

## Perceived Impact of Library and Information Literacy Skills on the Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students in Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The paper examined the impact of library and literacy skills on the academic performance of undergraduate students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** Descriptive survey method and random sampling techniques were used with 120 students randomly selected for the research. A self-designed questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the respondents and the simple percentage count ratio was adapted to analysis the data.

**Findings:** Result shows that most students do not have access to literacy facilities; it reveals lack of application skills by majority but shows positive effect of information literacy on student's academic performance. Finding shows that 82.5% Undergraduate students utilised their Smartphone while 17.5% do not use Smartphone as the type of information literacy facility for their academic performance. 59.16% applied internet as the high level of accessibility for their literacy skills more than other access window provided. Also, finding shows that 75.83% said information literacy skills can help to overcome time while 24.16% said no. Again, 75.83% said frequent power blackout resulted to the current literacy challenges.

**Originality/Value:** It recommended among others that undergraduate students must officially register with the main library for better academic learning and achievement; university management should introduce a compulsory and general study course on information literacy to enable potential graduate acquire literacy skills for research, project and further studies; Frequent capacity building/training should be organised on information literacy skills for staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students; Librarians should devise means for reaching out to students in order to strengthen the research process for maximum attainment of student academic performance etc.

**Keywords:** Library, Information, Literacy skills, Academic Performance, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.

**Paper type:** Empirical research

### Background to the Study

Library and information practitioners create, organise, inform users as well as knowledgeable and instrumental to student's academic performance which can be determined by the availability and the content of the library resources and services in their immediate environment. Libraries are defined as organized collection of published and unpublished books and audiovisual materials with the aid of services of staff that are able to provide and interpret such material as required, to meet the informative research, educational and recreational needs of its users. It's established as intellectual centre for the systematic

collection, organization, preservation and dissemination of knowledge and information. Provision of library services are of paramount importance from primary school through higher institutions and afterward. The library is basic to any educational development. It inculcates in people to love reading for its own sake quite early in life, develops in them the spirit of inquiry and self-development through reading (Bruce, 2017).

According to the Association of College and Research Libraries (Information Literacy Competency Standards, 2017), information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to

all levels of education. It enables learners to master the content of their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning. Literacy is ability to acquired knowledge through learning, usually in educational setting. This confirms Bailey (2007) declaration that “literacy is not an inborn human characteristic, but rather an ability that is learned, most often in schools.” Although schooling is very critical for literacy to flourish, it is not enough. It is unthinkable to achieve a modern and literate society without libraries, which according to Wilson (2001) “are uniquely situated to promote literacy”. Library is therefore a veritable instrument for the promotion of inclusive literacy. As Bruce observed (2017) Librarianship has undergone a radical change in recent years, which will be continued in the future. As libraries have changed, so too, has the role of the librarian. Librarians have expanded their roles by providing students information through publicly assessable computing systems.

Throughout the centuries, libraries have been useful institutions for study and investigation of all kinds of problems. It had always been a rallying point for students and scholars who wanted to go into in-depth research and discoveries on various subjects. That is why United States and the British Governments place high premium on libraries as a critical agent for educational and national development. Despite the indispensable role of libraries to educational and national development, governments, organization and educational institutions in developing nations have continuously paid lip service to their impact. They clamour for development, yet the veritable tool for achieving it is neglected especially in student’s academic performance especially in Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. Thus poor reading culture and falling standard in education persist.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Information literacy plays a very vital role in academic performance of students especially at the higher institution of learning. Bailey (2007) assessed the impact of four information literacy workshops conducted among pre-registration nursing diploma student at Northumbria University, UK and discovered that all students improved their academic grades in their next assignment besides

increasing their confidence levels and information literacy. Magoi (2014) notes that research reveals reading scores for students that focus on improving their library programs are, on average of eight to twenty one percent, higher than similar schools with no such development. Student generally improves their efficiency and positively handle task by the effect of information literacy skills which in turn contributes to their conduct, delivery and timely submission of their assignments as well as improves their academic performance. Information literacy enables learners to master content and extent their investigations, become more self-directed and assume greater control over their own learning (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2000).

The evolution of bibliographic instruction to information literacy coincided with, and was influenced by, a shift in thinking about university teaching. According to Breivik (2017) echoing the themes that were explored in information literacy around the world, future teaching roles for academic librarians considered:

- that the new paradigm for higher education reflects a need to focus on learning not teaching
- that the new learning-centred focus of higher education prizes the importance of learning and
- that in this new environment, librarians have new opportunities to play a forceful, dynamic role in collaboratively designing and developing the contexts of learning strategies.

