during the review process. Their views have improved the document and made it useful for different academic fields.

We also recognise the dedicated support and collaboration of the Heads of Units in the School of Postgraduate Studies, whose administrative and technical contributions were essential to the successful completion of this work. The effort put into the development and refinement of this document is truly invaluable. We appreciate:

- Mr Linus Onime - Head, External Examination and Special Duties Unit
- Mr Bulus Kachie - Head, Admissions Unit
- Ms Nnekka Egbo - Head, Records Unit

Our sincere thanks also go to the Head, Department of Philosophy, Dr Helen T. Olojede, and the Head, Department of Library and Information Science, Dr Ugonna V. Ailakhu, for their valuable suggestions that strengthened the scholarly framework of this document.

We deeply appreciate the leadership and encouragement of the Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies, Prof. Sonnie J. Oniye, whose vision and direction provided the foundation for this initiative. Special recognition is also accorded to Mrs Folashade T. Oritogun, Secretary, School of Postgraduate Studies, whose coordination, dedication, and attention to detail ensured the successful completion of this work.

Finally, the School acknowledges the contributions of all academic and administrative staff who, in diverse ways, participated in the drafting, review, and validation of this document. Their collective effort has resulted in a comprehensive and user-friendly guide for postgraduate research and academic pursuit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One:	General Regulations
Chapter Two:	Prescribed Structure for Research Projects/Dissertations/Theses
Chapter Three:	Writing and Typing Instructions
Chapter Four:	Guidelines for Referencing in Projects/Dissertations/Theses Using APA 7 th Edition for Postgraduate Students
Chapter Five:	Projects, Dissertations and Theses Management
Chapter Six:	Roles and Responsibilities of Offices/Officers in the Conduct of Postgraduate Moderation and Defence
Chapter Seven:	Guidelines for the Ethical Use of AI in Postgraduate Research Writing
Chapter Eight:	Managing Duties and Rights in the Supervision Process

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE UNIVERSITY



Prof Olufemi Peters
Vice-Chancellor



Prof Chiedu F. Mafiana
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)



Prof Shehu Usman Adamu
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration)



Prof Christine I. Ofulue
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Technology, Innovation and Research)



Mr Oladipo Ajayi
Registrar



Mal Nasir Marafa
Bursar



Prof Angela Okpala
University Librarian

MANAGEMENT TEAM OF SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES



Prof Sonnie J. Oniye
Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies



Mrs Folashade T. Oritogun
Deputy Registrar/Secretary, School of Postgraduate Studies

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL REGULATIONS

Students, supervisors, and examiners are expected to acquaint themselves with the general regulations of the School of Postgraduate Studies of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). While these regulations are not sacrosanct across disciplines, certain minor, discipline-specific exceptions may apply, and such have been clarified in other sections of this document.

The general regulations are hereby highlighted below:

1. All reports of research projects, dissertations, and theses must be written in British English.
2. Research Title should fulfil the following:
 - a) Be concise yet sufficiently descriptive of the research content.
 - b) Clearly identify the main research problem.
 - c) Be accurate, unambiguous, specific, and complete, and not contain abbreviations unless widely recognised.
 - d) A title shall not exceed twenty-two (22) words.
 - e) Avoid unnecessary qualifiers such as "A," "An," "The," or colon (:).
3. At the School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS), NOUN, research reports are categorised as follows:
 - a) Doctoral research is presented as a “thesis” (dark-green cover)¹.
 - b) Professional and Academic Master’s research is presented as a “Dissertation” (black cover).
 - c) Postgraduate Diploma research is presented as “Research Project” (navy-blue cover).
 - d) Submission of final, hard-bound copies of Project/Dissertation – four (4) copies (1 each for the student, Supervisor, Study Centre, and Departmental/Faculty Library)
 - e) Submission of final, hard-bound copies of Thesis – ten (10) copies, and one electronic copy in PDF format must be submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies.
 - f) All cover prints shall be in gold.
4. The research report for a Project follows a structured five-chapter format, while master’s dissertation and doctoral thesis shall follow a six-chapter format, along with references and appendices.
5. Project reports are to be examined by an internal arrangement in the Departments/Faculty, followed by moderation of the results by an External Examiner.
6. Dissertations are to be reviewed by the Department to ascertain their compliance with the basic standards of the Departmental/Faculty and the Postgraduate School before external examinations.
7. At least two (2) weeks before the proposed external examination/moderation, a copy of the project/dissertation must be uploaded on the Project Administration System (PAS) at the various Study Centres.
8. Theses are to be examined by a panel of examiners (internal and external) approved by the Board of the SPGS and the Senate.
9. At least four (4) weeks before the proposed examination, loose-bound copies of the thesis shall be transmitted to both the Internal and External examiners by the SPGS.
10. External Examiners for PhD defence examinations are to convey their decisions on preliminary assessment on whether the Thesis is of sufficient merit for oral examination within two (2) weeks of the receipt of the document to the Dean, SPGS.
11. All examiners are to ensure that Theses are examined within a maximum of five (5) weeks after receipt.
12. A doctoral student shall be presented for external examination after a satisfactory

¹ Visit *the website* of the School of Postgraduate Studies to obtain a template for the printing and binding of the final copy of doctoral thesis.

presentation of the final seminar/internal defence at the corresponding Department/Faculty, and only after the title and abstract must have been approved by the Board of the SPGS.

13. Upon approval of the title and abstract, the Head of Department, in consultation with the Departmental Postgraduate Committee, shall recommend the appointment of Internal and External Examiners to the Senate through the Faculty Postgraduate Committee and the SPGS Board not less than six (6) weeks before the projected date for the external/oral defence.
14. The School of Postgraduate Studies, in consultation with the Department/Faculty, shall arrange for examiners' claims and allowances through the Vice-Chancellor's Office.
15. No student shall be surcharged for any expenses for external examination, including refreshment.
16. For a project report, the student's work is graded by the supervisor, uploaded on the PAS for moderation by an approved External Examiner, and may be recommended for the award in one of the following categories:
 - a) Degree shall be awarded subject to minimum/minor/major corrections and to the satisfaction of the internal examiners.
 - b) Degree shall NOT be awarded when a student fails, i.e., scores < 50%, until major corrections are completed within twelve (12) months and the student's work is re-moderated and examined. This shall be at the expense of the student.
17. At the end of the online external defence for a master's degree, the candidate may be recommended for the award by the External Examiner, in one of the following categories:
 - a) Degree shall be awarded with very minimal correction to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within four (4) weeks.
 - b) Degree shall be awarded subject to minor corrections and to the satisfaction of the internal examiners within four (4) weeks.
 - c) Degree shall be awarded subject to major corrections and to the satisfaction of both internal and/or external examiners within six (6) weeks.
 - d) Degree shall NOT be awarded when a student fails (i.e., scores < 50%) until major corrections are completed within twelve (12) months, and the student's work is re-examined at the expense of the student.
18. Where a PGD/Master student fails a project/dissertation, the supervisor will be changed by the Department, and the new supervisor is apprised of the report of the previous external examination.
19. At the end of the external defence for a Doctoral degree, the candidate may be recommended for the award by the majority of the examiners, which must include the External Examiner, in one of the following categories (in line with the average score obtained by the candidate during the oral examination):
 - a) Degree shall be awarded with **minimal** corrections (A: $\geq 70\%$), within one (1) month, to the satisfaction of the internal examiner.
 - b) Degree shall be awarded subject to **minor** corrections and to the satisfaction of the internal examiner (B: 60 – 69%), within three (3) months.
 - c) Degree shall be awarded subject to major corrections and to the satisfaction of both internal and external examiners (C: 50-59%), within six (6) months. In this case, certification requires the signature and a letter from the External Examiner after re-certifying the corrections.
 - d) Degree shall NOT be awarded when a student fails (i.e., scores < 50%) during the oral examination, until major corrections are completed within twelve (12) months and the student re-appears for external defence at the expense of the student.
20. The Board of the SPGS shall be informed of the outcome of external examinations at each meeting of the Board.
21. The University awards degrees and other academic honours based on a student's personal efforts and achievements. Therefore, plagiarism is considered academic fraud and a serious offense, which may result in the termination of the student's studies.
22. External and Internal Examiners must be individuals with the requisite qualifications and

- competence sufficient to serve in the supervisory committee for the study being examined.
23. PGD projects and professional Master's dissertations are to be moderated by External Examiners after being graded by the supervisor and certified by the Department.
 24. Dissertation examinations, basically conducted online, are to be hosted by the corresponding Departments, which shall put in place all necessary arrangements regarding preparation and communication of a detailed timetable to stakeholders, assigning of External Examiners, grouping of students, creation of virtual links, etc, while the SPGS ensures compliance with laid down procedures.
 25. Each dissertation defence is chaired by the Head of Department (HOD) or his/her representative, while the supervisors are mandated to be in attendance in all the examinations. No external examination can commence without the presence of the HOD or his/her designated representative.
 26. Departments are to ensure that External Examiners are mandated to submit detailed reports for online moderation and defence exercises. Capturing of comments on the PAS aimed at guiding students for corrections is to be made for each chapter, preliminary pages, and references. In addition, soft copies of the examined project/dissertation should be uploaded by the External Examiner, highlighting areas in the work to be corrected and the corrections to be effected.
 27. PhD theses examinations shall mandatorily be hosted by the School of Postgraduate Studies.
 28. In addition to other departmental/programme requirements, all postgraduate project reports/dissertations/theses shall meet the following minimum standards:
 - a) **PGD Project:** At least three (3) months duration for the research; capable of generating one (1) publication; has at least two (2) clear objectives; may include issuance of questionnaires, field work, and/or minimal laboratory/studio/field work, etc.
 - b) **Professional Master's Dissertation:** At least three (3) months duration for the research; capable of generating at least one (1) publication; have at least three (3) clear objectives; evidence of attendance at one (1) relevant conference; may include issuance of questionnaires, field work and or moderate laboratory/studio work, etc.; make one (1) tangible contribution to knowledge.
 - c) **Academic Master's Dissertation:** At least six (6) months duration for the research; capable of generating two (2) publications; have at least three (3) clear objectives; evidence of attendance at one (1) relevant conference; should include any two (2) of the following: issuance of questionnaires, field work and/or moderate laboratory/studio work, etc; make two (2) tangible contributions to knowledge.
 - d) **Doctoral Thesis:** At least twenty-four (24) months duration for the research; should have at least five (5) clear objectives; should publish a minimum of two (2) articles in reputable journals; membership of a relevant professional body; evidence of attendance of at least two (2) relevant conferences, with at least one (1) conference article; should include any of the following: issuance of questionnaires, field work and/or extensive laboratory/studio work, etc.; make three (3) tangible contributions to knowledge; should involve a modern analytical or laboratory technique, as well as being original (rather than re-affirmation of an established information).
 29. Every postgraduate student at the University is expected to strictly apply these guidelines for their research project, dissertation, and thesis, failing which the research project/dissertation/thesis would not be examined.
 30. Any lecturer, supervisor, or examiner who fails to adhere to these guidelines shall not be paid and will be sanctioned.

