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Perception of Information Literacy Skills for Academic and Self Development among Undergraduate Students of Adamawa State University, Mubi, Nigeria.

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Abstract
This research was conducted to investigate the perception of the term information literacy, information literacy skills for academic and self-development, and factors that facilitate information literacy development of undergraduate students in Adamawa State University, Mubi. Quantitative research methodology was adopted using a cross-sectional design method. Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1971) method, where it was stipulated that any population of 100,000 or more 377 can be used as a sample. Therefore, the total number of undergraduates in Adamawa State University is 14,948 (Dean, Students Affairs), out of which 377 undergraduate students were chosen using convenience sampling. The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The period of the semester examination was used to distribute and retrieve questionnaires in the library because of the inflow of students during that period. Out of the 377 questionnaires distributed, 334 were found to be duly completed and used for analysis. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were utilized to answer the research questions. The standard decision means of 2.50 based on a 4-point Likert scale was used for analysis. Frequency, percentages, and tables were also used for data interpretation. The results revealed that undergraduate students of Adamawa State University, Mubi, have a different perspective on the term information literacy; their interpretations often centre on basic literacy skills rather than encompassing the broader and more critical competencies such as information evaluation, ethical usage, and strategic retrieval. On how information contributes to their academic and self-development, three measured items were accepted and two rejected. Regarding factors that facilitate IL development, only two out of the five items measured were accepted. The research therefore concluded that the students of ADSU Mubi has foundational but incomplete understanding of the concept. They also recognized the significance of IL in their academic and self-development. They agreed to a certain level on some factors that facilitate ILS Development. These findings highlight the urgent need to expand IL beyond its traditional scope and

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integrate it more deeply into the university's educational framework, as itemized in the recommendations made in this study to prepare students for the demands of academic research, digital citizenship, and lifelong learning.

Keywords: Perception, Information Literacy, Literacy Skills, Undergraduates

Introduction

Information is a vital resource required for survival, development, and advancement at both the individual and national levels. Access to information has been widely associated with progress and success in education, business, and other aspects of life. According to Pius (2019), *"people need information in all spheres of life, be it business, places of work, educational pursuits, and our day-to-day activities. It is a tool that all humans, organizations, and nations need for development and advancement, and a resource to depend on for survival."* Similarly, Gama (2012) observed that *"the power of information is that no individual, society or nation can do without it,"* emphasizing further that individuals and nations with access to information become more powerful than those without it. The development of many advanced nations has been linked to heavy investment in education and information systems, while many successful individuals have achieved growth through lifelong learning and the acquisition of information literacy skills.

Information literacy refers to the awareness of information needs and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use information to solve problems or satisfy specific needs. The concept emphasizes competencies such as searching, accessing, analysing, and utilizing information efficiently. The American Library Association Presidential Committee (1989) defined information literacy as the ability to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and use the required information effectively. To succeed academically and beyond, students require information literacy skills, including the ability to formulate questions, search for relevant information, evaluate sources, and use information ethically. Information literacy also involves competence in the use of scientific databases and digital technologies, reflecting its close relationship with digital literacy. Parang, Raine, and Stevenson (2000) described information literacy as a combination of library literacy, computer literacy, media literacy, technological literacy, critical thinking, ethics, and communication skills.

Information literacy skills are increasingly recognized as essential tools for academic success and self-development because they promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning. An individual may be generally literate yet lack information literacy skills, which are necessary for navigating modern information environments and using technology effectively to solve problems. Information literacy supports sustainable self-development by enabling individuals to improve themselves independently and achieve personal goals. In this regard, Etim and Ebefung (2023) described development as improvement toward becoming better, while Oye (2019) viewed it as a process of bringing about substantial societal change. Since information plays a central role in all human activities, students must possess

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information literacy skills to succeed academically and enhance their personal development. This, therefore, necessitated the investigation of information literacy skills among undergraduate students of Adamawa State University.

Statement of the Problem

Information literacy extends beyond the basic ability to read and write; it involves recognizing information needs and possessing the ability to locate, retrieve, evaluate, and effectively use information to solve problems. In the digital age, the vast amount of information available on the internet often produces excessive and sometimes unreliable results, making it difficult for students to identify relevant and credible information. Consequently, only individuals equipped with information literacy skills can effectively sift through large volumes of information to obtain accurate and useful content. These skills empower students to navigate academic and life challenges successfully and contribute significantly to their academic achievement and personal development.

