Information Impact

Information Literacy Skills and Research Output of Library and Information Science Postgraduate Students of University of Ibadan

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of information literacy skills on the research output of Library and Information Science (LIS) postgraduate students at the University of Ibadan. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling techniques were used to draw out 100 students as a sample for this study out of 206 total populations, which include all PG 2021/2022 academic session PhD, M.Phil. and Masters students of LIS in University of Ibadan, Ibadan. The questionnaire was used for data collection. Percentages, frequencies, and mean ratings were used to analyze the posed research questions. The only hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Findings revealed that LIS postgraduate students possessed information literacy skills based on information needs, how to locate, how to evaluate, and information utilization. However, the research productivity possessed was shown to be low with a Weighted Mean =2.11 and a significant correlation of research productivity and information literacy skill (r=.445, n=51, p (.001)<.05). It was recommended that LIS educators and schools need to incorporate literacy skills most especially ICT skills into the curriculum and sacrosanct or germane in research productivity in order to increase academic scholarship, be recognized for creative thinking, and promote lifelong learning.

Keywords

Information literacy skills, research output, postgraduate students, library and information science,

Introduction

In today's knowledge-driven society, the ability to effectively access, evaluate, and apply information is essential for academic success and professional development. Information literacy, defined as the capacity to recognize when information is needed and the skills to locate, evaluate, and use it effectively (Espina and Spracklin, 2022), has become a cornerstone of higher education. For postgraduate students, particularly those in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS), these skills are not only crucial for academic performance, but they are also integral to the production of high-quality research. In this context, information literacy is not just about accessing information; it also plays a significant role in enabling students to conduct meaningful research that contributes to the academic community.

Postgraduate programs in LIS aim to develop advanced competencies in information management, research, and academic writing. However, research productivity among LIS postgraduate students has been a subject of concern, particularly in African institutions where there are often challenges related to resource availability, infrastructure, and academic support. In the case of the University of Ibadan, one of Nigeria's foremost institutions, there is a growing need to examine how students' information literacy skills influence their ability to engage in and produce quality research. While LIS students are typically well-versed in information management practices, it remains unclear whether these competencies are translating into the expected research output required for graduation and professional development.

Research is an important avenue for proffering solutions to social and economic problems. Research has been and will continue to be a crucial ingredient in the growth of any nation. According to Alfarthy et al (2024) goals of higher education are to develop and expand knowledge, as well as to serve the community and spread information through research. He believed that a good researcher should be able to support scientific study in the humanities, social sciences, and creative arts while also helping society flourish culturally, socially, and economically. Therefore, research and development are key mandates of universities and institutions of higher learning. It is also a core issue to be carefully examined in the academic environment, especially as it relates to postgraduate students because the quality of an institution's research is a factor being used in measuring the academic achievement of the institution. In fact, postgraduate students' major focus is to conduct research in different fields to develop a nation. In order to be awarded a postgraduate degree in their chosen fields of study, postgraduate students worldwide must complete one or more research projects. As a result, they could find it challenging to find and use information if they lack the necessary navigational and manipulation skills. Achieving a high-quality research output in today's information-rich academic environment requires research skills and an understanding of the readily available tools. As a result, De Paor et al (2020) defined

information literacy skills as those proficiencies required to produce high-quality research outputs.

Since the term "information literacy" was originally used by Lister (1997), other definitions have been proposed (Bawden, 2008). The capacity to access, manage, integrate, assess, generate, and convey information using ICT tools and the internet in order to participate in a knowledge-based society is known as information literacy. According to ALA (2013), information literacy is the capacity to locate, comprehend, assess, produce, and share digital information through information and communication technology. The ability to comprehend, evaluate, and apply information in a variety of formats from a wide range of sources that we can access via digital equipment is known as information literacy. According to Dinata (2021), information literacy is more closely related to technical access, gathering, comprehending, and sharing information skills.

To fully take advantage of the opportunities presented by the digital revolution, students must possess information literacy skills, which are crucial. Digital literacy is beyond just knowing how to operate a computer; it also involves managing different data types. Information literacy skills, as defined by UNESCO (2018), are a set of competencies that enable individuals to use digital devices, networks, and communication applications to create and exchange information, connect and collaborate, and solve challenges in order to enhance their social, educational, professional, and personal lives. The productivity of research greatly depends on the application of these abilities. Productivity in research refers to the ability of individuals, institutions, and systems to conduct high-quality research and share it effectively and efficiently. Postgraduate students should be research-driven and conscious. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to investigate the impact of information literacy skills on the research productivity of LIS postgraduate students of the University of Ibadan in Oyo State.

