

Chapter Seven

Working Example: Converting Research Report to Publishable Article for Submission to Peer Review Journal



Working Example: Converting Research Report to Publishable Article for Submission to Peer Review Journal

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Abstract

Converting research projects or thesis into a publishable standard is a difficult a thing to most students and would-be researchers who have no experience. Achieving this though not difficult requires a skill that needed to be learned and mastered. This is because every research article carries pieces of information targeted for the consumption of certain clientele, and thus must be disseminated through publication in a peer reviewed journal. This article explains how research reports or theses are converted into articles for publication.

Keywords

Publishable Articles, Research Reports, Theses, Articles, Journals, Peer - Review

7.1 Introduction

This paper is aimed at helping the readers learn the various rudiments involved in converting research projects or reports into publishable articles in order for them to be submitted to peer review journals. It presents a sample of a research report that has been done and needed to be converted into a publishable article for a submission to Science Innovation Journal Published by the Science Publishing Group, a publisher of so many journals. The research project to be converted is found on pages 34 to 45. It is research project that was prepared which does not follow format of any journal and therefore cannot be accepted unless the research selects a journal for which article falls neatly within its scope. The article then can fine-tuned according to the journals format using the provided template and author's guide before submitting to the journal's editor for onward submission to reviewers for review for their decisions: either acceptance; acceptance with minor corrections; acceptance with major decisions; or outright rejection.

7.2 Sample of Unpublished Paper

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Promotion of academic scholarship and entrepreneurship through the writing and publishing of syllabi-based course textbooks for polytechnics in Ghana

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Abstract: Quality education is the bedrock on which a country's developmental agenda rests. Its delivery requires several resources but importantly availability of trained staff and the requisite teaching materials needed to facilitate the impartation of knowledge. The study appraised three suggested projects namely: Project A, Subcontracting Printing of Textbooks; Project B, owing a Printing Press together with printing of Textbooks; Project C, owing Printing Press and Bookshop together with Printing of Textbooks, on the need for writing of syllabi-based course textbooks by academics as a way of promoting scholarship through entrepreneurship using Accra Polytechnic in Ghana as a case study. Cost estimates used in the projects were done using the Ball pack Technique NPV method with selected discount factor of 28% and 32% were used rating the three projects in terms of viability and profitability. The analysis revealed that all the projects were viable and profitable as well as enhance promotion of research, scholarship among the academia, facilitate the delivery of quality education as well as income generation for staff and the Institution. Projects B, C and A ranked profitable in the order 1st to 3rd from the NPV analysis.

Keywords: Net Present Value, Syllabi-Based Course Textbooks, Projects, Research, Entrepreneurship, Profitability

1. Introduction

Education of the citizenry of a country is the lynch-pin on which the industrialization and

development of a nation is linked. There is therefore the need for the educational institutions in a country to provide quality to its citizenry through the provision of

up-to-date standard materials that would equip students, who would eventually offer the skilled man power for developmental take-offs with the necessary and needed contemporary knowledge and skills to withstand the competitive global challenge in various fields of endeavour.

Accra Polytechnic is one of the tertiary institutions in Ghana with the core mandate of training students to acquire technical and vocational skills to provide the needed middle man power to propel the country's developmental process. Sequel to this, syllabi have been developed and approved by National Accreditation Board of Ghana which are followed to provide tuition and training of students pursuing diverse programmes. The core mandate of Accra Polytechnic is to provide quality tuition to students. Oguntuase and Falaiye (2004) revealed that the most effective way to mobilize people is through the provision of required information in the most useable form and that such information should be provided for the benefit of a large number of people. There is no doubt however that the target of the syllabi cannot be achieved without the provision of quality course books to help lecturers research and impart students with the information as prescribed by the syllabi as well as aid students understand and apply the lessons received. Popoola (1998) also revealed that the provision and efficient use of information resources are central to any meaningful research and teaching in Nigeria.

