# Self-Assessment of Information Literacy Skills by Students of Federal Universities in South-West, Nigeria

**Inazu, Ifaka Queen and Soyemi, Opeyemi Deborah PhD**
ifakainazu@gmail.com
Department of Information Resources Management
Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State
Nigeria

**Abstract**
*The study aims to ascertain the Information Literacy (IL) skills of students in federal universities, South-West, Nigeria. This is to ascertain whether the students have the requisite IL knowledge and skills needed to search, evaluate and ethical use information on social media. The study uses survey design with multistage sampling techniques. Data was collected through the aid of a questionnaire, administered to students of the three federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. Among the 400 copies of the questionnaire distributed, a total of 397 were found usable, giving a 92.55% response rate. The study found that students of the federal universities have a high level of information literacy level on search, evaluation and ethical use of information. Therefore, The study concluded that students in federal universities, South-West, Nigeria have the requisite skills to interact with information thus it was recommended that to sustain their levels in aspects of search, evaluation and ethical use of university administrators and Library and Information Science professionals should integrate IL into courses not just for academic activities but also for social activities.*

**Keywords:** Information Literacy, Evaluation, Search, Ethics, Students, Federal-University, Nigeria,

## Introduction
In the face of changing information ecosystem due to explosion in information and communication technologies has resulted in the exponential growth of information service provision. This demands that individuals have the requisite capabilities to use information to meet their distinctive needs. Students on the other hand, consult online information, particularly the Internet, website and social media for information, research and recreational services. The freedom to publish information without verification mechanisms, particularly on social media may expose students to an overwhelming quality of information. Thus for students to filter, sort and retrieve relevant information, information literacy is inevitable. Li, Chen and Wang (2021) defines information literacy as a set of definable and standardized capabilities that assist individuals in acquiring, assessing, judging and integrating relevant information from varieties of media to take the next step of action. This suggests students' use of information could be associated with information literacy skills.

Observably, inadequate information literacy components of search, evaluation and ethical use of information have hindered students' use of online resources (Bashorun, Bashorun & Akinbowale, 2021). Personal, social, civic and other pursuits of students may be unsuccessful if they cannot use information resources effectively. Information literacy positively impacted students' academic performance (Boh Podgornik, Dolnicar, Sorgo & Bartol, 2016). In contrast, inadequate search skills resulted in students contracting their academic assignments to external agents and engaging in unethical use of information (Nwangwa, Yonlonfoun & Omotere, 2014). This means that poor information literacy skills may affect students' self-direct learning

or research, which is even crucial in circulation of misinformation on social media. Individuals with inadequate information literacy competencies might be susceptible to misinformation.

Information literacy skills are significant for students because of the free access to information online. The navigation and discernment of false information demand information literacy skills amidst misinformation (Apuke, Omar &Tunca, 2022; Igbinovia, Okuonghae & Adebayo, 2020). For instance, on social media, the unethical circulation of incorrect information has been ascribed to inadequate search, evaluation and sharing competencies (Apuke & Omar, 2021; Inazu, Ohwofasa, Omagbon & Adamu, 2019). Students need to be equipped with information literacy for productive use of information. Julien (2016) mentions it advances personal development, academic pursuits, civic participation and future employment. Information literacy is required for performance in a society that deploys information for sustainable developments, especially as businesses and organizations move their transactions online. Students are instructed on certain aspects of information literacy (Ademilua, 2019) while others have positive attitudes towards it which spurs the self-acquisition of information literacy skills (Aghauch, Nkamnebe & Nkamnebe, 2019). Therefore, for students to access, retrieve, evaluate and use information for decision making in various endeavours there is a need for acquisition of information literacy skills.

