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**A CITATION ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF GREY LITERATURE
IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IN THE SPECIAL
COLLECTIONS DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA NSUKKA,
LIBRARY.**

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Abstract

This paper examines the use of Grey literature in Agricultural research of the University of Nigeria Nsukka, through a citation analysis of Ph.D. theses of the faculty of Agriculture of the University from 2000-2005. The study reveals that Grey resources are not fully utilized in agricultural research. The paper in addition outlines the value of grey literature to scientific and scholarly research as well as lists problems with the acquisition and bibliographic control of this type of literature. Recommendations are proffered on how the library can help agricultural researchers to maximize the use of Grey resources in the University library.

Key words: Grey literature, Citation analysis, Bibliometrics, Agriculture research.

Introduction

Agriculture is a very important sector of the economies of low income countries. Very few countries have experienced rapid economic growth without a corresponding growth in Agriculture. In Nigeria despite the dominance of mineral oil exploitation as the current mainstay of the Nigerian economy in terms of foreign exchange earnings, the agricultural sector has remained the largest sector - contributing 37% of the GDP and employing 65% of the adult workforce (Falusi 1997). Indeed, agricultural research in Nigeria is very crucial, particularly in the universities where researchers have relied very heavily on the academic libraries to furnish them with latest topical issues in agricultural research with a view to improving food security in the country. This underscores the importance of research and scientific investigations in agriculture.

From the above-mentioned there is no doubt that agriculture researchers need reliable access to current literature. Agriculture researchers in low income countries such as Nigeria lack this access to current literature because of the small and often outdated collections found in most libraries in developing countries. In addition most libraries have experienced a steady decrease in their budget and this has consequently affected the number of books and journals any library can acquire at any given time. The dearth of current books and journals has necessitated the frequent use of Grey literature particularly in agricultural research where such materials abound. The use of Grey literature in agricultural research has consequently reduced the information deficit situation in most libraries in Nigeria.

For developing countries where it takes so long a time for works to go through the normal publishing channel, researchers have resorted mainly to Grey literature in supporting on-going initiatives aimed at improving food security mainly because of its currency, and speed in getting to the libraries. Given the latest advancement in information technology, the need to arrest declining agricultural productivity and the high premium placed in information repackaging to the researchers, libraries role has continued to enlarge. Grey literature has also posed a way out in meeting most of these needs. At the university of Nigeria library, Grey literature is mostly sought after because it fills the readers knowledge gap by presenting the topic in greater detail and allowing the reader gain more insight and a larger perspective on the topic more than journals and books, particularly researchers in agricultural sciences. This work, therefore, is an examination of the use of Grey literature in the Special collections division of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka library using the citation analysis approach. The paper also identifies and discusses the factors, which militate against the use of Grey literature in the library.

Definition of concepts:

It is germane at this stage to define important concepts or terms used in this paper- Grey Literature and Citation Analysis.

Grey Literature

According to Debachere (1995:94) Grey literature covers an extensive range of materials that cannot be found easily through conventional channels such as publishers but which is frequently original and usually recent. Hurtle (1991) defines it as quasi-printed reports, unpublished but circulated papers, unpublished proceedings of conferences, printed programs from conferences and the other non-unique materials which in fact constitute the bulk of our modern manuscript collection. Grey Literature has been perceived by many as belonging to the primary sources of information and has become an accepted method of non conventional communication in the sciences (Augur 1989). Grey literature has come to constitute a section of publications ranking in importance with journals, books and serials. Augur further supports this view by stating that Grey literature although separate from main stream publishing is just as important. Subramayan (1981) elaborates by stating that the quest for scientific knowledge adds to modifies, refines or refutes earlier findings and that Grey Literature is an important part of this process. Among reasons cited for the importance of Grey Literature are its greater speed, flexibility of dissemination and its currency. However, the debate over what exactly constitutes Grey literature resulted in a consensus definition at the Third International Conference on Grey literature held in Luxembourg (1997). This definition stated that Grey literature is that which is produced by government, academia, business and industries both in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishing interest and where publishing is not the primary activity of the organization Subramayan (1981).

