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AN ASSESSMENT INTO INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS AMONG FINE AND APPLIED ARTS UNDERGRADUATES IN SOUTH-EAST FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

Decades ago and centuries before now has being marked with different artistic; arts seems to be as old as man because no human existence has being recorded without artistic/creativity. Therefore, arts have helped man to live even during the dark-age till the golden-age. It is germane to note that art/creativity change as man change which makes it facilitate human relationships and wants. Importantly, it is remarkable to know that knowledge of arts are not only shared by students of fine and applied arts because arts being as old as man has being used to pass information from ages before the coming of formal education. Today, arts is studied in two different faculties of learning in tertiary institutions like; university (art education and fine and applied arts) in the faculty of education and languages respectively and all aimed creating informatory images that is capable of impacting/inserting information into an individual's brain. It's on this important note that most universities of the world today especially in Africa and Nigeria in particular prioritized the studies of fine and applied arts in her universities. Scholars of fine and applied arts and those of arts have given various definitions of arts. Arts according to Enamhe and Echeta (2007) is trace to a Latin word" ars meaning skill. Accordingly, the authors buttressed the meaning of arts to include creative endeavor or a whole range of cultural activities. The creative endeavor according to the scholars are subdivided into; (1) performing arts like music, theatre, dance, (2) literary arts such as novels and essays, poetry, and (3) visual arts like sculpting/designing, painting, drawing, textile, decorating crafts and arts, ceramics, graphics, photography and printmaking among others. It is pertinent to note that undergraduate students of fine and applied arts are compulsorily exposed to the above mentioned skill in the discipline of fine and applied arts or art education.

So, information literacy skill is as important as water as undergraduate students of fine and applied arts cannot draw, make graphic or create any image without adequate knowledge or information about the creation of such image. Collaborating with the assertion, arts was said to be showing/expression of emotional feelings/experience, which its processes and products are secured by man and disseminate to generations unborn (National Planning Commission, 2007). The author further maintained that culture in totality describes arts and that the discussion of arts without culture is incomplete as arts is subsumed in culture. This is because, arts includes customs, habits, beliefs which also describes culture. Buttressing further, Adeyemo (2012) defined fine and applied arts as creative arts and aspect of culture that provides relevant contributions to human development. Arts is further described as individual's self-expressions emanating intellect and emotions (Enamhe & Echeta, 2007). The authors further stated that art is expression that gives order to environmental reactions of human being. Arts according to Wangboje (1982) have different meaning to different people but arts generally, are seen as a product and a process (material manipulation to produce (process) while its outcome is the products). Accordingly, Enamhe and Echeta (2001) stated that different definitions to arts is beyond academics as Igbo traditions also define arts as "Nka" Contemporary art is subjective and therefore infinite. Nka is an objectification of image more through the senses than through

cunning of hand. Such definition of art as the art of running, swimming, black magic, photography, for example, does not refer to nka.

It thereby, important to note that relevance of arts cannot be overemphasis because creativity is part of human. Reacting, Adeyemo (2012) noted that people with mental disability are easily returned to normalcy with art work. To the author, art is image representation of the mentally disabled that gives an insight into his/her mental, spiritual, emotional and psychological state which could be used to restore normalcy to the individual's highest intellect potential. Collaborating, Ajebade, Enamhe and Oloidi (2011) saw arts as a system of symbol, world interpreting instrument, sensation transforming instrument into experience. The authors further stated that art work is use to express beautiful creation despite culture, race or religion. Adding, Aniakor (2001) described arts as language expression which goes above boundaries of any culture, religion or race. Accordingly, Enamhe and Echeta (2010) opined that art is mainly work of man that brings beauty in a practical form, permanent state where all creativity remains beautiful. Therefore, the beauty of art work may have contributed to its value both national and international. Remarkably, fine and applied arts are offer at almost all tertiary institutions in Nigeria and beyond.