Past studies on information literacy revealed that students' IL skills are inconsistent among the set of abilities, with emphases on search, evaluation and ethical use of information among Nigeria students (Ajiboye & Tiamiyu, 2018; Joshua & King, 2020; Okocha & Owolabi, 2020), South-West geo-political zone, inclusive (Oyedapo & Akande, 2020). This implies that student information literacy in these aspects may still be unclear, and specific in the context of social media. Further, existing literature either explored information literacy proficiency of postgraduates in Nigeria (Adeleke, Emeahara, 2016; Odede, 2019; Keboh & Baro, 2020;) while previous empirical works examine undergraduates in either a single department or faculty(Ajiboye &Tiamiyu, 2018; Joshua & King 2020; Okeji, Ilika & Baro 2020; Tella, Amadu, Olayniyi & Bamidele, 2021), Thus there is dearth of studies that examine the search, evaluation and ethic use of information in the context of federal university undergraduates in South-West, Nigeria. information is deployed beyond a particular programme and it is also vital for daily use as information increase and misinformation are shared online. Significantly, librarians and information professionals' instructors need to have an insight into students' competencies on social media to develop programmes that can support students' information use beyond academics to every information use concerning the dissemination of inaccurate information. Information literacy competencies are a prerequisite to operate in different information contexts (Julien, 2016). Thus, this study aims to investigate the information literacy skills of federal university students in South–West, Nigeria, in search, evaluation and ethical use of information. The study outline includes specific objectives, literature review, methodology, results, discussion of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

**Statement of the Problem**
Information literacy skills are important for individuals including students because it enables the use of information in different contexts and for survival in a society driven by information and communication technologies (ICTs) which have resulted in an information explosion. This means that students do not just need to access information but construct search techniques, evaluate and use it ethically for their academic and personal activities. However, students struggle in the use of information because of their inadequate information literacy competencies, particularly in areas of search, evaluation and ethical use of information (Adeniran & Onuoha, 2018; Onunoha, Molokwu, 2016; Ajiboye & Tiamyu, 2018; Okocha &

Owolabi, 2020). this has hindered the use of information sources and their effective operation in academics and society, particularly in the use of online resources. This has affected their use of relevant sources and ability to manage the deluge of information which could led to faulty decisions making, non participation in civic discussions and engagement in lifelong learning (Julien, 2016). This implies that students may be cut off from operating effectively in society in the face of evolving information formats. Importantly information literacy is needed for authentication of information. Thus it is essential to investigate these abilities of search, evaluation and ethical use of information, especially as extant literature in Nigeria context focuses on postgraduates or a faculty, department rather than undergraduates in South-West, Nigeria.

## Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study is to examine the information literacy of students in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. determine the level of search skills by students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria.
2. find out the level of information evaluation by students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria.
3. ascertain the level of ethical use of information by students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria.

## Review of Related Literature

### Search Skill

Searching skill is a component of information literate students because it enables the retrieval and easy access to information. Halder, Roy and Chakraborty (2018) describe it as a process that involves seeking and obtaining information. This may involve the application of keywords or vocabularies tailored for specific personal needs and information sources. The ineffective use of electronic resources suggests students lacked search skills. For instance, Nwangwa, Yonlonfoun and Omotere (2014) reported that due to poor research skills, students contracted their academic assignments to external mercenaries, engaged in plagiarism and infringed on copyright law. Tella et al. (2021) also investigated information literacy skills of management science students at the university of Ilorin, Kwara, State, Nigeria. The study found that students were unable to retrieve relevant information because of inability to identify search engines. This means that students may not be able to retrieve information online. Further, Okocha and Owolabi (2020) compared undergraduates of federal, state and private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. The results revealed that irrespective of the university ownership status students had difficulty in the application of Boolean and narrowing topics while searching for information. Students may face challenges in the navigation of the overload information online. As Horton (2013) stated that the value of knowing how to search enables one to avoid the dysfunctions to handle abundant unwanted and irrelevant information. Another study by Joshua and King (2020) affirmed that students from Modibbo Adama University of Technology (MAUtech), Yola, Adamawa, Nigeria, had a low level in searching electronic resources. Another study that collaborated with earlier mentioned studies was that of Toyo (2017) who found that despite students using basic and advanced search operators to search electronic databases, the Internet, search engines and websites; overall their search level was still low. The use of relevant search strategies is crucial for the accessibility and retrieval of information. This implies that inability to apply search strategies may hinder access and retrieval of essential information for research activities and could result in the consultation of wrong resources. Keshavarz, Givi and Vafaeian (2016) study reported that IL self-efficacy is germane for

productive information search on websites and the Internet. The study found that high self-efficacy in search skills could result in lower use or exposure to misinformation. This was confirmed among students who were able to search the internet for reliable sources during the COVID -19 pandemic in Nigeria (Igbinovia, Okuonghae & Adebayo, 2020). Thus, apart from search ability to support students with access and retrieval of relevant information it may reduce their vulnerability to misinformation. In other words, confirmation of information veracity on social media could depend on search skills.