The rapid growth of information resources and technological advancement has exposed undergraduate students to diverse information sources, thereby increasing the challenge of evaluating and selecting relevant information. As a result, students require strong information literacy skills to navigate this information overload and make informed academic decisions. Information literacy skills are therefore essential for academic success, lifelong learning, and self-development. Students who understand the concept of information literacy and can identify information needs, search for relevant information, evaluate sources, and acknowledge the use of others' ideas are more likely to perform effectively in their studies. In contrast, students with inadequate information literacy skills may experience difficulties in conducting academic tasks successfully. Alicia (2021) noted that although information literacy is regarded as a relatively new concept, it has long remained central to success in various aspects of life.

Despite the growing importance of information literacy, there is limited evidence regarding undergraduate students' understanding and application of these skills in Adamawa State University. While similar studies have been conducted in different locations and among different populations, no known study has specifically investigated undergraduate students of the university. Therefore, this study sought to examine students' perception and understanding of information literacy, the role of information literacy skills in academic and self-development, and the factors facilitating information literacy development among undergraduate students of Adamawa State University, Mubi.

Objectives of the Research

The main objective of this research is to find out the perception of information literacy skills among undergraduate students in Adamawa State University and the specific objectives are to:

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1. Find out their perception of the term information literacy among undergraduates of ADSU.
2. Ascertain whether information literacy skills contribute to academics and the self-development of undergraduate students in ADSU.
3. Identify the factors that facilitate the development of information literacy skills of undergraduate students in ADSU Mubi.

Research Questions

1. What is the Perception of the Information Literacy Skills by Undergraduate Students of ADSU Mubi?
2. Do Information Literacy Skills Contribute to Academics and Self-Development among students in ADSU?
3. What are the Factors that Facilitate the Development of Information Literacy Skills among Undergraduate Students in ADSU Mubi?

Significance of the Study

Information literacy skills are very important skills that undergraduates need to possess. It helps give them a direction and enables them to have a productive, academic, and self-developed life. This assertion is supported by Ode, E. O (2017) that information literacy skills and the role it plays in the area of academic and lifelong learning of undergraduate students have become important in the changing environment surrounded by technological changes too. It is a skill that an individual needs to maintain and achieve academic excellence. It also helps in conducting research and other activities involved in their academics and otherwise. Therefore, this research will help them to be aware of information literacy and information literacy skills, and the need for them to possess them to facilitate their academic and personal development.

Recommendations made to the university management at the end of the research, when taken into consideration, will facilitate positive decisions and policies that will improve students' literacy skills. This will help them too to make informed decisions, enhance their critical thinking, improve their academic performance, digital competency, good research skills and help in lifelong learning.

Other researchers specializing in this area will find the research work helpful as it is believed to have added to existing knowledge and also filled the gap established.

Literature Review

Information Literacy

Information literacy, according to (ACRL 2013) Association of College and Research Libraries is a set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyse, and use information. Similarly, Onyeka et al (2019),' perceive in their study that information literacy is the ability to note or recognize when information is necessary, to acquire and apply the same information effectively on time. Okon, Eduk, and Akpan (2014), on the other hand, view information

literacy as the capability to identify, locate, and critically evaluate information for decision-making, knowledge creation, and problem-solving. Similarly, Majetic and Pellegrino (2018) opined that information literacy encompasses the ability to discover information, understand how it is produced, valued, and used in creating new knowledge. An information literate person is considered someone that use information objectively and achieve his aims and objectives. However, before a person uses information effectively, there are certain requirements and skills that must be acquired and applied in various information-seeking processes.

Information literacy forms the basis for Lifelong Learning (LLL). It is a new field which recognize the fact that literacy does not only mean the ability to read and write, but also the ability to recognize areas they need information on, to be able to source it and use it. It also recognizes the fact that literacy does not have to come or be acquired through the conventional way of learning, but rather should also, and most importantly, come from self-willingness to learn and acquire knowledge even in an unconventional way for lifelong support and development.

It is a new field of knowledge which recognise the ability to use all the tools that can help to find and use information. Information literacy enables the learners to widen their inquisitiveness, which leads to investigations to satisfy their curiosities and consequently master their own lives and goals. Information seekers are always faced with the hassle of sifting through the mass of information resources, and being information literate will handle all that stress. However, before a person uses information effectively, there are certain requirements and skills that must be acquired and applied in various information-seeking processes.

