

INFORMATION LITERACY COMPETENCIES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITIES IN JIGAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the information literacy competencies (ILCs) among undergraduate students in the universities in Jigawa State (Sule Lamido University, Kafin Hausa and Federal University, Dutse). The objectives was identify the information literacy competencies among undergraduate students in the universities in Jigawa State and identified the challenges faced by the students while accessing the information resources. Using a quantitative methodology, the study employs a cross-sectional survey research design. A structured online survey questionnaire using Likert scale methods was administered via the students' Whatsapp platform to collect data. The data was collected from five hundred and forty eight (548) randomly sampled students from two (2) universities in the State. The study found that many of the students were found defective in the major skills of information literacy. As majority of the students 288(52.5%) cannot devise a search strategy. However, the study further discovered that significant number of the respondents 310(56.6%) indicated that they are facing challenges of insufficient IL training. The study recommended that the universities should introduce information literacy course to the students. Also, recommended that the libraries in the universities should introduce a user-librarian collaborative service delivery to enhance the student success in search for information among others.

Keywords: Information literacy, Impact, Competency, Undergraduate Students, Universities in Jigawa State.

Introduction

Understanding the students' information literacy competencies (ILCs) required to carry out an academic work has establishes a new phenomenon in the field of information science. The massive explosion of information resources changes the trends and practices of searching and using information by the students of 21st century. Unlike some years back when there were no adequate information resources and the existing ones were mostly in print, now days more sources such as web base, online databases, multimedia packages, and digitized information resources are also available. The increased quantity of information from these sources is overwhelming to the extent that the quality of the information is often compromised. Currently, anyone can publish information on the web which finally amounted to information overload, especially as it relates to the growth of digital information, and yet resulted in a new disorder called 'information fatigue syndrome' (Wilson, 2001). Information literacy equip individual with skills to define information needs, identify, locate and evaluate information for decision making

and problem-solving (Bruce, 2003). However, it includes the strategies, skills, awareness and adoption of appropriate information behaviour needed to define information needs, and to locate, evaluate, synthesize, organize, use and ethically communicate information (SCONUL, 2011).

Information literacy (IL) has been recognized in playing an important role in the student lifelong learning which results in successful academic work. Information Literacy and lifelong learning were acknowledged as the support of the information society, whereby Information Literacy lies at the center of lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2005). Therefore, the more importance the Information literacy competency is given in the student academic work, the greater the student success and lifelong learning (Koler-Povh & Turk, 2020). However, Information literacy allows students to develop the capacity for independent learning and critical thinking and equip them with the skills to update their knowledge and proficiency after graduation. An information literate student is able to recognize an information need, access information, evaluate, synthesis, ethically use information to efficiently learn, create new knowledge, solve educational problems and make rational decisions, understand economic, social, political, legal and cultural issues in the use of information and knowledge for participative citizenship and social responsibility, also be capable of independent and lifelong learning (Bundy, 2004).

For undergraduate students in Nigerian universities to be more sophisticated and confident researchers, independent and lifelong learners there is compelling need for them to be able to identify when and why information is needed, where to locate and access it, how to evaluate, synthesize, ethically and legally use it in their academic work.

Statement of the Problem

The students' information literacy competencies (ILCs) play a significant role in independent and lifelong learning critical thinking and rational decision making which results in success during and even after their studies. The Librarians and instructors are the responsible for imparting the skills to students and the information explosion and technological advances imposes the student need to acquire information literacy.

Students are deficient in various IL skills necessary for a successful academic works. The students are struggling with issues in identifying and selecting the specific information they required, they are also facing difficulties in evaluating the authority and credibility of the information returned from the huge search result. Researches proved that the students are poor in applying search strategies that will help them in getting a precise resource they need in their academic works. The students also lack legal and ethical skills of using information resources. These problems affect the students in the universities in Jigawa State, and leave them with deficient use of information and research outcome. These constitute the issues in the students fluency in academic exercise, if not addressed will seriously affect the university education in the state.

Using a quantitative research methodology and cross sectional survey design this study is conducted to investigate the information literacy competencies among undergraduate students in the universities in Jigawa State, Nigeria and the major setback they encountered while accessing the information resources. The study is also set to recommend some strategies to logical ameliorate the impending challenges.

Research Objectives

The study is aimed to achieve these objectives:

1. To identify the information literacy competencies among undergraduate students in the universities in Jigawa State.
2. To identify the challenges faced by the students while accessing the information resources.

Literature Review

The relevant literatures have been reviewed in this study by searching library databases such as Science Direct, EBSCOHost and ProQuest database, and trustworthy open access and Web resources. Different combinations of keywords were used such as, ‘information literacy’, ‘information literacy competency’, etc.