It is germane to note that undergraduate students undergo through different academic subject at their university education. Thus, an industrial field or fine and applied art is an academic subject is sub-divided into special area of studies (Fine and Applied). Fine arts according to Popova (2012) is the branch of arts that appeal humanity's sense of beauty in form of drawing, painting, art history or art appreciation, and sculpture. In the other hand, Ponky (1991) early described applied art as the application of aesthetics and design to objects of functionality and regular use. Deducing from the above submissions, it is understandable that incorporation sensibilities or stimulation of intellectual to the viewer is in fine arts while incorporate design and creativity of object utility, like decorative park bench or magazine and cup are rooted in applied arts. Therefore, filed of decorative art or functional art, industrial design, interior design, graphic and fashion design are considered applied arts. It is to this regards that Adeyemo (2012) summed the unified definition of fine and applied arts to represent visual arts. Visual arts according the scholar are art forms that create works which are basically visual in nature, such as drawing, sculpture, ceramics, painting, crafts, printmaking, video, design, filmmaking and photography among others. This suggest that the above skills are subdivided into fine and applied arts because fine arts includes sculpture and painting while applied arts are ceramics, graphics and textiles as contained in the overall arts skills. Apart from beautification of art work, the major aim of fine and applied art are:

Underlying Objectives of Fine and Applied Arts

- ✚ To empower professionals on skillful drawing, painting, graphic and textile works.
- ✚ Preparing skillful minds on transmitting the understanding, knowledge and skill of fine and applied arts to generation unborn.

- ✚ Enabling citizen of a given country to promote their cultural heritage and world artistic.
- ✚ Enabling hopeful teachers and world tomorrow leaders the power to transform, relate and communicate through the arts among others.

No wonder, Nigerian government under the stewardship of Federal Government Blueprint (2001) noted the importance of preparing future teachers of fine and applied arts that will be strength fit to translate the new version and underlying goals of the discipline into action in studios, classrooms, workshops among others. This is because, making purpose of fine and applied arts known is as good as teaching students and generation unborn the beautification of the universe. Therefore, undergraduate students of fine and applied arts not only progress in learning but gain useful knowledge for self and transformatory tip to their immediate environs and the globe at large. Importantly, the above stated magnificent significance cannot manifest if undergraduate students of fine and applied arts are not properly informed on the essentiality of information literacy skills. As it is the vehicle at which student get prepared to do the needful in their places of learning and otherwise. So, it evident that studies has shown that art maintains a position of indispensability in information literacy skills among undergraduate students of the discipline for their mental, social and psychological stability. It is therefore, important to note that information is a phenomenon generated from knowledge and integrated therein, analyzed and interpreted to achieve the transfer process of message (i.e., meaningful content) and the cognitive transformations of people and communities, in a historical, cultural and social context. Information is a multi-layered concept with Latin roots ('informatio' _ to give a form) (Hjorland, 2010). Every organization needs information to communicate effectively in this jet age adequate and accurate functionality. Information is a multi-layered concept with Latin roots ('informatio' _ to give a form) that go back to Greek ontology and epistemology (Plato's concept of 'idea' and Aristotle's concepts of 'Morphe' but also to such concepts as 'typos' and 'prolepsis') (Hjørland, 2010). Information is data that has been categorized, counted, and thus given meaning, relevance, or purpose. Information is facts, figures, and other forms of meaningful representations that when encountered by or presented to a human being are used to enhance his/her understanding of a subject or related topics.

In other development, literacy skill enhances quick information absorption among individuals of all class especially undergraduate students of fine and applied arts in particular. Literacy as an integral part of western education is the art of reading and writing in any language. A study carried out by Enamhe and Echeta (2001) revealed that literacy brings about the transformation of society which in turn gives rise to a political in democracy favour. The achievement of literacy through education was seen by Enamhe and Echeta as the process in which major Clusters of old-social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people became aware or available for new patterns of socialization and political apathy into a different life of broader and deeper involvement in the vast complexities of modern life. It had been hoped that the sad state of poor art work among undergraduate students of fine and applied arts in the world and Nigeria in particular will be improved with sound knowledge of

information literacy skill. This is because information literacy skill is the gateway to academic excellence among fine and applied arts undergraduates.

