Full Length Research Paper

Scholarly use of information for research by postgraduate students: The role of Kenneth Dike Library (KDL)

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Research process is being focused upon by universities and colleges. An important element in the research process is the accessibility of information resources and services provided by libraries. Postgraduate students are one group of stakeholders in the universities. It is thus appropriate for academic libraries to re-examine how they can play a more relevant role in facilitating research. This study examines the views of postgraduate students on the role of the university library in helping them with their research and their satisfaction with the sources and services currently provided. The study adopted descriptive design and questionnaire was used to gather information from postgraduate students. Data were collected from 300 randomly selected postgraduate students from the university. They were analyzed with simple descriptive statistics. The findings show that the majority (55%) of respondents acknowledged the important role of library in facilitating research, while (48.2%) of the respondents were satisfied with the current role being played by the libraries. It is recommended that libraries need to create awareness among postgraduate students about the services and resources that are available and how to use them and academic libraries should be stocked with up-to-date materials in order to encourage researchers to use their facilities.

Key words: Postgraduate-education, information resources, library services, universities, libraries, research.

INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries have for centuries played critically-important roles in supporting research in all subjects and disciplines within their host institutions. Today, research plays an important part in almost all universities and research institutions. While teaching and learning are still important, research is becoming increasingly emphasized, thus leading to increase in postgraduate population in most universities. Faculty members and postgraduate students form a significant group of researchers in a university. While postgraduates are expected to acquire and maintain a broad but also highly detailed knowledge of their subject and related disciplines and are expected to carry out original research in partial fulfillment of the award of a higher degree, the faculty members are required to do research themselves, take on more postgraduate students, and are assessed based on the outputs of their research. This has led to researchers making greater demands for access to to information and on the quality of information provided (Singh, 2007). Academic libraries are known as gateways to information but this role is being challenged because researchers are turning to Google in growing numbers, even though

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the libraries have provided the latest research materials to them (Law, 2009). To better meet these challenges, academic libraries need to keep the connection with researchers and further develop the functions and remain viable and competitive in this new information environment so that researchers could effectively learn and apply the full capabilities of resources and services offered (Moyo, 2004).

The question is "what is the role of the academic library in supporting research activities of graduate students". Rasul and Singh (2010) says libraries have a critical role to play in successful research by providing a place for students and faculty to do their research and advance their knowledge, provide collections of resources, programs in helping users to find the resources and reference services. Digital technology has revolutionized not only the way information is packaged, processed, stored, and disseminated, but also how users seek and access information; and the question now being asked is "how do we move all services to an e- platform in order to support scholars in the research life cycle" since success is measured not by provision of resources and services, but by the use and value placed by researchers? Libraries therefore need to understand students' research behavior and the services needed.

Thus, this study attempts to find out the role of Kenneth Dike Library in helping postgraduate students with their research. It examines what role it currently plays, and what it ought to do from the users' perspective. It also identified the resources and services commonly used in the library, and the impact these had on their academic success.

The University of Ibadan which was established in 1948 is the oldest university in Nigeria. For the academic year 2011/12, the university has over 1,416 full-time faculty members, 13,408 undergraduates and approximately 8,228 graduate students. Through its 13 faculties and six academic institutes, it offers different range of disciplines. Kenneth Dike Library, the main library houses over one million volumes of books, thesis, special collections, over 6,000 titles of journals and electronic databases. Internet connectivity is available through the university's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and there are wireless links throughout the library. The library runs a 24 h shift.

The broad objective of the study is to investigate the impact of Kenneth Dike Library in facilitating postgraduate research in the University of Ibadan. The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. explore which Library resources are of importance to the postgraduate students.
2. assess the satisfaction level of these students with the library resources currently provided in KDL.
3. assess the satisfaction level of these students with the library services currently provided in KDL.
4. assess the satisfaction level of these students on the role of KDL in facilitating research.

5. examine postgraduate students' views on the role of the KDL library services in facilitating their research.
6. examine the location and operations of KDL in facilitating research.
7. examine the purpose why postgraduate students visit the library to use KDL resources.
8. examine the library materials mostly consulted.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literatures that focus on graduate students as they conduct their research are limited. Previous studies are on information behaviour of high school, college, university students and professionals. These studies focused on providing access to resources and providing services that facilitate access to the resources, such as interlibrary loans, information literacy programs, and reference services. Nonetheless some documents acknowledged the pivotal role of university libraries in facilitating research. The Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) Strategic Plan 2003-04 refers to improving access by the students and staff of Australian universities to the information resources that are fundamental to the advancement of research. Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) also touched on the academic library which conveys its integral role in supporting higher education's core missions of research and education (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2006).

