



**LIBRARY ORIENTATION AND INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS AS
CORRELATE OF SCHOLARLY RESEARCH OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OF
FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, ABEOKUTA**

**Ogungbo Wakilu O., Dapo-Asaju Harriet Seun, Makinde Omawunmi O. (PhD), Ekeh Esther
Motunrayo**

Abstract

This study examined the correlation between library orientation, information literacy skills and scholarly research of postgraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. The university has ten colleges with various departments. Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection from the 150 respondents that were sampled. The study identified that both male and female pursue postgraduate programme. It equally revealed that orientation and information literacy has become imperative in order to enable users familiarise with the available information resources and sources available in the library, and to also equip them with the skills necessary for effective, efficient and independent use of the library. This is more so, due to the increasing data proliferation and information starvation occasioned by advancement in information and communication technology (ICT). However, the study discovered that while there is no library orientation programme for postgraduate students at FUNAAB, the only available form of information literacy is the use of computer course. As a result, majority of the postgraduate students do not have the skills to either utilise the huge electronic information resources domiciled in the library's databases, or employ the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for data analysis and interpretation. The study, therefore recommended a review of the overall user education programmes in the library to more provision for postgraduate students. Also, seminars and workshops on the use of electronic databases for research as well as SPSS for data analysis should equally be periodically organised.

Keywords: Library orientation, information literacy, postgraduate students, scholarly research, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta.

Introduction

Before the evolution of information and communication technology (ICT), library collections were mainly housed and provided in printed format. The evolution of and continuous advancement in information and communication technology which permeates every aspect of human endeavour, has gradually affected the way we do things. In the library setting, the advent of ICT has drastically resulted in a change in the functions and responsibilities of librarians, hence, information is now sought and provided through various technological and communication means; using different tools and equipment, and in different forms (print and electronic formats), which can be accessed anywhere with the means of internet. The intricacies associated with accessing this information especially those in electronic formats, require a lot of demonstrable competencies, strategies and knowledge of the use of information technology, for users to be able to effectively utilize the available information sources and resources, for learning and research. Library orientation and information literacy skills are complementary components of a broader user education program that enable students and researchers to familiarise with library resources and services; recognize when information is needed, and have the ability to not only locate, but also to evaluate and use effectively the needed information.

Library orientation is an integral aspect of user education which is commonly carried out in academic libraries as a means of increasing users' familiarity with the library and its resources and services (Madhusudhan and Singh 2010). In other words, the purpose of library orientation is to introduce new users to the library, get them acquainted with its resources and services, and is usually done at the beginning of academic session, for many users, not few, at a time (Adeyoyin, 2011). By its very design and purpose, library orientation rather serves to provide users with the basic overview of what the library has, in terms of resources and services; instead of intensive or holistic teaching or understanding of the library's inner workings and resources. Information Literacy on the other hand as defined by the American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy, means a person's ability to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information (ALA, 1989).

It is the ability of an individual to identify, locate and critically use and evaluate information for decision making, knowledge creation and problem solving (Bruce, 2003; US National

Commission on Library and Information Science, 2003). This has become imperative especially in this era of data proliferation where users have in abundance, a large amount of information available to them, but are constrained by lack of access to the right type of information they need at the right time. As a result, users are therefore required to be equipped with the skills necessary to assist them in becoming independent learners. This is more so because, the abundance of information is not enough to build the information society, but what is more important is to acquire skills necessary to effectively use information (Hof, Sluijs, Asamoah-Hassan and Agyen-Gyasi 2010).

Similarly, Okiki and Mabawonku (2013) opined that the availability and access to information is not sufficient to ensure that the information users will possess requisite skill to effectively make use of information resources at their disposal. Therefore, an average information resource user needs some skills which include knowing the sources of information services; arrangement of information in various formats, different means of using computers and websites to retrieve information, and being informed about laws ensuring their rights on use of information (Menou, 2002).

Postgraduate students all over the world and in Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta in particular, are required to complete one or more research works, as part of the conditions for the award of Postgraduate degree in their various fields of study. It may therefore be difficult for them to search and utilise information without adequate skills needed to navigate and manipulate information tools in the library and beyond.