CHAPTER TWO

Prescribed Structure for Research Projects/Dissertations/Theses

2.1 Preliminary Pages

All words must follow the general guidelines: single spacing; font size of 12. Times New Roman; Left indentation.

2.1.1 Cover Page

The cover page shall contain the following details, presented in **uppercase** only:

- a) **Title** of the Project Report/Dissertation/Thesis
- b) **Student's Name** (surname first, separated by a comma)
- c) **Matriculation Number** (the "NOU" must always be uppercase)
- d) **Department, Faculty, and University**
- e) **Month and Year of Certification of Corrections** (see example in Appendix I)

2.1.2 Plain Leaf

This is a blank page. The white paper used must be of high quality (not glossy) and consistent with that of the inside cover.

2.1.3 Title Page

The title page shall include the following details in **uppercase** only:

- **Title** of the Project Report/Dissertation/Thesis
- **Student's Name** (surname first, separated by a comma), including qualifications (with institution and year obtained)
- **Matriculation Number**

This will be followed by:

A PROJECT REPORT/DISSERTATION/THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF, FACULTY OF....., NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF (Approved Name of Degree)

- **Month and Year of Certification of Corrections** (see example in Appendix II)

2.1.4 Declaration Page

The declaration page must contain the following statement in **sentence case**:

"I declare that the work in this Research Project/Dissertation/Thesis, entitled [insert title], was carried out by me in the Department of [insert department]. Information derived from literature has been duly acknowledged in the text, with a corresponding list of references provided. No part of this Research Project/Dissertation/Thesis has been previously presented for another degree or diploma at this or any other institution."

- **Student's Name** (surname first, separated by a comma)
- **Signature**
- **Date**

2.1.5 Certification Page

The certification page must contain the following statement in **sentence case**:

"This Research Project/Dissertation/Thesis, entitled [insert title in uppercase], by [student's surname first, separated by a comma], meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of [approved name of the degree] of the National Open University of Nigeria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge."

_____	_____	_____
Main Supervisor	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Co-Supervisor	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Head of Department	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies	Signature	Date

2.1.6. Dedication Page

This section should briefly state to whom the work is dedicated, such as a mentor, family member, or anyone who inspired or supported the study.

2.1.7. Acknowledgments Page

This section should briefly express gratitude to those who contributed to the success of the study, such as advisors, colleagues, institutions, or family members

2.1.8 Abstract Page

The abstract as a single body with no paragraph in single line spacing, should concisely summarise the study, not exceeding:

- **250 words** for Research Projects
- **350 words** for Dissertations
- **500 words** for Theses

(NB: The abstract lines should be numbered all through the approval /defence processes until after successful defence; thereafter, the numbering is to be removed before submission of final bound copies)

The abstract should be a single paragraph, typed in **single-line spacing** using **Times New Roman, size 12**, with **justified margins**. The abstract should briefly cover the problem statement, main objective(s), data collection and analysis methods, key findings, conclusion(s), and recommendation(s). The completed theses **should not contain line numbering, word count, and keywords**.

2.1.9 Table of Contents Page

This section lists the main sections and subsections of the work along with their corresponding page numbers. The **table of contents** should be **double-spaced**, with multi-line titles; it should be **single-spaced and not indented**. Students are encouraged to use a computer-generated table of contents by inserting a table not to draw a table)

Only the **1st, 2nd, and 3rd tier** headings should be included, following these formatting rules:

- **1st Level headings:** UPPER CASE and BOLD
- **2nd Level headings:** Title Case and BOLD
- **3rd Level headings:** Sentence case, not bold
(See examples in Appendix)

2.1.9.1 List of Figures, Tables, Plates, and Appendices

Titles that span multiple lines should be **single-spaced and not indented**.

- List of Figures: e.g., Figure 1, 2, 3, etc., each followed by a title description.
- List of Tables: e.g., Table 1, 2, 3, etc, each followed by a title description.
- List of Plates: e.g., Plate I, II, III, IV, V, etc., each followed by a title description.
- List of Appendices: Appendix I, II, III, IV, V, etc., each followed by a title description.

2.1.9.2 Abbreviations, Definitions, Glossary, Nomenclature, and Symbols

All abbreviations and symbols used in the work should be clearly explained. In addition, specialised terms should be presented in a **glossary** for clarity. Please note departmental and faculty specifications.

2.2 Main Body of Work

2.2.1 Chapter Layout for all Research Projects (Postgraduate Diploma)

Below is the prescribed chapter layout for all research projects at the National Open University of Nigeria.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: Materials and Methods / Methodology

Chapter 4: Results and Discussions/

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations (*Must include contributions to knowledge and study limitations*)

References

Appendices

- List of Figures: e.g., Figure 1 and Title, which is placed below/under the figure/diagram
- List of Tables: e.g., Table 1 and Title, which is placed above the table
- List of Plates: e.g., Plate I and Title, which is placed below/under the plate
- List of Appendices: e.g., Appendix I and Title, which is placed above the table
(NB: *Numbering of Plates and Appendices should be in capital Roman numerals*)

2.3 Dissertations and Theses for Science-based Programmes

The format for dissertations and theses in science-based programmes is basically the same. The following is the prescribed layout for science-based dissertations and theses. Students should contact their department for the most up-to-date guidelines on writing dissertations and theses.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview of the study, Research background, Problem statement, Objectives, Hypotheses, and Significance

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of existing research

Theoretical and conceptual frameworks (if applicable)

CHAPTER THREE: MATERIALS AND METHODS/ METHODOLOGY

Research design and methodology
Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Presentation of key research results
Data analysis and insights

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Interpretation and explanation of findings
Comparison with existing literature
Inferences

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of major findings
Conclusions drawn from the study
Recommendations for future research
Contributions to knowledge
Study limitations

REFERENCES

Comprehensive list of all cited sources alphabetically in line with APA 7th or newer edition.

APPENDICES

Supplementary materials/approvals/questionnaires
Ethical clearance
Relevant field pictorials

Note: All chapter headings should be in Capital letters, while every sub-heading that follows should be in title cases.

2.4. Prescribed Chapter Format for Humanities Dissertations/Theses

The format for dissertations and theses in humanities-based programmes is basically the same. The following is the prescribed layout for humanities-based dissertations and theses. Students should contact their department for the most up-to-date guidelines on writing dissertations and theses.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview of the study
Research Problem
Research Questions
Objectives
Significance

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of relevant studies
Theoretical and conceptual frameworks (if applicable)

CHAPTER THREE: MATERIALS AND METHODS/ RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Approach
Data Collection and Analysis Methods

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS/DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Data Presentation

Data analysis and interpretation

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Discussion of findings in relation to existing literature

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS (*Must include contributions to knowledge and study limitations*)

Summary of major findings

Conclusions drawn from the study

Recommendations for future research

Contributions to knowledge

Study limitations

REFERENCES

Comprehensive list of all cited sources alphabetically according to APA 7th or newer edition.

For the Faculty of Arts, the referencing style is the Chicago and Modern Language Association (MLA) styles.

For the Faculty of Law, the referencing style is the Oxford University Standard for the citation of legal authorities (OSCOLA).

APPENDICES

Supplementary materials/approvals/questionnaires

Ethical clearance (if any)

*(NB: Faculties and Departments may have specific variations***)*

2.5 Introductory Chapters

Introduction

This section provides background information on the study variables, emphasising the research problem, knowledge gaps, and justification for the study. Key components include:

- **Statement of the Problem** – Clearly defines the research focus and its contribution to the field.
- **Research Questions** – Guides data collection and analysis.
- **Objectives of the Study** – States the overall aim and specific goals.
- **Hypothesis Statement** – Presents testable assumptions based on prior observations or knowledge.
- **Significance of the Study** – Explains its impact on theory, policy, or practice.
- **Scope of the Study** – Defines the study's boundaries, including time, population, and resources.
- **Definition of Terms and Acronyms** – Clarifies key terms specific to the study.

Literature Review

This section synthesises existing studies on the subject, ensuring a logical structure and inclusion of recent research. At least **70% of references should be from the last five (5) years** to maintain relevance and currency. The review should:

- **Contextualise prior research** and its contribution to understanding the problem.
- **Establish relationships** between past studies.
- **Identify gaps** in the literature.
- **Address inconsistencies** in previous research.
- **Prevent duplication** of existing studies.
- **Highlight areas** requiring further investigation.
- **Situate the current study** within broader academic discourse.

Conceptual Framework

Defines key study variables and their relationships. Each variable should be clearly conceptualised and reviewed separately using subsections (e.g., 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, etc.).

Theoretical Framework

This section presents relevant theories and models underpinning the study. Each theory should be analysed separately in subsections (e.g., 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 2.3.4, etc.).

Chapter 3: Materials and Methods / Methodology

This section provides a **detailed breakdown of materials, methods, and research processes**, including:

- Consumable and non-consumable materials.
- Research/experimental design.
- Sample and sampling techniques.
- Research instruments, equipment, and analytical methods (statistical or otherwise).

Chapter 4: Results/data presentation and analysis should be systematic, ensuring major findings align with the research problem and questions.