Ka (2005) opines that universities can offer a variety of services in supporting research by building up their resources to gather more research information and journals information for helping young professors and PhD students publish their works in addition to providing a variety of services in this digitization era. The university library is the academic heart of a university system and its basic purpose is to provide university staff, students, and other researchers with materials, assistances and an enabling environment that would facilitate teaching, learning and research. Foo et al. (2002) indicated that academic libraries now take on the key role of providing a competitive advantage for the university and they are positioning themselves to be the learning and research centres of universities. It is important for library services to focus more on the use of resources provided for their patrons.

Popoola (2008) affirmed that the information resources and services available in institutional information systems must be capable of supporting research activities among the students and faculty members. Campbell (2006) expatiates on the multiple role of library, of providing not only books and space for students to study, but also provide services for facilitating research activities, such as bibliographies, reference services and information literacy classes. In University of Malaya, the library's mission is "to be the premier academic library providing excellent collections and information services in support

of the University of Malaya's mission". This is in furtherance to the university mission "to advance knowledge and learning through quality research and education for the nation and for humanity". Singh (2007) showed that research is taking on increasing importance in universities and colleges. Universities are making larger allocations for research and the ranking of universities are also factored on their research outputs. It therefore becomes imperative for the role of academic libraries in facilitating research to be re-examined. This could be done through the provision of effective services and supports to users of academic libraries.

Webb (2007) asserted that effective academic libraries are gateways to academic knowledge through their own collections and through facilitating access to materials. In line with its core purpose, providing effective library services could support the research activities of researchers. Haglund and Olsson (2008) indicated that university libraries are dedicated to what they perceive as the needs of students and researchers at the university. Nonetheless, needs of user are diverse, so libraries must strive to satisfy those needs; otherwise, they would not effectively assist the research activities, nor could they contribute to the university's research. While all aspects of library services may seem important to librarians in their quest to support research, the case may not be the same with users, especially postgraduate students. In a study of users' needs, satisfaction, and library performance at the University of Washington Libraries, Hiller (2001) found out that respondents placed increased importance on electronic resources. In another study, Anunobi et al., (2010) affirmed the importance of serials (print or non print) to postgraduate research as they maintain that serials form the bedrock of postgraduate research. In the opinion of Luzius and Webb (2002), the physical library serves to provide access to technology, instruction to library use, a place to study among other things. Such considerations are no doubt important to postgraduate students.

Exposing users to library resources through users' education is one service that will facilitate research. Simmonds (2001) found that the use of academic libraries is influenced most by users' perceived familiarity with the library and its resources. Those who are more familiar with the library are more likely to use academic libraries. To motivate the greater usage of libraries, librarians need to educate users on how to use library resources not only in the confines of the library building, but even when they access the resources remotely.

Rowley (2004) pointed out that librarians can promote the research culture among researchers. Currently, libraries are undergoing continual changes and development as library managers, information profess-ionals, and knowledge workers need to manage and understand these changes to respond to the dynamic environments. Researchers could benefit from these changes.

Even though available literature has indicated that academic libraries play a significant role in facilitating research, the overall support of academic libraries for research is not yet strategic. Patterson (2009) observed that libraries rely heavily on inter-library loans to support research instead of developing an extensive research collection.

As the academic environment is constantly changing and with universities increasing their emphasis on research, academic libraries need to re-examine their role in assisting the users in their research. It is in the light of this that this study is investigating the contributions of the Kenneth Dike Library to research activities in University of Ibadan.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive research design and observation. Three Hundred (300) postgraduate students were randomly chosen and sampled across the faculties. A questionnaire with three sections of questions with a free response was constructed by the researchers. The questionnaire was administered to each of the respondents, Two Hundred and Ten (210) questionnaires was returned, yielding 70% percent return rate.

RESULTS

Demographic information

Data from 210 the respondents showed that 119 (56.7%) are males and 91 (43.3%) are females. As to the level of study, a total of 166 (79.0%) respondents were studying at Masters' level, 22 (10.5%) at M. Phil level while the remaining 22 (10.5%) were in their PhD program. Their age group ranges from 20-25 with 27 respondents (12.9%); 26-30 was 101 (48.1%) and respondents from 31-50 range were 82 (39%) (Figures 1-3).