Year in year out, frontiers of knowledge are being expanded by the creation of knowledge pool which can be utilized to solve contemporary challenges the world is faced with. To provide quality education to students in order for them to keep abreast of current trends, there is the need to embrace contemporary innovations and technologies encapsulated in up-to-date books or materials. Nicholas and Rowlands (2008) found that students tend to economise by not purchasing the books that they have been recommended to read. Some students are also charged by their own University for coursepacks of research content. A study in the US found that sometimes the cost of these coursepacks rivals

that of the textbooks, but they have no resale value to mitigate the cost (Baker 2007).

Study and teaching materials are the resources required by students for their study. They consists of recommended textbooks, books to support class texts, journals, past examination papers, reference books, monograph etc. while the research materials are used by higher degree students and lecturers. These are made up of periodicals, documents of different kinds, treaties, manuscripts, pamphlets, government publications conference proceedings and papers etc. (Fayose, 1995).

Lecturers employed to teach various courses are expected to have built expertise through their research works which should make them capable of writing course text books in their respective jurisdiction of service provision. These can be tailored to meet syllabi requirement, reviewed by expert reviewers, published, and then accepted and recommended as standard course textbooks or material by the Polytechnic in the delivery of standard quality education.

1.1. Problem Statement

In Accra Polytechnic, most lecturers compile handouts for the various taught courses which are sold to students as course materials. Since these handouts or materials are not peer reviewed and so their contents can be said not to be standardized. These are likely to contain mistakes and other anomalies. Some of these hand outs produced by the lecturers of the Polytechnics in Ghana fall into the public domain via students. It therefore makes it needful for the Institutions to find a way to aid the rewrite and upgrade of these materials into reviewed and publishable standards for approval and recommendation of the Institution as course based-textbooks for students, and promotion materials for their respective lecturers.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The main import of this study is to help stem out handouts by aiding lecturers in the Institution to write course based-textbooks to be reviewed and published by the Institution to

assure delivery of quality education to student; and to serve as promotion materials for lecturer, thus generating funds for lecturers and the Institution through the sales of published books.

1.3. Justification for Study

Every staff and student is a stake holder of the Institution. Information that would be put in the public domain by any staff will not affect the reputation of the that staff alone but would have either a positive or negative impact effect on the Institution as well as the entire staff and students. It therefore becomes prudent and necessary to regulate and standardize course materials that are sold to student which inevitably become public due to its mobility and transfer among students.

2. Methodology

2.1. Charting of the Procedures and Processes Involved in the Publication of Syllabus – Based Course Textbooks

The chart and procedures on which the study is based is shown in figure 1.

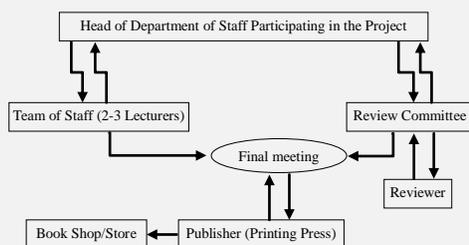


Figure 1. Project Organizational Chart.

2.2. Roles and Responsibilities for Involved in the Syllabus - Based Course Textbook Production Process

2.2.1. Head of Department of Participating Staff

The Head of Department of the participating staff is to constitute a team of lecturers with expertise in a particular course to be mandated to come up with a draft syllabus based course textbook which is to be submitted within a given duration of 3 – 6 months. Logistics needed are to be provided to the lecturers in

order to deliver to the stated mandate.

2.2.2. Team of Staff (Lecturers)

Staff constituting a team can further do a breakdown of course into subtitles, for which they can share and write on. Each of them can write on the subtitles and later on come together to compile them. The team would consist of between 2-3 members with expertise in the course under consideration. They are expected to exhibit teamwork in preparing the draft copy by organizing series of brainstorming meetings and researches to come up with the needed facts. They are to compile all their written works together for the draft copy as well as do an internal peer reviewing of the constituents of the draft copy. The team would submit their draft copy to their respective Heads of Departments between a stipulated duration of 3-6 months.

2.2.3. The Review / Editorial Committee

The draft work of the team submitted to their respective HODs would be forwarded to the editorial Review Committee as soon as received. The Review / Editorial Committee would be tasked to do internal editing and corrections, and then look for reviewers for the draft course book under consideration. This is to be done within a span of three weeks. The Committee is expected to give the duration of one month for the review.