Chapter 5: Discussion

- **Interpret findings**, comparing them with existing research
- **Highlight implications** and justify discrepancies with previous studies.
(*Specific requirements may vary across disciplines*).

Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

- **Summary** – Highlights key findings.
- **Conclusion** – Draws inferences based on data analysis and study objectives.
- **Recommendations** – Provides precise, practical solutions and suggests areas for future research.
- **Contributions to knowledge**: Novel insights, discoveries, theories, or perspectives from the study
- **Challenges/Limitations** – Notes any difficulties encountered.

All postgraduate students are advised to see their departmental/faculty guidelines for details of each chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

WRITING AND TYPING INSTRUCTIONS

3.1 Checklist for Project Reports, Dissertations, and Theses Writing

Postgraduate students writing their Research Projects/Dissertations/Theses are required to note the following:

- a) Are the problem statements and objectives clearly and concisely written?
- b) Have the objectives, hypotheses, and research questions been adequately addressed?
- c) Are the findings, conclusions, and recommendations clearly stated, and do they match the objectives, hypotheses, and research questions?
- d) Where necessary, are significant or potentially controversial statements supported by the literature or adequately proven by the study?
- e) Are there weaknesses in logic or mistakes in spelling or grammar?
- f) Are concepts and technical terms adequately explained?
- g) Could a major point be better presented by a table or graph?
- h) Is the Research Project/Dissertation/Thesis objective in tone?
- i) Does the title adequately describe the contents?
- j) Is the use of headings and subheadings consistent throughout the write-up?
- k) Is each paragraph essential?
- l) Does one paragraph flow naturally into the next?
- m) Are pages, tables, and charts numbered correctly?
- n) Are all the references necessary, appropriate, and relevant?
- o) Are all citations in the text listed in the reference list?
- p) Are all the listed references cited in the text?
- q) Are all the quotations correct?
- r) Is the table of contents included?
- s) Are abstract and summary of the report included?

3.2 Language and Style

- a) The Research Project/Dissertation/Thesis must be written in British English or such other language as the Senate may approve.
- b) Great care should be taken to make the Project Report/Dissertation/Thesis a scholarly contribution to knowledge, including language usage and accuracy of expression.
- c) A Research Project/Dissertation/Thesis must be accurate, precise in language, formal, and objective. Expression should normally be in the third person singular.
- d) Proper attention should be paid to such skills as correct spacing, spellings, punctuations, sentence structure, capitalisation, and the proper use of italics. Students are advised to consult a good handbook on language usage, a dictionary, a thesaurus, and a manual of style for further details. In addition, students are strongly advised to consult a language expert.
- e) The rendering of research reports should be in the past tense for the most part.

3.3 Tables

- a) Tables should be constructed such that they can be read and understood without reference to the text.
- b) Tables should be simple and present only one general kind of data or relationship as much as possible.
- c) Tables should contribute to the processes of analysis and valid generalisation of findings inherent in the original data.
- d) Tables should be inserted immediately after the page on which they have been mentioned for the first time; however, other standard styles of placement of tables, such as Modern Language Association (MLA), Vancouver, Harvard, Chicago Manual of Style (CMS), etc, may be applied.
- e) Tables based on data other than those collected directly from the investigation and/or very long tables should be inserted as Appendices at the end of the Project Report/Dissertation/Thesis.
- f) Each Table should have a self-explanatory title.
- g) Tables should be numbered throughout the Project Report/Dissertation/Thesis according to chapters, e.g., Table 2.1 denoting Chapter 2 Table 1. The text should include useful references to all tables.

- h) Tables on landscape should have their captions at the free end of the bound copy.
- i) All Tables should be discussed within the text.
- j) When typing Tables, avoid vertical lines and a minimum number of horizontal lines.
- k) The Title should be set to the extreme left above the table with the second line, where applicable, starting under the first letter of the title.
- l) The data should be set to the left under the column headings. The column headings should also be set to the left.

3.4 Figures and Plates

- a) Figures include graphs, charts, drawings, diagrams, maps (with scale and direction), and some kind of computer print-outs. The term “Figures” thus refers to any type of graphic illustration other than a Table. Figures should be clear, elegant, and simple to interpret.
- b) Figures should be numbered throughout the Project Report/Dissertation/Thesis according to chapters, e.g., Figure 2.1 denoting Chapter 2 Figure 1.
- c) Mounted illustrations, such as photographs, are usually referred to as plates. The recommended practice is to use Roman numerals to identify plates: e.g., Plate III, Plate V, etc. Where microscopic slides are used, the magnification and staining techniques must be indicated. An arrow should point to the North where the direction is relevant. The plates should not be distorted and should be in the proportional scales.
- d) Each Figure or Plate must have a concise but comprehensive caption. The caption should be typed below the figure or plate. These should be set to the left, as in the case of headings for Tables. Avoid the use of such superfluous phrases as “Graph Showing” or “Map illustrating.....” and the like.
- e) Large figures may either be neatly folded or photographically reduced to the required size. If the system of folding is selected, a large Figure should be so folded as to facilitate ease of reference to it. In using the photographic reduction technique, it should be noted that such reductions may distort relationships.

3.5 Data Presentation

The data used in drawing graphs and charts should not normally be represented in the form of Tables. However, if their representation would provide additional information, then these should be given as appendices.

3.6 Numerals and Units

- a) In the descriptive text, numerals are usually spelled out if under 10, except when they denote a unit of measurement. All other numbers should appear in Arabic numerals. Insert a comma in numerals from 1,000 and above or space out as recommended by the International System of Units. Use “first”, “second”, not “1st”, “2nd”, etc.
- b) Dates should take the form of **10 March 1982**, and not 10th March, 1982; i.e., omit “th”. Decades should be referred to without the apostrophe, e.g., **1940s**, **1960s** and not 1930's, 1950's, 1970's, etc.
- c) If you choose to use the percentage sign %, do not mix it with spelt figures or vice versa.
- d) Units of measurement should be spelled out when appearing alone in the text, but abbreviated according to standard abbreviations when used in Tables and Figures and when qualified by numbers.
- e) Metric Units should be used in all situations.

3.7 Operational Definitions/Nomenclature

(a) Definitions

Define the significant terms that:

- i) are specific to the field in which the study is being conducted;
- ii) have everyday language counterparts with which they might be confused;
- iii) are related substantively or methodologically to the Project Report/Dissertation/Thesis.

Such terms should be listed and defined carefully in the introductory chapter to provide readers with a common frame of reference added in writing the Project Report/Dissertation/Thesis.

(b) Nomenclature

All biological/Latinised/vernacular words are to be italicised, e.g., *Zea mays* L. and not Zea mays

L.

- i) **Organisms:** At their first mention, species names should be in full and backed with authorities in accordance with the appropriate international rules of nomenclature e.g., *Aphis creccivora* Kock; *Echinochloa acolona* (L) link., etc. This is followed (in brackets) by the abbreviation of the generic name, while writing the species name, e.g., *Zea mays* (*Z. mays*). Subsequently, the generic name should be initialed. Common names should be defined by the full Latin names at the first mention: e.g., maize (*Zea mays* L.) The names of the authorities should not be given subsequently. Taxa above the rank of genus should be spelt with the first letter in capital and not underlined: e.g., Aphididae, Homoptera, etc. In the case of fungi, if two names are commonly used, the perfect state name should be given with the imperfect state name in brackets, e.g., *Mycosphaerella arachidis* (Deighton), *Ceroospora arachidicola* (Hori). Variations from this standard should be communicated to the SPGS before their use in Project Reports, Dissertations, and Theses.
- ii) **Pesticides and Drugs:** Common names of pesticides and drugs which have been accepted by either the International Organisation of Standardisation or British Standards Institution should be used wherever possible. If necessary, proprietary names may be given in brackets, e.g., benomyl (Benlate F, Dupont Ltd., U.S.A.). Where there is no accepted common name, the proprietary name (spelt with initial capital letter) or code number may be used, with the name of the manufacturer given in brackets. Chemical names of all pesticides and drugs mentioned in the text should be given in an appendix.
- iii) Trade names should be followed by the designation ® as a superscript after the trade name of the product.

3.8 Abbreviations

- i) **Explain all Acronyms and Abbreviations:** A term to be abbreviated must, on its first appearance, be spelled out completely and followed immediately by its abbreviation in parentheses. Thereafter, the abbreviation may be used in the text without further explanation. **For example**, the results of studies of simple reaction time (RT) to a visual target have shown a strong negative relationship between RT and luminance. Abbreviations in a Figure or Table must always be explained in the Figure caption, Table footnote, key, or legend. An abbreviation that is used in several Figures or Tables must be explained in each Figure or Table in which the abbreviation is used.
- ii) You are advised to use standard Latin abbreviations only in parenthetical material. In non-parenthetical material, use the English translation of the Latin terms. For example,

Latin Abbreviation	English Translation
Cf	Compare
e.g	For Example
Etc	And so forth
i.e.	That is
Viz:	Namely
Vs	Versus; against

CHAPTER FOUR

GUIDELINES FOR REFERENCING IN PROJECTS/DISSERTATIONS/THESES USING APA 7TH EDITION FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

Proper credit must be given to all sources used in research. The **American Psychological Association (APA) referencing style** is adopted by the School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS), National Open University of Nigeria. **Plagiarism** is strictly prohibited; students must ensure originality in their work. The **APA 7th edition** replaced the 6th edition, 2010. Below is a detailed guide to referencing using APA 7th Edition for your project, dissertation, or thesis.

1. General Guidelines for APA 7th Edition Formatting

Your reference list is an important part of your dissertation or thesis, as it allows

readers the track to follow the cited works for further reading and acquisition of knowledge. The APA 7th Edition offers specific **rules** for formatting both in-text citations and the reference list.