Raspa (2015) noted that “we have reached a point at which neither librarians nor instructional faculty can adequately teach the research process in isolation from each other as it takes both classroom instructors and librarians to teach students to develop adequate research skills”. This suggested more important role for library which has been the impact of using electronic information today in libraries. Bruce (2017) observed that, globalization, information and computer technology have inexorably altered the ways we read, write, learn and research. We know today that standard practices from past do not suffice because they do not help much with the complexities of contemporary life, nor with the realities of

information. This is to say understanding requires a number of competencies, including the power to analyse, synthesize and present information in multiple contexts for every different audience. Successful links between teaching and library resources depend on the personal relationship between faculty and librarians and a critical mass is growing as “information superhighway” which can have a huge impact on how students learn.

Libraries has been recognised as having the advantage of in the new information universe due to their long experience in the organisation and classification of electronic information systems, and because of their expertise in using and teaching database. In the expanded information universe, according to Association of College and Research Library (2017) the ability to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information” was acknowledged as being crucial to academic success. As documented by Whitehead & Quinlan (2002) and Julien & Boon (2004) information literacy in Canada, particularly in higher education, remains largely rooted in the bibliographic instruction tradition. However, several universities, such as the university of Alberta and Winnipeg are moving to newer IL-based models, but these efforts represent the work of individual institutions and often individuals’ librarians. An analysis of the literature points to certain key issues that characterize the change from traditional Bibliographic Instruction (BI) to an effective Information Literacy (IL) programme. An IL programme should:

- follow an inquiry-based, student centred learning mode
- have the immediate goal of students achieving academic success, with the long term objective of providing lifelong learning
- address needs of varying learner backgrounds as well as learning capacities
- include learning objectives that recognize the learners varying experience with electronic environment

The teaching librarian should:

- be active collaborator and participant, and work as a partner with the faculty at the curriculum design level

- take a proactive and dynamic role in the teaching process by seeking collaborative opportunities with faculty for designing and developing the contexts for learning strategies, resulting in a stronger and more formal teaching role

The IL Coordinator should:

- work with library colleagues in a coaching role
- seek administrative support for the teaching role of the librarians by building coalitions within the library and marketing library’s instructional role to the campus
- collaborate with stakeholders in the academy to achieve success in implementing IL across the campus

Notwithstanding, the success of any integrated IL programme depends on the readiness with which the librarians are prepared to work with their changing role “from passively supporting their teaching functions to actively collaborating and participating in them” through professional development programme. Library users are instructed on how information is obtained interpreted and used for academic and productive activities. Information literacy enables students develop skills that help them become effective and efficient learners. Bruce (2017) asserted that information literacy function of libraries imbues in user the ability to locate, manage and use information effectively for a range of purposes. It is thus, an important skill which allows people to engage in effective decision-making, problem solving and research. It also enables them to take responsibility for their own continued learning in areas of personal or professional interest. User education has grown visibly during recent years and information literacy has become an issue in many academic libraries. Different approaches have been used to develop information literacy among students. For example:

- Developing a guide for students to use or for resource evaluation,
- Presenting class sessions,
- Developing stand-alone courses,
- Creating a course Web site giving students a guided tour for searching the Web,
- Developing an assignment where students work on a search strategy appropriate to a

- problem statement,
- Assisting students in preparation of their literature reviews,
- Developing online tutorials or integrating information literacy into curricula

Bruce and Lampson (2012) note, that despite some progress over the past decade, library and information professionals still report that universal information literacy is a distant, if not a receding, goal while Johnston and Webber (2016) argue that even in the United States: “Whilst much attention has been paid to information literacy by American policy makers, librarians and academics, the results are still relatively narrow, giving a potentially superficial guide to the nature of a curriculum for information literacy in Higher Education”(Virkus, 2004).

**Research Questions**

The paper essentially seeks to demonstrate the role of libraries as imperative institutions for literacy skills acquisition for academic performance of undergraduate students as well as for qualitative questions used for research questions raised.

**Results**

**Table 1: Gender Distribution**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	59	49.16%
Female	61	50.83%
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1: Gender distribution results shows that 59(49.16%) respondents are male while 61(50.83%) are female students. Based on the

educational and national development. Other specific objectives include:

- What are the Types of Information Literacy Facilities Use by Students?
- What is the Level of Accessibility of Students to Literacy Skills?
- In which ways Libraries Impacted through Information Literacy?
- What is the Challenges Militating against Accessibility to Information Literacy?

**Methodology**

Descriptive survey was used as the study involved gathering of data about the sample of population which was organised, tabulated, depicted and described the variables of the study (Akinsola&Agunleye, 2004). Students of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto (UDUS) formed the population of this study, and one hundred and twenty students were purposively and randomly selected using questionnaire. The instrument consisted of responses on demographic information and YES/NO

analysis showed on the table, there are more female respondents than males.