Citation Analysis

Citation analysis is most applicable to research or special collections. It can be characterized as a specialized form of list checking in which the lists are created by the assessor from scholarly books and articles (IWR 1996). This study is a method of assessing actual use of resources and the incidence of agricultural Grey literature appearing in bibliographies of articles.

Methodology:

Citation analysis of Ph.D. works in faculty of Agriculture from 2000-2005 was embarked upon. At the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, obtaining a Ph.D. can take a minimum of 4 calendar years part-time and 3 calendar years full time. However, in certain cases the programme can run for as long as 7 or 8 years part-time. Since most students are part-time only a total of twenty completed Ph.D. theses were recorded in the faculty of Agriculture between 2000-2005 this comprised seventeen males and three females. The departments examined were Agricultural Science, Agricultural Extension and Agricultural Economics.

The analysis was done to ascertain the use of Grey literature in agricultural research. In addition to examination of documentary sources, oral interview of librarians in the special collections division of the university of Nigeria library was conducted with a view to establishing the availability and accessibility of Grey literature to Agricultural researchers.

Results:

The citation analysis of twenty Ph.D. Agricultural theses yielded a total of 2,640 (Two thousand six hundred and forty) citations, out of which 513 (19.4%) citations were Grey literature. Therefore only 19.4% of all the literature cited in twenty Ph.D. agricultural theses was Grey. A further break down of Grey materials consulted yielded the following: Conference papers and proceedings 175 (6.6%); Theses 120(4.5%); Annual reports 52(1.9%); Technical reports 86 (3.3%); Occasional papers 80 (3.0%). For technical reports FAO materials were cited more than others, followed by World Bank reports. Occasional papers include Newsletters, monographs, occasional paper series and agency manuals. However, Newsletters were more cited than others.

Discussion

The findings of this analysis revealed that agricultural researchers have not fully optimized Grey literature in their research. Only 513 (19.4%) of 2640 citations are Grey materials. This has serious implications for research since the bulk of current literature in agriculture is Grey materials. A further examination of this trend through documentary sources/statistics revealed that out of 4050 users of the Special collections division of the library in the year 2005, only 550(5.5%)of the users are from the faculty of Agriculture. This underscores why Grey resources are not maximized. The awareness of these

be promptly indexed and sent to the faculty of Agriculture. When new resources arrive, their cards should be written immediately and filed in the library system

To expedite access a bound list of all Grey materials with their respective call numbers should be generated for both staff and students. The library is currently embarking on this project.

Acquisition of these sources is crucial. Agencies should be communicated from time to time to send their materials as quickly as they are published. When such materials arrive, they should be quickly processed and made accessible to agricultural researchers. Current Awareness Services (CAS) helps to facilitate the use of these resources. This is a system of reviewing publications immediately on arrival and selecting pertinent topics, mostly brought to the attention of our agricultural researchers. This will help in creating awareness of these resources. The Nnamdi Azikiwe library also has the University of Nigeria Library Accession News (UNLAN) which is published from time to time. This provides full bibliographic details of materials recently acquired by the library. This list is sent to the various departments via their faculties to lecturers and post-graduate students. This list presently does not include gray resources. It is hoped that in the future grey literature will be advertised through this medium. Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI). This involves knowing the research interest /profile of our agricultural researchers with a view to drawing the attention of the concerned persons to relevant resources. It is a customized service which most researchers find invaluable. The library through this service will maintain a close link with these researchers with the intent of serving them better.

Finally In a world in which free trade and instantaneous communication have eliminated many of the barriers to information flow, grey literature is gaining greater importance as a source of information for much of the world's population. It is an indispensable resource for an informed and enlightened public and will undoubtedly continue to serve as a necessary supplement to journal literature well into the future

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