- i. **Font and Spacing:** Use a 12-point Times New Roman font for the main body and the reference list. The entire document, including the reference list, should be double-spaced with no extra spaces between paragraphs or citations.
- ii. **Hanging Indent:** Each reference should have a hanging indent, meaning that all lines after the first line of each reference should be indented by 0.5 inches.
- iii. **Title of the Reference List:** The title of your reference list should be "**References**" (in bold) and centered at the top of the page.
- iv. All citations follow double-spacing format.
- v. All entries are sorted alphabetically by the first word of the entry.
- vi. A comma (,) should be used to separate an author's initials from additional author names even if there are only two authors, e.g., Samaila, M. U. & Mafiana, C. F.
- vii. Ampersand (&) should be used to conjoin multiple authors, e.g., Ailakhu, U. V., & Oritogun, F.T. (2024).
- viii. All entries are **NOT** numbered.
- ix. Italics are used for titles of books, periodicals, reports, webpages, and websites.
- x. In line with grammatical rule, only the first letter of the first word and proper nouns in the title of books, periodicals should be capitalized no matter how they appear in a database or the source.
- xi. Where no date is listed, (**n.d.**) should be used instead, e.g., Onime, L. A. (n.d.). Only one space should be used between initials.
- xii. In the reference list, surnames and initials that are up to 20 authors should all be listed. Ampersand (&) should be used before the final author's name, e.g., Author, A. A., Author, B. B. & Author, C. C.
- xiii. Titles, positions, ranks, academic achievements such as Oba, Chief, Emir, Architect (Arch.), Engineer (Engr.), Chairman, Professor etc. should not be included as entries in reference list.
- xiv. Author's surname should be written exactly as it appears in the published work including compound or hyphenated surname, e.g., Odebode-Oniye, C.
- xv. To avoid ambiguity in multiple works cited in a paper having the same author and date, the multiple citations should be differentiated with lowercase letters, e.g., Peters, O. A. (2025a), Peters, O. A. (2025b) etc.

2. In-Text Citations

In-text citation in APA has two parts:

Parenthetical Citation: In a parenthetical citation, give credit in parentheses to a source that you are quoting or paraphrasing.

The name of the author and date of publication (separated by a comma, appear in parentheses or round brackets within or at the end of a sentence, e.g., Fundamental of library education is a ... (Uduma & Uduma, 2026).

Narrative Citation: Here the author's name is embedded into the running sentence with date in parentheses or round brackets immediately after the author's name, e.g., Uduma and Uduma (2026) are of the opinion that ...

In-text citations with three or more authors, shortened form (*et al*) is now allowed right from the first citation quite unlike the 6th edition which requires full listing of all authors in the first citation and then short form with (*et al*) in the subsequent citing.

3. Reference List: Basic Elements

There are **four** basic elements in APA reference list (**Author; Date of Publication; Title of work and Source**). Your reference list should include all the sources cited in your dissertation or thesis. The reference list should appear on a separate page at the end of your work. Each entry should be formatted in a specific way depending on the source type. Examples are listed below:

a. Books:

Without DOI (Digital Object Identifier):

One author

- **Format:** Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of the book* (Edition if applicable). Publisher.
- **Example:** Okonkwo, J. D. (2025). *Research methodology in social sciences* (2nd ed.). NOUN University Press.

With DOI (Digital Object Identifier)

- **Format:** Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of the book* (Edition if applicable). Publisher.
- **Example:** Okonkwo, J. D. (2025). *Research methodology in social sciences* (2nd ed.). NOUN University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2657/xxxxx>

Without DOI (Digital Object Identifier):

Two authors

- **Format:** Author, A. A. & Author B.B. (Year). *Title of the book* (Edition if applicable). Publisher.
- **Example:** Okeke, J. D. & John, U. A. (2020). *Research methodology in social sciences* (2nd ed.). Joymab Publications.

With DOI (Digital Object Identifier):

Two authors

- **Format:** Author, A. A. & Author, C.B. (Year). *Title of the book* (Edition if applicable). Publisher.
- **Example:** Ifeoluwani, N.E. & Okon, U.R. (2020). *Research methodology in social sciences* (2nd ed.). NOUN University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2657/xxxxx>

b. Book Chapters or Edited Books:

Book chapter

- **Format:** Author, A. A. (Year). Title of the chapter. In E. E. Editor (Ed.), *Title of the book* (pp. xx-xx). Publisher.
- **Example:** Ailakhu, U. V. (2019). Women in purdah. In V. E. Unegbu (Ed.), *Information for diverse user groups*. 161-170. Jamiro Press Link.

Edited books

- **Format:** Editor, A. A. (Ed.) (Year). *Title of the book*. (Edition or Vol. No.). Publisher.
- **Example:** Ambrose, S. E. (Ed.) (2019). Exploring qualitative research methods. In S. F. Ibe (Ed.), *Research in social sciences* (45-60). NOUN University Press.

c. Journal Articles:

One author

- **Format:** Author, A. A. (Year). Title of the article. *Title of the Journal*, Volume (Issue), pages. <https://doi.org/xxxx>
- **Example:** Ailakhu, U. V. (2020). Influence of human capacity building on records management effectiveness in registries of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. *Ilorin Varsity International Journal of Library & Information Science*, 3(2), 45–64.

Multiple authors

- **Example:** Nkata, K., Elem, G. Ailakhu, U. V. & Christian, J. (2022). The new normal, artificial intelligence, and higher education in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *Gloryland International Journal of Library and Information Science & Education*, 1(1), 13–26.

d. Websites:

- **Format:** Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). Title of the webpage. Website Name. URL
- **Example:** Mayowa-Adebara, O. (2021, March 3). Understanding artificial intelligence in the 21st century. *Environmental News*. <https://www.environmentalnews.com/climate-change>

e. Government or Organisational Reports:

- **Format:** Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of the report* (Report No. xxx). Publisher. URL (if applicable)
- **Example:** Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance and Open Learning. (2020). *The state of the world's oceans* (UN Report No. 123). RETRIDOL. <https://www.retridol/noun-edu>

f. Theses and Dissertations:

Published

- **Format:** Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of the dissertation or thesis* (Publication No. xxx) [Doctoral dissertation, University Name]. Database or Archive.
- **Example:** Anyikwa, I. N. (2018). *Examining the effects of urbanization on wildlife conservation* (Publication No. 1098) [Doctoral dissertation, National Open University of Nigeria]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Unpublished

- **Format:** Author, A. A. (Year). *Title of the dissertation or thesis* (Publication No. xxx) [Doctoral dissertation, University Name]. Database or Archive.
- **Example:** Ailakhu, U.V. (2018). *Human capacity building, job satisfaction and records management effectiveness of registers in federal universities in Nigeria* [Unpublished doctoral thesis], Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.

g. Conference Papers:

- **Format:** Author, A. A. (Year). Title of the paper. In E. E. Editor (Ed.), *Title of the conference proceedings* (pp. xx–xx). Publisher. <https://doi.org/xxxx>
- **Example:** Akanbiemu, A. A. (2024). Harnessing Indigenous Knowledge Systems to Empower Women in Africa: A Systematic Literature Review, *Proceedings of the Faculty of Arts 1st International Conference on Humanities in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)* (pp.56–63). NOUN University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/noun.2020.0625>

4. Special Cases and Considerations:

a. No author:

- If the author is unknown, start with the title of the work in place of the author's name.
- **Example:** *The global economy in 2020*. (2020). Oxford University Press.

b. Multiple authors:

- For works with two or more authors, list all authors in the reference, separating them by commas. Use an ampersand (&) before the last author's name.
- For more than 20 authors, list the first 19 authors followed by an ellipsis (...) and then the last author's name (**no ampersand**).

c. Personal Communications:

- Personal communications, such as emails or interviews, are not included in the reference list but should be cited in-text.
- **Example:** (Eze, personal communication, May 5, 2021).

d. Secondary Sources:

If you refer to a source mentioned within another source, cite the original author and then the secondary source. **Example:** (Onyia, 2018, as cited in Owolabi, 2020).

CHAPTER FIVE

PROJECTS, DISSERTATIONS AND THESES MANAGEMENT

5.1 Submission of Projects and Dissertations for External Examination

- a) Upon completion of project/dissertation, the student shall submit a soft-bound copy of his/her work at the Study Centre, and an electronic copy in MS-Word to the designated email of the Study Centre Director or the designated Desk Officer.
- b) The supervisor shall forward the assessment report in the approved format to the Study Centre Director or the Desk Officer. This should be done directly and never through the student.
- c) Upon receipt of the project/dissertation, the Study Centre shall assess the project for compliance with the approved standards, and conducts *Turnitin* plagiarism test (which must not exceed 30% similarity index).
- d) The Study Centre shall upload the cleared project/dissertation on the Project Administration System (PAS) in line with approved postgraduate calendar.
- e) The Department shall assigned uploaded projects/dissertation to approved External Examiner in line with the approved postgraduate calendar, and prepare and communicate timetable to stakeholders.
- f) The timetable for the oral defence of Master's dissertations shall be detailed and well-structured, with students grouped by Study Centre for each examination panel. No panel shall be scheduled to examine more than ten (10) to twelve (12) students per day.
- g) External Examiners shall have a minimum of two (2) weeks to review assigned dissertation before the scheduled date of defence, and are required to forward a reported in the approved format to Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies, through the Head of Department 7 working days after the examination.

5.2 Submission of Theses for External Examination

- a) The candidate shall forward ten (10) soft-bound copies of his/her Thesis respectively to the Head of Department (HOD) through the Chairman of the Supervisory Committee after successful Internal Defence/Post-Field at the Department/Faculty.
- b) The Head of Department, in consultation with the Departmental Postgraduate Committee, shall certify that the Thesis conforms to all the conditions stipulated in the Guidelines, and forward same to the Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies, alongside the list of nominated Examiners (Internal and External).
- c) The Dean, in consultation with the Department, agrees on a date for the doctoral defence, and then constitutes the Panel of examiners, while the Secretary, SPGS, communicates the decisions and copies of the thesis to members of the panel.

5.3 Binding

- a) Projects/Dissertations/Theses shall be permanently bound only after the oral examination and making all necessary corrections and alterations pointed out during the moderation/examination
- b) The spine of each Project/Dissertation/Thesis shall be lettered boldly in gold to indicate the degree, month, year and name of the candidate.
- c) PhD Theses shall be in **dark-green** colour, Master's Dissertations shall be **black** in colour, while PGD shall be in **navy-blue**.
- d) The caption on the cover page shall be as indicated in section 2.1.1.