Among these respondents, 113 (53.8%) postgraduate students are doing full coursework while 97 (46.2%) are writing their thesis\dissertation.

Research Question 1: Which library resources do you consider most valuable?

Table 1 showed the ranked list of importance of Library Resources for research. Internet facilities top the list of important library resources with 60.5% (Mean score 4.39) closely followed by Print resources; examples books, journals, Indexes and Abstracts with 40% (Mean score 4.16) and the electronic resources with 40% (mean score 4.03). The postgraduate students indicated that theses and dissertations, newspapers, online catalog, maps and atlases are equally important to their research while photographs and special collections are not so important to their research work.
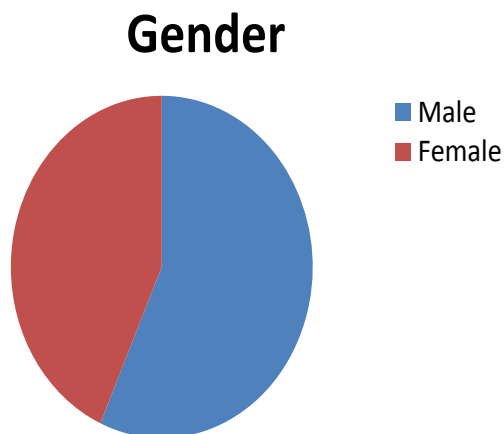
Gender

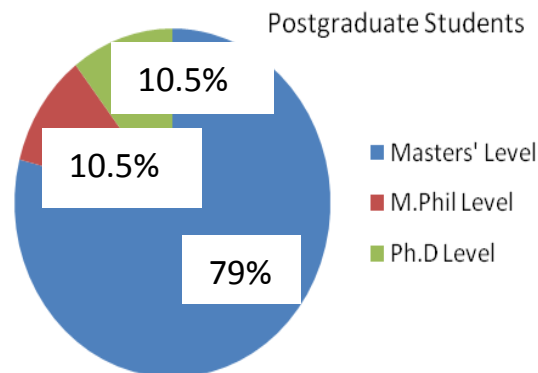**Figure 1.** Distribution of the respondents by gender.

Figure 3. Distribution of the respondents by level of study.
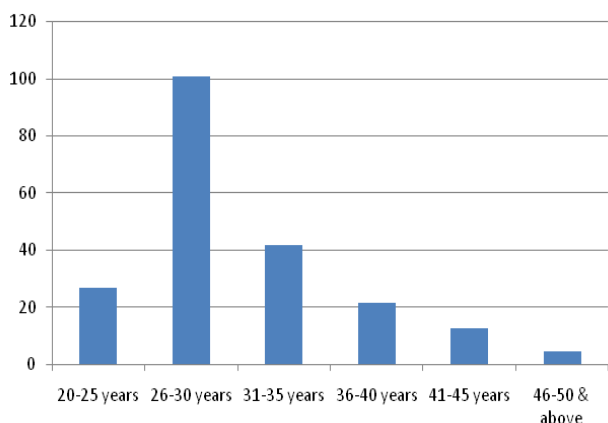

Figure 2. Distribution of the respondents by age range.

Research Question 2: How satisfied are you with the library resources?

Table 2 highlighted the respondents' level of satisfaction with library resources and shows the results in mean and standard deviation.   41% respondents were highly satisfied with newspapers (mean score, 3.22), 42.4% respondents show their satisfaction with print resources (mean score 3.19) while Theses and Dissertations recorded 43.3% (mean score 3.12) satisfaction. 30% respondents were less satisfied with Internet facilities (mean 2.85); Online Catalog, 32.9% (mean score 2.83); Electronic resources, 31.4% (mean score 2.80); Maps and Atlases, 20% (mean score 2.72); 30.4% of respondents are not very satisfied with Photographs and Special collections.

Research Question 3: How satisfied are you with the library services?

