

**Availability of Grey Literature for Library and Information Science Postgraduate Students
in South-South, Nigeria**

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Abstract

The study investigated the availability of grey literature for library and information science postgraduate students in South-south, Nigeria. The study was led by two research questions and one hypothesis. The availability of grey literature for postgraduates in library and information science was discussed after a study of pertinent and recent literature. The research design used in the study was a descriptive survey. 121 respondents, all postgraduates in library and information science, made up the study's population. Using the census sampling method to choose the respondents, the complete population served as the sample size. The respondents' replies were elicited using a self-structured, open-ended 27-item questionnaire. Examples of descriptive and inferential statistics that were utilized to analyze the data gathered from the administered instrument include simple percentages, frequency counts, and correlation. The study's findings included, among other things, the verity that government publications, dissertations, handbooks, bulletins, thesis, newsletters, and conference proceedings are among the grey literature options available to postgraduate students. The availability of grey literature in the library does not statistically significantly influence the research outputs of postgraduate students in library and information science in South-South, Nigeria, it was also shown. The study concluded that grey literature is a beneficial source of knowledge that enhances postgraduate students' research writing in higher education institutions. Therefore, it was advised that library management form an ad hoc committee to determine the grey literature that is relevant to postgraduate students in comparison to the grey literature that is already available in the library and to make appropriate recommendations that will direct management on the need to make provisions for the grey literature that is not in the library.

Keywords: Availability, Grey literature, Postgraduate students, South-south, Nigeria.

Introduction

The information needed by citizens to make decisions about their lives and the society in which they live is provided through grey literature. Grey literature will continue to be the most frequently used source of information, whether people are travelling, conducting research, purchasing an appliance, treating an illness, maintaining machinery, participating in an archaeological dig, or engaging in a variety of other activities as part of their daily lives (Mukhtar, 2009). As long as there is a demand, print versions of grey literature, such as handbooks, service manuals, consumer product ratings, travel guides, and other materials we frequently carry about us and study, will likely continue to be published. According to Weintraub (2011), In a world where instantaneous connectivity and free commerce have removed many of the barriers to information flow, grey literature is becoming more significant as a knowledge source for a considerable section of the worldwide population. It already serves as an important resource for an informed audience and will undoubtedly do so for a very long time as an important contribution to journal literature. It appears that knowledgeable and effective management of these resources is now required.

Libraries should place a high priority on making grey publications accessible in the environment of circulating information in universities. Four views on availability might be deployed: physical, bibliographic, intellectual, and internet (Tofi & Fanafa, 2019). The focus of this poll, physical availability, refers to the grey literature document's presence in a library. This indicates that consumers have the option to conduct in-depth content consultation. Bibliographic availability denotes the existence of citations to a document's title or content without the document itself necessarily being available in the library's collection. Some nations have made an effort to restrict the bibliography of grey literature (Muswazi, 2001).

The European Society for Grey Literary Exploitation, for instance, was founded in Europe because of a grey literature strategy (EAGLE). Since 1993, there have also been international conferences on grey literature, which have sparked a national interest in the subject in nations including Sierra Leone, Sudan, Benin, Lesotho, Senegal, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania. Intellectual accessibility refers to the presence of analytical or evaluative works on the source documents of the grey literature. Most of the time, intellectual access can satiate users' informational needs without necessitating a further visit to the document. Conversely, the term "online availability" describes the existence of the "grey literature" in computer systems that are reachable through computer-to-computer communications. In this instance, even though the documents containing them are not physically present in the library, the material can still be made physically available (by downloading).

The biggest issue preventing libraries from appreciating the worth of grey literature and using it consequently is still availability. Items may be available in libraries but not always accessible (perhaps owing to the poor organisation), but they may not always be accessible even if they are available. This implies that the usage of grey literature is reliant on libraries having it on hand.

Use studies become powerful indications of the value assigned to such works by users when they are made available in libraries (Tofi & Fanafa, 2019).