## Evaluation of Information
Evaluation of information means reviewing the research process, comparing and appraising information and data (Bent & Stubblings 2011). Students' consultation of online resources; social media and the Internet for academic and social activities demand evaluation ability. Hisle and Webb (2017) claimed that evaluation competency helps in the identification of information with bias and those with questionable credibility. Kahn and Idris (2019) added that vital skills for distinguishing between true and false information and reduction of misinformation sharing online. This means that students that consult social media and the Internet need competency in the evaluation of information. Illustratively, Onuoha and Molokwu (2016) studied provided an insight into how students of the College of Agriculture, South-West, Nigeria transferred information literacy skills in the use of information during real-life situations. The study found that students' self-perceived levels in evaluation did not match practical performance. Aghauche, Nkamnebe and Nkamnebe (2019) revealed that students utilized heuristic strategies and consulted external sources during interaction and evaluation of information. This suggests that the rationale for deploying personal cues in the assessment of information credibility perhaps is connected with students' inadequate IL instructions or non-existence of IL. As Ajiboye and Tiamiyu (2018) highlighted that university in Nigeria emphasize less evaluation ability and more on identification and accessibility of library resources. This could be the rationale for students exploring self-strategies or using trial and error in the evaluation of online information.

Moreover, Odede (2019) sampled 115 Library and information science postgraduate students from three universities in South-South Geo-political zone, Nigeria, to determine their IL self-efficacy. The study reported that postgraduates' IL self-efficacy varies concerning evaluation, comprehension and interpretation of information. Keboh and Baro (2020) found that among the 806 undergraduate students offering library and information sciences from seven universities in South-East and South-South, Nigeria reported that before deciding to use online information, they ensure to evaluate the sources for accuracy. In a recent study, Bashorun, Bashorun and Akinbowale (2021) studied medical students at the university of Ilorin information literacy found that student evaluation level was high in the use of electronic resources. This implies that evaluation ability among students varies across the information sources. Although the resources evaluated were associated with academic-related electronic resources, the need to ascertain evaluation ability of students in social media is critical because of their use of information in that setting.

## Ethical Use of Information
Individuals need to understand intellectual property and copyright laws concerning the use of information. This is vital because students consult resources in libraries, the Internet and social media. For example, students consult other people's published information for writing assignments and projects which demand they acknowledge authors' ideas through in-text citation and reference. Ubi, Orji and Osang (2020) investigated graduates in the University of Calabar and Cross River University of Technology Calabar campus of the faculty of education.

The study found that ethical use of information was high among the students. A similar result was found by Akhilomen, Oluwatoyin and Osezua (2020) among members of the law faculty, at Ambrose Alli University Ekopma, Edo State, Nigeria. This connotes that individuals can deploy information effectively without violating other individuals' intellectual rights.

On the other hand, Onyeneke and Obichere (2018) study considered the information literacy competency of secondary school students in Owerri, South East, Nigeria, The study found that even though students acknowledged sources used for their assignments in schools, the majority of the students somewhat engaged in plagiarism. It also reported that students did not comply with the right to privacy and altered original information before using it for their academic assignments. The need to emphasize ethical use of information among students is crucial in the accessibility of information online, especially as software is available for the manipulation of information. Similarly, Ajiboye and Tiamiyu (2018) reported that course ICS 102 on information literacy did not impact students' ethical use of information, thus the study recommended more attention be given to intellectual rights and copyright issues in university. This implies that students are not just unable to use information ethically but may result in information theft such as cutting and pasting during assignments. This was affirmed by Afebende and Nna-Etuk (2019) survey of undergraduates from two universities in South-South, Nigeria found that they were unable to paraphrase information which led to the mining of others' ideas. Another result not too different from earlier findings, Okeji, Ilika and Baro (2020) found that the 1,350 undergraduate final year students of library and information science in Nigeria lacked the competencies to correctly cite, reference and paraphrase information thus leading to engagement in plagiarism. This suggests that students' unethical use of information may either be due to attitude, IL instruction or technology enabling manipulation of information.