This suggested that information literacy skill is the individual potentiality of undergraduate students to be knowledgeable enough to evaluate, find, identify, apply, organize, and access information. Paul Zurkowski in the early 70's was the first to introduce information literacy in the United States of America. Then, the applicability of the information literacy continued to grow from strength to strength since then till date and has been weighed in different discipline. Information literacy skill according to Ali, Abu-Hassan, Daud and Jusoff (2010) is as the same as digital/media literacy skill. The above mention information literacy skills may not only be valuable to undergraduate students of fine and applied arts in the course of their academic responsibilities but would assist them in evaluating credibility and quality of source of information, gaining new knowledge, making decision or solving problem and as well as in attributing credence to a source. Information literacy according to American Library Association, (ACRL) (2010) is the ability to reorganize when information is needed and have the ability to use needed information effectively, locate and evaluate needed information. Information literacy skill is instrumental in the course of positioning better learning and effective translation of fine and applied arts among undergraduates because they are prepared for life-long learning. Bundy (2004) listed generic skill (collaboration, problem solving, team work, critical thinking and communication), information skill (such as information seeking, technology fluency and use) and values and beliefs (using information ethically and wisely, community participation and social responsibility) as elements of information literacy. On the other hand, Bruce (1997) attributed information technology literacy, computer literacy, information skill, learning to learn and library skills as concepts coexisting and influencing information literacy. No wonder, Californian University Information literacy fact sheet (2000) reported that information literate individuals are able to access needed information effectively, determine the extent of information needed, evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into one's knowledge among others.

RELEVANCE OF INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS TO FINE AND APPLIED ARTS UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

It has been brought to the limelight through this investigative study that information literacy skill is essential to every learner especially among undergraduate students of fine and applied arts. It is said to vital because of the rapid growth of information resources and systems. Information literacy skill relevance according to University of South Carolina (2018) is that it help learners of all disciplines to possess the ability to have knowledge on when information is required, how to write research question, when to find information, where to locate information, understand or determine source of information, select best information source, organize information, present and evaluate information among others. Therefore, below are sub-relevance of information literacy skill among undergraduate students of fine and applied arts:

- ❖ Information literacy skill will assist undergraduate students of fine and applied arts to utilize research skills such as attention to detail, note taking, time management and problem solving for presenting and interpreting information for general good.
- ❖ It will enrich their knowledge with critical thinking to evaluate facts
- ❖ It will enable them the opportunity to know how, when and where to locate vital information related to fine and applied arts.
- ❖ It will encourage them to identify appropriate information for use
- ❖ It will enable them to place proper evaluation as prerequisite for adequate information presentation among others.

Thus, there are other numerous relevance of information literacy skills among fine and applied arts undergraduate students but we just limited it to the above listed ones. This is because, information literacy skill is a key to modern learning and knowledge update as information is power giver for learners. Although, it is not certain if information literacy skills as articulated above play significant role for the growth of fine and applied art. It is still unclear if undergraduate students of fine and applied arts utilize information literacy in crafting their skillful art works. It is on this conflicting state of mind that they researchers wishes to ascertain information literacy skills among fine and applied arts undergraduate students in South-East Federal Universities in Nigeria. Specifically, the researchers want to investigate the following:

1. What are they information literacy skills needed by fine and applied arts undergraduate students?
2. What are they relevance of information literacy skills among undergraduate students of fine and applied arts?

