

# Assessment of Information Literacy and Searching Skills among Undergraduate Student in Federal College of Education Zaria, Nigeria.

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper was set to examine and identify some aspects of information literacy skills among undergraduate students at Federal College of Education Zaria, and determine challenges and problem facing them in terms of searching and use of various information resources. The population comprised all libraries and information student of the college which they are 606, Sampling and questionnaires were used to collect data from the population. The finding showed that although information literacy exists among students, a good number of students demonstrated significant deficiency in their information literacy knowledge and skills in key aspects including searching for information from electronic sources, application of various information search techniques the challenges of information literacy programme include Lack of adequate resources indicate 83.7%, the paper recommends addressing the shortcomings found introducing a mandatory information literacy programme for undergraduate students to ensure effective independent learning among students.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Information literacy constitute the abilities to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate effectively use and communicate information in its various formats. Sunny council of library directors, information literacy initiative committee's final report, September 30, 1997.

To be an information literate a person must be able to recognize when to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information producing such a citizenry will require that schools and colleges appreciate and integrate the concept of information literacy into their learning programs that they play a leadership role in equipping individuals or institutions to take advantage of the opportunities inherent within the information society.

America Library Association (ALA, presidential committee final report 1989.)Each institution should foster optimal use of its learning resources through strategies designed to help student develop information literacy.

It is essential to have an active and continuing program of library orientation and instruction in accessing information, developed collectively and supported actively by faculty, Librarians academic deans and other information provides. (Commission on higher education middle states Association of Colleges and schools, Characteristics of excellence in higher education, standard for accreditation, 1994 edition).

Mc Tavish (2009) opined that in order to increase, maximize people's contributions to a healthy democratic and pluralistic society and maintain a prosperous and sustainable economy, government and industries around the world are challenging education systems to focus people's attention on literacy.

Brink (2009) Research government organization such as human resources and skill development in Nigeria, claim that almost half of working age Nigerians do not have the literacy skills they need to meet the over-increasing demand of modern life. Information literacy can combine various elements of library literacy, computer literacy, media literacy, network literacy and other literacy, but it should be noted that in the best educational experiences, student become more information literacy in the natural course of learning subject content and various disciplines they study whether it or not they all want their graduates to have developed those competencies any many believe their students to have done so. Even though all want their students to be information literate, few have specifically built the means of acquiring those skills into the curriculum wide responsibility. But because of the schools in the college and the information resources in our

departmental libraries not all can contribute equally to the effort.

**Objective of the Study**

1. To determine students’ knowledge of information literacy skills and mastery of information searching skills.
2. To examine the student ability to distinguish between information sources.
3. To assess through students responses the effectiveness of information literacy programmes of private colleges

**Method**

A survey research design was adopted for the study where questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondent.

Olaitan and Nwore (1999) defined a survey research design as a descriptive study in which the entire population or representative sample is study by collecting and analyzing data from the group through the use of questionnaire. The survey design is therefore consider suitable, since the study sought information from the sample that was drawn from a population using questionnaire.

Mohammed (2005) opined that a research design is said by survey if it has no control group. It involves gathering required data and information from the observation of the sample of a given population devoid of any manipulation of cause and effect of relationship. Since it has no control group a survey research was derived appropriate.

**Population of the Study**

Population is a collection of subject or event that has common characteristic for research work, the population refers to the group from whom data is being obtained.

Ndagi (1991) said population of a research is sometimes referred to as universe; and it is defined as the entire group whose characteristics are to be estimated. The population of the study was the undergraduate student of the Federal College of Education, Zaria. However the population includes all the undergraduate student of library and information science from 100 level – 400 level. Total population of students is 606.

**Table 1**

Level of the student	Population of the student
100 level	66
200 level	245
300 level	209

400 level	86
Total population of students	606

**Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Sample represents a portion out of the totality of the population studied.

Fink (1995) opined that a sample is the subject of a population. The researcher used the results obtained from the sample to make generalization about the entire population.

Systematic random sampling technique was adopted for this study. Patton (1990) a systematic random sampling is obtained by selecting one unit on a random basis and choosing additional elementary units at evenly spaced intervals until the desired number of unit is obtained. This technique was adopted to give each individual an equal opportunity of being a member of the sample. It is used to select 20% of the population that is 126 students.

**Instrument for Data Collection**

A structured questionnaire will be used to collect data for the study.

Czaja and Blair (2005) said closed ended questionnaire has the advantage of eliciting the desired response and it minimized the analysis of a time for the data collected. More so, questionnaire was used because getting the student proved a herculean task. The questionnaire was divided into two parts/sections. Section A consists of demographic information whereas the other section consist of questions to be answered.

Observation was also conducted to compliment the information collected using questionnaire.

**Validity of Research Instrument**

Validation of instrument is meant to ensure that the instrument measure what it is suppose to measure and nothing else, it is necessary that researchers should validate the instrument designed for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation, this is done by giving it to the research expert and librarian outside the study area in order to make correction, amendment, observation and suggestions. The correction & suggestion will be added for the instrument to be viable for the conduct of research.

**Procedure for Data Collection**

The questionnaire will be administered by the researcher to the student as various items that need clarification will be better explained to the

respondents so as to improve the validity of the result. The study will take a period of three weeks.

**Procedure for Data Analysis**

The data collected through the instrument was analyzed using frequency counts and percentage. This is to ensure that the actual factor militating against acquisition of information literacy and searching skills among undergraduate students in F.C.E, Zaria.

**Findings**

The data was analyzed using quantitative methods. The data from questionnaires were analyzed based on the research objectives and research questions and interviews were added to each question ask.