2.2.4. The Reviewer

The reviewer is expected to be an expert in the course under consideration and an individual who has vast experience and has published a lot of materials in the field. An organization with high reputation can be contracted to do such a review if need be. A reviewer is to deliver to his given mandate within the duration of one month.

2.2.5. Final Book Copy Committee Meeting

This would include the Management of the Institution, the Review/ Editorial Committee, the Team. It is at this meeting that everything about the book would be finalized. They are also to look for a publisher to do the printing depending on whether it is to be subcontracted or an internal press is to be used. The cost of

the final book is also to be decided at this meeting.

2.2.6. The Publisher

The Publisher is the organization or press that would do the final printing when the drafts have been approved at the final meeting. The Publisher is to be given a duration of two weeks to deliver to that mandate.

2.2.7. Bookshop / Store

The printed books are to be delivered to a bookshop or store after the inspection of copies by members of the Final Book Copy Committee. The books would be sold and distributed at this point.

2.3. Process Flow of Project

The process would be initiated at the departmental level. The HODs (Heads of Departments) would have to form a 2-3 member teams with expertise in a named course taught within the department and mandate them to prepare a draft copy of a syllabus-based course textbook. Duration of 3-6 months would be given them to submit a draft copy of the book for onward submission to a Review / Editorial Committee for scrutiny, correction and subsequent submission to an Appointed Reviewer.

The Appointed Reviewer would be given one month to complete the review and return the copy with comments. The Review / Editorial Committee having received the reviewed copy from the Appointed Reviewer, would take note of the comments and then pass it on through the HODs to the Team. The Team would be given a month to do the necessary corrections as per the comments and resubmit the corrected work through their HODs to the Review / Editorial Committee who would in turn peruse and check thoroughly to ensure corrections are done accordingly.

After these checks have been done in accordance with the Appointed Reviewer's comments, the Final Book Committee Meeting would be organized to decide on the printing, the book cost and the Publisher to be appointed (if the printing would be subcontracted), or else approval given for the internal printing press to print copies to be presented to the

Final Book Copy Committee Members before the mass printing is done. The publisher would then be given two weeks to deliver.

2.4. Costs Estimation and Appraisal of Projects

2.4.1. Costs Estimation

Ball pack estimate method was used in estimating the various cost estimates involved in the process in terms of printing and making of photocopies involved in the preplanning process; manpower requirements; building of press; bookshop; cost of equipment for the press summarized in tables below:

For the purpose of estimating cost involved in the process, an average of five (5) courses per department for fifteen (15) departments was considered. A total of Seven thousand (70000) book copies of averagely two hundred (200) page books are expected to be printed at the cost of Eight Ghana Cedis per book annually for Students within the Institution. This means a total of 70000 copies of books would be printed annually for an average of five courses per each department considering each of the three projects. The cost of typing a page is estimated at 0.50 Ghana Cedis. The estimated amount of One thousand Cedi (GH ₵1000) per book is to be paid to a reviewer. A total of GH ₵1,125 is expected to be used in making photocopies of materials from writing to printing of the books. The cost of printing the total number of 70,000 book copies is higher for Project A (GH ₵560,000) as compared to each of the two other projects (GH ₵210,000) partly because it is expected to be subcontracted and the differentials (GH ₵350,000) is the estimated cost to be paid to the subcontractors. The man power charges were estimated as the same for all the three projects while no building, and machinery and equipment cost was charged for Project A because the printing work is to be subcontracted. The difference in the building cost for Project B (100,000) and Project (C) is that, the former is expected to be the cost of a building a print room whiles the latter a building a print and a bookshop.

Table 1. Estimated Costs for items.

List of items	Cost GH ₵
Building	200000
Machinery /Equipment	700000
Photo copies	1125
Printing of materials	560000
Manpower	101000
Total	1562125

2.5. Cost Benefit –Analysis of Projects

The appraisal was done using a cost discounted technique known as Net Present Value (NPV) for the three different projects considered: Project A, Subcontracting Printing of Textbooks; Project B, owing a Printing Press together with printing of Textbooks; Project C, owing Printing Press and Bookshop

together with Printing of Textbooks. This was to enable the researchers compare and select the most profitable project. Two different discounting percentages of 24 and 28 were used because of the prevailing interest rate in Ghana. According to Lin and Nagalingam (2000), Net present value (NPV) of a time series of cash flows, both incoming and outgoing, is defined as the sum of the present values (PVs) of the individual cash flows of the same entity. NPV compares the value of a dollar today to the value of that same dollar in the future, taking inflation and returns into account. If the NPV of a prospective project is positive, it should be accepted. However, if NPV is negative, the project should probably be rejected because cash flows will also be negative (INVESTOPEDIA, 2013).