The information literacy competency of university students is an area of concern for researchers in the field of Library and Information Science and educators. Many studies have been conducted to investigate the extent of students’ competencies in using information resources for their academic work. However, these studies exposed gaps in knowledge relating to information literacy competencies and their relevance to students’ academic work. Hemamalini and Umesh (2020) have examined the Information literacy competencies among the undergraduate students of Mysore city.

The findings from the study showed that less number of students were aware of using different search strategies to find the resources. It was also established in the study that the students lack proper guidance in accessing and using the information in a proper way. The study suggested that the library authorities and library professionals must ensure the provision of proper guidance to the students to search information sources in the library. However, Lwehabura (2018) conducted a study to examine the information literacy skills and the difficulties experienced in searching the information among the students of Saooin University of Agriculture. The study concluded that even though information literacy exists among students, but many of them were found wanting in major techniques of information searching. Likewise Asif & Mahmood (2021) explored the students’ perceived information literacy self-efficacy in the digital information environment; the research used a cross-sectional survey to investigate 350 business students at the University of Management and Technology, Lahore. The study found that the students had high self-efficacy for basic information literacy skills and low self-efficacy for advanced-level information literacy skills. In the same manner, Hicks & Lloyd (2021) investigated the discourses of information literacy and the learner from within higher education while focusing on professional texts. Using discourse analysis, 16 textbooks and 4 recent English-language models of information literacy were analyzed in the study.

The analysis disclosed that information literacy is shaped by 2 conflicting narratives within higher education. The first narrative place information literacy as an empowering practice that equips learners with the knowledge and skills that they need within complex and fast-paced information environments. The second narrative positions learners as incompetent or as lacking the ability to operate within higher education. However, Koler-Povh & Turk (2020) studied how information literacy topics impact the publishing and citations of engineering doctoral students in Slovenia. The results of 120 PhD students under study revealed that the information literacy course increased students’ competence. The quantitative parameters looked into the number of

references in PhD theses and the number of scientific publications written and found that the students who did not take IL course cited a few references than their colleagues who attended the course that cited more references. Nonetheless, Ben amram et al. (2020) In a study on teachers' perspectives concerning information literacy teaching in the primary schools in Israel, using a qualitative research method argued that participation in the national information and communications technology program did not lead to the integration of information literacy in the curriculum. Also a significant gap was discovered in both schools between the teachers' perceptions who understood the importance of teaching information literacy and its actual implementation.

Methodology

This investigation used a quantitative methodology and cross sectional survey design to explore the impact of ILCs among undergraduate students. However, the population of this study comprises the total enrolment of undergraduate students of Sule Lamido University, Kafin Hausa and Federal University, Dutse. A simple random sampling technique is employed in this study in which two hundred and thirty three (233) undergraduate students from Sule Lamido University, Kafin Hausa and Three hundred and fifteen (315) undergraduate students from Federal University, Dutse were randomly selected to fill the questionnaire. Moreover, an online structured survey questionnaire was used to collect the data for the study. A multiple choice approach specifically objectives and likert scale was chosen in the study. A link to Google form questionnaire was shared via the students' Whatsapp platform at all levels (100 to 400). Finally, simple frequency and percentage table was used in the data analysis.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Students' Competencies in Information Literacy

Competencies	Number of Respondents				
	SA	Ag	UD	DA	SD
I am able to identify an information need	273(49.8%)	50(9.1%)	119(21.7%)	101(18.4%)	5(0.91%)
I can formulate a search strategy	67(12.2%)	192(35.0%)	0(0%)	288(52.5%)	68(12.4%)
I am able to locate the resources	122(22.2%)	313(57.1%)	2(0.36%)	100(18.2%)	11(2.0%)
I am able to access and comprehend the resources	13(2.3%)	141(25.7%)	0(0%)	291(53.1%)	103(18.7%)
I am capable of using information for specific purpose	21(3.8%)	201(36.6%)	0(0%)	292(53.2%)	34(6.2%)
I can apply alternative methods to get information resources.	29(5.2%)	67(12.2%)	3(0.54%)	273(49.8%)	176(32.1%)
I know how to interpret and synthesize the information	5(0.91%)	103(18.7%)	45(8.2%)	296(54.0%)	99(18.0%)
I can incorporate new	45(8.2%)	89(16.2%)	3(0.54%)	266(48.5%)	145(26.4%)

knowledge into existing knowledge					
I am capable of evaluating the information sources	16(2.9%)	68(12.4%)	0(0%)	270(49.2%)	194(35.4%)
I know the difference between a peer reviewed and non peer reviewed resources	11(2.0%)	76(13.8%)	3(0.54%)	279(50.9%)	179(32.6%)
I understand the legal and ethical issues surrounding information	53(9.6%)	41(7.4%)	6(1.0%)	236(43.0%)	212(38.6%)