**What is the level of information literacy skills in F.C.E, Zaria?**

**Table 2 level of information literacy skill**

Assessment	No of respondents	Percentage
Very good	-	-
Good	25	20.8%
Fairly good	60	50.0%
Poor	35	29.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Survey, 2017 in FCE Zaria

In the table 5 above Majority of respondents, 50.0% said that the current information literacy skills were fairly good. 29.2%,

said it poor, 20.8% which was a small number said it was good. None of the respondents commented on very good.

**What Types of Information Literacy Programme is available in F.C.E, Zaria?**

**Table 3: Available Information Literacy Programme**

	No of respondents		Total
	Available	Not-Available	
Orientation	106 (88.3%)	14 (11.7%)	100%
Classroom base instruction	80 (66.6%)	40 (29.4%)	100%
User education initiative	17 (14.2%)	103 (85.8%)	
One-on-one interaction	77 (64.2%)	43(35.8%)	100%
Seminar	10(8.3%)	110(91.7%)	100%
Workshop	2(1.7%)	118(98.3%)	100%

Source: Survey, 2017 in FCE Zaria

The study sought to establish from respondents on which types were used to provide information literacy programme. Majority of the respondents 88.3% indicated that the most commonly used method was orientation because it was always mandatory that all newly registered users must undergo library orientation. Class baseinstruction was 66.6% . One-on-one interaction types 64.2% was revealed to be undertaken when the users are taken steps of asking

question from the staffs, preferred one on one i.e. on demand because it helped save users time and it was very convenient to serving users when they needed information at that time. It’s regrettable that most important literacy programme like user education initiative, seminars and workshops with 14.2% , 8.3% and1.7% respectively has not been emphasized in the library and information science students and this shows that there is need for it to be embraced.

**Table 4. How efficient and effective is the programme?Table 3**

Assessment	Very good	Good	Fairly good	Poor	Total
Orientation	-	20 (16.6%)	90 (75%)	10 (6.3%)	120 (100%)
Classroom base instruction	-	-	70 (77.8%)	20 (22.2%)	90 (100%)
User education initiative	-	-	60 (50%)	60 (50%)	120 (100%)
One-on-one interaction	2 (1.6%)	10 (8.3%)	70 (58.3%)	38 (31.8%)	120 (100%)
Seminar	-	--	10 (14.3%)	60 (85.7%)	70 (100%)
Workshop	-	-	-	50 (100%)	50 (100%)

Source: Survey, 2017 in FCE Zaria

The table above sought to establish from respondents how efficient and effective is information literacy. The respondents rated their information literacy programme and none of them had every good. while majority of respondents 75% rated orientation very good, 58.3% rated as fairly good in effectiveness of one on one interaction, 50% also indicate that User education initiate was fairly and poor effective and efficient in FCE Zaria, while workshop and seminar are considered poor which could be because library student in the college arv not involve in those areas.

## II. CONCLUSION

The projects found that information literacy helps learners to find and use information. Furthermore Information literacy enables learners to acquire knowledge and skills that enhance their interaction with information for decision-making or problem-solving.

It is found in this study, that information literacy skills are applicable and adaptable to everyday situations in life and will determine the quality of an individual life and usefulness in academic environment and society. However, most appropriately, information literacy skills are used for academic purposes, such as research papers and group presentations in the colleges. Therefore, the student's skills to find, evaluate, identify, use and share information is a vital skill that enhance students to effectively and efficiently utilize the resources of the library. The study was restricted to Federal Colleges of Education Zaria.

The type of information literacy includes technological literacy, information literacy, media literacy, visual literacy, communication literacy and digital literacy. Where by media literacy included both print and post-print media and is a component of information literacy. Visual literacy

in terms of visual competencies that result from seeing and integrating experiences of other senses.

The research find out different challenges of information literacy practice the challenges that compare with those in reviewed literature include: negative attitude of lecturers towards information literacy, collaboration and library generally; negative attitude of library staff towards information literacy efforts; attitude of users towards information literacy and the library in general; absence of a clear information literacy policy across the colleges which would nurture information literacy partnership; poor evaluation and assessment tradition on information literacy and issue of academic status for librarians with its attendant remuneration disagreements and lack of policy implementation.

The study has examined the level of information literacy skills possessed by the undergraduate library users of Nigerian universities and found out that the students do not possess considerable level of skills for effective use of information.

The importance of imparting information literacy programmes to develop information literacy skills among the students cannot be ignored in the contemporary electronic environment. This has been recognized and accepted by majority of the students. Among various modes of imparting the information literacy instruction, majority suggested for integration of information literacy instruction in regular courses. Significant percent of them also felt that information literacy skills can be promoted using the printed material on and through the college website. Different areas and topics were suggested by the students, where they need some guidance, training and assistance

### Recommendations

The researcher has argued in this report that more is needed to be done in terms of putting relevant measures so as to make information literacy programmes to be successful in academics libraries so as to enable users access information effectively and efficiently. It is against this background that the recommendations below are made:

1. Users should be provided with relevant information literacy programmes so that they can be able to access information effectively and efficiently.
2. Users should be assessed to determine the level of their information literacy skills so as to know which information literacy skills they need more
3. New library users should be given orientation and other information literacy programmes once they visit the library and it should also continue regularly to keep them abreast with new technology changes.
4. The researcher recommends that libraries develop clear information literacy statements to be included in the library mission statements, to act as a guide to information literacy activities, stating its advantages. This will act as enlightenment to the college's academic administration and the librarians will need to further advocate for a policy statement, at university level, on information literacy. When this is achieved, all education stakeholders will be able to recognize and appreciate information literacy.

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