As a result, information literacy and orientation programmes are usually organised by academic libraries and most of the time include tutorials, seminars, workshops, one-on-one discussion, computer-aided instruction, user education, library tour and briefing among others. The aim is to acquaint users with the way library operates; its resources and services; and as well, teach them how to use the library so they will be able to effectively utilise the resources and services of the library.

FUNAAB is a specialised educational institution established by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Nimbe Adebipe Library is an ultra-modern academic library, attached to FUNAAB to meet the information needs of staff and students of the institutions by providing study facilities, extensive collections of books, periodicals and other materials with the twin benefits of internet

resources and electronic databases. Part of the activities of this library is the provision of user education programme among which is library orientation and information literacy skills aimed at making the users aware of the library's collection and services, and as well equip them with the skills necessary for effective, efficient and independent use of the library resources.

The imperativeness of library orientation and information literacy skills in enhancing the academic research of postgraduate students cannot be overemphasized, especially in tackling the challenges associated with the 21st century data proliferation and information starvation. This is more so as the success of any research exercise in academic environment depends greatly influenced by the researcher's possession of relevant information literacy skills and search strategies. Also, Retrieving information from any source requires an understanding of how information was organised, coupled with the relevant skills to retrieve and use it effectively. While library orientation enables students familiarise with the available information resources, sources and services in the library, information literacy skills equips them with the abilities to recognise when information is needed, as well as the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information.

However, studies have shown that while most postgraduate students in general and those of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta in particular, seem not to be aware of the information resources and sources available in the library, others have limited background of fundamental research and information literacy skills. As a result, they are not able to effectively search for information, or evaluate, synthesize and blend ideas, or may not even have learned how to use information in original work, or give proper bibliographic citation and references, for information used in their research work. The resultant effect may be poor quality research work, plagiarism or any other form of malfeasance.

Although it is possible that some students may have acquired basic computer skills for sending electronic mails; social media use among others, they may be constrained with how to effectively search the internet or use library electronic resources for academic purposes. This underscore the need for effective and efficient library orientation and information literacy programme integration into the tertiary education curriculum, and is the focus of this writing.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to investigate the impacts of library orientation and information literacy skills on the academic research of postgraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokua. The specific objectives are:

1. Determine the influence of library orientation programmes available for postgraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokua
2. to examine the level of information literacy skills possessed by postgraduate students of FUNAAB
3. to establish the relationship between information literacy skills and academic research of postgraduate student
4. to determine the relationship between library orientation and information literacy skills as it affect scholarly research of postgraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokua

Research questions

In view of the above, the following questions have been put forward to guide the study:

1. what is the influence of library orientation with regard to scholarly research of postgraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta?
2. what is the level of information literacy skills possessed by postgraduate students of FUNAAB?
3. what is the relationship between information literacy skills and academic research of postgraduate students?

Hypothesis

- H01. There is no significant relationship between library orientation and scholarly research of postgraduate students of FUNAAB
- H02. There is no significant relationship between information literacy skills and scholarly research of postgraduate students of FUNAAB
- H03 library orientation,information literacy skills will not significantly determine scholarly research of postgraduate students of FUNAAB

Literature review

Walsh (2008) defines library orientation as a short lecture delivered by a librarian, usually in a large room spaced within the library building or in the classroom. The content of the instructional lecture consists of information about the services and resources offered by the library. However, this content varies considerably according to the category of students involved (whether undergraduate or postgraduate students). Library orientation is a factor of collaboration between lecturers (sometimes referred to as instructors) and the librarians in which librarians ask the lecturers are encouraged to bring the entire class in for an orientation.

According to Walsh, the librarians design the orientation to support the learning priorities and highlight the resources held by the library that are fundamental to completing the course and assigned projects. Other materials covered in a complete orientation include: the library's Web page, how to find it and how to use it, the physical layout of the library, how to locate various resources and service points, checkout procedures and privileges, an explanation of basic services, searching the catalog, requesting books and articles, and searching databases. The intention is to expose the student to the basic skills needed in completing their future information needs independently (information literacy). The orientation also informs the student of the kinds of help the library can offer if they are having trouble finding what they need on their own.

