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THE IMPACT OF INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS ON STUDENTS' STUDY HABITS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study examined the impact of information literacy skills on students' study habits in Nigeria. The main objectives of the study was to investigate the vital role of information literacy skills in shaping students' study habits, particularly in a diverse and developing background like Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Data was collected through a self- structured questionnaire. The population was made up of 200 undergraduate students of Tai-Solarin University of Education. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean, standard deviation, t-test for independent sample mean, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The finding of the study revealed that undergraduate students do not vary in their information literacy skills and study habits based on their course selection. Also the result indicated that female students had better study habits than their male counterpart. In conclusion, proper utilization of literacy information increases students study habits, which invariably assist their learning achievement. It was recommended that teachers and parents should guide students on how to develop good study habits; thereby enhancing their academic performance. Parents, teachers and other stakeholders in education should encourage students to maintain good information literacy and study habits so that their academic performance can be positively affected.

Keywords: Impact, Information, Literacy Skills, Student, Study Habits

Introduction

At all levels of education, there is remarkable pressure on learners to earn good grades as academic achievement is assumed to possess projecting value and is used as a prerequisite for progress through the various stages of education. Information literacy skills and study habits are intended to elicit and guide one's cognitive process during learning. If a student wants to show high academic achievement, first of all, he or she must know his or her own self that is the self-concept. Knowing one's own strengths and weaknesses and developing good study habits definitely yields best results.

The 21st century, characterized by an explosion of information has created both opportunities and challenges in all human endeavours including education (Kalu and Ochepa, 2021). The ability to locate, evaluate and use information has become an essential skill required for survival in the contemporary world (Chisholm, 2015). This ability is known as information literacy, and is crucial for achieving academic success, performing effectively in the workplace, and actively engaging in society as informed and capable citizens (Bulent, Hakan, and Aydin, 2015). The vital role of information literacy skills in shaping students' study habits, particularly in a diverse and developing context like Nigeria, cannot be overemphasized. Information literacy skills equip students with essential critical thinking abilities, enabling them to become independent, lifelong learners (Alazie et al., 2019); (Quadri and Alasa, 2022). Thus, it empowers them to transfer knowledge effectively from familiar contexts to new, unfamiliar situations (Ranaweera, 2008).

In an era of information overload, it is pertinent that students cannot acquire all the knowledge they need within the four walls of the classroom (Feroz et al., 2021). Yet many Nigerian students face challenges in harnessing their information literacy skills, leading to poor study habits that hinder their academic growth (Quadri and Quadri, 2015; Chukwusa, 2021). Higher levels of information literacy skills are positively associated with students' academic performance and overall learning outcomes (Ngozi, 2024). By fostering information literacy, students gain the tools to learn and adapt continuously throughout their lives.

This paper argues that developing and harnessing information literacy skills among Nigerian students is critical for improving their study habits, enhancing academic performance, and better preparing them to meet the demands of the knowledge-driven economy of the 21st century.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are to examine the impact of information literacy skills on students' study habits in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- Examine he vital role of information literacy skills in shaping students' study habits.
- Investigate undergraduate students study habits.
- Evaluate factors affecting undergraduate students' study habits.
- Determine the study skills undergraduate students possess.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in undergraduate students' information literacy skills and study habits based on course selection.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in undergraduate students' study habits based on gender.

The Concept of Information Literacy

Information literacy was first used by Paul Zurkowski when referring to individuals with expertise in the information field as 'educated professionals who aim to utilize information resources effectively in their workplace' (Zurkowski, 1974). The conceptual basis for information literacy was established by the American Library Association (ALA), which stated that information literacy requires individuals to recognize the need for information, locate it, evaluate it, and use it effectively. Those who are information literate have mastered learning how to learn (American Library Association, 1989).