Information Literacy Skills for Academics and Self-Development

Information literacy involves the ability to retrieve, evaluate, use, and communicate information effectively. In today's information-driven society, these skills are essential for independent learning, academic success, and sustainable self-development. Adekunle et al. (2012) emphasized that *"information literacy is a very fundamental ingredient to students' success in the digital age, particularly in higher education and lifelong learning."* An information-literate person should be able to identify information needs, retrieve relevant information, critically analyse it, and apply it effectively to solve problems and achieve specific goals. Similarly, Bank and Kumar (2019) asserted that adequate information literacy skills improve undergraduate students' academic performance and contribute to national development. Supporting this view, Murthya and Padmini (2018) found that most undergraduate students at Sri Venkates Medical College could identify their information needs and access information in both print and electronic formats, which are key characteristics of information literate individuals.

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Information needs usually arise from knowledge gaps, and the ability to bridge these gaps requires strong information literacy skills. These skills empower students to navigate academic and life challenges successfully through critical thinking, problem-solving, and research abilities. According to Akinosho et al. (2018), information literacy skills refer to the *"ability to know when there is need for information and the ability to locate, evaluate and effectively use information."* Beyond conventional library use, information literacy now includes the ability to navigate vast internet resources, retrieve relevant information, and apply it appropriately to solve problems. Critical thinking and problem identification are therefore fundamental skills of an information-literate individual, especially because research activities involve observation, investigation, experimentation, and analysis.

Several empirical studies have highlighted the importance and level of information literacy skills among students. Inazu and Soyemi (2022) reported that students in federal universities in Southwest Nigeria possessed high information literacy skills used for searching, accessing, and evaluating information. Similarly, Maidin et al. (2022) found that about 75% of medical students in Kuala Lumpur had high levels of information literacy skills. Aduba, Obat, and Baro (2022) revealed that Library and Information Science students demonstrated higher information literacy skills than Computer Science students, although both groups showed low ability in framing research topics. Likewise, Popoola (2023) observed that medical students had average information access and evaluation skills, high familiarity with search engines, and high ability to use information effectively.

Information literacy also includes awareness of ethical issues related to information use, such as copyright, plagiarism, and intellectual property rights. Yebowaah (2018) found that although many undergraduate students in Ghana lacked full awareness of information literacy features, about 75% were aware of copyright and plagiarism issues. This awareness is important because using another person's ideas without acknowledgement constitutes plagiarism and violates copyright laws. Akinosho et al. (2018) further observed that *"an information literate person must understand the ethics that guide information access, use, creation, and distribution."* They emphasized that such individuals should understand intellectual property rights, copyright, and fair use principles to avoid plagiarism and promote ethical information use.

Factors Facilitating the Development of Information Literacy Skills

Developing information literacy skills among students should be a major objective of higher institutions because such skills prepare learners to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, and lifelong learners. Equipping students with information literacy competencies not only supports their academic success but also enables them to become agents of change capable of addressing personal and societal challenges. Information literacy development goes beyond the ability to access and retrieve information; it also includes effective reading and writing skills, proficiency in information and communication technologies (ICTs), listening skills, and critical thinking abilities necessary for lifelong learning. Ndou and Zimu-Bayela (2023)

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highlighted that the concept of information literacy has evolved to include new literacies aimed at preparing students for lifelong learning.

The persistent issue of plagiarism among undergraduate students in higher institutions may be linked to inadequate information literacy skills, particularly deficiencies in academic writing, referencing, acknowledgement of sources, synthesis, and evaluation of information. Consequently, identifying factors that facilitate the development of information literacy skills is essential. Buba and Abdullahi (2023), in their study on undergraduate students in federal universities in Nigeria, found that although students possessed adequate knowledge of information literacy programmes and search terminologies, they struggled with inconsistent information that required interpretation and critical evaluation. This suggests that many students lack the foundational skills needed for critical analysis and evaluation of information. Similarly, Bashorun, Bashorun, and Akinwale (2021), in a study on medical students at the University of Ilorin, recommended continuous information literacy programmes and regular training throughout students' academic programmes to enhance information literacy development.

Empirical studies further revealed that institutional support plays a significant role in facilitating information literacy skills development. Philip (2023), in a study of higher school students in Accra, reported low information competency among students due to inadequate infrastructure and lack of formalized information literacy instruction. The study therefore recommended integrating information literacy instruction into school programmes. Supporting this view, Abdullahi (2023) identified several factors that facilitate information literacy development, including dedicated information literacy policies, motivational programmes on information literacy acquisition, workshops, conferences, seminars, adequate ICT infrastructure, well-structured curricula, and properly developed syllabi to guide information literacy practices among students. These findings underscore the importance of early and continuous information literacy instruction in developing competent and information-literate students.