**Methodology**
This study adopted a survey design with a population of 83,760 undergraduates from three federal universities in South-West, Nigeria.

**Table 1 Population of Students**

| S/N | State | University Name | Population |
|-----|-------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Oyo | University of Ibadan, Ibadan | 20,193 |
| 2 | Lagos | University of Lagos Akoka | 45,930 |
| 3 | Ondo | Federal university of Technology, Akure | 17,637 |
| | | Total | 83,760 |

Source: National University Commission Statistical Digest (2019)

To determine the sample size, the Taro Yamane formula was used for calculation which resulted in 400 respondents. Among the six states that make up the South-West, a random sampling was deployed using the ballot method to pick three states from the South-West, Nigeria that is Lagos, Oyo and Ondo respectively. Then a stratified sampling was done ensuring that each of the selected university are equally represented based on their population.

The calculation formula of Taro Yamane is presented as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$
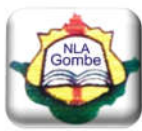
Where: n= sample size required
N = number of people in the population
e = allowable error (%)

n = $\frac{83,760}{1+83,760 (0.05)2}$

n= $\frac{83,760}{1+ 209.4}$

n=398.09 = 400 approximated.
Therefore, 400 students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria consisted of the study sampled size.

The sampling technique of the study was multistage. The first stage used random sampling technique, using the ballot method to pick three states from the six states in the South-West zone. The second stage used a stratified sampling technique to select students from the three federal universities; to ensure that each university is evenly and equally represented in the sampled population (See table 1). The third stage applied convenience sampling to recruit participants for the sample.

The instrument for data collection was a structured closed-end questionnaire titled Information Literacy Skills of Undergraduate with items gotten form Bents and Stubbing, (2011) Al-Aufi, Al-Azri, & Al-Hadi (2017; Oyedapo and Akande, (2020) but with modification made in some items to suit the study. The instrument has four sections; demographic details and search, evaluation and ethical use of information measured with a five-point Likert scale. The instrument was administered to 40 students not included in the study to ascertain the reliability. It was also given to two experienced colleagues for assessment afterwards corrections was made based on their suggestions before administration to the 400 students. A reliability test was conducted with Cronbach's Alpha to ascertain the instrument's internal consistency. The values revealed that search 0.835, evaluation0.808 and ethical use of information 0.799. This implies that the instrument is valid for the study. The data were collected for one month and two weeks with the support of trained research assistants. The 400 copies of questionnaires were returned but 397 were found usable for the study given a 99.25% response rate. Afterwards, the instrument was collated, coded and inputted into the SPSS version 21. The descriptive statistic of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were employed for the analyses.

**Result and Analysis of Respondents**
**Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Details**

| Demographic Details | Items | Frequency (N=397) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Name of University** | University of Lagos | 219 | 55% |
| | University of Ibadan | 96 | 24% |
| | Federal University of Technology Akure | 82 | 21% |
| **Level of Study** | 100 | 91 | 23% |
| | 200 | 81 | 20% |
| | 300 | 79 | 20% |
| | 400 | 99 | 25% |
| | 500 | 46 | 12% |
| | 600 | 1 | 0% |
| **Gender** | Male | 192 | 48% |
| | Female | 205 | 52% |
| **Age** | less than 16 | 32 | 8% |
| | 16-25 | 342 | 86% |
| | 26-30 | 18 | 4% |
| | 31-35 | 1 | 0.3% |
| | 36 and above | 4 | 1% |

Source: Field Survey 2021

The result in Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of respondents according to demographic details. Of the 379 participants more than half 219 (55%) of the respondents were found in the University of Lagos (Unilag) while the least number of respondents was from the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA), 82 (21%). This implies that UNILAG has more respondents than the other two universities because of their population. With regards to gender, a little above half (52%) 205 of the respondents were female and 192 (48%) were male. Based on the level of study, a quarter of the respondents 99 (25%) were in 400level, while the least was 600 levels with a respondent 1 (0.3%). Further, Majority of the respondents were between the ages of 16-25 years while the lowest range was 31-35 years with a respondent 1 (0.3%). This connotes that respondents are young adults.