In response to how satisfied are users to KDL library services, 48.6% respondents indicated being satisfied with opening hours during semester (Mean score 3.31) for their research activities (Table 3); likewise the newly introduced 24 h service scored 38.1% (mean score 3.01), while 33.8% respondents are not satisfied with Reference services (mean score 2.89); Internet facilities, 32.9% (mean score 2.77); Printing, Photocopy and Scanning, 34.8% (mean score 2.76); Opening during break, 33.3% (mean score 2.75) and study room carrels, 31.4% (mean score 2.72). The respondents that are not at all satisfied with Computer Laboratory are 26.2% (mean score 2.59); Online Catalog, 21% (mean score 2.50); Current Awareness Services, 22.9% (mean score 2.50); Document delivery, 20% (mean score 2.45) and inter-library loan, 13.3% (mean score 2.37).

Research Question 4: What is the role of Kenneth Dike Library in facilitating research?

Table   4 shows that 55.2% (mean score 3.79) respondents rated high the library as a gateway for learning and research and 49% agreed that the library enables them to be more efficient in their research (mean score 3.61); 54.8% (mean score 3.60) said that the university library plays an important role in their research. While 28.6% will like the library to assist them in publishing their research work.

Research Question 5 – How satisfied are you on the role of Kenneth Dike Library in facilitating research?

Table 5 presented the respondents' level of satisfaction on the role of KDL in facilitating their research. Results show that 46.2% were satisfied with KDL's role as the gate way for learning and research (mean score 3.33), 46.7% respondents believed that KDL enables them to be more efficient in their research (mean score 3.26); while 48.1% respondents were satisfied that KDL plays a role in their research (mean score 3.21). 44.3% believed

Table 1. Importance of Library resources.

S/N	Resources	%	Mean	Std
1	Internet facilities	60.5	4.39	1.00
2	Print resources – books, journals, indexes and abstracts	40.0	4.16	0.98
3	Electronic resources	40.0	4.03	1.11
4	Theses and Dissertations	28.6	3.84	1.14
5	Newspapers	17.6	3.55	1.13
6	Online Catalog (OPAC)	11.0	3.28	1.13
7	Maps and atlases	7.1	3.11	1.11
8	Photographs	3.3	2.92	1.01
9	Special collections – Arabic manuscripts, manuscripts, legal deposit and Africana materials	4.8	2.81	1.10

1, not at all important; 2, not important, 3; neutral 4; important, 5, very important.

Table 2. Level of satisfaction with library resources.

S/N	Resources	%	Mean	Std
1	Newspapers	41.0%	3.22	1.06
2	Print resources	42.4%	3.19	1.15
3	Theses and Dissertations	43.3%	3.12	1.13
4	Internet Facilities	30.0%	2.85	1.25
5	Online Catalog	32.9%	2.83	1.15
6	Electronic resources	31.4%	2.80	1.27
7	Maps and Atlases	20.0%	2.72	1.00
8	Photographs	19.0%	2.71	0.95
9	Special collections – Arabic manuscripts, manuscripts, Legal deposit and Africana materials	11.4%	2.68	0.89

1, Not at all satisfied; 2, Not satisfied; 3, Neutral; 4, Satisfied; 5, Very Satisfied.

Table 3. Level of satisfaction with library services.

S/N	Library services	%	Mean	Std
1	Opening during semester	48.6%	3.31	1.40
2	24 hours services	38.1%	3.01	1.34
3	Reference Services	33.8%	2.89	1.33
4	Internet facilities	32.9%	2.77	1.33
5	Printing, photocopy and scanning	34.8%	2.76	1.25
6	Opening during break	33.3%	2.75	1.28
7	Study room carrels	31.4%	2.72	1.30
8	Computer Laboratory	26.2%	2.59	1.28
9	Online Catalog (OPAC)	21.0%	2.50	1.23
10	Current Awareness services	22.9%	2.50	1.16
11	Document delivery	20.0%	2.45	1.18
12	Interlibrary loans	13.3%	2.37	1.10

1, Not at all Satisfied; 2, Not satisfied; 3, Neutral; 4, Satisfied; 5, Very Satisfied.

that KDL helps to find reliable information (mean score   3.19).

Table 4. What is the role of Kenneth Dike Library in facilitating research?

S/N	What is the role of Kenneth Dike Library in facilitating research?	%	Mean	Std
1	The Library is a gate way for learning and research	55.2%	3.79	1.05
2	The Library enables me to be more efficient in my academic research	49.0%	3.61	1.11
3	The Library plays a role in my research	54.8%	3.60	1.07
4	The Library helps me find reliable information	43.8%	3.51	1.12
5	The Library provides assistance in searching information resources	42.4%	3.48	1.17
6	The Library create awareness on plagiarism among researchers	32.9%	3.13	1.15
7	The Library helps me in publishing my research	28.6%	2.97	1.21

1, Strongly Disagree; 2, Disagree; 3, Neutral; 4, Agree; 5, Strongly Agree.