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research method using a cross-sectional survey design to investigate information literacy among undergraduate students of Adamawa State University. The population comprised 14,948 undergraduate students, from which a sample size of 377 respondents was selected using the Krejcie and Morgan (1971) sampling guideline for populations below 100,000. A convenience sampling technique was employed, with respondents mainly targeted in the university library during the examination period due to the high influx of students at that time. A questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection, and the administration and retrieval process lasted for two weeks.

Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, to answer the research questions. Frequencies for the response categories of

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strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree were computed alongside their respective mean scores. The cumulative mean for each section was then compared with the standard decision mean of 2.50 based on a 4-point modified Likert scale. A cumulative mean above 2.50 indicated positive agreement, while a mean below 2.50 indicated disagreement with the measured items.

Data Presentation of Results

A total of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) copies of the questionnaire were distributed and retrieved; only three hundred and thirty-four were found perfectly completed and therefore used for this analysis. Forty-four were disregarded because they were found worthy to be used. Therefore, the analysis was based on the (334) questionnaire returned.

Table 1: Response Rate

Number of Questionnaire Administered	Response Rate	Percentage (%)
377	334	88.59%

Table 1 shows the number of questionnaires distributed, the response rate and the percentage.

Research Question 1: Perception of the Term Information Literacy by Undergraduate Students of Adamawa State University Mubi.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of responses to Research Question 1.

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	The ability to read and write only.	334	3.34	0.66	Accepted
2	The ability to read, write and do arithmetic.	334	2.78	0.71	Accepted
3	The ability to recognize the need for information.	334	2.65	0.85	Accepted
4	The ability to access, retrieve, evaluate and use information.	334	3.31	0.46	Accepted
5	The ability to acknowledge ideas and sources used.	334	2.63	0.92	Accepted

The analysis of undergraduate students' perception of the term Information Literacy at Adamawa State University, Mubi, indicates a generally positive but basic understanding of the concept, as all five items measured were accepted. The highest mean score (3.34) was for defining information literacy as the ability to read and write only, and a similar acceptance of reading, writing, and arithmetic (mean = 2.78) suggests students primarily associate the term with traditional literacy skills. More advanced aspects, such as accessing, evaluating, and using information (mean = 3.31) and recognizing the need for information (mean = 2.65), were acknowledged but with less emphasis. The lowest mean score (2.63) for acknowledging ideas and sources reflects a limited grasp of ethical information use, highlighting the need for more comprehensive instruction on critical and ethical dimensions of information literacy.

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Research Question 2: Information Literacy Skills Contribution to Academic and Self-Development of Undergraduate Students, Adamawa State University Mubi.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses to Research Question 2.

S/No	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	I can identify, access, retrieve, evaluate, and use information.	334	2.55	0.92	Accepted
2	It helps me navigate through mass sources for my academics.	334	2.61	0.60	Accepted
3	Knowing the appropriate tools to use in searching for information.	334	2.50	0.76	Accepted
4	It helps me learn, unlearn, and relearn on my own.	334	2.43	0.75	Rejected
5	It makes me conscious of plagiarism and copyright issues.	334	2.46	1.10	Rejected

The analysis of undergraduate students' responses at Adamawa State University, Mubi, regarding the contribution of information literacy to their academic and self-development reveals mixed outcomes, with three out of five items accepted and two rejected. Students recognized that information literacy aids in navigating academic sources (mean = 2.61), identifying appropriate search tools (mean = 2.50), and supporting continuous learning (mean = 2.43), reflecting partial awareness of its value in fostering independent learning. However, they showed limited proficiency in core skills like identifying, accessing, evaluating, and using information (mean = 2.55) and lacked awareness of ethical aspects such as plagiarism and copyright (mean = 2.46). These findings emphasize the need for targeted training to strengthen both practical and ethical competencies in information use.

Research Question 3: Factors that Facilitate the Development of Information Literacy Skills among Undergraduates of Adamawa State University Mubi.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses to Research Question 3.

S/No	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Prior education.	334	2.16	0.80	Rejected
2	Early access and exposure to technology.	334	1.94	0.92	Rejected
3	Faculty members' promotion of information literacy courses.	334	2.37	0.93	Rejected
4	The institution's policies.	334	2.69	1.20	Accepted
5	Collaboration activities e.g. peer learning and learning style.	334	2.53	0.72	Accepted

The analysis of factors influencing the development of information literacy skills among undergraduates at Adamawa State University, Mubi, reveals that only two of five items were accepted, with students acknowledging the positive role of institutional policies (mean = 2.69) and collaborative activities like peer learning (mean = 2.53). However, they rejected the

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influence of prior education (mean = 2.16), early access to technology (mean = 1.94), and faculty promotion of information literacy (mean = 2.37), indicating a perceived lack of support from foundational education, technology exposure, and instructional efforts. These findings highlight the need for a more comprehensive and integrated strategy involving educators, curriculum developers, and technological tools to embed information literacy across educational levels.