**Table 2: Level of Undergraduate Respondents**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
400L	45	37.50%
300L	30	5%
200L	28	23.33%
100L	17	14.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100%</b>

The level of undergraduate students dominated the respondents showed 45(37.50%) are 400L respondent, 30(25%) are 300L respondents, 28(23.33%) are 200L respondents while

17(14.17%) are 100L. From this analysis we deduct that the 400 levels students responded more than other levels. Their high response is seen to be as a result of their intense academic activities in which

at this level, they rigorously embark on research works (Table 2).

**Research Question 1:** What are the types of Information Literacy Facility Use?

**Table 3: Showing the Type of Information Literacy Facility Used by UG Students**

Items	Responses and	Percentage (%)	
		Yes %	No %
Physical Resources	89	74.16	31 25.83
Online Resource/OPAC/OER	83	69.16	37 30.83
Electronic Media	30	25	90 75
Personal Computer	50	41.66	70 58.33
Smartphone	99	82.5	21 17.5
Library Services	82	68.33	38 31.67
Commercial Services	59	49.16	61 50.83
All of the above	64	53.33	56 46.67

Table 3 presented the perceptual disposition of respondents regarding type of literacy facility used. From the results obtained, 74.16% used physical resources, while 25.83% do not. 69.16% prefer online resources such as OPAC and OER while 30.83% opted otherwise, 25% preferred to use media resources while 75% said no, 41.66% used personal computer while 58.33% do not, 82.5% utilised their Smartphone while 17.5% don't, 68.33%

used library services while 31.67 do not, 49.16% prefer commercial services while 50.83% said no, and 53.33% used all the above items while 46.67% do not. It is concluded that there is high level of Smartphone usage among UG students as information literacy facility.

**Research Question 2:** What is the Level of Accessibility of Students to Literacy Skills

**Table 4: Showing the Level of Accessibility by UG Students to Literacy Skills**

Items	Responses and	Percentage (%)	
		Yes %	No %
Application of Internet	71	59.16	49 40.83
Library/Usage skills	68	56.67	52 43.33
Knowledge/Literacy skills	23	19.16	97 80.83
Interest/aspiration for library	66	55	54 45
Relevant framework avail.	32	26.67	88 73.33
Leisure purpose	41	34.16	79 65.83
Conducive environment	59	49.16	61 50.83
Attitude of staff	63	52.5	57 47.5
Personal effort/skills	55	45.83	65 54.16

From table 4, 59.16% applied internet while 40.83% do not, 56.67% have library/usage skills while 43.33% do not have, and 19.16% have information literacy skills while 80.83 claimed ignorance, 55% have interest and aspiration for information literacy while 45% do not. It shows that 26.67% agreed with relevant library framework while 73.33% disagreed, 34.16% access information for leisure purpose while

65.83% said no, 49.16% convince with conducive library environment while 50.83% opposed, 52.5% satisfied with the library staff attitude while 47.5 do not and 45.83% used personal effort while 54.16 seek help assistance.

**Research Question 3:** Which Ways Libraries Impacted through Information Literacy?

**Table 5: Showing Ways Libraries Impacted through Information Literacy Skills**

Items	Responses and	Percentage (%)	
		Yes %	No %
Improvement on C/A		84	70 36 30
Improve on assignment		79	65.83 41 34.16
Increase efficiencies		86	71.67 34 28.33
Handle academic task		68	56.66 52 43.33
Consistency in task delivery		69	57.5 51 42.5
Overcoming time		91	75.83 29 24.16
Overcoming comm. Barrier		62	51.66 58 48.33
General studies		75	62.5 45 37.5

70% agreed that library and information literacy skills improved conduct of their continuous assessment while 30% said no, 65.83% said it improved on class assignment while 34.16% disagreed, 71.67% agreed that literacy skills increase their efficiency while 28.33% said no, 56.66% can now handle academic task effectively while 43.33% cannot, 57.5% can deliver academic task systematically and consistently while 42.5% seems not, 75.83% said it can help to overcome time while

24.16% said no, 51.66% agreed that information literacy can overcome their communication barrier while 48.33% disagreed and 62.5% said general studies course impacted for their literacy skills while 37.5% disagreed.

**Research Question 4:** What is the Challenges Militating against Accessibility to Information Literacy?

**Table 6: Showing Challenges Militating against Accessibility to Information Literacy**

Items	Responses and	Percentage (%)	
		Yes %	No %
Poor internet services		77	64.16 43 35.83
Frequent power blackout		91	75.83 29 24.16
Lack of basic literacy training		96	80 30 25
High cost of data/equipment		72	60 48 40
Lack of ICT skills		64	53.33 56 46.67
Lack of internet subscription		31	25.83 89 74.16
Strict library regulations		41	34.16 79 65.83
Perceived nature		26	21.66 99 82.5

Table 6 highlighted that, 64.16% poor internet service was the reason behind challenges against accessibility to information literacy according to respondents while 35.83% disagreed the assertion, 75.83% said frequent power blackout resulted to the current literacy challenges while 24.16% said no, 80% agreed of lack of literacy training while 25% disagreed, 60% agreed with high cost of both data and equipment while 40% disagreed, 53.33% attest that lack of ICT skills as a factor while 46.67% said no, 25.83% confirm that lack of internet subscription hinder access to literacy skills while 74.16% disagreed, 34.16% said strict library rules and regulation as basis for not accessing information literacy and can also prevent use while 65.83%

debunk and 21.66% perceive nature of literacy skills as not necessary while 82.5 sees the need of information literacy skills.