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 650 which comprise 250 female students and 400 male third year and final year undergraduate students of fine and applied arts in South-East Federal Universities in Nigeria. The sample size of the study was 240 which made up of 110 female and 130 male students. This figure represents 40% of the total population of fine and applied arts undergraduate students in the area. To draw this sample, proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure equal representation from each stratum for the study. The instrument for data collection is researcher constructed questionnaire titled “Information literacy skill needs questionnaire (ILSNQ)”. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, 1 & 2. Part one elicited information on the personal data of the respondents, while part two has 2 clusters: A and B each focusing on specific role of information literacy skills. These are: the information literacy skills needed by fine and applied undergraduate students and relevance of information literacy skills among undergraduate students of fine and applied arts in South-East Federal Universities in Nigeria. The face validation of the instrument was done by three experts, two experts in fine and applied arts unit and one in Measurement and Evaluation. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a trial-

test was conducted with 20 undergraduate students (10 male and 10 female students). The data was collected by the researchers. The research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

Results

The results of data analysis based on data collected for the study. The presentation followed the sequence of the research questions that guided the study.

Research Question One:

1. What are they information literacy skills needed by fine and applied arts undergraduate students?

The data collected with items 1-6 of the instrument which dwelt on the information literacy skills needed by fine and applied arts undergraduate students were used to answer the above stated research question. Data were also analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Summary of the results was presented in table 1 below

Table 1: Mean Ratings of male and female undergraduate students of fine and applied arts on the information literacy skill needed by fine art students in South-East, Federal Universities, Nigeria.

S/N	Item statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Dec.
1	Evaluating credibility and quality of source of information	3.64	0.55	SA
2	To gain new knowledge in the field of study	3.43	0.65	A
3	Decision/ problem solving skill.	3.44	0.65	A
4	For better learning and effective translation of fine and applied arts creative works	2.62	1.17	A
5	Information technology literacy, computer literacy, information skill, learning to learn and library skills among other skills	3.43	0.71	A
6	Ability to reorganize, locate and make effective use of information when needed	3.63	0.59	SA

Table 1 above showed the overall mean of each of the items from 1-6 to be 3.64, 3.43, 3.44, 2.62, and 3.42, and 3.63 while standard deviation is 0.55, 0.64, 0.65, 1.17, 0.71, and 0.59. From the data obtained, it showed that the mean of each of the items is greater than 2.50 (working or acceptable mean). Therefore, the respondents agreed that all the items listed are the information literacy skills needed by fine and applied arts undergraduate students. This affirmed that both the male and female students accepted that information literacy skills are needed by fine and applied arts undergraduate students in South-East Federal Universities, Nigeria.

Research Question Two:

2. What are the relevance of information literacy skills among undergraduate students of fine and applied arts?

The data collected with items 7-13 of the instrument which dwelt on the relevance of information literacy skills among undergraduate students of fine and applied arts were used to answer the above stated research question. Data were also analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Summary of the results was presented in table 2 below

Table 2: Mean Ratings of male and female undergraduate students of fine and applied arts on the relevance of information literacy skill among undergraduate students of fine and applied arts in South-East, Federal Universities, Nigeria.

S/N	Item statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Dec.
7	Information literacy skill will assist undergraduate students of fine and applied arts to utilize research skills such as attention to detail, note taking, time management and problem solving for presenting and interpreting information for general good.	3.33	0.66	A
8	It will enable them the opportunity to know how, when and where to locate vital information related to fine and applied arts.	3.37	0.56	A
9	Information literacy skills enable students to have knowledge on when information is required	3.57	0.57	SA
10	It enable students to know how to write research question	3.63	0.53	SA
11	It will enrich their knowledge with critical thinking to evaluate facts	2.72	0.68	A
12	It assist students to know when to fine information, where to locate information, understand or determine source of information	3.46	0.61	A
13	It will encourage them to identify appropriate information needed to improve their skill	3.24	0.80	A

Table 2 above showed the mean of each of the items from 7-13 to be 3.33, 3.37, 3.57, 3.63, 2.72, 3.46 and 3.24 while standard deviation is 0.66, 0.56, 0.57, 0.53, 0.68, 0.61 and 0.80. From the data obtained, it showed that the mean of each of the items is greater than 2.50 (working or acceptable mean). Therefore, the respondents agreed that all the items listed are they relevance information literacy skills among undergraduate students of fine and applied arts. This affirmed that both the male and female students accepted that above items are they relevance of information literacy skills among undergraduate students of fine and applied arts in South-East Federal Universities, Nigeria.