Statement of the Problem

In the contemporary academic environment, information literacy skills are vital for successful research and academic productivity, particularly for postgraduate students since their work is research centered. These skills, which include the ability to identify, evaluate, and effectively use information, are fundamental to conducting quality research and producing meaningful academic outputs. Despite the recognized importance of information literacy in academic success, there is limited research on the relationship between the information literacy skills of LIS postgraduate students and their research output.

At the University of Ibadan, LIS postgraduate students are expected to engage in high-level research, contributing to the body of knowledge in the field. However, there is a concern that the students' information literacy skills may not be at an optimal level, potentially affecting the quality and quantity of their research output. Factors such as

inadequate access to resources, insufficient training, and a lack of practical application of information literacy concepts may hinder their ability to produce high-quality research. This gap in understanding raises the question of how well the information literacy skills of LIS postgraduate students are correlated with their research productivity.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between the information literacy skills and the research output of LIS postgraduate students at the University of Ibadan. The research will assess the extent to which these skills influence the students' ability to effectively search for, evaluate, and use information for research purposes, and how this, in turn, affects their academic performance and research contributions in the field of Library and Information Science. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the need for enhanced information literacy training programmes within LIS postgraduate curricula, ultimately fostering better research outcomes.

Objectives of the study

The principal objective of the study is to investigate the information literacy skills and research output of LIS postgraduate students of university of Ibadan while the specific objectives are to;

1. Identify he level of information literacy skills of postgraduate students of LIS at the University of Ibadan.
2. Ascertain the level of research productivity of postgraduate students of LIS at the University of Ibadan.
3. find out the influence of information literacy skills on the research productivity of postgraduate students of LIS at the University of Ibadan.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this research:

i.   what is the level of information literacy skill of postgraduate students of LIS at the University of Ibadan?
ii. What is the level of research productivity of postgraduate students of LIS at the University of Ibadan?
iii. what is the influence of information literacy skills on the research productivity of postgraduate students of LIS at the University of Ibadan?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:
Ho1. Information literacy skills do not significantly influence the research productivity of postgraduate students of LIS at the University of Ibadan.

Literature review

Investigative studies continue to be crucial in any country's development. According to Alfarthy et al (2024) higher education's goals are to further knowledge, create knowledge, propagate knowledge through investigations, and serve society as a whole. He posited that a good researcher should be able to support societies' cultural, sociological, and economic advancement.

As stated by Natividad-Franco and Cruz (2023), research productivity exerts a crucial role in influencing innovations. Research must be done before making any changes to the way that education is structured, school programs, projects, and activities are structured, as well as methods and techniques, as only research can offer factual justification for their efficacy or lack thereof. Put differently, research forms the foundation of all educational activities for overall development.

Postgraduate students can become effective academics with the help of research. This is so that postgraduate students can acquire the knowledge and strengthen the skills necessary for efficiently transferring knowledge through research. It motivates them to work hard, closes the gaps left by earlier research, and opens up new avenues for investigation. Academics are exposed to up-to-date information through high-quality research, and research findings are shared. Academic research is important because it allows scholars to share their knowledge, exhibit their scholarly work, and be recognized for their original thought processes (Lertputtarak, 2008).

Numerous studies have tried to determine the degree, importance, and effect of information literacy skills on the research productivity of postgraduate students. Information literacy was examined by Prakasha and Muniyappa (2017) among research scholars and students at Bangalore University's Faculty of Science. Bansal (2021) looked into the information literacy proficiency of the Hisar District student body. According to the study, most students in the commerce stream own a desktop computer, a laptop, and a smartphone. While just a small percentage of students are familiar with Twitter, blogs, or Skype, 45.52 percent are familiar with email. These results indicated that students must be given greater information literacy skills to improve their current situation and join an informed society. studies have shown that postgraduate students lack sufficient information literacy skills (Whitworth et al., 2011; Anunobi & Udem, 2015; Lwehabura, 2018). Postgraduates no longer believe they possess the necessary information literacy skills. They find it difficult to supplement their academic and research endeavors with scholarly print and electronic resources because they lack the skills to effectively, credibly, and ethically access, retrieve, evaluate, and use information (Islam & Tsuji, 2010). The presumption that postgraduate students would have few problems and concerns and little need for training about the information needed for postgraduate research contributed to the lack of adequate information literacy skills (Streatfield et al., 2010).