The term "information literacy" according to Nwosu, Obiamalu and Udem (2015), was first used in 1974 by the former President of United States Industry Association, Paul G. Zurkowski, to emphasize the need for people to become information literate in order to survive and compete in an emerging information society. Since then, the term has come to be widely used especially in the United States, as necessary for effective information resources and sources utilization and has been variously conceptualized.

The American Library Association's Presidential Committee on Information Literacy defines information literacy as the ability to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information (ALA, 1989). Adeyoyin (2011) observed that there are six important reasons for information literacy as a skill necessary for lifelong learning and the production of an informed and prosperous citizenry:

- to reconsider the ways we have organised information institutionally, structured information access and defined the roles of information in our lives at home in the community and in the work place;
- to promote public awareness of the problems created by information illiteracy;

- to develop a national research agenda related to information and its use;
- to ensure the existence of a climate conducive to students becoming information literate;
- to include information literacy concerns in teacher education; and
- to promote public awareness of the relationship between information literacy and the more general goals of literacy, productivity and democracy.

According to Lock (2003), there are two major approaches to information literacy skills in any learning environment. The first is concerned with the skills that the researchers, academic, students and numerous users of information apply during the process of their inquiries or research; and usually involves the ability of an individual to effectively utilise the library and other electronic resources for advancement of knowledge towards the research that is being carried out; as well as the ability to conduct a literature search, cite and properly reference sources. As a result of these, the individual will come to function effectively as a member of the academic community.

The second perspective is concerned with an individual's ability to participate actively in any activity that is chosen for advancement of knowledge towards information literacy skills, in line with awareness and understanding of the programmes meant for information literacy. This may include how information is sourced, accessed, acquired, evaluated and preserved for proper dissemination to the information seekers in different professions.

Therefore, information literacy skills can be said to be those abilities, competencies and demonstrable knowledge, which enables individuals recognise when they need information and as well, have the ability to locate and use such information. This has become imperative as a result of information explosion brought about by rapid changes and advancement in technology. Thus, the abundance of information is not enough to build the information society, but what is more important is to acquire skills necessary to effectively use information (Hof, Sluijs, Asamoah-Hassan and Agyen-Gyasi 2010).

In his view, Ranaweera (2008) opined that information literacy skills equip the researcher with critical thinking abilities that will enable them to become independent lifelong learner. In a similar way, Raja, Raja and Kamaruzaman (2011), information literacy skill enables one to solve problems, critical thinking, decision making and collaborative learning that will prepare an individual to be a better informed citizen.

As an integral aspect of educational curriculum necessary for lifelong learning, academic libraries usually design and organize various orientation and information literacy programmes for students at all levels, the essence which is to familiarise them with the resources and services held by the library and empower them with the skills necessary to access and utilise information effectively, for research and learning, even after they would have left school.

According to Wash (2008) and Omeluzor, Bamidele, Onuoha and Alarape (2013), library orientation and information literacy programmes are usually organised by the university libraries and in most cases, cover lecture or tutorial, seminar, workshop, one-on-one discussion, online courses, computer aided instruction, user education, library tour and briefing by librarians. Specifically, library orientation and information literacy skills programme are only meant to educate newly admitted students of the University. The purpose is to enable new students acclimatize with library rules and available services for users which include opening and closing hours, procedures for book loan, identification of library sections, search tools, available information source and their locations, among others.

The significance of research in any academic environment, is that it facilitates knowledge sharing and insight; demonstration of scholarship, and gaining of creative thinking recognition (Lertputtarak, 2008). In today's environment characterized by information overflow, knowledge of available information resources and possession of search skills are very fundamental to achieving a quality research output, and which is the hub of library orientation and information literacy. In view of this, Madu and Dike (2012) observed that information literacy skills are those competencies which are necessary for achieving a good research output.

Many studies have therefore been carried out to examine the relationship between library orientation, information literacy skills and academic research of students. According to Walsh (2008), library orientation is the most commonly used techniques of increasing students familiarity with the library and its resources; hence, a survey carried out within the Ventura College Accreditation Report of 2004, indicated that there was a significant increase in students patronage statistics of the Ventura College Libraries as a result of increased library orientations to promote usage of library's resources and services. Also, another study undertaken by the Dublin City University library discovered that the institution's revamped library orientation

programme was a significant contributing factor in the increased popularity and renewed interest exhibited by patrons.