**Table 3 Level of Search Skills by Respondents**

| Search skills N=397 | To a very high level (%) | To a High level (%) | To a Moderate level (%) | To a low level (%) | To a very low level (%) | Mean (SD) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I can clearly scope (limit) search question in an appropriate language | 112 (28.2) | 126 (31.7) | 105 (26.4) | 38 (9.6) | 16 (4.0) | 3.71 (1.10) |
| I have the ability to define search strategy by using appropriate keywords | 120 (30.2) | 128 (32.2) | 95 (23.9) | 35 (8.8) | 19 (4.8) | 3.74 (1.12) |
| I have the ability to select the appropriate search tools | 108 (27.2) | 131 (33.0) | 103 (25.9) | 37 (9.3) | 18 (4.5) | 3.69 (1.10) |
| I have the ability to constructs complex searches across a range of digital resources | 108 (27.2) | 129 (32.5) | 98 (24.7) | 42 (10.6) | 20 (5.0) | 3.66 (1.13) |
| I have the ability to use advanced search techniques such as Boolean | 120 (30.2) | 97 (24.4) | 107 (27.0) | 54 (13.6) | 19 (4.8) | 3.62 (1.18) |
| I can use the hashtag tools to search information on social media | 116 (29.2) | 127 (32.0) | 95 (23.9) | 42 (10.6) | 17 (4.3) | 3.71 (1.12) |
| | (34.3) | (25.7) | (20.7) | (12.3) | (7.1) | (1.26) |
| **Overall mean** | **3.69** | | | | | |

Source: Field Survey, 2021/2022
Decision Rule: If mean falls between 1.0-1.49 = To a very low level; 1.50-2.49 = To a low level; 2.5-3.49 = To a moderate level; 3.5-4.49 = To a high level; 4.5-5.0 = To a very high level.

Table 3 depicts the search level of the respondents. Based on the descriptive analysis, respondents overall ability to construct search had a mean score of 3.69 which was to a high level on a scale of five. With regards to a specific level, the ability to define search strategy by using appropriate keywords was (M=3.74) had the highest score; followed by scoping (limit) search questions in an appropriate language, next was the use of hashtag tools to search information on social media (M=3.71) then, to select the appropriate search tools(M=3.69), and to constructs complex searches across a range of digital resources was (M=3.66) with the least being able to use advanced search techniques such as Boolean with (M=3.62). This implies that federal university students can search for online information but still face challenges in the use of advanced search terms.

**Table 4 Evaluation Level of Respondents**

| Evaluation of Information N=397 | To a very high level (%) | To a High level (%) | To a Moderate level (%) | To a low level (%) | To a very low level (%) | Mean (SD) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have the ability to assess credibility of information quality on social media. | 114 (28.7) | 120 (30.2) | 109 (27.5) | 39 (9.8) | 15 (3.8) | 3.70 (1.10) |
| I can read to critically identify the point of information on social media. | 112 (28.2) | 126 (31.7) | 108 (27.2) | 32 (8.1) | 19 (4.8) | 3.71 (1.11) |
| I can critically appraise of my own findings before making use of it on social media. | 118 (29.7) | 126 (31.7) | 110 (27.7) | 35 (8.8) | 8 (2.0) | 3.78 (1.03) |
| I can distinguish between a true information and a rumour in social media. | 119 (30.0) | 111 (28.0) | 103 (25.9) | 43 (10.8) | 21 (5.3) | 3.66 (1.17) |
| I can consult other knowledgeable people about credibility of information before making a decision to use it. | 120 (30.2) | 109 (27.5) | 117 (29.5) | 35 (8.8) | 16 (4.0) | 3.71 (1.11) |
| I hesitate to use information I receive on social media before checking credibility. | 116 (29.2) | 121 (30.5) | 92 (23.2) | 49 (12.3) | 19 (4.8) | 3.67 (1.16) |
| **Overall Mean** | **3.70** | | | | | |

Source: Field Survey, 2021/2022

Decision Rule: If mean falls between 1.0-1.49 = To a very low level; 1.50-2.49 = To a low level; 2.5-3.49 = To a moderate level; 3.5-4.49 = To a high level; 4.5-5.0 = To a very high level.