Table 1, shows that the majority of the students under study 273(49.8%) strongly agreed that they are able to identify an information need; while 5(0.91%) strongly disagreed. This study revealed that, many of undergraduate students under study are capable of identifying information need. However, most of the students 288(52.5%) have disagreed that they can initiate a search strategy and 67(12.2%) strongly agree. This signifies that the students lack ability to initiate a search strategy. The study found that the dominant number of the students lack ability to initiate a search strategy. The largest number of the students 313(57.1%) agreed that they are able to locate the desired resources and 11(2.0%) have strongly disagreed. The study revealed that the students are incapable of locating the required information resources. However, the largest amount of students disagreed that they are able to access and comprehend information resources with 291(53.1%) and the minority 13(2.3%) strongly agreed. The study uncovered that the students lack ability to comprehend information resources. The dominant students disagreed of their capability in using information for a specific purpose with 292(53.2%), and marginally, strongly agreed with 21(3.8%). This pointed out that the students lack ability to use information resources for a specific purpose.

Most of the students disagreed of their ability to apply alternative methods to get information resources with 273(49.8%); while the least 29(5.2%) strongly agreed. However, the highest number of respondents 296(54.0%) disagreed to have ability to interpret and synthesize the information; while 5(0.91%) indicated their strong agreement. The majority of students totaling 266(48.5%) disagreed that they can incorporate new knowledge into existing knowledge and the least of them 45(8.2%) strongly agreed. The dominant number of the students 270(49.2%) disagreed that they were capable of evaluating the information sources; while the least 16(2.9%) strongly agreed.

In differentiating between peer reviewed and non peer reviewed information resources, the highest number of the students totaling 279(50.9%) disagreed with the ability; while the least number 11(2.0%) strongly agreed. Therefore, the students cannot differentiate between peer reviewed and non peer reviewed information resources. Finally in terms understanding the legal and ethical issues surrounding information, the leading number of the students 236(43.0%) disagreed with the capability; while the lowest number 41(7.4%) agreed. So the students are unable to apply the alternative methods to get information resources.

The findings of the study corroborated with that of Lwehabura (2018) that conducted a study to examine the information literacy skills among the students of Saoine University of

Agriculture, that information literacy skills and have the competencies to retrieve and evaluate what was retrieved with ease.

Table 2: Challenges faced by the students while accessing information

			Frequency	Percentage
1	Insufficient IL Training	Yes	310	56.6
		No	238	43.4
2	Lack of IL skills	Yes	299	54.6
		No	249	45.4
3	Low computer Knowledge	Yes	408	74.5
		No	140	25.5
4	Limited ICT facilities	Yes	139	25.4
		No	409	74.6
5	Insufficient electronic Information resources	Yes	279	50.9
		No	269	49.1
6	Inadequate guide by librarians	Yes	296	54.0
		No	252	46.0

Table 2, above indicated that low computer knowledge 408(74.5%) was the major challenge faced by the students followed by insufficient IL training 310 (56.6%) and lack of IL skills 299(54.6%). The rest are limited ICT facilities, insufficient electronic Information resources, and inadequate guide by librarians. Asif & Mahmood (2021) explored the students' perceived information literacy self-efficacy in the digital information environment exists among students, but found out many of them were found wanting in major techniques of information searching and low self-efficacy for advanced-level information literacy skills. Thus, proper re-orientation need to be given for the students to address such challenge.

Summary of findings

The following are the major findings of this study:

1. This study revealed that, even though the students under study are capable of identifying information need, but lack ability in many other aspects of information literacy such as to initiate a search strategy; access and comprehend information resources and also unable to apply the alternative methods to get information resources. They are also incapable in interpreting and synthesizing the information, incorporating new knowledge into existing knowledge and evaluating the information sources. Likewise, they cannot differentiate between peer reviewed and non peer reviewed information resources, and unable to understand the legal and ethical issues surrounding information.
2. The study pointed out low computer knowledge, insufficient information literacy training and lack of information literacy skills as the major challenge faced by the students under study.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from this study highlighted the impacts information literacy competencies (ILCs) among undergraduate students in the Universities in Jigawa State. The study concluded that despite the fact that many of the students can identify when they need information for their academic works but majority of them were found incapable in some important information literacy skills. The result from the study indicated that the students were found deficient in IL competencies due to some challenges they face such as low computer knowledge and insufficient IL training. The study recommended that the managements of the universities should introduce an information literacy as general studies course to the students. However, the university library should introduce a user–librarian collaborative library service delivery with aim of improving the students’ success in using electronic information resources. Also, university management should emphasize on IT/computer basics and information literacy training to the students.

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