Gkorezis et al (2017) addressed this problem in their most recent work. They proposed that the positive relationship between students' exploration and academic performance is mediated by information seeking and, in turn, academic self-efficacy. In any academic setting, research is important because it promotes knowledge exchange and insight, scholarly demonstration, and the recognition of creative thinking.

One of the primary factors influencing postgraduate students' research output is their awareness of the caliber and volume of publications that researchers have generated and disseminated. Creswell, as cited by Okiki (2012), states that research output is the result of a process that involves gathering, evaluating, changing, reading, writing, and eventually being able to share the knowledge gained with others in the community via publications in scholarly and professional journals and lectures delivered. A researcher must recognize the available resources and the most effective method or channel for finding and using them to conduct quality research (Madu & Dike, 2012). Most LIS postgraduate students do not consider publishing research work as sacrosanct to their existence as postgraduate students. Therefore, early acquisition of information literacy skills is recommended because it will improve a person's capacity for socialization and education.

Methodology

The study employed the survey method. The population is 206 LIS postgraduate students for the 2021-2023 academic session. This information was got from the general office in the department. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 postgraduate students for the study. The questionnaire, titled Information Literacy Skills Test and Research Productivity (ILSRP), was the instrument used and was self-administered to the 100 randomly selected respondents. Research questions were descriptively analyzed using frequencies, mean, and percentages as a measure of central tendency, while the Research hypothesis was inferentially analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) which was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings

Demographic analysis of the respondents was presented by the following figures.

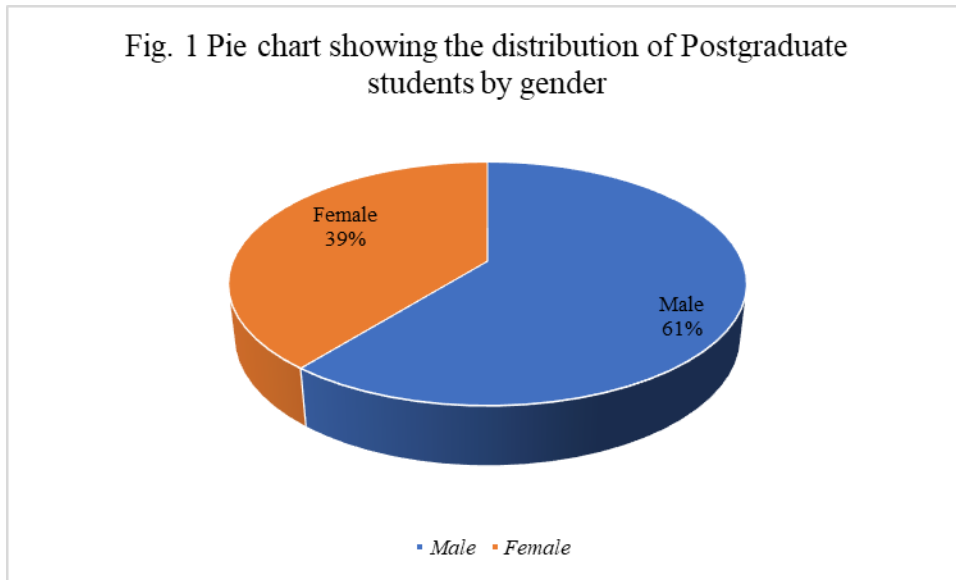Fig. 1 Pie chart showing the distribution of Postgraduate students by gender

Fig. 1 shows the distribution of the respondents by gender. It was shown that there more males than females at 61% to 31%