Table 2. Cost Estimates Collected for the various Project under Consideration.

Items	Project A Cost		Project B Cost		Project C Cost	
	GH ₵	US \$	GH	US \$	GH	US \$
photocopies	1125		1125		1125	
Printing of materials	560000		210000		210000	
Manpower	101000		101000		101000	
Building	-		100000		200000	
Machinery /Equipment			700000		700000	
Total	662125		1112125		1212125	

3. Results and Discussion

The cost collected for each of the projects was appraised using the Net Present Value (NPV) technique at a discount factor of 28% and 32% respectively for each of the three Projects – A, B and C. The results for the projects discounted at 28% are summarized in

tables 3, 4 and 5 respectively for Projects A, B and C. The NPVs of the three projects at 28% were A (654796.64), B (1072180.83) and C (994055.82) as shown in tables 3, 4 and 5 respectively. These show that the Project B is the most viable, and Project C is the least viable on the basis of their NPVs at 28% (NPV of B > C > A).

Table 3. Project A Cash Flows Discounted at 28%.

Years	Cash outflow	Cash inflow	Cash flow	Discounting Factor (1+i) ⁻ⁿ	Present Value (PV)
1	6621,25	840000	177875	0.78125	138964.8438
2	560000	840000	280000	0.610351563	170898.4375
3	560000	840000	280000	0.476837158	133514.4043
4	662125	840000	177875	0.37252903	66263.60118
5	560000	840000	280000	0.291038305	81490.72528
6	560000	840000	280000	0.227373675	63664.62912
				NPV	654796.6411

Table 4. Project B Cash Flows Discounted at 28%.

Years	Cash outflow	Cash inflow	Cash flow	Discounting Factor $(1+i)^{-n}$	Present Value (PV)
1	1112125	840000	-272125	0.78125	-212597.6563
2	210000	840000	630000	0.610351563	384521.4844
3	210000	840000	630000	0.476837158	300407.4097
4	106500	840000	733500	0.37252903	273250.0434
5	210000	840000	630000	0.291038305	183354.1319
6	210000	840000	630000	0.227373675	143245.4155
				NPV	1072180.829

Table 5. Project C Cash Flows Discounted at 28%.

Years	Cash outflow	Cash inflow	Cash flow	Discounting Factor $(1+i)^{-n}$	Present Value(PV)
1	1212125	840000	-372125	0.78125	-290722.6563
2	210000	840000	630000	0.610351563	384521.4844
3	210000	840000	630000	0.476837158	300407.4097
4	106500	840000	733500	0.37252903	273250.0434
5	210000	840000	630000	0.291038305	183354.1319
6	210000	840000	630000	0.227373675	143245.4155
				NPV	994055.8286

Again, subject the three projects to NPV analysis using a discount factor of 32% reveals a similar trend as the results obtained for the analysis using a discount factor of 28% as seen in tables 6, 7 and 8 (NPV for A, 598583.07;

NPV for B, 945515.0509; NPV for C, 869757.48). Comparing the NPVs for each of the three projects at 32% discount factor shows that Project B is the most viable while A is the least viable (NPV of $B > C > A$).

Table 6. Project A Cash Flows Discounted at 32%.

Years	Cash outflow	Cash inflow	Cash flow	Discounting Factor $(1+i)^{-n}$	Present Value (PV)
1	662125	840000	177875	0.757575758	134753.7879
2	560000	840000	280000	0.573921028	160697.888
3	560000	840000	280000	0.434788658	121740.8242
4	662125	840000	177875	0.329385347	58589.41858
5	560000	840000	280000	0.249534354	69869.61904
6	560000	840000	280000	0.189041177	52931.52958
				NPV	598583.0673

Table 7. Project B Cash Flows Discounted at 32%.