5.4 Endorsement of Bound Copies of Project Reports, Dissertations and Theses

Bound copies of Project Reports, Dissertations and Theses are to be endorsed by the Supervisory Committee, HOD and Dean, SPGS.

5.5 Number of Copies

A minimum of four (4) copies of hard-bound, approved project/dissertation shall be submitted through the Study Centre for distribution as follows:

- (a) Study Centre Library
- (b) Department
- (c) Supervisor
- (d) Student

Ten (10) copies of hard-bound approved Thesis shall be submitted through the Head of Department to the SPGS for endorsement and distribution as follows:

- (a) University Library
- (b) Departmental Library
- (c) Faculty Library
- (d) School of Postgraduate Studies Library (2 copies)
- (e) Chairman and other members of the Supervisory Committee
- (f) Internal Examiner
- (g) Student

5.6 Submission of Hard and Electronic Copies of Dissertations /Theses to SPGS

Electronic copies of corrected projects/dissertations shall be submitted to the Study Centres alongside the hard copies, while that of theses shall be submitted to the SPGS.

5.7 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of using another person's ideas, writings, or work without proper acknowledgment. Students often face uncertainty about when to cite sources or assume a concept is general knowledge. As a rule, when in doubt, provide a reference. Citations are required for discoveries, theories, controversies, opinions, as well as methods, procedures, illustrations, charts, and tables of data.

The following guidelines apply:

- a) All Projects/Dissertations/Theses must undergo screening using the University-approved plagiarism detection software (*Turnitin*) before submission for External Examination.
- b) Only projects that meet the approved similarity index shall be slated for external examination as follows:
 - Projects/Dissertations: The Maximum allowable similarity index is 30%.
 - Theses: Maximum allowable similarity index is 20%
- c) Any work found to be plagiarised shall be withdrawn, and the student's candidature may be terminated.

5.8 Publication and Upload of Dissertation/Thesis Summaries

Outstanding theses at the National Open University of Nigeria shall be published annually, with electronic versions made available on the University's website.

5.9 Internal and External Assessment of Theses for Awards

- a) Each Faculty shall establish an assessment committee to review submitted Theses annually and select the top three.
- b) A Central Assessment Committee, comprising Heads of Complexes, shall evaluate the Faculty-selected Theses and determine the University's top three for the year.
- c) The selected Theses will form the basis for NOUN's participation in the National Universities Commission's (NUC) 'Best Thesis Competitions' and potential publication in a book by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).

CHAPTER SIX

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICES/OFFICERS IN THE CONDUCT OF POSTGRADUATE MODERATION AND DEFENCE

6.1 Introduction

The roles and responsibilities of officers/offices involved in the conduct of external defence and moderation of research projects, dissertations, and theses are hereby detailed below.

All stakeholders, particularly departments and study centres, are to note that the official email for the dissemination of information regarding external examinations conducted through the Project Administration System is the faciliatorsclaims@noun.edu.ng. As such, no correspondence on the foregoing that is sent to any other official email of the School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS) shall be entertained.

Stakeholders are to ensure that no student is intimidated, denigrated, or verbally abused during defence, and everyone should be treated with courtesy and mutual respect. The panelists should ensure that the students are made comfortable during their presentation.

6.2 School of Postgraduate Studies

The School of Postgraduate Studies shall ensure the following:

1. Provide overall coordination over the examination of research projects and dissertations during external moderation and oral defence across departments and study centres, ensuring uniformity, integrity, and adherence to University regulations.
2. Work closely with the Directorate of Learning Content Management System (DLCMS) to facilitate an efficient and seamless management of external examination activities on the PAS.
3. Develop and issue official guidelines, policies, and timelines governing the conduct of external moderation and defence exercises across all postgraduate programmes.
4. Ensure that External Examiners are duly appointed, approved, and provided with all necessary documentation.
5. Monitor and observe the conduct of defence sessions to ensure they meet established academic and quality assurance standards of the University.
6. Maintain comprehensive records of defence outcomes and communicate approved results to the Directorate of Examination and Assessment (DEA) for further processing and official release.
7. Process the claims of examiners.

6.3 Heads of Departments (HODs) and the Departments

1. Upon receipt of the communication for the commencement of external moderation and defence, the Head of Department (HOD) is to liaise with members of the Departmental Postgraduate Committee to work out a schedule for the conduct of both internal moderation and external moderation/defence.
2. The HOD bears ultimate responsibility for the proper coordination and conduct of all moderation and defence exercises within the Department. However, the HOD may delegate specific aspects of this responsibility to a qualified academic staff member **not below the rank of Senior Lecturer** and who is a member of the Departmental Postgraduate Committee. The HOD must ensure that all defence exercises are carried out in accordance with established procedures, and that all scores, reports, and related documentation are duly completed and returned to the SPGS within the stipulated timeframe.
3. The Department, through the HOD, shall nominate eligible External Examiners for consideration and approval by relevant university authorities. The nominees must be:
 - a. Distinguished academics and leaders of thought in their respective disciplines.
 - b. Of professorial rank, with evidence of continuous research and scholarly publications, the most recent of which should not be later than the year preceding the nomination.
 - c. IT-savvy and proficient.
 - d. Individuals without any current affiliation with the University, whether as adjuncts, facilitators, supervisors, examiners, course writers/editors, or visiting/sabbatical staff.
 - e. The nomination process should reflect transparency, academic merit, and adherence to institutional quality assurance standards.
 - f. The nomination of External Examiners shall be carried out in consultation with members of the Departmental Postgraduate Committee, ensuring an equitable spread across the nation's geopolitical zones - with reference to institutional affiliation rather than state of origin or ethnicity.
 - g. Each submission for the appointment of External Examiners must be accompanied by the following:
 - i. A copy of the nominee's Curriculum Vitae (CV).
 - ii. A letter of institutional affiliation from the nominee's home institution.
 - iii. Minutes of the Departmental Postgraduate Committee meeting where the nominations were considered.
 - iv. The complete nomination package shall be forwarded through the Dean of Faculty to the School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS) for consideration and approval.
4. Prior to the commencement of the moderation and defence exercises, the HOD shall convene a meeting with all examiners to clarify expectations, procedures, and institutional regulations. Only examiners who express willingness and demonstrate readiness to fully comply with the University's extant rules and guidelines shall be enlisted to participate in the exercise.
5. The HOD shall ensure that only active and functional virtual defence links are circulated, alongside the approved defence timetable to all concerned study centres at least one week before the scheduled defence. This is to guarantee smooth coordination and effective participation of all stakeholders.

6. Timetables for the oral defence shall be well-structured, with each student assigned a specific date and time for their appearance. No more than ten (10) to twelve (12) students shall be scheduled for defence per panel on any single day.
7. The School of Postgraduate Studies reserves the right to disapprove of the inclusion of any examiner who, in previous moderation or defence exercises, demonstrated non-compliance, unwillingness, or inability to adhere to established rules, procedures, and timelines.
8. Upon conclusion of the moderation and defence exercise, the HOD shall vet, collate, and forward all examiners' reports (both internal and external), together with duly completed claims forms of External Examiner, to the SPGS. The HOD must ensure that all documents are accurate, complete, and in line with prescribed formats before submission.
9. HODs shall be held personally accountable for the submission of unverified claims, or for any claim submitted on behalf of examiners who failed to correctly capture comments or scores of students on the PAS. Due diligence and proper verification must therefore be exercised before forwarding such claims to the SPGS.

6.4 Internal Examiners

Internal Examiners for PGD and Master's moderation/defence are to:

1. Ensure prompt moderation of non-examinable courses (seminar, teaching practice and practicum) assigned to them by the HOD or designated representative on the PAS.
2. Serve as chair and moderator (on behalf of the HOD) for oral defence sessions as may be assigned by HOD.
3. Ensure the orderly conduct of the oral defence, allowing only students whose names appear on the approved timetable to participate. Internal Examiners must also ensure strict adherence to the official defence schedule.
4. Respect the time of both students and departmental officers by ensuring punctuality and smooth transitions between sessions. Internal Examiners **must not unilaterally reschedule or alter** the date or time of any defence without prior approval from the HOD, who will, in turn, notify the SPGS.
5. Before the commencement of each defence, confirm the presence of the student's supervisor, and obtain verbal confirmation that the supervisor personally supervised and approved the final version of the dissertation.
6. Verify that each student:
 - a. Joins the virtual defence from a conducive and appropriate environment;
 - b. Is neatly and professionally dressed;
 - c. Has an active video feed throughout the session; and
 - d. Uses an acceptable PowerPoint presentation in slideshow mode.

Students joining from noisy environments, without video, or without an appropriate presentation shall not be allowed to proceed with the defence.

7. Keep detailed records of all students who appeared for the defence as well as those who were absent. This record shall be used to **verify and audit** the comments and scores of the External Examiner on the PAS and in the final report, before submission to the SPGS through the HOD.