This may not always be the case, though, since people occasionally use what they see not because it is what they want but rather because it is what is available right now. The main conclusion of a report detailing the outcomes of a brief survey on academic grey literature accessibility to Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in the UK (SMEs) was that SMEs require grey literature for practical benefits like using resources and university facilities as well as training opportunities and scouting for potential recruits. the JISC Scholarly Communications Report from 2008. The best source for contemporary research on particular topics, such as rural poverty or the plight of Sydney's homeless, is typically grey literature. 2012 (The UNE Home Library) (The UNE Home Library). Grey literature is "a broad and amorphous array of resources that is likewise 'grey' for being 'uncertain, unclear, and imprecise[e]," according to Rucinski (2015, p. 544). "Grey literature" is described by Weintraub (2011) as works created in print and electronic media by the government, academia, business, and industry but not under the purview of capitalist publishing concerns or when publishing is not the organization's core business activity. Publications that are neither published commercially nor indexed by significant database suppliers are referred to as "grey literature. Those with expertise in education, research, development, and information have been observed to pay increased attention to the potential of grey literature. Unpublished conference materials, standards, patents, basic specifications and recommendations, statistical resources, discussion/working papers, factsheets, promotion/advertising/commercial documentation, preprints, preliminary progress and advanced reports, research memoranda, posters, unpublished translations, and unpublished bibliographies are all examples of grey literature.

Statement of the Problem

There has been an explosion of informational assets in multiple formats as a result of the accessibility of ICTs and their associated use in controlling all parts of data processing. However, one important source of information that contains undiluted information is grey literature, such as scientific, technical, economic, social, and other reports developed in national and private institutions, unpublished conference materials, standards/patents/technical specifications and recommendations, statistical resources, and so on. Particularly, the overabundance of information sources has made it difficult for information seekers to decide which sources to use. According to the researcher's initial study, students in South-South, Nigeria, do not have easy access to grey literature for research purposes, which is why this study was done to determine whether such literature is available to postgraduate library and information science students.

Research Questions

The study was centred on the following research questions:

- i. What grey literature is obtainable in South-South, Nigeria, for postgraduates studying library and information science?
- ii. What difficulties do postgraduate students encounter when conducting research?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis below guided the study

- i. The research output of LIS postgraduates and the amount of available grey literature do not significantly correlate.

Literature Review

It is widely known that the library is a repository of knowledge that has been recorded and is available to users in a variety of formats to aid in their instruction, training, and research endeavours. The library is frequently the first stop for postgraduates engaged in advanced research studies because it is recognized to contain literature or recorded human knowledge. Consequently, they examine various information resources to expand the frontier of knowledge. All writing can be considered literature in the broad sense, or it can be defined more specifically as work that conveys ideas, emotions, and outlooks on life. So, the term "literature" is best described as "chronic phrase(s) in lexis" (said or penned), especially when those words are arranged in a pleasing and conventional pattern or form, such as grey type. According to Osayand and Ukpebor (2012), grey literature is one genre that librarians purchase to suit the information needs of their patrons. Annual reports, fact sheets, patents, blogs, government publications, personal communications, interviews, bulletins, policy statements, conference proceedings, legislation, newsletters, dissertations/theses, press releases, newspaper clippings, speeches, data and statistics, and more are among the publications that are categorized as grey literature, according to a report from the University of Canberra Library (2020).

Annual Reports: they contain details about the operations of the controlling organization and any other subordinate organizations during the reporting year. It is a key document used by enterprises to inform their shareholders and other stakeholders about their activities, spending, strategies, and other information (CPA Australia, 2019).

Fact Sheets: a fact sheet, also known as a fact file or one sheet, is a source of information that highlights key points about a specific event or the operations of an organization using tables, headings, bullets, and other formatting devices. Fact sheets typically include summaries of research findings, production statistics, technical data, lists, statistical reports, responses to frequently asked questions, educational resources, do-it-yourself instructions, etc. Examples of fact sheets include the planetary fact sheets of the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the abridged U.S. International Revenue Service report, study guides on various subjects, and fact sheets from the World Health Organization on a variety of health-related topics (NASA).

Dissertations/Theses: a paper that contains a thorough explanation of the research that a postgraduate student undertook to obtain a degree or other type of professional certification is referred to by this phrase. Several details in a dissertation or thesis typically benefit postgraduate students' ongoing academic endeavours. A dissertation/thesis is a protracted academic writing assignment that often employs predetermined procedures and is based on primary research

completed by a postgraduate student as a fraction of the requirements for the award of a master's or doctorate, as the case may be. Even researchers typically dismiss dissertations/theses as sources of information, yet when properly combined, they offer the following advantages:

- i. Similar like journal articles, conference papers, and other sorts of literature, current dissertations/theses offer sneak peeks into concepts and conclusions that have not yet been made public.
- ii. These might be the sole works by authors that are made available to the general public but don't typically publish through commercial publishers or write for a popular readership.
- iii. Dissertations/theses frequently include extensive bibliographical and PubMed to assist readers in locating pertinent literature for their research. They could also serve as models for structuring and presenting concepts, diagrams, charts, and other elements of a document.
- iv. In addition, the dissertation and thesis serve as references and shed light on a particular person's early work.
- v. They both serve as a jumping-off point for the majority of scholars.