Years	Cash outflow	Cash inflow	Cash flow	Discounting factor $(1+i)^{-n}$	Present Value (PV)
1	1114400	840000	-274400	0.757575758	-207878.7879
2	210000	840000	630000	0.573921028	361570.2479
3	210000	840000	630000	0.434788658	273916.8545
4	106500	840000	733500	0.329385347	241604.152
5	210000	840000	630000	0.249534354	157206.6428
6	210000	840000	630000	0.189041177	119095.9416
				NPV	945515.0509

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

It is envisaged that at the end of the project, reviewed syllabus based text books would be developed for each course taught in the Institution to facilitate quality assurance; aid with accreditation and reaccreditation of programmes; generate substantial Internally Generated Fund through books sales to student; serve as promotional materials for staff and source of income. It would also boost the academic publishing output of the institution and raise its ranking higher. Appraisal indicates the viability of three projects.

Based on the study, the Project B is recommended, if polytechnics want to go into the production of a syllabusbased textbooks publication. Once these textbooks are published, sales of other materials such as handouts and pamphlets sales to students as course materials must ceased. This can only be enforced if management comes out with a regulation that would stem out this act. Also, there might not be initial fund to cover the printing of all the course materials at a go. This can however be done over a period of three years. The need to come up with new editions to keep up with up-to-date information of all the books published must be emphasized.

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After formatting the article and submitting it to the editor of the journal, it was given to reviewers who blind peer reviewed the article and made their comments encapsulated in the journal's reviewer's form as below:



Science Innovation (SI)

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The Official Publication of Science Publishing Group

Manuscript Review Form

Manuscript Number: SI_1800111_20131212

Article Title: Promotion of Academic Scholarship and Entrepreneurship through the Writing and Publishing of Syllabi-Based Course Textbooks for Polytechnics in Ghana

Overall Evaluation: Please put a check mark in the appropriate box.

- 1. Publish, no significant alterations suggested.
- 2. Publish, but suggest changes to the article as specified in this review.
- 3. Publish, but suggestions as specified in this review must be addressed by either making changes or explaining why changes would be inappropriate.
- 4. Reject, but encourage author to try a major revision and a second peer review.
- 5. Reject, do not encourage a rewrite.

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Manuscript Review Form

Evaluation Criteria:

Please provide a numeric rating on a 5-point scale for each evaluation item, along with a brief rationale for each 3-less-point rating.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>RatingResult</i> [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
1. The article title is appropriate.	5
<i>(brief rationale for 3-less point rating)</i>	
2. The abstract accurately reflects the content.	4
<i>(brief rationale for 3-less point rating)</i>	
3. There are few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.	3
<i>(brief rationale for 3-less point rating)</i>	
Please revise the English text with a native speaker. There are some errors such as “all the project were” in the Abstract, “syllabi cannot achieved” on p. 2, “by the lecturers Polytechnics” on p. 2, “would have a either a positive” on p. 2, “course materials that are sold to student which inevitably becomes public due to its mobility” on p. 2, “reviewer is expected to be an expertise” on p. 3, “Publisher to appointed” on p. 4, “print a copies” on p. 4, “The appraisal was done Cost – Benefit analysis was done using the a discounted technique” on p. 4, “enable compare and select” on p. 4, “books must to be emphasized” on p. 6, etc.	
4. The purpose or purported significance of the article is explicitly stated.	4
<i>(brief rationale for 3-less point rating)</i>	
5. The literature review and research study methods are explained clearly.	3
<i>(brief rationale for 3-less point rating)</i>	
You may want to add a literature reference to the Net Present Value (NPV) discussed in Section 2.5.	
6. The research study methods are sound and appropriate.	4
<i>(brief rationale for 3-less point rating)</i>	

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7. All figures, tables, and photos are necessary and appropriate.	3
<i>(brief rationale for 3-less point rating)</i>	
Please improve the legibility of the figures in Tables 2 – 8. Could you include a separating comma in the numbers and decrease the number of decimal digits?	
8. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.	4
<i>(brief rationale for 3-less point rating)</i>	
9. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.	3
<i>(brief rationale for 3-less point rating)</i>	
What is AJLAIS in reference [1]? Please include some space in “InformationScience” in reference [2].	
10. There is enough new content in this paper to distinguish it from otherworks.	4
<i>(brief rationale for 3-less point rating)</i>	
11.If the paper is an extended version of a conference paper, the submission provides enough new material for journal publication.	N/A
<i>(brief rationale for 3-less point rating)</i>	

Specific Reviewer Comments and Suggestions:

Note that these comments may be in addition to or in lieu of reviewer comments inserted into the text of the article. Use as many lines as needed.

