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INFORMATION LITERACY FOR EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This work is on information literacy for effective utilization of information resources in academic libraries in Nigeria. Four hundred copies of questionnaire were administered to students of four academic institutions- Federal University of Technology Owerri Imo State, Imo State University, Federal Polytechnic Nekede and Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education. The result indicated that most of the students were aware of importance of information literacy although some of them could not identify some aspects of plagiarism. Practical component were not taught and use ICT in teaching was lacking. It was recommended that practical components of teaching should be included, that modern teaching methods like flipped classroom, teleconferencing etc should be used in teaching the students. There is need for training the trainers. The teaching and learning of information literacy should be improved to incorporate copyright, plagiarism and proper ways of evaluating information sources. The teaching of utilization of electronic information sources should also be enhanced to enable students make use of information resource for academic purposes and lifelong learning and to contribute their quota to national development. ICT should be applied in the teaching and learning of information literacy. There is need for guided tours, flipped instructions, video conferencing, advanced literature search, use of interactive boards and other computer aided programmes to enable the students source information with minimal help in the globalized world.

Keywords*: Information Literacy, Information resources, Information skill, Plagiarism, Practical component, teaching and learning, academic libraries, Nigeria.*

Introduction

Information is seen as processed data that is capable of answering users query. It is "fuel for development" and life wire of societies because it is vital to the activities of government and private individuals as they strive towards growth (Igwe 1986). It is for social, political economic and technological development of any nation. It is more important than natural resources like coal, gas, oil etc (Arunachalam, 1986). It is clear that information rich countries are wealthy while most countries like Nigeria with abundant natural resources but lack information are in crisis and poor. The role of information in technological advancement of

nations cannot be over emphasized. Information is also in the form of statistics that is necessary for planning and decision making (Aiyepeku 1989). Various nations cannot make effective planning and policy making if they lack the relevant statistics associated with population, number of roads, availability of electricity, water, broadband, external reserve, gross domestic product (GDP) and other vital information for national development. The developing countries that lack information and statistics required for political, economic, social and technological development find it difficult to plan and make effective decisions that will lead to national development.

In consideration of the role of information in individual and national development and lifelong learning, students in institutions of higher learning and even in secondary schools should be taught how to retrieve, evaluate and utilize information. The students are expected to know how to navigate through large quantity of information that is available in libraries, internet and other sources to obtain the right data or information they need.

This underpins and substantiates the need for information literacy to enable students to obtain the right kind of information they need for their assignments, research, personal use and contribution to political, social, economic and technological development of their society and country.

Information literacy helps people to know when information is needed and the ability to evaluate and use it. Information literacy is also very useful in critical thinking. Association of College and Research libraries information competency for higher education, (2018) define information literacy as a set of characteristics that transform an ordinary students, helps people to obtain skills not just for academic programmes, as a student but for lifelong learning. Information literacy is therefore a prerequisite for effective use of information.

American Library Association (2018) sees information literacy as a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to evaluate and use effectively the needed information(Wikipedia retrieved

30/10/18). An information literate person should therefore be in the position to find out information need, the extent of information need, locate and retrieve appropriate information sources, evaluate and use them. CILLIP, (2018) added that information literacy is the ability to think critically and make balanced judgement about any information we find and use. Information explosion has facilitated the need, to obtain, evaluate and use information for academic programmes and learning throughout ones life (Ivanitskaya, O'boyle and Casey, 2006).

The rate of social, political, economic and technological development in Nigeria and other developing countries is at its lowest level. What people learnt at school and after school facilitate effective planning, and decision making that will lead to economic, social and technological breakthrough. It is important to note that nothing positive seems to be coming from the administrators, civil servant, policy makers and legislators in developing countries. It seems information literacy was either poorly carried out or was not done at all during school days because it is a major way of retrieving, evaluating and using

information for national development. It has therefore become necessary to evaluate information literacy programme for students in academic libraries.