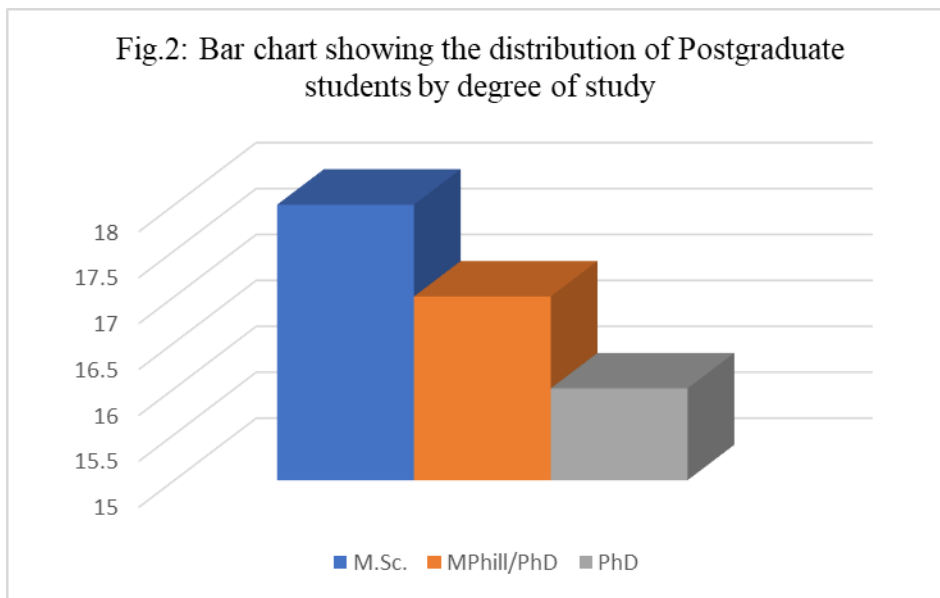Fig.2: Bar chart showing the distribution of Postgraduate students by degree of study

Fig. 2 shows the distribution of respondents by degree of study. The figure reveals that there were more master students than others

Answer to research questions

Research Question 1: Level of information literacy skills of LIS postgraduate students in the University of Ibadan

Table1a reveals the mean scores of the respondents' responses

s/n	As a postgraduate student, I feel confident and competent that:	SD	D	A	SA	Mean
1	I possess the ability to define the information that I need	1 2.0%	17 33.3%	18 35.3%	15 29.4%	2.92
2	I can recognize a wide range of possible information sources.	3 5.9%	19 37.3%	12 23.5%	17 33.3%	2.84
3	I can restrict my search tactics by date, language, and subject.	2 3.9%	17 33.3%	16 31.4%	16 31.4%	2.90
4	I can employ keywords to start search tactics.	2 3.9%	22 43.1%	10 19.6%	17 33.3%	2.82
5	I'm able to choose how to look for the information I require.	3 5.9%	21 41.2%	14 27.5%	13 25.5%	2.73
6	I can use a variety of print sources, including books and journals.	1 2.0%	18 35.3%	17 33.3%	15 29.4%	2.90
7	I can assess the information sources' authority, accuracy, and dependability.	3 5.9%	16 31.4%	17 33.3%	15 29.4%	2.86
8	I am acquainted with Mendeley and Zotero, two resources for scholarly publication and referencing.	4 7.8%	21 41.2%	17 33.3%	9 17.6%	2.61
9	I can use the information for different academic purposes	2 3.9%	16 31.4%	19 37.3%	14 27.5%	2.88
10	I can evaluate information critically	2 3.9%	20 39.2%	13 25.5%	16 31.4%	2.84
	Weighted Mean =2.83					

Table 1b: Test of norm showing the level of information literacy skill of LIS postgraduate students in the University of Ibadan

Interval	Mean index	Extent of information literacy skill	Frequency	Percentage
0-20		Low level	10	19.6
21-40	28.3137	High level	41	80.4

Table 1b shows the level of information literacy skills of LIS postgraduate students at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. 19.6% (n=10) students had a low level of information literacy, and 80.4% (n=41) had a high level of information literacy. Hence, there is a high level of information literacy skills among LIS postgraduate students in the study.

Research question two: Level of research productivity of LIS postgraduate students

The ability of the respondents to publish working papers, monographs, co-authored textbooks, conference/seminar/workshop papers, book chapters, technical reports, and journal articles is measured by the mean scores of their responses.

Table: 2: Level of research productivity of LIS postgraduate students

s/n	Types of publications	Very Low	Low	High	Very High	Mean
1	Working papers	6 11.8%	31 60.8%	10 19.6%	4 7.8%	2.24
2	Monographs	14 27.5%	23 45.1%	9 17.6%	5 9.8%	2.10
3	Co-authored textbooks	16 31.4%	21 41.2%	8 15.7%	6 11.8%	2.08
4	Conference/Seminar/Workshop papers	13 25.5%	21 41.2%	4 7.8%	13 25.5%	2.33
5	Book chapters	12 23.5%	27 52.9%	5 9.8%	7 13.7%	2.14
6	Technical reports	14 27.5%	27 52.9%	7 13.7%	3 5.9%	1.98
7	Scientific peer-reviewed bulletins	16 31.4%	24 47.1%	5 9.8%	6 11.8%	2.02
8	Occasional papers	19 37.3%	20 39.2%	3 5.9%	9 17.6%	2.04
9	Patent and Certified Invention	19 37.3%	26 51.0%	3 5.9%	3 5.9%	1.80
10	Journals articles	11 21.6%	24 47.1%	3 5.9%	13 25.5%	2.35
	Weighted Mean =2.11					