Conference Proceedings: a conference proceedings is an anthology of academic papers published as a fraction of an academic conference or workshop in academia or librarianship. These papers reflect the contributions of the researchers who attended the conference or workshop and are published in many academic fields in addition to academic journals. According to a report from Penn State University Libraries, a conference proceeding is the published account of the events of a conference, congress, symposium, or other meeting organized by a professional body, society, or association. Typically but not always, it includes abstracts or reports of papers presented by the participants or researchers (2020).

Personal Communication: Personal communications include personal memos, letters, emails, face-to-face encounters, and phone calls with a specific person over a time frame specified. Intimate interactions are only cited in the text and not in the reference list because they cannot be retrieved by other people.

Bulletins: A bulletin is a condensed report, often a government announcement on a topic of public interest, that is released for quick publishing, broadcast, or information to the target audience. It may equally be observed as a succinct update or summary of recent news information distributed by an established communication source in an organization, whether it be print, non-print, or both. A bulletin is a brief notice made by a reputable source regarding significant information. It can also be thought of as a brief article that a company publishes to share news about itself.

Policy Statements: This piece offers a summary of the appropriate practices for staff members and clients inside an organization. Often, it outlines how things should be conceded within the organization. A policy statement should cover the organization's human resources, financial resources, legal or regulatory concerns, safety concerns, and operational concerns.

Policy statements are documents that outline an organization's goals, explain how those goals might be attained, and specify the steps necessary to get there (Duff, 2019).

Omeje (2010) pinpointed certain traits of in grey literature, which are summarized below:

- i. They are hard to find and obtain due to their unconventional publication style, and non-availability through typical channels of book supply.
- ii. They are unconventionally published, that is, they are not published by traditional publishers
- iii. They are typically not available through the traditional sources of book supply, such as publishers, vendors, and bookshops
- iv. They are not covered by secondary bibliographic services like indexes, abstracts, and bibliographies.
- v. They are significant informational sources since they include unaltered reports or the authors' original opinions.

Research is carried out precisely and methodically to look for new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values or for the reinterpretation of existing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to address a specific issue. Bocar (2013) noted that when conducting research, researchers must be cautious, allow a bounty of occasions to complete each stage of the activity, be conscientious, and work in the library for a specific number of hours each week. Additionally, researchers must add additional hours or weeks before the deadline because some tasks take longer than anticipated and some research work stages are more challenging than what the researchers anticipate. According to Trimmer(Bocar, 2013), there are unforeseen challenges that researchers face that may result in academic failures, but the first step is to think optimistically about reaching set goals. Collins (2012) noted that because conducting research is a technological process requiring a great deal of technical knowledge and critical thought, researchers often face a variety of difficulties. Olaitan (2009) lists a few of the difficulties faced by researchers as the alternative researchable topic, a deficiency of knowledge about where to find materials, supervisors who are unfriendly and occasionally aggressive, a deficiency of motivation on the researcher's part, a deficiency of funding, poor health during the research-writing process, etc.

Taylor and Beasley (as cited in Bocar, 2013) claim that because researchers face numerous difficulties, they require additional guidance from their supervisors to improve research writing abilities such as problem-solving, original thought, validation, summary, documentation, and reproduction. Due to their inability to locate pertinent literature, including books, articles, papers, abstracts, theses, and dissertations, researchers also, have difficulties while using search engines and databases. Williams et al. (as cited in Bocar, 2013) also noted that some postgraduate students delay writing their theses not because of any academic challenges but rather because of their supervisors' lack of acceptance and respect. According to Wisker, Robbinson, and Shacham (as cited in Bocar, 2013), who conducted the study that yielded this conclusion, issues might occasionally arise when a student's prospects for the supervisory relationship and the research experience do not line up. According to Career Research and Advisory Centre (2022), obstacles faced by researchers include a deficiency of motivation on their part, a lack of self-confidence, poor time management, a deficiency of focus or direct support, researchers who are stuck in their

comfort zones, a fear of failure or fear of taking risks, a lack of relevant experience, an inability to choose a researchable topic, a deficiency of sufficient resource materials on the topic chosen, hostile attitude.