6.5 External Examiners

An approved External Examiner for PGD and Master's moderation/defence shall:

1. Under no circumstance, examine any student for oral defence unless he or she has been duly assigned to that student on the PAS. The Examiner must have read the work thoroughly and made detailed notes before the scheduled date of the defence.
2. Be prohibited from having direct interactions with Study Centres, Desk Officers, or students. All correspondence and interactions shall be through the HOD and designated Internal Examiners. In rare cases, the SPGS may directly contact the External Examiner for clarification.
3. Not assign scores to dissertations prior to oral defence. However, they are required to carefully review the submitted work, provide constructive comments, and upload the reviewed soft copy with tracked changes on the PAS immediately the defence.
4. Under no circumstance should an External Examiner award a score to an academic Master's student who did not appear for oral defence.
5. Provide detailed, chapter-by-chapter comments on the PAS for each work examined. These comments should be sufficient to guide students in making meaningful corrections. Purely editorial remarks or one-line comments that show a lack of critical engagement with the dissertation are strictly prohibited.
6. Not take up the role to upload an edited version of the student's work or offer eulogies in the comments section on the PAS. The Examiner's role is to critically appraise the work, highlighting areas for improvement and providing academic guidance to aid the student in implementing necessary corrections.
7. Recuse self from examining any student with whom there exists a personal relationship or any circumstance that could compromise objectivity and fairness in the examination process.
8. Not upload scoresheet as the External Examiner's file, nor should scores be entered in the field designated for External Examiner's comments on the PAS.
9. Ensure that comments are impartial and consistent with scores, and that scoring is strictly based on the rubrics approved by the Department (which must include a score for presentation in the case of oral defence). Consequently, a priori award of round/block scores is not allowed.
10. Select the mandatory field for defence/moderation outcome, ensuring that the checked option is consistent with the score awarded (or not scored) as follows:
 - a. Defence: Student was absent
 - b. Defended: Passed with minimum corrections
 - c. Defended: Passed with major corrections
 - d. Defended/Moderated: Failed; to repeat (< 50%)
 - e. Moderated: Passed with minimum corrections
 - f. Moderated: Passed with major corrections
 - g. Stepped Down: Incomplete work uploaded
 - h. Stepped Down: No preliminary pages uploaded

- i. Stepped Down: No ethical clearance
 - j. Stepped Down: Plagiarised work
11. Ensure that all comments and scores are duly uploaded on the PAS. Reports on the outcome of the exercise must also be submitted to the Department within **ten (10) working days** of concluding the examination.
 12. Not unduly delay the completion of the exercise by withholding scores and reports beyond the stipulated timeframe. Defaulters shall be **blacklisted** and disqualified from further engagements with the University.

Payment of honoraria shall be subject to the timely submission of reports and scores both on and off the PAS within **ten (10) working days** after the oral defence or and within two (2) weeks of the assignment of projects or dissertations for moderation. Failure to comply with these provisions, or with any other related regulation, shall result in non-payment and termination of engagement.

6.6 Study Centre Directors and Desk Officers

Directors of Study Centres are responsible for the effective coordination and supervision of the activities of Desk Officers. They must ensure that all relevant information is promptly disseminated and that Desk Officers fully comply with established procedures for postgraduate moderation and defence. Directors and desk officers are to:

1. Abide strictly by the approved timetable for uploads, ensuring that all cleared submissions are correctly uploaded on the PAS before the deadline.
2. Carefully review all submissions on the PAS and immediately draw the attention of the SPGS and the DLCMS) to any observed errors or discrepancies.
3. Route all complaints or requests for modification of submissions already made on the PAS to the SPGS for proper authorisation and resolution.
4. Ensure that students are duly informed of the approved date and time of their oral defence, and that only students who are adequately prepared and listed on the approved timetable are presented for defence.
5. Ensure that comments and reviewed soft copies received from External Examiners are promptly forwarded to the concerned students after the external examination.
6. Follow up with students to ensure the completion of all required corrections and the upload of the final, corrected copies of projects or dissertations on the PAS within the stipulated timeframe.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GUIDELINES FOR THE ETHICAL USE OF AI IN POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH WRITING

7.1 Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools can sometimes give wrong, biased, or made-up information. They do not truly understand context and may break copyright or plagiarism rules, which means it must always be checked carefully. In other words, the responsible use of AI is not only an ethical duty but also an invaluable tool for enhancing research quality and accelerating new knowledge production.

These guidelines are meant to provide a clear direction for postgraduate students and supervising staff on the ethical and responsible use of AI tools in research and academic writing. These guidelines align with the following existing institutional policies:

- i. Policy on the Adoption of Artificial Intelligence in NOUN
- ii. NOUN Policy on Plagiarism
- iii. NOUN Policy on Research Ethics and Procedure
- iv. NOUN Data Centre Policy
- v. Policy on Assessment
- vi. NOUN Quality Assurance Policies, Processes, and Procedures
- vii. Institutional Periodic Quality Assurance Audit

7.2.0 Dos and Don'ts of AI

7.2.1 Don'ts of AI

Students are not permitted to use AI tools for the following:

- i. Use AI without adequate subject knowledge.
- ii. Generating any part of a project, dissertation, or thesis (e.g., literature review, methodology, data analysis, discussion, coding, or scholarly writing).
- iii. Replacing essential academic resources such as textbooks, peer-reviewed articles, or academic databases with AI-generated content.
- iv. Relying on AI outputs without adequate subject knowledge or critical evaluation.
- v. Uploading full academic documents or sensitive materials to AI platforms.
- vi. Performing data analysis for research without proper academic oversight or approval.
- vii. Employ AI for solution generation, coding, or scholarly writing.
- viii. Rely on AI in place of textbooks, peer-reviewed articles, or academic databases.
- ix. Upload their work to AI tools for assistance (due to data privacy and originality risks).
- x. Use AI for data analysis in their research.
- xi. AI should not make academic decisions on students behalf.

7.2.2 Dos of AI

Students **may** use AI for:

- i. Minor proof-reading with tools like *Grammarly* for language refinement may be used, but should not be used re-write substantive content.
- ii. Idea Generation: in which case AI may be used for cautious brainstorming, always with academic guidance.
- iii. Arranging references (e.g., into APA 7th edition), provided the final references are verified by the student.
- iv. Complementary Search: Using AI alongside, not in place of, academic search tools (e.g., *Google Scholar*, library databases).
- v. When the thesis or dissertation's core focus is the development, analysis, or application of AI technologies itself (e.g., developing Large Language Models, studying AI system performance), the use of AI tools as an integral research object or method may be permissible. In such cases, the methodology, extent, and output of AI use must be thoroughly justified, transparently documented in the thesis, and specifically approved by the supervisor. This exception does not permit AI to generate thesis content beyond its role as a research object or method.
- vi. All use of AI must be clearly mentioned, including what it was used for and how it was applied.
- vii. Students must maintain control over their work; AI must not make independent academic decisions.
- viii. Students are encouraged to develop AI literacy and engage in training sessions for responsible use.

7.3 Academic Integrity & Misconduct

Violations of these guidelines, including unauthorised AI use, may constitute academic misconduct and will result in disciplinary measures. Supervisors and assessors are responsible for enforcing these guidelines and educating students on AI ethics.

7.4 Recommendations

- i. Students should take responsibility for understanding and applying these guidelines diligently.
- ii. Supervisors should provide guidance and actively monitor AI use in their students' research work from the point of conceptualisation of title to conclusion.

Note: These guidelines are a living document and will evolve with advancements in AI technology and academic standards.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8.0 MANAGING DUTIES AND RIGHTS IN THE SUPERVISION PROCESS

8.1 Relationship between Supervisor and Supervisee

The relationship between a postgraduate supervisor and a supervisee is an academic partnership built on mutual respect, trust and open communication. To achieve the goal of scholarly excellence, commitment, professionalism and integrity are important. Unlike in an undergraduate setting, this relationship goes beyond teaching and learning. It is focused more on mentorship aimed at guiding the student to become an independent researcher and scholar.

8.1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

There is the need for clarity of roles and responsibilities between supervisors and supervisees for a postgraduate research journey to be successful.

8.1.1.1 What is expected of a Supervisor

- i. Acts as a mentor, providing guidance in formulating research question, developing methodology, and navigating the complexities of the student's field of study.
- ii. Monitors the student's progress and provides timely, constructive feedback by setting and agreeing on milestones with the student.
- iii. Ensures that the student understands and adheres to research ethics and institutional guidelines, and guides the student in obtaining ethical clearance where necessary.
- iv. Reads and comments on manuscripts within an agreed timeframe, advise on the organisation, clarity, referencing, and academic rigour of the work.
- v. Advises on the readiness of the work for submission while guiding the student in preparing for external defence.
- vi. Ensures the student is aware of and adheres to university policies and regulations.
- vii. Helps the student gain broader professional skills, such as presenting at conferences and networking with other academics.
- viii. Provides honest, clear, and constructive feedback.
- ix. Be conversant with the SPGS/faculty guidelines in writing project, dissertation and thesis, and refer the student to do same.
- x. Be abreast of currency of trends, locally, nationally, and internationally in the chosen field of the supervisee.
- xi. Note and keep records of all interactions with a supervisee.
- xii. In situations or aspect of the research where the supervisor has no or limited knowledge, he/she is encouraged to direct the supervisee to a colleague for assistance, but such referral must not be a basis for abuse or extortion of the student.
- xiii. Encourage the publication of a postgraduate research work. Any publication emanating from such research must be co-authored, with the student as the lead author (never the supervisor).
- xiv. Submit scoresheets for PGD and master's research electronically or in person to the director of the study centre director or his/her designated representative. Where the login details to the Project Administration System (PAS) are provided, the supervisor is to upload the score directly.

8.1.1.2 What a Supervisor should not do

A supervisor must not do the following:

- i. Hold meetings with a student outside his or her office or designated study centre.
- ii. Request or accept any form of gratification, whether in cash or kind from the supervisee under any circumstance or guise.
- iii. Discriminate against a supervisee on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, socioeconomic status or personal beliefs.
- iv. Intentionally withhold or delay constructive feedback on the supervisee's work without justifiable reasons.
- v. Take undue credit for the supervisee's research, publish their work without consent and or acknowledgment, or use it for personal gain.
- vi. Assign personal tasks unrelated to academic work to the supervisee.
- vii. Avoid any form of relationship with a supervisee that could compromise professional judgment, including romantic or overly familiar associations.
- viii. Disclose a supervisee's research data, personal information, or academic challenges to anyone without the consent of the supervisee.
- ix. Repeatedly cancel meetings, fail to respond to communications, or show a lack of interest in the supervisee's progress.
- x. Intimidate, verbally abuse, or humiliate a supervisee in any setting or under any guise.
- xi. Endorse a research work or any part thereof without properly scrutinising and certifying it to have met minimum standards and institutional guidelines.

8.1.1.3 What is expected of a Supervisee (Student)

A supervisee should do the following:

- i. Take primary responsibility for the research work. This includes demonstrating initiative, meeting agreed timelines, take minutes of meetings (with a copy kept with the supervisor), seeking guidance as necessary, and incorporating feedback provided by the supervisor.
- ii. Maintain regular communication with the supervisor and adhere to institutional and departmental guidelines.
- iii. Move beyond simply following instructions of the supervisor(s) to also critically examining their own work and contributing original ideas.
- iv. Maintain a consistent line of communication with the supervisor, reporting both successes and challenges.
- v. Manage time effectively, take ownership of the work, and uphold personal and academic integrity.