Table 2 shows the level of research productivity of LIS postgraduate students at the University of Ibadan, |Nigeria. The majority of the respondents had a low level of working papers, monographs, jointly written textbooks, conference/seminar/workshops articles, book chapters, scientific reports, journal

articles, periodic papers, scholarly bulletins with peer review, patents, and certified inventions.

Hypothesis: Information literacy skills are not significantly correlated to the research productivity of LIS postgraduate students at the University of Ibadan.

Table 3: **Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the correlation between information literacy skills and research productivity of LIS postgraduate students**

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	r	p-value	Remarks
Information literacy skills	28.3137	8.03365	51	.445*	.001	Sig.
Research productivity	21.0784	7.45880				

Table 3 showed that there is a statistically significant correlation between information literacy skills and research productivity (r=.445, n=51, p(.001)<.05). Hence, information literacy skills influenced the research productivity of LIS postgraduate students in the investigation. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. This result implies that the higher the information literacy skills, the higher the research productivity of the LIS postgraduate students.

Discussion of findings

Postgraduate students of LIS had low research productivity as they did not consider it a necessary component of their coursework and prestige as postgraduate students. In other words, LIS postgraduate students are knowledgeable about information but do not consider research as part of their major focus. As a requirement for being awarded a postgraduate degree in any chosen field of study, postgraduate students across the globe must complete one or more research projects. This is based on the assertion by Natividad-Franco and Cruz (2023) that research productivity is necessary and is a key influencer of innovations. Research must be conducted before making any changes to how education is structured, school programs, projects, and activities, as well as to methods and procedures, as only research can offer objective justifications for their efficacy or lack of effectiveness.

The result is consistent with that of Bansal (2021), Oyewo & Samuel (2016), and Adetoyeje, Donald, Adewale, and Tolulope (2019), who found that African institutions, particularly Nigerian universities, are trailing their Western counterparts in terms of research productivity. This is further backed by Lertputtarak's (2008) assertion that the main purpose of researchers' output is to impart knowledge, exhibit academic rigor, and garner recognition for innovative thinking.

It was further revealed that LIS postgraduate students have high-level information literacy skills since they are adept at finding, using, assessing, and applying information

effectively. According to Madu & Dike (2012), the researcher should be able to determine what resources are available and the appropriate method or medium of finding and accessing them. Additionally, it was discovered that the respondents showed high competence in information literacy.

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight a critical gap between the information literacy skills and research productivity of postgraduate students in Library and Information Science (LIS) at the University of Ibadan. While the students demonstrated a commendable level of proficiency in information literacy—evidenced by their ability to efficiently locate, evaluate, and apply information—this competence did not translate into high research productivity. The study revealed that, despite their advanced information literacy skills, the majority of LIS postgraduate students did not view research as a central aspect of their academic and professional identity. Instead, research was often perceived merely as a requirement for graduation, rather than as an essential component of their academic trajectory and professional growth. Despite possessing high-level of information literacy skills, the postgraduate students' limited focus on research suggests that the problem lies not in their ability to access or apply information, but in how research is conceptualized within the LIS curriculum.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding the disconnect between information literacy and research productivity. It emphasizes the need for universities, particularly in Nigerian contexts, to reframe the role of research in postgraduate education. By aligning research more closely with the academic and professional aspirations of LIS students, institutions can engender a stronger research culture and increase scholarly output. Furthermore, the study advocates for incorporating more research-focused training, mentorship, and collaborative projects into LIS programs to motivate students and equip them with the tools necessary for high-quality research.

In conclusion, this study calls for a reorientation of postgraduate LIS education to prioritize research as a key component of students' academic and professional development. This approach would not only enhance the academic prestige of the LIS field but also contribute to the advancement of knowledge and innovation within the discipline. By enabling a research-driven environment, institutions can better prepare LIS students for the growing demands of the information profession and improve the overall research productivity in Nigerian universities.

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