Research Method

Survey research is used. Questionnaire will be administered to students of Federal University of Technology Owerri, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Federal Polytechnic Nekede and Imo State University. A total of 400 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the students through simple random sampling. Simple percentage, will be used for analysis of data.

Objectives of the Study

i.   To find out if students have information literacy skills,

ii.   To find out if they can evaluate information .

iii.   To identify if users have ability to identify plagiarism

iv.   To identify the challenges of teaching and learning information literacy.

Literature Review

Shorten (2001) has emphasized the benefit of information literacy which include effective access to information and ability to use information during and after school. Association of College and Research Libraries(2018) stated that a literate person should be able to identify, locate, retrieve, evaluate, synthesise and present the newly acquired knowledge so that others can use it and translate these abilities and concepts to new projects and disciplines. The library user is expected to exploit information resources in the library with minimal help from the library staff Audu (2006), and Nwokocha and Ugocha (2014) emphasized the need for knowledge of how to obtain information. It is also believed that an educated person is one who is always in the position to access ones information needs from the myriad of resources kept in the library for use. Information literacy aims at assisting the users to make effective use of information resources in the library on his own (Osagie; 2003). Shaw, (2016); and William and Evans (2008) in their various studies found out that information literacy skills were positively correlated with both students writing abilities and final course grades. In support of

the above statement, Blakes, Bowles, Terry, Pearson and Kiraiyi, (2017) affirmed that students retention rate are higher for those whose courses included information literacy instruction components.

Ekong and Ebong (2018) agreed that there is correlation between effective information literacy and academic performance of students but decried lack of reasonable ICT components in information literacy instruction in Nigerian schools; they further suggested that ICT facilities should be installed in academic libraries for effective teaching and learning of information literacy.

Gbaje and Okojie (2011) stated that information literacy helps in access to knowledge which is essential for promoting human rights activities, economic and cultural development, innovations, individual freedom and creativity.

Data Analysis

Out of 400 copies of questionnaire distributed only 280 valid copies were returned representing about 70%. Importance of importance of information literacy

S/No	Importance of information	Frequency	Percentage
I	Information literacy students perform better in exams than others	180	62.3
II	Information literacy skills help in life long learning	178	63.6
III	Information literacy skills prevent information overload	82	29.3
IV	Needed for evaluating information sources	152	54.3
V	Information literacy helps to depend on others for access to information	21	7.5
VI	Information literacy prevents overdependence on internet	150	56.3

The table above shows the importance of information literacy. The students were allowed to check all answers that applicable. The result indicated that most of the students are aware of the role of Information literacy in academic performance in school, lifelong learning, and ability to evaluate information sources.

2.   Evaluation of information

S/No	Evaluation of information	Frequency	Percentage
I	Peer review journals are authoritative	35	12.5
II	Journals are sources of scholarly	110	39.3

	information		
III	Use of articles based on opinion rather than well supported evidence is good	31	11.1
IV	Use of an article whose author has no known affiliation is not acceptable	151	54

The table above shows that respondent checked all that are applicable. The result indicated that they know that journals are scholarly information sources. They also knew that the use of article whose author has no known affiliation is not good. However, many of them did not seem to know what is peer review journal and the negative implication of using articles and journals that are based on opinion which may lead to prosecution in the law court.

3. Ability to Search for Information (Skills)

S/No	Ability to search for information (skills)	Frequency	Percentage
I	Knowledge of scholarly sources	82	29.3
II	Use search strategy effectively to identify information sources	72	25.7
III	I can detect journal citation that is incomplete	85	30.4
IV	I know what is abstract	101	36.1
V	I know what is bibliography	141	50.4
VI	Can identify books in the library based on a unique author	120	42.9
VII	Able to carry out boolian search	26	9.3

VIII	Reference is not necessary for a good journal	101	36.1

The result above indicated that the respondents have some information literacy skills. They know how to get books based on unique author, they know bibliography, abstract and can detect journal citation that is incomplete. However, many of then did not know how do boolian search probably because of lack of practical components and application of ICT in teaching and learning information literacy.