8.1.1.4 What a Supervisee should not do

A supervisee should not do the following:

- i. Allowed to meet with a supervisor in any location outside the supervisor's official office or designated study centre.
- ii. Must not give or promise any form of gratification whether in cash or kind to the supervisor under any circumstance or guise.
- iii. Must not present fabricated, falsified, or plagiarised work to the supervisor.
- iv. Repeatedly miss agreed submission dates or meeting schedules without valid reasons or prior notice.
- v. Deliberately disregard feedback, corrections, or instructions that are essential to the progress of the research.
- vi. Disclose sensitive research data, communications, or unpublished findings without proper authorisation.
- vii. Use disrespectful, abusive, or intimidating language towards the supervisor or in any official communication.

- viii. Request the supervisor to manipulate grades, overlook academic deficiencies, or bypass established academic procedures.
- ix. Falsely attribute statements, approvals, or academic endorsements to the supervisor without their consent.
- x. Publish any part of the research work without the consent of the supervisor and their inclusion in the authorship (a supervisor cannot waive his right to be included in the list of author for a work he supervised).

8.1.1.5 What is Expected of Both Supervisor and Supervisee

At the beginning of the supervisor-supervisee engagement, there should be a meeting called by the supervisor (or main supervisor in the case of doctoral programme) to reach an agreement on the following:

- i. Discuss the title and focus of the research
- ii. Establish a clear understanding of their respective roles from the onset.
- iii. Maintain regular, purposeful meetings and follow agreed schedules.
- iv. Engage in open and respectful communication.
- v. Keep records of supervisory meetings and feedback.
- vi. Address disagreements or misunderstandings promptly and professionally.
- vii. Develop a professional relationship that should evolve as the research nears completion.
- viii. Respect each other's time, expertise, and boundaries are crucial.

Both supervisor and supervisee are encouraged to publish their research in recognised high impact journals. Thus, it is the primary responsibility of the supervisor(s) to provide the necessary leadership and guidance to produce high quality work that meets acceptable standards, while paying due attention to the rules on authorship as already explained in sections 8.1.1.1 and 8.1.1.4.

8.1.1.6 Common Challenges

Despite its importance, the postgraduate supervision relationship can face several challenges:

- i. **Power Imbalance:** The inherent power dynamic can make it difficult for students to express concerns or disagree with their supervisor.
- ii. **Poor Communication:** Unclear expectations, infrequent meetings, or a lack of constructive feedback can lead to delays and frustration.
- iii. **Mismatch of Expectations:** Discrepancies between what the students expect from the supervisor and what the supervisor is willing or able to provide can be a significant source of conflict.
- iv. **Supervisor Workload:** Supervisors often have heavy teaching and administrative loads, which can limit their availability and attention to each student.
- v. **Institutional Issues:** Administrative procedures, policy and operational matters, service provision and technical glitches, unforeseen environmental challenges, etc.

Addressing these issues requires a mutual commitment to respect, open dialogue, with a focus on successful research and completion of degree.

8.1.1.7 Resolution of Issues

In cases where concerns arise in the supervisor-supervisee relationship at the doctoral level, such as lack of progress, breakdown of communication, or academic disagreements, the matter should be reported to the Head of Department (HOD) through the relevant Coordinator. The HOD in consultation with the departmental Postgraduate Committee can arbitrate/intervene in disputes between supervisors and supervisees. If unresolved, the HOD is expected to escalate such matters to the SPGS for appropriate intervention in line with institutional procedures.

Where similar issues arise at the PGD and master's level, the supervisor or the student is to report to the director of the study centre or his designated representative who is expected to resolve the issue or escalate to the HOD and then to the SPGS if the need arises.

Every supervisor/student can request through the Study Centre (for PGD and master's) or PhD coordinator to the HOD, with reason(s), to change a student/supervisor. In both cases, the HOD must consult and notify the other party before taking a decision. Under no circumstance should a student be reassigned from a supervisor at the student's request without first hearing from the supervisor and formally notifying him/her of the change.

And where a student's supervisor is changed, the title of the research is to change and the student is to start afresh, except if former supervisor's consent is obtained in writing or the departmental postgraduate committee decides otherwise.

However, both supervisor and students have the right to directly petition the SPGS where they feel their rights and privileges as laid out in this handbook have not been duly accorded. In such instance, they must prove that they have exhausted all internal mechanisms set out above.

The **supervisor-supervisee relationship** is central to the successful completion of postgraduate research work, and it thrives on mutual respect, shared responsibility, and open communication.

8.2 Relationship among Members of Supervisory Team

In postgraduate research, particularly at the doctoral level, there should be at least two (2) supervisors. The effectiveness of the supervision process depends significantly on the quality of collaboration and communication among these members. As such members of doctoral supervisory team are to note the following:

- i. Roles and responsibilities among team members should be explicitly agreed upon at the onset to avoid overlap, duplication of efforts, or neglect of certain duties.
- ii. Team members must be professional, respect each other's expertise, perspectives, and contributions, recognising that each plays a vital role in supporting the student's progress.
- iii. Regular communication should be encouraged among members where periodic meetings are held either jointly with the supervisee or individually, to discuss progress, challenges, and next steps.
- iv. Team members should, as much as possible, present consistent advice and avoid giving conflicting instructions to the supervisee. Any differences of opinion should be resolved internally before they are communicated to the student.
- v. While the main supervisor has primary responsibility, all team members share accountability for the supervisee's academic development and the quality of the research output.

- vi. Disagreements should be addressed professionally; focusing on what best serves the student's academic progress and the integrity of the research.
- vii. Team members should promote an atmosphere that encourages open dialogue, constructive feedback, and collective problem-solving.
- viii. Where dispute arises among members of supervisory team, it should be resolved at departmental and faculty levels. Otherwise, it should be referred to the SPGS.
- ix. On no account should a member of the supervisory team continue to meet with the student consistently without the knowledge or input of the other supervisor(s).
- x. Pending when the supervision logbook is fully built into the PAS, Supervisors are strongly encouraged to use collaborative software such as MS Team and Google Drive to enhance efficiency in the supervision process, allow for single submission of manuscripts by student, and concurrence in the comments/views of members of supervisor team.

8.3 Carrying Capacity for Postgraduate Supervision

The maximum allowable number of postgraduate students that can be supervised by a supervisor in a semester is as follow:

1. PGD/Master's: 20
2. PhD: 5

8.4 Responsibilities of the SPGS

The School of Postgraduate Studies (SPGS) superintends over the administration of postgraduate programmes on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor and the Senate. As such, it is saddled with ensuring adherence to all policies, guidelines and rules pertaining to the administration of postgraduate programmes in the University.

It also mediate/arbitrates disputes between supervisors and supervisees, and members of the supervisory committee.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Cover Page

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PROSPECT, CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS OF
ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNALISM ON SUSTAINABLE MEDIA DEVELOPMENT IN
THE 21ST CENTURY**

By

MOHAMMED, ABDULLATEEF

NOU215008465

OCTOBER 2024

Appendix II

Title Page

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PROSPECT, CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS OF
ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNALISM ON SUSTAINABLE MEDIA DEVELOPMENT IN
THE 21ST CENTURY**

By

MOHAMMED, ABDULLATEEF

BSc (ABU Zaria, 2017); MSc (NOUN, 2020)

NOU215008465

**A PROJECT REPORT/DISSERTATION/THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT
OF MASS COMMUNICATION, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, NATIONAL OPEN
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.) IN MASS
COMMUNICATION**

OCTOBER 2024

Appendix III

ABSTRACT

The rise of digital technologies has disrupted traditional journalism, leading to job insecurity and necessitating innovation. Entrepreneurial journalism (EJ) has emerged as a potential solution to these challenges, yet research in this field has primarily focused on Western contexts, leaving gaps in understanding the unique dynamics in regions such as Nigeria. This study addresses this gap by evaluating EJ's opportunities and challenges within Nigeria's media industry and its implications for sustainable media development. Five key objectives guided this research: a meta-analysis of global EJ studies over the past decade, an exploration of Nigerian media entrepreneurs' motivations and strategies, an evaluation of media entrepreneurs' sustainability practices, an assessment of final-year journalism students' perceptions of their EJ education, and an analysis of their career interests in EJ. The study reviewed five theories that aided the analysis of the subject matter, including Metamorphosis, Media Dependency, Uses and Gratifications, Technological Determinism, and Diffusion of Innovation, with the latter two serving as the main theoretical frameworks. The research adopted a triangulation design, involving meta-analysis, in-depth interviews, and surveys to draw insights. Findings from the meta-analysis revealed a surge in EJ research, particularly between 2015-2020, with 66% of studies published during this period. The concentration of EJ research in the United States (20%) and Spain (19%) and other Western and European countries contrasted sharply with the lack of significant research on EJ in Nigeria – a country with a fast-growing entrepreneurial journalism landscape. The survey results indicated that while 52% of the studied Nigerian journalism students felt they received adequate training in the economic aspects of journalism, a significant portion (63%) noted the limited availability of courses on media entrepreneurship and lack of interaction with professional entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, 87% expressed a desire to pursue EJ, with high interest in digital news publishing (82%), podcasting (73%), and freelance writing (64%). Statistical analysis revealed significant correlations between training quality and career interest ($r = 0.663$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that better-quality EJ education is associated with higher interest in pursuing an EJ career. Additionally, entrepreneurial competencies were strongly correlated with interest in EJ practice ($r = 0.893$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that students with higher self-rated entrepreneurial skills are more inclined to explore EJ opportunities. The in-depth interviews with Nigerian media entrepreneurs demonstrated a strong motivation for creative autonomy and a commitment to overcoming market competition through networking, strategic partnerships, and continuous learning. These entrepreneurs employed diverse revenue models, including sponsored content, consultancy, affiliate marketing, and Google AdSense monetisation. However, they also faced ethical challenges in balancing objectivity with revenue generation. Despite these challenges, most expressed resilience and a willingness to continue in the EJ field, with those possessing formal journalism training leveraging their storytelling skills and professional ethics to stand out. The study recommends enhancing journalism curricula with specialised entrepreneurial modules, conducting localised research on entrepreneurial journalism and publishing in reputable sources, fostering collaboration between academia and industry, and providing support mechanisms for emerging digital news ventures to bridge the existing gaps.