Discussion

The findings of this study have many scholarly backup and assumptions that became reality. According to Arrojo (2021) information is the secret key for a total positive change of any organization. The scholar added that the ability for meaningful searching of information, reorganization, identification and information evaluation on information literacy skill. In an earlier submission of Arrojo (2015), the author stated that information abilities are essential element needed for the growth of all learners. This suggested that fine and applied undergraduate students need information literacy skills for positive academic improvement. No wonder, the respondents showed high demonstration of concern on the needed information literacy skills for academic improvement. In view of the important of information and technology, Legault, et, al. (2021) were of the opinion that the academic strength of learners is dependent on the available information they were able to access. This implies that fine and applied arts undergraduate students can either remain academically staunch or sound depending their eagerness/weakness to search needed information on their areas of learning. Arrojo (2013) and (2017) holds that academic improvement of students is highly attributed to their desire to search for new knowledge or information. The added that the best option to gain new knowledge is by searching for information updates.

Furthermore, Hepworth (2000) found that information literacy skills among learners, equips them with the following technical knowhow; computer technology skill, critical thinking skill, communication and research skills. Contributing, Ali, Abu-Hassan, Daud and Jusoff (2010) noted that information literacy skills helps students to develop their ability to recognize quality sources, to be aware of the right academic direction to follow, utilize advanced search techniques and put research skills into practice. The benefits of information literacy skills was further elaborated by Bundy (2004) to include; individual enablement to know how to use information, to determine the kind of information and when it is needed, it offers access to credible data, and enables effective and efficient use of information. According to Ali, Siddique and Shahzad (2022), information literacy skills enable learners of sound minds to usually decide on where, how and when to access information and justify why it must be used at a particular time. Affum (2022) equally noted that information literacy skills enable individuals especially learners of

different institution to be creative, objective and collective in pursuing desired dreams of excellence. In the study of Afolabi, Afolabi and Aragbaye (2022) on teachers' information literacy skills, it was revealed that teachers possess electronic information resources, evaluating www sources and uses internet sources to gather information among others as their information literacy skills. The findings is also in support of the present investigation, as the present study showed that undergraduate students of fine and applied arts can grow academically if they are properly exposed to information literacy skills, as it will not only help them to search information but would preposition them to know when to search, how to validate and when to use it among other numerous advantages of information literacy skill. No wonder, it was remarked that information literacy skill enable students to be well educated, informed and eager to perform expected task (Adedokun, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Fine and applied art is becoming globally accepted discipline of increasing and improving standard of living of the common man in the society in this 21st century and beyond. So, considering the technological advancement in the globe today, it became paramount for undergraduate students of fine and applied arts to utilize their talents, abilities, aptitude and intelligence effectively in realizing the underlying goals of fine and applied reality through the application of information literacy skill. Experts in the field of fine and applied arts should endeavor to properly and smoothly translate/transmit fine and applied arts keynote of information literacy skill utilization to undergraduate students. This became pertinent because undergraduate students of federal, private and state universities in Nigeria are learners that increase knowledge from those experts (field specialist). Therefore, undergraduate students in Nigeria federal universities especially those of south-east region need information literacy skills to enable them gain the needed information and became grounded in the learning of fine and applied arts and self-reliance. Importantly, inability to utilize information literacy skill among fine and applied arts undergraduate students makes the learning of the discipline difficult. This could be responsible for poor industrialization among graduates of the discipline. However, if experts/ lecturers of fine and applied arts can educate their students on the essentiality of information literacy skills in the teaching and learning of fine and applied arts at the university, then impacted learning will be created among them. Thus, the use of information literacy skills makes learning of fine and applied arts easier to her learners. The south-east federal universities authorities should also harmonize challenges limiting smooth translation of information literacy skill among fine and applied art undergraduate students of the area in order to ensure skill acquisition and utilization.

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