Similarly, findings of a study by Suleiman (2012) revealed that user education helped students to increase their searching skills; and equally helped them appreciate and make better use of the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC).

In the work of Nwosu et al (2015), the relationship between information literacy and research performance was explained using the Society of College, National and University Libraries' (SCONUL) "Seven Pillars of Information Literacy" Model. According to them, the process of developing an information literate user is an all encompassing exercise, which touches all areas of the seven pillars of information literacy. This therefore, enables a researcher to advance from the level of a learner to that of a professional as they progress in their research activities. These pillars are explained in subsequent paragraphs.

First is the pillar of identity. According to SCONUL, an information literate person is able to identify a need for information and have the ability to locate as much information that will enhance his or her research activity as possible, in order to provide answers to research questions. Such researcher, knowing well that information is constantly evolving on a daily basis, will develop a search habit so that new information and data are actively sought at all times.

Furthermore, an information literate researcher can access information sources that are available, to understand what he or she doesn't know in order to occupy a niche in the body of existing research literature. He or she is also able to identify the scope and type of information that is being accessed such as data, people, videos and published information that will meet the researcher's information needs; have the ability to identify relevant tools that will be utilized at different levels of literature search; examine data collection methods and formats in which information exist which could be in print, digital or multimedia; as well as have the ability to adapt to new tools as technology evolves.

Also, an information literate researcher is also able to use research questions clearly and in an appropriate language; define search strategies by using appropriate keywords, concept and Boolean operators to identify controlled vocabularies and taxonomies to aid in searching and develop specialist search tools that will be adequate to each individual needs.

Again, an information literate researcher should locate and access information and data needed, by exploring different means of retrieval tools and resources, construct complex searches for use across digital and print resources. As a result, he or she is able to translate the search strategies to work at different resources, redefine a search strategy based on previous results obtained, sort and manipulate results sets. The researcher also should have the ability to access the full text information, both print and digital, read and download online materials; be abreast of new information, engage with scholarly communities especially through collaboration and networking.

More so, an information literate researcher has the ability to review the research process and compare and evaluate information, thus, distinguishing between information resources, such as web pages, scholarly, professional, trade and popular journals. The researcher should also have the ability to choose from a wide range of information materials on topics, using appropriate criteria, access the quality, recency, accuracy, relevance, bias, objectivity, reputation and credibility of the information sources.

Another important pillar concerned with the skills to professionally and ethically organise information by adopting appropriate bibliographical software to manage information, demonstrate awareness of issues relating to the right of other researchers and research participants, which includes ethics, data protection, copyright, plagiarism and other intellectual property issues, set and meet standards of conduct for academic integrity and make appropriate information available as may be required by information seekers.

Lastly, an information literate researcher should be able to apply the skills acquired in presenting his or her work, by synthesizing new and old information to add to the existing body of knowledge and disseminating it in a variety of ways. He or she is also able to use findings of his work, to address the research questions, summarize document downloaded and report verbally and in writing, analyze and disseminate data properly, incorporate new research findings into the context of existing knowledge, communicate effectively using adequate styles in a variety of formats, such as abstract, literature review, scientific report, journal articles, posters, conference papers, visually and web 2.0, use open access as well as traditional publishing routes, develop personal profile in the scholarly community using appropriate personal and digital technologies as in discussion lists, social networking sites and blogs.

The literature review above, on orientation and information literacy in the library as it affects research outputs of students, is relevant to the present study because attempts were made to establish that awareness of the presence of information in a particular source or resources and the ability to effectively locate and use such information by the researchers and postgraduate students in particular, ultimately enhances their research productivity. More specifically, it helps in the professional and ethical use of information sources; appropriate referencing and bibliography, to the works establishing writer's intellectual property; independent selection and retrieval, evaluation and use of information at one's disposal. It is also relevant to this study because it pinpoints how postgraduate students and indeed other researchers, can effectively utilise their information literacy skills in research activities thereby positively improving their research output.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey method to examine library orientation and information literacy skills as a correlate of scholarly research of postgraduate students of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. The population of the study is comprised of the total number of postgraduate students from the (10) colleges of the institution. Simple random sampling was employed to ensure that every member of the population has equal and independent chance of being selected in the sample to be studied; while a convenient sampling method was used to select 15 postgraduate students from each of the colleges.