Methodology

This study looked into the availability of grey literature for postgraduate students studying library and information science in South-South, Nigeria. Postgraduate LIS students at Delta State University, Abraka, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Portharcourt were asked for their opinions. For this study, a descriptive research design was used. Using the census sampling technique, 121 respondents from the postgraduate student population (Ph.D. and M.Sc.) were selected as the sample. The limited population is to blame for this. According to Baxter and Babbie (2004), the complete population can be used for this investigation if the population is small and manageable. The study's instrument, a questionnaire, has 24 open-ended questions about the accessibility of grey literature and the difficulties faced by postgraduate researchers while they carry out their research projects. The availability of grey literature for library and information science postgraduate questionnaire (AGLLISPO) was the name of the study tool. To ensure a high response rate, the questionnaire was personally distributed to respondents in each lecture hall. Descriptive statistics including mean, frequency counts, and straightforward percentages were used to analyze the data collected from the disseminated questionnaire. Using SPSS version 22, the analysis was completed.

Results

The data and interpretation of the research findings are presented in this portion of the study following the research questions and hypotheses that served as its guiding principles.

Table 1: Questionnaire Response Rate

Copies of the Questionnaire Administered	Copies of Questionnaire Retrieved	Percentage of Retrieved Copies of Questionnaire
121	119	98

In total, 121 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents, and 119 (98%) of those copies were completed, retrieved, and otherwise useful for carrying out the study, as shown in Table 1. The study concluded that a 98% response rate to the questionnaire was sufficient for conducting the poll and allowing for population-wide generalization. This finding was reached in agreement with Fincham's (2008) claim that researchers should aim for a response rate of roughly 60% for the preponderance of their studies.

Table 2: Institution of the Respondents

Institution	Freq.	Percentage
Delta State University, Abraka	43	36
Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma	24	20
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Portharcourt	52	44
Total	119	100

According to data in Table 2, 52 (44%) of the responders hold postgraduate degrees from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in Portharcourt, 43 (36%) hold postgraduate degrees from Delta State University in Abraka, and 20 (24) have postgraduate degrees from Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma. The preponderance of the responders who participated in the survey are postgraduates from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Portharcourt, it was concluded.

Research Question 1: What grey literature is obtainable in South-South, Nigeria, for postgraduates studying library and information science?

Table 3: Obtainable Grey Literature for Postgraduates

Grey Literature	Available		Not Available	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Conference Proceedings	99	83	20	17
Technical reports	15	13	104	87
Theses	99	83	20	17
Dissertations	112	94	7	6
Newsletters	99	83	20	17
Patents	39	33	80	67
Factsheets	24	20	95	80
Government publications	114	96	5	4
Bulletin	108	91	11	9
Extract from minutes of meetings	19	16	100	84
Research reports	17	14	102	86
Handbooks	111	93	8	7
Blogs	24	20	95	80

The mainstream of responders, as shown by the data in Table 3, agreed that the obtainable grey literature in the university libraries under this study is composed of government publications (114, 96%), dissertations (112, 94%), handbooks (111, 93%), bulletins (108, 91%), newsletters (99, 83%), and theses.

Research Question 2: What difficulties do postgraduate students run into when conducting research?

Table 4: Challenges Encountered by Postgraduates when Carrying Out Research

Challenges	Agree		Disagree	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Difficulty in the selection of researchable topic	96	80	23	20
Inadequate knowledge of the source of materials	98	82	21	18
Unfriendly/sometimes aggressive behaviour of supervisors	101	85	18	15
Less motivation from the side of the researcher	105	88	14	12
Inadequate financial resources	112	94	7	6
Bad health during the period of writing the research	29	24	90	76
Low self-esteem	17	14	102	86
Poor time management	117	98	2	2
Lack of focus/direction on the part of the researcher	107	90	12	10
Inability to carry out independent research	111	93	8	7
Fear of failure	103	87	16	13
Inadequate research experience	97	81	22	17
Inadequate or difficulty in getting literature	102	86	17	14
Inadequate research skills	97	82	22	18

Data in Table 4 revealed that the bulk of the responders agreed that poor time management (117, 98%), a deficit in financial resources (112, 94%), an inability to conduct independent research (111, 93%), a deficiency in focus/direction on the part of the researcher (107, 90%), a deficit in motivation on the part of the researcher (105, 88%), and fear of failure (103, 87%) are among the challenges faced by postgraduate students while conducting research. Inadequate or challenging literature acquisition (102, 86%), unwelcoming or occasionally aggressive supervisor behaviour (101, 85%), a deficit in familiarity with the sources of the materials (98, 82%), a deficiency in research experience and expertise (97, 81%), and difficulty selecting a research topic are additional confrontations that students must overcome.

