

## **Introduction**

The focus and purpose of this essay is to provide a short and concentrated introduction to the concept of Harvard Referencing and the reasons behind its significance. Furthermore, the essay will also acutely demonstrate how the Harvard referencing system is best integrated in report form.

## **What is Harvard Referencing? Origin & Definition**

The concept of Harvard Referencing is widely believed to have originated from a paper published by scientific professor Dr Edward Laurens Mark in 1881 who evidenced one of his report conclusions with the name and date of the work of his predecessor (Pears & Shields, 2016). In the contemporary era, the Harvard referencing system is used ubiquitously by academic institutions such as schools, colleges and universities to provide a reading source list (Pears & Shields, 2016). Comparably, Choy (1994) asserts that the key purpose of Harvard referencing is to enable researchers to qualitatively identify the books, academic journals and other relevant sources used in the construction of their essay and/or report. Moreover, Butler et al (2010) assert that Harvard referencing ensures that a report and/or essay is suitably evidenced and founded on solid academic information. Indeed, Pears & Shields (2016) further opine that reports or essays which do not incorporate the Harvard referencing system are not as well received in the field as those which do principally because these reports and essays will have little academic grounding.

## **Why is Harvard Referencing Important?**

A key aspect of the Harvard referencing system is in giving due credit to the original authors of sourced information (Butler et al, 2010). Turabian et al (1996) assert that when stating a direct quote from an author of a journal or a book, the researcher must use quotation marks and reference the page number. This process is carried out so that the reader of the report can then directly engage with the source text should they wish to gain a clearer understanding of the subject matter (Turabian et al, 1996). An example of how to appropriately cite a Harvard referenced direct quote is as follows; “The concept of human resource management (HRM) basically contains three elements that refer to successful people management. The first element – human – refers to the research object” (Bach & Edwards, 2012, p.19). If the researcher wishes to use this quotation as a means of furthering their own written argument they can alter the words accordingly. In relation to the citation given, an example of this would be as follows; conceptually, human resource management involves three main elements which are essential pre-requisites in the successful management of people within a modern organisation (Bach & Edwards, 2012). In this instance, there is no need to add the page number because the researcher has directly integrated their own words and lexicon into explicating the subject matter (Pears & Shields, 2016).

There is also a form of Harvard referencing which involves in-text citations which is where a researcher is obligated by their academic institution to provide page numbers for all sourced material in the main body of the report. Another key feature of the Harvard referencing system pertains to providing a clearly set out reference list as an appendix to the report or essay which ensures that the reader is granted the opportunity to pursue further readership on the topic (Pears & Shields, 2016). Indeed, it is also important to note the difference between a reference list and bibliography because these terms are often used interchangeably when discussing Harvard reference lists. Pears & Shields (2016) asserts that the difference between

a reference list and a bibliography is that a reference list documents all sources which have been used in-text whereas a bibliography is a list of all the sources contacted in the write up of a report but may not necessarily be cited in text. Additionally, Butler et al (2010) add that the Harvard referencing system grants a student the opportunity to showcase their wide variety of readership out with module sessions. Butler et al (2010) further argue that this is a key area where students can attain higher marks in an assignment scenario. Indeed, there are several areas in relation to Harvard referencing format where students can excel and/or underperform. For example, Cottrell (2013) asserts that one of the key problems students face in the successful implementation of the Harvard referencing system is in citing one or more authors for a direct quote and/or reference. The correct way to do so when citing two authors is to state the author's surname and then intersect the surname of the second author with an ampersand (Cottrell, 2013). In the event of citing three or more authors the Harvard referencing system dictates that researchers must state the surname of the first author and then add the phrase "et al" – a latin phrase meaning 'and others' (Cottrell, 2013). The chief reason why the Harvard referencing system stipulates this rule of citation is because many journals and books in the world of academia can be authored by 10 or more authors, so the in-text citation would be too exhaustive and cumbersome for researchers (Butler et al, 2010).

Furthermore, it also estimably improves the layout and format of an essay and/or report which is another area of the marketing criteria which students must demonstrate proficiency in (Pears & Shields, 2016). Another area of essay and report writing which the Harvard referencing system directly caters for is where a researcher sources from the same author more than once during their writing (Pears & Shields, 2016). Butler et al (2010) assert that in this scenario, the Harvard referencing system stipulates that the citation should be listed alphabetically to avoid confusion. An example of this is as follows; Bach & Edwards (2012a) assert that human resource management is an essential core function and/or support function in any modern organisation. Turabian et al (1996) are in concurrence and further add that human resource management can be detrimental to an organisation's strategic success depending on how it is managed. Similarly, Bach & Edwards (2012b) state that without a strongly effective HRM support system locked in place an organisation is unlikely to sustain any long-lasting marketplace competitiveness.

### **What are the Academic Consequences of Not Using Harvard Referencing Appropriately?**

Turabian et al (1996) categorically assert that reports or essays which do not Harvard reference appropriately are destined not to attain high grade classifications. This is chiefly because in the modern world of academia, the assignment criteria will specifically mark how well a student has referenced their work (Turabian et al, 1996). Furthermore, Butler et al (2010) add that reports which do not Harvard reference appropriately are at greater risk of scanning as plagiarised work which will reduce a student's grade classification quite considerably. Indeed, in cases where the student has Harvard referenced so poorly, the level of plagiarism could even lead to their expulsion from their course module depending on the opinion of their tutor (Butler et al, 2010).

## References

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