Table 5. Level of satisfaction on the role of Kenneth Dike Library in facilitating research.

S/N	How satisfied are you on the role of KDL in facilitating research?	%	Mean	Std
1	The Library is a gate way for learning and research	46.2%	3.33	1.33
2	The Library enables me to be more efficient in my academic research	46.7%	3.26	1.31
3	The Library plays a role in my research	48.1%	3.21	1.24
4	The Library helps me find reliable information	44.3%	3.19	1.36
5	The Library provides assistance in searching information resources	35.2%	3.13	1.30
6	The Library create awareness on plagiarism among researchers	26.7%	2.93	1.27
7	The Library helps me in publishing my research	14.8%	2.72	1.31

1, Strongly Disagree; 2, Disagree; 3, Neutral;   4, Agreed; 5, Strongly Agreed.

Research Question 6: How has location and operations of KDL facilitated research?

The perception on how the location and operations of KDL facilitated research revealed that 76.7% agreed that KDL is well located and easily accessible (Mean=2.67). 72.9% agreed KDL has environments conducive for research purposes (Mean=2.61).   The library staff efficiency is relatively satisfactory with 61.9% (Mean=2.45). 54.8% respondents agreed there are no distractions that constitute a nuisance when using KDL (Mean=2.40). 41.4% agreed it is easy to obtain materials on current research areas in KDL (Mean=2.17), while 31% (Mean=2.07) obtained prompt needed information for research. Sourcing materials outside the library for respondents is poor with 23.4% (Mean=1.91) (Table 6).

Research Question 7: For what purpose do you visit the library most?

This study also reveals that majority respondents 103 (49%) visit the library for the purpose of reading, 42 (20%) respondents visit to carry out research and 60 (28.6%) for preparation for examination (Figure 4).

Research Question 8: What are the materials mostly consulted in the Library?

The mostly consulted material as indicated by 117 (55.7%) respondents is textbooks. 19 (9.0%) consulted CD Rom, 31 (14.8%) consulted Journals, Theses and Electronic resources were least consulted. Both recorded 22 (10%) usage (Figure 5).

The other factors considered important to their research are library opening hours, which is a plus for the library, because it operates 24 h service thereby supporting academic activity of the university, the library's as a gate way for learning and research, easy accessibility as a result of library's location, the conduciveness of the library environment and staff efficiency.
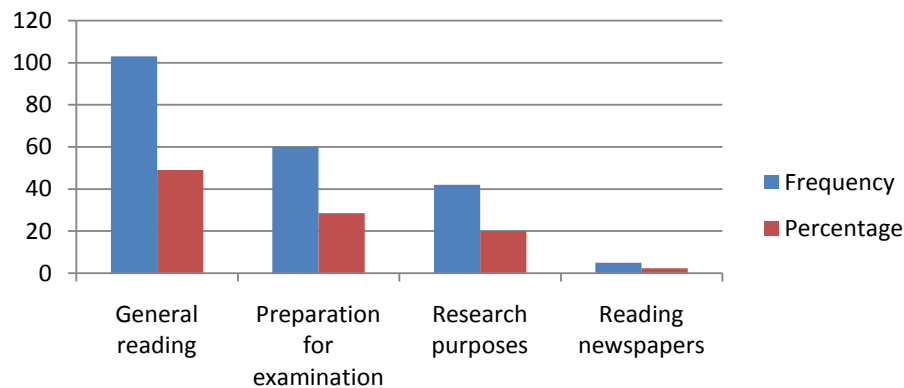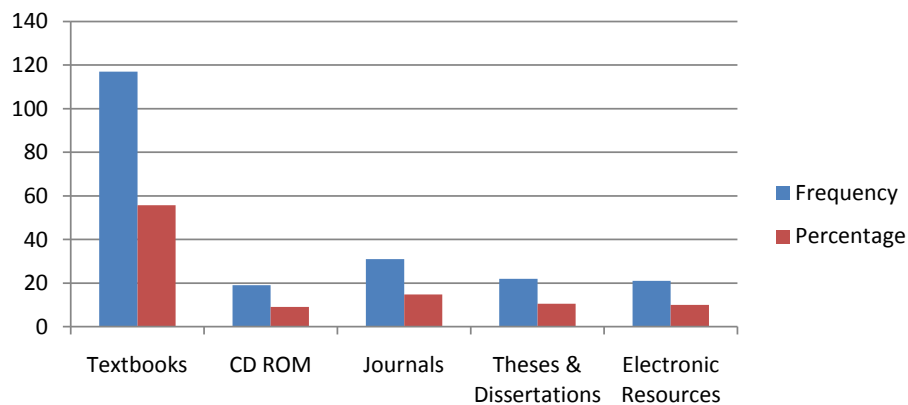
DISCUSSION