The main instrument of data collection was questionnaire, which was administered to all the sample respondents. The rate of response was encouraging, as all the 150 questionnaires administered, were duly completed and returned (100%). Descriptive survey method was adopted in analyzing the data collected through questionnaire.

Results and discussion

The results of the study were analysed using frequency table and followed by discussion of the findings.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by gender (N=100)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	276	61.3
Female	174	38.7

Total	450	
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Findings from the above table show that a greater number of the postgraduate students are male (61.33%) while the female are less (38.67%).

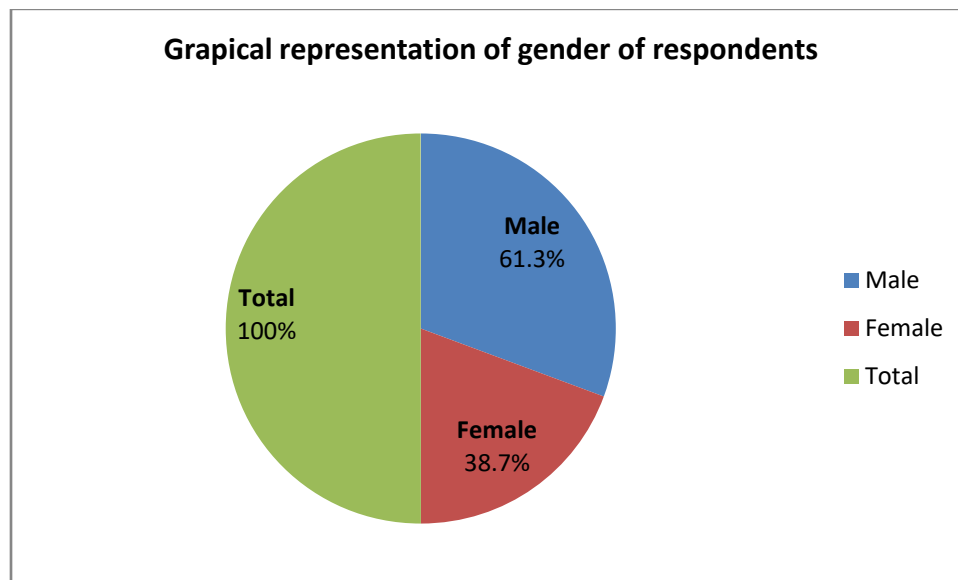


Table 3: Distribution of respondents by College(N = 150)

College	Frequency	Percentage (%)
COLAMRUD	48	10.7
COLANIM	60	13.3
COLBIOS	36	8
COLENG	54	12
COLERM	51	11.3
COLVET	30	6.7
COLPLANT	63	14
COLPHYS	45	10
COLFHEC	27	6
COLMAS	36	8
Total	450	100

From the table above, the number of respondents from each college is 15 representing 10% of the total respondents.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by Programme(N = 150)

Programme	Frequency	Percentage (%)
PGD	39	8.7%
M.Sc	318	70.6%
PhD	93	20.7%
Total	450	100%

Responses of the respondents as shown in the table above, indicate that the majority of the respondents are postgraduate. Masters Degree students (70.7%); followed by the Doctoral degree students (20.7%) while the Postgraduate diploma students are relatively less (8.7%).

Table 5: Information Literacy and Orientation Programmes available for postgraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD
1	Participation in some of the of Library courses	225	153	54	18
2	Library Orientation Exercise	276	135	48	15
3	Use of computer course	213	204	21	12
4	Library tour	243	87	75	45
5	Seminar	258	71	11	12
6	Information literacy	183	144	42	81

The above table analysed the orientation and information literacy programmes available to postgraduate students of FUNAAB. Responses indicate that use of computer course, seminar and partly information literacy are the only available programmes available to postgraduate students.

The others i.e. use of library course, library orientation and tour are not provided for postgraduate students.