Appendix IV

Table of Contents

Chapter One.....	1
Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background to The Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of The Problem.....	5
1.3 Research Aim.....	7
1.4 Research Objectives.....	7
1.5 Research Questions.....	7
1.6 Research Hypotheses.....	8
1.7 Significance Of Study.....	8
1.8 Scope of Study.....	9
1.9 Operationalisation Of Concepts.....	10
Chapter Two.....	13
Literature Review.....	13
2.1 Conceptual Review.....	13
2.1.1 Meaning of Entrepreneurial Journalism.....	13
2.1.2 Who is an Entrepreneurial Journalist?.....	15
2.1.3 Historical Development of Entrepreneurial Journalism in Nigeria.....	16
2.1.4 Entrepreneurial Journalism Education.....	20
2.1.5 Entrepreneurial Journalism and the Freelance Media Market.....	24
2.1.6 Entrepreneurial Journalism and the Freelance Media Market.....	29
2.1.7 The Digital Tool-Kits in Entrepreneurial Journalism.....	30
1. Websites and Blogs as Virtual News Companies.....	30
2. Content Syndication and Audience Engagement Technologies.....	32
3. Traffic Tracking Technologies in Entrepreneurial Journalism.....	35
4. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) Tools for Entrepreneurial news Sites.....	37
5. Podcasting Technologies and Entrepreneurial Journalism.....	38
2.1.8 Digital Audiences, Digital Natives and Digital News Gathering.....	41
2.1.9 Monetising Journalism: Popular Strategies and Business Models.....	44

2. 10 Challenges of Entrepreneurial Journalism	50
1. Ethical Pitfalls and Concerns in Entrepreneurial Journalism.....	50
2. Legal Issues in Nigerian Entrepreneurial Journalism Practice	50
3. Volatility of Digital Platforms and Audiences in Entrepreneurial Journalism	55
2.2 Theoretical Review	57
I. The Mediamorphosis Theory.....	57
II. Media Systems Dependency Theory.....	58
III. The Uses and Gratification Theory.....	59
IV. Technological Determinism.....	59
V. The Diffusion of Innovation Theory.....	59
2.2.1 Theoretical Framework	60
2.2.2 Technological Determinism: A Peek into Journalism’s Future Frome the Past?	60
2.2.3 The Diffusion of Innovation Theory: Illuminating the Path to Innovation in Journalism?...	65
2.3. Empirical Review	69
2.3.1 Empirical Studies on Entrepreneurial Journalism.....	69
Chapter Three	82
Materials and Methods/Methodology	82
3.0 Introduction	82
3.1 Meta-Analysis Design.....	83
3.1.1 Application to Study	84
3.2 Survey Design	85
3.2.1 Application to Study	87
3.2.2 Study Population	87
3.2.3 Sampling and Sampling Technique	88
3.2.4 Sampling Size.....	89
3.2.5 Method of Data Collection.....	89
3.2.6 Method of Data Analysis	89
3.2.7 Validity and Reliability of Instrument	90
3.3 In-Depth Interview Design	91

3.3.1 Application to Study	92
3.4 Research Instruments	94
Chapter Four	95
Results/Data Presentation and Analysis	95
4. Introduction	95
4.1 Data Presentation and Interpretation	95
4.1.1 Meta-Analysis Data Presentation	95
Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria	95
Database Search Results	96
Research Discipline	98
Approaches and Data Collection Methods	99
Publication Types and Indexing	102
Institutional Affiliations	103
Dominant Narratives in Entrepreneurial Journalism Research	105
Word Cloud Diagram of Predominant Keywords in EJ Research	110
Count and Weight of Top 50 Keywords in EJ Research	111
4.1.2 In-Depth Interview Data Presentation	117
Characteristics of Interview Participants	117
Section A: Personal and Professional Experiences	118
Section B: Ethical Questions for Bloggers/Digital News Start-Ups	126
Section C: Funding and Business Models	131
Section D: Thoughts on Entrepreneurship Media and Communication Education in Nigeria	136
Section E: Final Thoughts and Reflections	141
4.1.3 Survey Data Presentation.....	143
Demographic Analysis	143
4.2 Hypotheses Testing.....	152
Chapter Five	
Discussion.....	169
Discussion should have Sub-headings	

Chapter Six

Summary, Conclusion, And Recommendation

Contribution to Knowledge

Study Limitations

Suggestion for Further Research

References

Appendix

Appendix I: Interview Guide

Appendix II: Questionnaire

Appendix III: Meta-Analysis Coding Sheet

Appendix IV: EJ Data

Appendix V: Published Article from Thesis I

Appendix VI: Published Article from Thesis II

Appendix V

EXAMPLE OF MLA CITATIONS

Examples of the most common forms of MLA citations

This is an example of a works cited page completed according to the latest standards of the Modern Language Association (MLA (/advice/an_intro_to_mla.en.html)). These MLA citation examples can apply to any research project. Please use these examples of MLA citations (/advice/mal_citations.en.html) as a reference when creating your own work cited page.

If creating a work cited page isn't your strong point, feel free to consult our essay editing service (/service/student_essay_editing). Our editors, armed with all of the latest relevant information, can create an MLA work cited page rivaled by none.

Books

Basic

Last Name, First Name. Title of Book. Edition used. Place of publication: Publisher,
Year of publication. Medium of Publication.

Book with one author

Aprilson, Andy. *The Emergency Budget Task Force Handbook*. Mississippi:
Haberdasher, 2001. Print.

Book with two authors

Bringham, Darrin E., and Sally Knope. *Resting Heartbeat Science*. 12th ed. `
Alahandro: Spaghetti, 2001. Print.

Book with three authors

Christopherson, Charles, Ronald Swanson, and Roger Koltz. *Fog Pirates: On Board
the USS Hammerhead*. Pickleton: Putters, 2001. Print.

Book with more than three authors

Niderbacher, Leslie A., et al. *Penne and the Jets: A love story*. Albuquerque:
Partridge, 2003. Print.

Books with no author

Encyclopedia of Football. New York: Sporting Publishers Inc., 2002. Print.

Books by a corporate author or Organization

Canadian Pumpkinology Association. *The Truth about Rats and Skunks: Nature's Worst Enemies*. Toronto: La Fraude Publisher, 2009. Print.

Work in an anthology

Graeve, Michael J. "Catching the Big One: How Fishing Helped Me Find My Centre" *The Anthology of Modern Fishing*. Ed. A.D.Hovel. Ann Arbor: Maven Publishing Company, 2009. 42-63. Print.

Work in a compilation

O'Hanlon, Bert, Lenny Thompson, and Brenda Massey, Comp and ed. *Safety: How to be Safe Literally All the Time*. San Diego: Goldstein, 1942. Print.

Work in a reference book

Graeve, Michael J. "The Best Way to Catch a Fish." *The Big Book of Fishing*. Ed. D.A. Trader. Burlington Vermont's Finest Publisher Inc., 2008. Print.

Two or more works by the same author

Zruna, Jim. *Adequate Lawn Care 101*. Detroit: University of Michigan Press, 1993. Print. *Common Lawn Pests and How to Destroy Them Effectively*. Florida: Simon & Penguin, 1991. Print.

Periodicals

Basic

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Periodical Series* Number. Volume Number. Issue Number. Date of Publication (for a scholarly journal, the year; for other periodicals, the day, month, and year): Pages. Medium of publication.

Magazine

LaFrambois, Karen. "Why Do People Treat Their Pets Better Than Other Humans?" *Vanity Circus* Sept. 2003: 121-140. Print.

Journal article

Coxswain, Abraham D., Frederick Blursdale III, Thaddeus T. Landover, and Jose

Sanchez. "Analyzing the Psychology of Odd Juxtaposition." *Name Technology* 42 (1986): 121-342. Print.

Electronic sources

Basic

Author/Editor (if available). "Title of Article (if applicable)." Title of Website/Database/Book.

Version or Edition. Publisher information (the organization/institution affiliated with the site), date of publication. Medium of publication. Date of access.

Entire website

The Official Website of the Super Bowl XLV Champion Green Bay Packers. The Green Bay Packers, 2011. Web. 23 May 2001.

Page on a website

Mueller, Dawn. "How the Packers Won My Heart and Then the Super Bowl." The Very Unofficial Packers Fan Site. 14 Mar. 2011. Web. 1 May 2011.

Article in an online scholarly journal

Paulson, Robert. "Soapmaking: A Journey through the Dirty World of Saponification." *Journal of Pierce & Pierce* 55.81 (1991): 21-48. Web. 14 April 2001.

Email

Rodgers, Aaron. "Re: I Am Your Biggest Fan." Message to Dawn Mueller. 20 Mar. 2011. Email.

Sound Recording

CD

Adele. 21. XL Recordings, 2011. CD.

Song

Mars, Bruno. "Just the way you are." *Doo-Wops & Hooligans*. Elektra, 2010. CD.

Audiocassette

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major. Perf. Timothy Twain. Rec. 14 August 1982. Sony, 1988. Audiocassette.

Other common sources

Film

Zoom: Academy for Superheroes. Dir. Peter Hewitt. Revolution Studios, 2006. Film.

Television program

"Cooking with Chocolate." Fancy Eats. The Food Channel. 6 June 2006. Television.

Interview

McCabe, Adam. Interview by Larry King. Larry King Live. CNN. New York.

21 September 2009. Television.

Lecture

McRae, Kellen. "No Surprises." Matthew Coleman Hall at the University of Western Ontario. 21 Sep. 2004. Lecture.

Presentation from a published conference proceeding

Cassidy, Karen. "How to Be Really Good At Everything." The 2010 Conference

of Talented People. Ed. April Smith. Toronto: The Big Publishing

Company, 2011. Print.