This study was intended to examine the perceptions of postgraduate students of University of Ibadan on the role of Kenneth Dike Library in facilitating their research process. This study has presented information on the scholarly use of information for research in KDL by

Table 6. Location and operations of the library.

S/N	Location and operations of the Library	%	Mean	Std
1	KDL is well located and easily accessible	76.7%	2.67	0.65
2	KDL have environments conducive for research purposes	72.9%	2.61	0.69
3	The Library staff efficiency is relatively satisfactory	61.9%	2.45	0.77
4	There are usually no distractions that constitute a nuisance when using KDL	54.8%	2.40	0.73
5	It is easy to obtain materials on current research areas in KDL	41.4%	2.17	0.80
6	Obtaining needed information for research from KDL is very fast	31.0%	2.07	0.74
7	It is very fast and easy to order for materials not in the Library	23.4%	1.91	0.75

1, Agreed; 2, Not Agreed; 3, Indifferent.

Figure 4. The purpose of visiting the library.

Figure 5. Distribution of the respondents by the materials mostly consulted.

graduates students of University of Ibadan. The findings indicate that the library plays a relevant and important role in assisting students on their research activities.

Respondents were satisfied with the resources and services, which are available at KDL. For instance, respondents of this study acknowledged that internet facilities have value for helping their research over print resources and electronic resources.

This finding confirmed Chiemeke et al. (2007)'s study that the Internet enjoyed more patronage for the purpose of research because the users visited the Internet more often than academic library facilities for research purposes. Though respondents count internet resources in this study to be important to their research, ironically

they were dissatisfied with its service in the library; likewise electronic resource service offered by the library.

This trend implies that the Kenneth Dike library will have to continually improve its electronic resources, provide more digital contents and 'seamless' access to resources to meet needs of researchers.

Respondents are satisfied more with Newspapers than Prints and Theses /Dissertations. Budget cuts is a major challenge facing libraries worldwide; nonetheless academic libraries still need to perform their functional role of acquiring current resources. KDL needs to update their print collections with latest books and journals so that students could obtain the latest information for their research. Patterson (2009) indicated that resource sharing is one of the main sources in academic libraries to facilitate research especially the supply of the latest thesis in their collection, and provide access freely.

A university renowned for its research works is normally supported by the extensive and quality library services and activities. It is hoped that the results of this study will prompt the KDL administration and University of Ibadan administration to evaluate the various aspects of the management of the library functions and make improvements where needed.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the role of the library as a place of learning and of access to information is as valid as ever. However, there is need for improvement in the services it renders to the graduate students in particular and the university community in general. The desired service expectations of graduates reflect that the users required relevance and accurate information that matches their needs. The findings of this study would help other academic libraries to re-evaluate their resources and services for research activities. The results could assist libraries not just to improve their services and launch new services, but to avoid frustrations and difficulties faced from research activities. The environment is unpredictable changing; academic libraries have to maintain their position as key partners in research by anticipating, understanding, and stressing the challenges in new research activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to support research activities of postgraduate students:

1. Libraries need to create awareness among graduate students about the services and resources that are available and how to use them.
2. Having Institutional repository of indigenous information sources (theses, projects, technical reports

etc.) would reduce the cost of scholarly publication and increase visibility and access of scholarly research from faculty and students of academic institutions.
3. Academic libraries should be stocked with up-to-date materials in order to encourage researchers to use their facilities and provide more electronic resources that are easily accessed within a user-friendly environment.
4. Accessibility of resources and services is an important factor that determines graduate students' satisfactions
5. Staff has to be involved in research activities so that they understand the needs of the library users when doing research.
6. Designing appropriate information literacy and bibliographic instruction programs will aid research capacity development of students.

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