Table 6: Information literacy skills level of postgraduate students of FUNAAB

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD
1	I can operate a computer without assistance	215	145	64	26
2	I can use the internet very well for information search	241	112	84	35
3	I can use the library's online catalogue	89	72	75	214
4	I can use the SPSS for analysis	45	81	203	121
5	I can use Microsoft office tools	207	79	75	64
6	I can effectively search onlinedatabases such as EBSCOHOST, TEEAL, HINARI etc.	61	25	143	121

The above table shows that the information literacy skill level of the postgraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, is still relatively very low. This was as revealed that majority of the students can only operate the Microsoft Office tools; search the internet; operate computer etc. However, quite a large number of them do not have the knowledge and skills to effectively use the online catalogue; search the online databases or use the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis.

Table 7: Relationship between library orientation, information literacy skills and scholarly research of postgraduate students

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD
1	Knowledge of available information resources and sources	234	108	75	33
2	Helps in identification and retrieval of right information	191	144	45	63
3	Quality research output	210	105	75	60
4	Proper citation and referencing	162	186	39	63
5	Increased library patronage	150	144	81	75

6	Better use of the library's electronic resources	225	81	84	60
7	Independent learning	282	45	51	72

Responses from the above table reveal that there is a demonstrable relationship between library orientation, information literacy skills and scholarly research of postgraduate students of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. Some of such correlation is its potentials to increase knowledge of the available information resources, sources and services within the library; efficient and effective retrieval of the right type of information; more independent learning; better use of the library's electronic resources; proper citation and references; and the overall quality research output of postgraduate students.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study's findings revealed that the postgraduate students comprise both sexes (male and female); some of whom are married, though a greater percentage is single. Their categories of programme of study include PGD, M.Sc. and PhD. Library orientation and information literacy represent integral aspects of academic libraries activities, aimed at ensuring the users become aware of the library's resources and services, and as well equipping them with the skills necessary for effective, efficient and independent use of those resources.

Among the many factors necessitating library orientation and information literacy in the library, is the proliferation of data and information starvation, brought about by the continuous advancement in information and communication technology (ICT).

In academic libraries, orientation and information literacy activities are usually designed in accordance with the institution's curriculum, where they are found. However, there are a few library orientation and information literacy programmes available to postgraduate students at FUNAAB. These include the use of computer course and seminar. Other forms of orientation and literacy programmes such as use of the library, library orientation exercise and tour, information literacy, etc. are either unavailable for postgraduate students or completely ineffective. The only form of orientation exercise is usually the library guide issued upon registration as a user of the library.

Although there are observable correlations between library orientation, information literacy skills and scholarly research of postgraduate students of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, such as its potentials to increase knowledge of the available information resources, sources and services within the library; efficient and effective retrieval of the right type of information; more independent learning; better use of the library's electronic resources; proper citation and references; and the overall quality research output of postgraduate students. Unfortunately, the information literacy skill level of the postgraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, is still relatively very low. This was revealed that while majority of the students can utilise the Microsoft Office tools; search the internet; operate computer for email messaging and other social media activities, etc., quite a large number of them do not have the knowledge and skills to effectively use the online catalogue; search the online databases or use the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis.

CONCLUSION

Library orientation and information literacy skills are very germane to both postgraduate students and researchers undertaking research activities. Every library user needs the awareness that particular information resources are available in the library and also the ability to locate and evaluate them, before he or she can effectively and efficiently use them. The awareness combines with the literacy skills to produce a research work that is of high quality and will contribute to knowledge within the community and beyond.

Although there are still challenges of inadequate orientation and information literacy skills among the postgraduate students of Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, these impediments are not without solutions, provided that the recommendations of the study are adequately taken into consideration and fully implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the above findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are hereby offered:

- ❖ Library orientation and information literacy programmes at Nimbe Adebipe Library and of course, other academic libraries should be reviewed to accommodate postgraduate students most of whom are coming from various institutions where the programmes are user education is ineffective. This will expose majority of them to the basics of library

use and increase their information search skills and ultimately improve their research output.

- ❖ The library should equally educate the institution's authorities on the importance of user education and information literacy, as well as other forms of user education programmes, in enhancing the research output of the students, and increasing the institution's prestige. This will ensure their greater commitment to the success of the programme.
- ❖ Intensive seminar or workshop on the use of online databases such as Ebscohost, Hinari, Teal etc. for research, and the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) should be organised for postgraduate students as that will equally go a long way in enhancing their research output.
- ❖ Audio-visual materials containing tutorials on how to do effective research and analysis could equally be helpful if provided to PG students. This will encourage independent learning and research.

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