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a) Please give a frank account of the strengths and weaknesses of the article (in 100-200 words):

The authors comment on three possible ways how polytechnics in Ghana may generate income by printing and selling syllabi-based textbooks to students. They give an example of the Accra Polytechnic and present a cost-benefit analysis of three specific scenarios: a) when the printing is subcontracted, b) when the printing is done in-house, and c) when both the printing and selling is done in-house. They calculate six-year discounted cash-flows for all three approaches given some estimated average inputs and outputs and conclude that variant is the most profitable.

The topic presented is interesting and important because it presents a way how academics and their institutions (not only in developing countries) may benefit from preparing course materials for their students.

I see the biggest weakness in the derivation of the estimated costs for items in Table 1 and how these estimates relate to the values given in the paragraph above it. Other minor problems include a few English errors, a lower quality (legibility) of Tables 2 – 8, and some small omissions in the references.

b) Please provide detailed suggestions on how to improve the paper (in 100-200 words):
-Main problems of the article (e.g. Methodology, Interpretation)

-In order of seriousness/relevance

- Please explain in detail how the values in Table 1 are calculated based on the data in the paragraph above it. (E.g. why is building worth 200000, machinery 700000, photo copies 1125, etc? You say “seven thousand (70000) copies” in the paragraph above Table 1. Should it be “seven thousand (7000) copies”?)
- Please improve the legibility of the figures in Tables 2 – 8. Could you include a separating comma in the numbers and decrease the number of decimal digits?

c) Minor comments (If any)

-Missing references, Stylistic problems, Typos, Misleading Captions, etc.

- You may want to add a literature reference to the Net Present Value (NPV) discussed in Section 2.5.
- What is AJLAIS in reference [1]?
- Please include some space in “InformationScience” in reference [2].
- Please revise the English text with a native speaker. There are some errors such as “all the project were” in the Abstract, “syllabi cannot achieved” on p. 2, “by the lecturers Polytechnics” on p. 2, “would have a either a positive” on p. 2, “course materials that are sold to student which inevitably becomes public due to its mobility” on p. 2, “reviewer is expected to be an expertise” on p. 3, “Publisher to appointed” on p. 4, “print a copies” on p. 4, “The appraisal was done Cost – Benefit analysis was done using the a discounted technique” on p. 4, “enable compare and select” on p. 4, “books must to be emphasized” on p. 6, etc.

7.3 Post Manuscript Submission

Once the reviewer's comment is received by the authors, the mistakes identified are to be corrected with omissions and grammatical errors corrected and then returned to the editor for further scrutiny.

The editor is expected to forward the corrections back to the reviewer's to check whether the various mistakes identified had been corrected by the authors before recommending the publication of the manuscript by the journal. Alternatively, the editors by themselves verify as per the comments of the reviewers whether the necessary corrections had been makes by the authors and decide on the publication of the article in the journal.

When a decision is reached by the editor as to whether the article should be published, a letter of acceptance is issued in which the article's publication fees charged indicated and the deadline for the payment also given. The deadline for payment is given in order to let the authors know that failure to pay within the stipulated would lead to either the publication of the article in subsequent issues of the journal or outrightly rejection of the paper due to competition for publishing space.

For some journals, the conditional acceptance is issued to the authors together with the corrected manuscript sent to them for proof reading and final editing. Sample of a letter of acceptance and payment invoice are given on the succeeding page.

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Department of Agricultural Engineering, KNUST, Kumasi- Ghana

Title: Survival of Compost Microbial Community in two Different Composting Systems

Date of acceptance: April 27, 2012

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