**Discussion of Findings**

In analysing and discussing the findings of this research, the researchers deal with each established research questions. From analysis, the researchers deduct that the 400 levels students responded more than any other levels, this is because their high response is seen to be as a result of their intense academic activities in which at this stage, they rigorously embark on research works. For instance, Breivik (2011) attested that library develops in people good reading skills and encourages long-term

learning habits through listening, reading and viewing a wide variety of learning resources. On the type of information literacy facilities used by the respondents, the study revealed high level of Smartphone usage among UG students as information literacy facility. This has showed their curiosity towards modern (ICT) literacy facility/tool. This is in line with a study undertaken by Virkus (2011), to find out the effect of ICT skills on the undergraduate academic performance in higher education discovered that student's ability to evaluate, interpret, locate, use and disseminate information has increase as a result of their competence in ICT skills acquired. Data collected on the Level of Accessibility by UG Students to Literacy Skills, revealed high rate of internet application but do not possess basic literacy skills or understanding of information literacy handling skills on their academic performance. Magoi (2014) noted that there are some problems that confront the need and use of student's information retrieval tools which includes lack of knowledge to use electronic resources and inadequacy of power supply, absence of internet facilities and lack of sufficient time to use information resources and services. On ways libraries impacted on students Information Literacy skills, the study revealed positive effect of information literacy on academic performance of UDUS undergraduate students. Johnson and Lampson (2016) who assessed the impact of four information literacy workshops conducted among pre-registration nursing diploma students at Northumbria University and discovered that all students improved their academic grades in their next assignment besides increasing their confidence levels and information literacy. ACRL (2006) attests that information literacy enables learners to master content and extent their investigations, become more self-directed and assume greater control over their own learning. In the same view, Wilson (2001) affirmed that research shows that the reading scores for students in schools that focus on improving their library programs are on average of 8-21% higher than similar schools with no such development. Regarding Challenges Militating against Accessibility to Information Literacy, the study reported lack of basic literacy training follow by frequent blackout and poor internet services as major hindrance to the use of information literacy

by UDUS undergraduate students. Julian and Boon (2004) posited that because of information age and which information is being driven by globalization; many students enumerated some users of ICTs encountered problems to be ignorance, unavailability of internet access, low bandwidth, subscription problem and lack of skills in information retrieval. According to Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (2011), Digital literacy education is, therefore, one of "the most pressing education and learning issues facing Canadians today". From this analysis we deduct that majority of the students positively impacted by the use of available literacy skills facilities in the library. Their positive response is seen to be as a result of their interest and intense academic activities.

### **Conclusion**

New educational paradigm has created the need for new trends and redefinition of the role and impact of libraries towards information literacy in higher institutions of learning. Developing countries are faced with the need to develop information infrastructures for information literate population as Information literacy becomes a non-negotiable index of capacity building and empowerment. Information literacy skills have therefore become an issue in many academic libraries and much work has been undertaken to deliver information literacy education to staff and students. It initiatives in high institutions have taken a variety of forms, but there are trends towards the integration of information literacy into subject areas. Beyond intellectual professional discourse, librarians should constructively dialogue with policy-makers for effective partnership between library and faculty, integrated 'information literacy' programmes, the integration of the potential of modern ICT and the use of active learning methods etc. Factors such as policy, teaching and learning approaches, understandings and attitudes of faculty, students, and resources (budget, staffing, facilities, and time) may be a gap while implementing and investing on information literacy skills in libraries of high institution of learning.

### **Recommendations**

On the bases of findings and the conclusion drawn, the researchers recommended that:

1. Library management should make sure all undergraduate students officially register with the main library for better academic learning and achievement
2. University management should introduce a compulsory general study course on information literacy to enable potential graduate literacy skills for research project
3. Frequent capacity building/training should be organised on information literacy skills for staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students
4. Designated centres within the campus should be provided with adequate literacy facilities to enable users close access
5. Librarians should devise means for reaching out to students in order to strengthen the research process for maximum attainment of their academic performance
6. To achieve the objective of learning and research, proper utilization of information resources to improve student literacy skills should be given priority for their overall intellectual growth and development

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