From Paul Zurkowski's definition in 1974 to the 1989 definition by the ALA, the concept of information literacy has evolved, with varying interpretations rooted in information retrieval methods, serving as the foundation for techniques in intellectual work (Landøy et al., 2019). For instance, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) (2005) posits that information literacy is central to lifelong learning, equipping individuals from all walks of life to efficiently seek, evaluate, use, and create information to achieve their personal, social, professional, and educational objectives. It is a fundamental human right in the digital age, fostering social inclusion across nations (IFLA, 2005). According to the American Library Association (2017), information literacy is a set of skills enabling individuals to identify when information is needed and effectively locate, evaluate, and utilize the required information. Expanding this definition, Secker (2018) defined information literacy as the ability to think critically and make well-informed judgments about the information people encounter and use. The author further postulates that information literacy empowers individuals to form and express informed opinions, enabling active

and meaningful social participation (Secker, 2018). Regardless of how information literacy is defined, it is widely agreed that an information-literate individual should demonstrate the following abilities: Recognize the need for information, understand how to address information gaps, develop strategies to locate information, locate and access information, compare and evaluate information from different sources, organize, apply, and communicate information and synthesize information to create new knowledge (Landøy et al., 2019)

The Importance of Information Literacy Skills to Students

Information literacy has evolved to address challenges such as information overload resulting from rapid advancements in digital technologies. It meets the demands of the information society by fostering competent information consumers and supports the knowledge economy by equipping students with the responsiveness and expertise needed to stay informed and adapt effectively. Thus, serving as life skills that empower them to thrive in an information-rich world. The importance of information literacy skills to students can be highlighted as follows:

Enhances academic performance: Information literacy enhances students' ability to locate, evaluate, and apply relevant information effectively to improve their academic engagement and achieve better academic outcomes.

It fosters intellectual growth and independent thinking. Information literacy allows students to analyze information critically and assess its credibility to make an informed decision, improving their critical thinking skills and helping them to grow intellectually.

It turns students into lifelong learners: with the rapid way in which information is created in today's world, information literacy helps students to adapt and allows them to continuously acquire and apply new information throughout their lives.

Improves students' digital literacy skills: digital technology has permeated human activities. Information literacy allows students to navigate online resources, use digital tools effectively and avoid misinformation.

It turns students into informed citizens: information literacy empowers students to actively participate in society by critically engaging with information,

It helps them to efficiently utilize resources: information literacy helps students save time by identifying the most appropriate sources for their needs and using them effectively.

The Concept of Study Habits

Study habits refer to deliberate and structured patterns of study that students adopt consistently to deepen their understanding of academic subjects and achieve success in examinations (Adejumo, 2018). Egbujuo and Grace (2019) explain that study habits emerge through routine practices and repetition, involving a systematic approach to acquiring knowledge and understanding principles, with an emphasis on retention and application.

In a broader sense, study habits represent the extent to which students engage in consistent and effective study practices, including reviewing materials in a conducive environment (Credé and Kuncel, 2008). Bashir and Mattoo (2012) define study habits as intentional and well-organized patterns of studying that aid in understanding academic content and succeeding in examinations. Similarly, Rabia et al. (2017) describe study habits as encompassing all study routines, such as the frequency of study sessions, material review, self-testing, concept rehearsal, and ensuring an environment conducive to learning.

Eremie and Achi (2020) categorize study habits into three sub-components:
Study Attitude: Refers to a learner's mental readiness, shaped by prior experiences, which influences their responses to learning situations.

Study Method: Involves approaches to completing study tasks, including assignments, homework, and personal notes, as well as decisions to study independently or collaboratively.

Study Skill: Pertains to identifying optimal study times, allocating sufficient hours for learning, and achieving academic excellence.

Generally, study habits reflect a student's personality, revealing their learning character and approach to acquiring knowledge (Ramesh and Murthy, 2020). They serve as both a means and an outcome of the learning process, pivotal in a student's academic journey. According to John et al. (2020), a student's success or failure often hinges on their study habits. While studying requires consistent practice, its effectiveness varies; some students may study extensively with minimal results, while others achieve significant success with less effort. Ultimately, success depends not only on ability but also on the efficiency of study habits (Tagud and Valle, 2023).