Hypothesis 1: The research output of LIS postgraduates and the amount of obtainable grey literature do not significantly correlate.

Table 5: Correlation between Obtainable Grey Literature and Research Output

		Availability Grey Literature	Research Output
Availability Grey Literature	Pearson Correlation	1	.032
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.740
	N	119	112
Research Output	Pearson Correlation	.032**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.740	
	N	112	112

$\alpha = 0.05$

The association connecting the obtainable grey literature and the research outputs of postgraduate Library and Information Science students in South-South, Nigeria is shown by the data in Table 5. The outcome indicates that the correlation coefficient, or r, is 0.032, or 3.2%. This demonstrates that there is only a shaky relationship between the research outputs of postgraduate scholars and the available grey literature. However the significant level of .740 is higher than the alpha threshold of 0.05. Therefore, it is recognised that there is no significant relationship between the research outputs of postgraduate students and the available grey literature. The conclusion reached was that the currently available grey literature has no statistically significant impact on the research outputs of postgraduate library and information science students in South-South, Nigeria.

Discussion of the Findings

The explanation of the research findings is provided in this portion of the study and is supplied as follows following the research questions and hypotheses that acted as the study's guiding principles:

Obtainable Grey Literature for Postgraduates

Government publications, dissertations, handbooks, bulletins, theses, newsletters, and conference proceedings are among the sorts of grey literature that are obtainable in the university libraries under this study, according to the analysis of the data for research question 1. The results show that libraries are a repositories of preserved human knowledge in a variety of setups that are made accessible to library users to support their teaching, learning, and research activities. The results are consistent with Osay and Upebor's (2012) claim that librarians often purchase grey literature to gratify the information needs of their patrons. The results concur with the University of Canberra Library's report from 2020, which identified a variety of publications as grey literature, including annual reports, fact sheets, patents, blogs, government publications, personal communications, interviews, bulletins, policy proclamations, conference proceedings, legislation, newsletters, dissertations/theses, press releases, newspaper clippings, speeches, and data.

Confrontations Encountered by Postgraduates when Carrying Out Research

Data analysis for research question two uncovers that poor time management, a deficit in financial resources, an inability to conduct independent research, a deficit in direction and focus on the researcher's part, insufficient motivation on the researcher's part, and fear of failure, insufficient or difficulty obtaining literature, unfriendly/occasionally aggressive behaviour on the part of supervisors, and a deficit of knowledge of the source of obtaining material are among the factors that contributed to the failure of the researcher. The results support Trimmer's assertion (as cited in Bocar, 2013) that researchers occasionally face unforeseen challenges that can result in academic failures, but that the first step is to maintain a positive outlook on achieving objectives. The results supported those of Olaitan (2009) who found that postgraduate students face several difficulties when conducting research studies, including choosing a researchable topic, not knowing where to find materials, dealing with unfriendly and occasionally aggressive supervisors, lacking motivation from the researcher's part, having insufficient financial resources, and being ill while writing the research.

Correlation between Available Grey Literature and Research Harvest

In line with the first hypothesis's conclusion, the presence of grey literature in the library has no statistically significant impact on the research outcomes of postgraduates studying library and information science in South-South, Nigeria. The study's findings contradict Okiki's (2013) assertion that the access to and utilization of information assets determines the quality of the research output produced by researchers. He added support for the idea that libraries at higher education institutions were created to help the teaching, learning, and research efforts of faculty, students, and other outside users of the library by offering information resources.

Conclusion

Considering the study's findings, the researcher concluded that grey literature, which includes government publications, dissertations, handbooks, bulletins, , newsletters, and conference proceedings, is a useful source of information that contains crucial information that improves postgraduate students' research writing in higher educational institutions. Postgraduate students still face several difficulties when writing their thesis or dissertation, including poor time management, a deficit in funding, the inability to conduct independent research, a deficit in focus or direction on the part of the researcher, and a deficit in desire.

Recommendations

Considering the study's findings, the following were recommended:

1. . To prevent unethical behaviours, university administration should devise a system for monitoring the interaction between supervisors and supervisees. They should also set up a program on research writing where seasoned professionals will be asked to instruct postgraduate students.
2. Library bureaucrats should shape an ad hoc committee to assess the importance of the grey literature to postgraduate students in comparison to the grey literature already

available in the library and to provide management with appropriate recommendations regarding the need to make provisions for the non-library grey literature.

3. Library management should inform university administrators about the necessity of educating postgraduate students about the worth of grey literature to their academic achievement and exposing them to the grey literature that is available in the library to ensure corresponding utilisation.

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