Table 4 shows the respondents' ability to evaluate information which was analyzed with descriptive statistics with an overall (Mean= 3.70) on a scale of five. The respondents highest level in the evaluation was in aspects of critical appraise of my findings before making use of it on social media (M=3.78); followed by both consult of other knowledgeable people about the credibility of information before making a decision to use it and read to critically identify the points s of information on social media mean scores (M=3.71) next was ability to assess credibility of information quality on social media (M=3.70); then I hesitate to use information I receive on social media before checking credibility (M=3.67) and finally distinguishing between a true information and a rumor in social media (M=3.66). This implies that students of federal university South-West, Nigeria engage in objective evaluation of information before use on social media.

**Table 5 Respondents' Level of Ethical Use of Information**

| Ethical use of information N=379 | To a very high level (%) | To a High level (%) | To a Moderate level (%) | To a low level (%) | To a very low level (%) | Mean (SD) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I can demonstrate awareness of issues relating to rights of others on social media | 111 (28.0) | 123 (31.0) | 113 (28.5) | 39 (9.8) | 11 (2.8) | 3.72 (1.06) |
| I indicate the reference to information when I make a decision to participate with the information on social media | 117 (29.5) | 124 (31.2) | 87 (21.9) | 46 (11.6) | 23 (5.8) | 3.67 (1.18) |
| I can acknowledge original copyrighted screenshot information on social media | 102 (25.7) | 100 (25.2) | 101 (25.4) | 58 (14.6) | 36 (9.1) | 3.44 (1.27) |
| I have adequate knowledge of ethical issues associated with information use | 104 (26.2) | 112 (28.2) | 110 (27.7) | 50 (12.6) | 21 (5.3) | 3.57 (1.16) |
| I can reference original source of manipulated information on social media | 99 (24.9) | 127 (32.0) | 93 (23.4) | 46 (11.6) | 32 (8.1) | 3.54 (1.21) |
| I can demonstrate awareness of issues relating to plagiarism on social media | 114 (28.7) | 98 (24.7) | 104 (26.2) | 60 (15.1) | 21 (5.3) | 3.56 (1.20) |
| **Overall Mean** | **3.58** | | | | | |

Source: Field Survey, 2021/2022

Decision Rule: If mean falls between 1.0-1.49 = To a very low level; 1.50-2.49 = To a low level; 2.5-3.49 = To a moderate level; 3.5-4.49 = To a high level; 4.5-5.0 = To a very high level.

The result of Table 5 data represents the ethical use of information of students in federal university South-West, Nigeria. The respondents have a high level ability in ethical use of information with an overall mean score of 3.58 in a scale of five. On a specific statement; I can demonstrate awareness of issues relating to rights of others on social media had (M=3.72), followed by ability to indicate reference to information when I make a decision to participate with that information in social media (M=3.67);next was I have adequate knowledge of ethical issues associated with information use (M-3.57), then, I can also demonstrate awareness of issues relating to plagiarism (M=3.56); and I can reference original source of manipulated information on social media(M=3.54) while the least was I do not share copyrighted screenshot information on social media without acknowledgement of original sources (M-3.44), This suggests that students in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria do not just interact with other people's ideas but adhere ethical to copyright laws and plagiarism as well as issues of privacy.

**Discussion of Findings**
The study ascertains the information literacy skills of federal university students South-West, Nigeria specifically in search, evaluation and ethical use of information. On the overall, the information literacy skills in the three aspects were highly among the students of the federal university South-West, Nigeria. This implies that students can interact with use formation for their needs, construct search ability although relating to search skill, the finding disagrees with Toyo, (2017); Okocha and Owolabi, (2020); Kings and Joshua, (2020); findings that students were unable to use online information because of their low level of search ability. Although. It assumed that students search for different sources that demand distinctive use of search strategies.. The construct of proper search terms helps to navigate abundant information online midst of misinformation (Fosnacht, 2017). This implies that students are not overwhelmed with

information as it is easier for them to narrow and filter the information using relevant tools and strategies.