4. Rating of Search Skills

S/No	Rating	Frequency	Percentage
I	Excellent	25	8.9
II	Very good	105	37.5
III	Good	108	38.6
IV	Fair	22	7.9
V	Poor	20	7.1
VI	Non existent	-	-
		280	100

Many of the respondents rated themselves good search skills. Some said they are very good.

5. Awareness of plagiarism

S/No	Plagiarism	Frequency	Percentage
I	Submitting a free research paper downloaded from the internet	102	36.4
II	Awareness of the implication of reproducing a sentence that is quoted in a book without reference to the original source of information.	40	14.3
III	Enclosing a word for word sentence in a quotation mark accompanied by citation	85	30.4
IV	Copying from a source verbatim any quotation without adding any citation	119	42.5
V	Putting someone's idea in my own words without citing a specific source	110	39.3
VI	Using similar sentence structure to express another persons idea without referring to the original source	80	28.6

In the above table ,many of the respondent know about plagiarism but they seem not to be aware of the implication of reproducing a sentence quoted in a book without reference to the original source.

6.   Reproduction without proper referencing

S/No	Item	Frequency	Percentage
I	Common knowledge	31	11.1
II	Classmates idea	60	21.4
III	Lecturers idea	50	17.9
IV	Unpublished work	53	18.9
V	Spoken words	32	11.4
VI	My fathers social opinion	54	19.3

		280	100

The result here indicated that most of the respondents did not know that it is only common knowledge that should not be cited.

7.   Challenges Learning Information Literacy

S/No	Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
I	Lack of ICT	82	29.3
II	Lack of power supply	105	37.5
III	Lack of practical competency	140	50.0
IV	Lack of interest of the students	52	18.6
V	Lack of flipped instruction and video conferencing	62	22.1

The result above indicate that lack of practical components, lack of power supply and lack of ICT are some of the major challenges of learning information literacy. The respondents also indicated lack of flipped instruction, video conferencing etc.

Summary of Findings

1.   The result shows that many of the students are aware of the importance of information literacy, however few of them did not know that information literacy discourages dependence on others for information.

2. Many of respondents did not seem to know all the processes involved in evaluating information sources. Some of the respondents did not seem to know what peer review is and implication of use of articles based on opinion rather than evidence.

3. Most of the respondents said they have skills for getting books based on unique author, but many of them did not know how to do boolian search which indicated poor ICT skills.

4. Many of them rated their search skills as good

5. The responses indicated that many respondents were aware of plagiarism but many of them did not seem to know the implication of reproducing a sentence that is quoted in a book without reference to original source of information. This implies that some of them do not have full knowledge of plagiarism.

6. Most of the respondents did not know that it is only common knowledge that cannot be quoted.

7. Lack of practical components, power supply, and lack of ICT were the major challenges of learning information literacy.

Recommendations

The curriculum should be strengthened to include critical thinking, boolian search and other search strategies to enable the users make effective use of resources in the library. The teaching and learning of information literacy should be improved to incorporate copyright, plagiarism and proper ways of evaluating information sources. The teaching of utilization of electronic information sources should also be enhanced to enable students make use of information resource for academic purposes and lifelong learning and to contribute their quota to national development. ICT should be applied in the teaching and learning of information literacy. There is need for guided tours, flipped instructions, video conferencing, advanced literature search ,use of interactive boards and other computer aided programmes to enable the students source information with minimal help in the globalized world.

There is need for training the trainers' workshop regularly to acquaint lecturers/ librarians with recent developments in information literacy to enable them impart quality knowledge to the students

The students should taken to e-library for teaching practical and learning practical components of information literacy.

Conclusion

The role of information literacy in improving academic performance and contribution to national development and lifelong learning cannot be overemphasized. Libraries in the developing countries should be equipped with electronic gadgets that will facilitate teaching and learning of information literacy in this era of globalization.

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