Discussion of the Findings

A total of 377 questionnaires were distributed to undergraduate students at Adamawa State University, Mubi, and all were retrieved; however, only 334 were correctly completed and thus deemed valid for analysis, resulting in an effective response rate of 88.59%.

The analysis of undergraduate students' perception of the term Information Literacy at Adamawa State University, Mubi, reveals a generally positive but somewhat limited understanding of the concept. All five measured items were accepted, with the highest mean score (3.34) assigned to defining information literacy as the ability to read and write only, suggesting a prevailing association of IL with basic literacy skills (Adebayo, 2015). Similarly, students agreed with the broader but still foundational definition of IL as the ability to read, write, and do arithmetic (mean = 2.78), indicating a tendency to conflate IL with traditional academic competencies (Aliyu et al., 2022). However, more advanced elements, such as the ability to access, evaluate, and use information, also scored highly (mean = 3.31), reflecting some awareness of the functional aspects of IL, consistent with trends observed in similar Nigerian universities (Anyim, 2020). Lower mean scores for recognizing the need for information (2.65) and acknowledging sources (2.63) indicate gaps in understanding the proactive and ethical dimensions of IL, pointing to a lack of emphasis on information ethics and responsible scholarship (Okpala, 2020).

When evaluating students' views on how information literacy contributes to academic and self-development, the findings were mixed. Of five measured items, three were accepted, including the role of IL in navigating sources (mean = 2.61), identifying appropriate search tools (mean = 2.50), and supporting continuous learning (mean = 2.43), suggesting that students appreciate IL's practical academic value. However, the rejection of core IL skills such as identifying, accessing, evaluating, and using information (mean = 2.55) implies a lack of confidence in applying these competencies effectively (Mousaion, 2023). Similarly, limited understanding of plagiarism and copyright (mean = 2.46) emphasizes the insufficient instruction in academic ethics and responsible digital use, a trend observed across other Nigerian tertiary institutions (Adebayo, 2015). These outcomes point to the necessity for targeted IL instruction that not only improves functional skills but also instils a strong ethical foundation for academic work.

Regarding factors that facilitate IL development, only two out of five items namely institutional policies (mean = 2.69) and collaborative activities like peer learning (mean =

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2.53) were accepted. This finding affirms the influence of supportive institutional environments and interactive learning in fostering IL competencies (A. C. & Okpala, 2020). In contrast, factors such as prior education (mean = 2.16), early exposure to technology (mean = 1.94), and faculty support (mean = 2.37) were rejected, revealing a perceived lack of influence from foundational learning stages, digital familiarity, and academic guidance. These perceptions may stem from underdeveloped curricula and minimal faculty engagement in IL promotion (Mousaion, 2023). While students exhibit a foundational awareness of IL, their limited understanding of its ethical, evaluative, and strategic dimensions highlights the need for comprehensive integration of IL into academic programs through institutional reforms and innovation.

Conclusion

The study on undergraduate students' perception of information literacy (IL) at Adamawa State University, Mubi, reveals a foundational but incomplete understanding of the concept. While students generally recognize the importance of IL in academic and personal development, their interpretations often centre on basic literacy skills rather than encompassing the broader and more critical competencies such as information evaluation, ethical usage, and strategic retrieval. The mixed results regarding IL's contribution to academic development and the limited impact of prior education and faculty involvement further highlight systemic gaps in IL instruction. These findings highlight the urgent need to expand IL beyond its traditional scope and integrate it more deeply into the university's educational framework to prepare students for the demands of academic research, digital citizenship, and lifelong learning.

Recommendations

1. The university should embed structured IL instruction into all undergraduate programs, covering not just search strategies but also critical thinking, ethical information use, and digital literacy. This could involve collaboration between librarians and faculty members to deliver subject-specific IL content aligned with students' academic needs.

2. Faculty should be equipped through regular training and workshops to promote IL within their teaching. Encouraging lecturers to incorporate IL objectives in their courses will reinforce students' learning and model the responsible and strategic use of information in academic work.

3. The institutions should invest in interactive, student-friendly IL materials such as online tutorials, workshops, and peer-assisted learning schemes. These resources can foster collaboration, boost confidence in applying IL skills, and create a supportive environment for students to develop a deeper understanding and practical competence.

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