Evaluation is significant in the information society where individuals freely publish online creating a deluge of information and misinformation. This study results on evaluation ability contradicts, Onuoha and Molokwu (2016) finding who observed that students used personal cues for evaluation of information. Although this study deployed self-report rather than assessment of the student abilities thus could not establish in practical terms determine their actual abilities in evaluation of information. However, the findings of the study consent to those of Keboh and Baro (2020) and Bashorun, Bashorun and Akinbowale (2021) found that students have a high level of information evaluation. This signifies that students of the federal universities in South-West, Nigeria can evaluate information, resulting in a possible reduction in the use of incorrect information. For the ability to ethically use information this study found that students' level was high which contradict Ajiboye and Tiamyu (2018); Onyeneke and Obichere (2018); Afebende and Nna-Etuk (2019) findings that students engaged in intellectual theft and claimed people's ideas as their own. This study aligns with the findings of keboh and Baro (2020) that students used information ethically. Even though some social media may differ somewhat in the style of writing compared to academic settings. For instance, social media may use links to refer to original work or published information consulted instead of reference lists in some circumstances. It is essential to respect copyright laws and avoid plagiarism. This study establishes that students of the three federal universities understand and value ethical use of information.

**Conclusion**
The place of information is essential for students' academic, social and civic responsibilities. The access to information to meet these needs depends on the abilities of search, evaluation and ethical use of information regardless of context. The place of information literacy skills, especially regarding search, evaluation and ethical use of information is essential in the face of the information explosion as well as misinformation. The study found that students in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria had high literacy skills in three components, however to sustain it university authorities and librarians or information professionals has to continue to expand the information literacy instruction content to embrace other information sources apart from the academic ones because students are not consuming other people's information but also are producing their personal ideas online. Importantly, information literacy skills are not just   skills that support academic activities but also are functional skills for lifelong learning.

**Recommendation of the Study**
Information literacy skills were high therefore there is a need to sustain these skills among the students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. University administrators and specific librarians and information scientists should organise training for students or ensure that IL is incorporated in their course contents.

**References**
Adeleke, D. S., & Emeahara, E. N. (2016).Relationship between information literacy and use of electronic information resources by postgraduate students of the university of Ibadan. *Library Philosophy & Practice*.

Ademilua, S. O. (2019). A survey of information literacy skills among undergraduates of adeyemi college of education, Ondo, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1-22.

Afebende, G. B., & Nna-Etuk, G. M. (2019).Ethical issues in information use and the exploitation of library resources by undergraduate students in federal universities in South-South zone, Nigeria. *International Journal of Information Management Sciences*, *3*(1), 62-75.

Ajiboye, O. O., & Tiamiyu, M. A. (2018). Effectiveness assessment of an information literacy course at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. *Journal of Information Science, Systems and Technology*, *2*(1), 19-33.

Akhilomen, D. L., Oluwatoyin, O. O., & Osezua, B. E. (2020). Information Literacy Skills, information ethics observance and use of electronic databases by law lecturers of ambrose alli university. *Library and Information Science Digest*, *13*, 43-59.

Al-Aufi, A. S., Al-Azri, H. M., & Al-Hadi, N. A. (2017).Perceptions of information literacy skills among undergraduate students in the social media environment. *International Information & Library Review*, *49*(3), 163-175.

Bashorun, M. T., Bashorun, R. B., &Akinbowale, A. T. (2021). Evaluating information literacy competence in the use of electronic resources among medical students in university of Ilorin, Nigeria. *University of Dar es Salaam Library Journal*, *16*(1), 131-148.

Bent, M., & Stubbings, R. (2011). The SCONUL seven pillars of information literacy: Core model.

Boh Podgornik, B., Dolničar, D., Šorgo, A., & Bartol, T. (2016).Development, testing, and validation of an information literacy test (ILT) for higher education. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, *67*(10), 2420-2436.

Fosnacht, K. (2017). Information Literacy's Influence on Undergraduates' Learning and Development: Results from a Large Multi-institutional Study. 272–287.

Hisle, D. & Webb, K. (2017). Information literacy concepts: An open educational resources, ECU Joyner library,1-16, https://libguides.ecu.edu/libinstruction.

Igbinovia, M.O., Adegboyega, S. & Adebayo, S. A. (2020). Information literacy competence in curtailing fake news about the COVID-19 pandemic among undergraduates in Nigeria. *Reference Services Review*, DOI.10.1108/RSR-06-2020-0037 Ref Serv Rev 2020; 49(1): 3–18.

Inazu, I. Q., Ohwofasa, F., Omagbon, A. B., & Adamu, D. B. (2019). Information literacy skills and social media use in sharing misinformation among undergraduate students. *Hallmark, Journal of Management and Social Sciences,* 1(3).

Joshua, D., & King, L. (2020). The utilization of e-resources at Modibbo Adama University of Technology ( MAUTech ), Yola, Adamawa State, *Nigeria. International Journal of Knowledge Content Development & Technology, 10*(1), 47–70.

Julien, H. (2016). Beyond the hyperbole: Information literacy reconsidered. *Communications in Information Literacy, 1*0(2), 124–131. https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2016.10.2.28

Keboh, T., & Baro, E. E. (2020).Library and Information Science (LIS) Students Competency in Evaluating Information and Information Resources in Universities in Nigeria. *UNIZIK Journal of Research in Library and Information Science*, *5*(1), 17-41.

Keshavarz, H., EsmaeiliGivi, M., &Vafaeian, A. (2016). Students' sense of self-efficacy in searching information from the Web: A PLS approach. *Webology*, *13*(2), 16-31.

Khan, M. L., & Idris, I. K. (2019). Recognise misinformation and verify before sharing: a reasoned action and information literacy perspective. *Behaviour& Information Technology, 0*(0), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2019.1578828

Li, Y., Chen, Y., & Wang, Q. (2021). Evolution and diffusion of information literacy topics. *Scientometrics*, *126*(5), 4195-4224.

Nwangwa, K. C. K., Yonlonfoun, E., & Omotere, T. (2014). Undergraduates and their use of social media: assessing influence on research skills. 2(6), 446–453.

Nwangwa, K. C., Yonlonfoun, E., &Omotere, T. (2014). Undergraduates and their use of social media: assessing influence on research skills. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, *2*(6), 446-453.

Odede, I. R. (2019). A comparative analysis of information literacy self-efficacy skills of postgraduate students in library schools in South-South. *Philosophy and Practice,* January.

Okeji, C. C., Ilika, O. M., & Baro, E. E. (2020). Assessment of information literacy skills: A survey of final year undergraduates of library and information science in Nigerian universities. *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication*.

Okocha, F. & Owolabi, S. (2020).International information & library review web information seeking behavior of undergraduate students in Kwara State Nigeria web information seeking behavior of undergraduate student. *International Information & Library Review, 0*(0), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1080/10572317.2020.1729298

Onuoha, U. D., & Molokwu, E. U. (2016).Information literacy competence of students in colleges of agriculture, South-West, Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology*, *9*(1), 153-161.

Onyeneke, C. O., & Obichere, C. (2017, August, 22-23).Information Literacy Competency of Secondary School Students of Owerri West, South East, Nigeria. Satellite Meeting: Africa Section Libraries as Centers of Community Engagements for Development Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. http://ifla-test.eprints-hosting.org/id/eprint/2315/1/s01-2018-onyeneke-en.pdf

Oyedapo, R. O., Akande, D., & Oyeniyi, S. (2021). Influence of self-concept on undergraduates' computer literacy skills in selected federal universities in southwestern Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal).* 5035. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/5035

SCONUL (2011). The SCONUL Seven pillars of information literacy. Core model for higher education. Literacy, April, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1108/00907320610716486
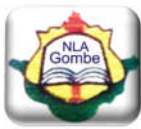
Tella, A., Amadu, R., Olaniyi, O., & Bamidele, S. (2021). assessment of information literacy competency of management science students at the university of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. *ÜniversiteAraştırmalarıDergisi*, *4*(3), 299-308.

Toyo, O. D. (2017). Undergraduates' information literacy skills and the use of electronic resources in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. *International Journal of Education and Evaluation*, *3*(1), 27-36.

Ubi, I. O., Orji, E. I., & Osang, A. W. (2020).Knowledge and practice of ethical consideration for quality of research skills among graduate students of universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, *11*(5), 55-55.