Information Literacy Skills and Study Habits Nexus

Students must develop proficiency in information literacy, as these skills have far-reaching implications for various aspects of student life (Menggo et al., 2021). Numerous studies (Matteson, 2014; Pinto and Fernández-Pascual, 2017; Hasyim, 2018; Lei et al., 2021; Jamilah et al., 2024) demonstrates that information literacy competencies significantly enhance students' language skill acquisition, boost learning motivation, transform learning habits, and foster personal effort in developing information literacy. Although scientific studies have not established the relationship between students' information literacy competencies and their study habits, some research suggests that these competencies can influence study habits, independent learning practices, initiative, and enthusiasm (Jumino, 2018). Information literacy skills enable students to refine their thinking processes to meet desired learning outcomes. Students with well-developed information literacy competencies are more likely to feel inspired, confident, and adaptable in their learning strategies and habits, which positively contribute to their academic performance (Menggo et al., 2021).

Information literacy competency influences students' study habits. A habit is formed through the repeated performance of an activity, eventually becoming precise and automatic. Carefully accessing information, understanding the primary functions of various computer devices, and utilizing software applications for learning significantly enhance students' knowledge. Study habits are closely linked to an individual's learning skills, as well-developed study skills naturally shape effective study habits, ultimately supporting optimal academic performance (Menggo et al., 2021). In other words, information literacy skills and students' study are intrinsically linked. Information literacy serves as a foundational element that helps students to cultivate effective and sustainable learning practices. Thus, the following can be established as the connection between information literacy and study habits:

Information sourcing made easier: students with adequate information literacy skills have the capacity to promptly identify their information needs and locate relevant learning resources faster. This fosters a productive study habit by minimizing time wasted on searching for information and helps the students to focus more on studying and understanding the materials.

Critical evaluation of information sources and application of knowledge: students with adequate information literacy skills tend to access the credibility, relevance, and accuracy of the information they encounter better. This ensures they rely only on quality sources that enhance deeper engagement with academic

content and a stronger understanding of complex concepts. Through this, the quality and focus of students' study sessions are enhanced.

Enhancing students' self-directedness and making them lifelong learners: information literacy skills help students to become self-directed learners. It helps them to find and utilize information independently, thus reducing their over-reliance on teachers/ lecturers and physical textbooks. Through this, they can explore diverse perspectives and develop a habit of continuous learning that goes beyond formal education.

Enhances time management skills and improves study efficiency: students with adequate information literacy waste no time using critical resources to aid their learning. They spend less time on irrelevant or reluctant learning materials. This efficiency aids their time management skills and allows them to dedicate more energy to synthesizing and understanding information, leading to more effective study habits.

Builds student's confidence in learning: based on the ability to easily locate, evaluate and use information, students become more likely to take ownership of their learning processes more seriously, leading to consistent study habits.

All these point to the fact that by integrating information literacy into educational practices, students can achieve better academic outcomes and develop essential skills for lifelong learning.

Issues Related to Students' Information Literacy Skills and Their Impact on Study Habits

Several issues have been identified by scholars regarding students' information literacy skills and they affect their approach and engagement with their study habits. Below are some key issues and their impact on students' study habits.

Low level of awareness about information literacy: students are mostly unaware of the concept of information literacy and its importance in their academic and personal development. This often affects their ability to develop structured study habits and deeper engagement with learning materials.

Low level of digital skills: some students despite living in an era where digital tools and resources have become ubiquitous, lack require digital skills to navigate digital platforms which are critical for accessing academic resources. This limits

their access to diverse information sources, narrowing their study scope and reinforcing outdated study habits.

Socio-economic and technological barriers: students in Nigeria have limited access to technological devices and the Internet. This limits their ability to develop their information literacy skills and this is more prominent among students in remote communities. Thus, there are unequal opportunities for students in the country to acquire and apply information literacy, leading to inconsistent study habits and academic disparities.

Difficulty in adapting learning strategies: Due to inadequate information literacy skills among students, they may find it difficult to easily adapt their learning strategies to new academic demands or environments. This limits their capacity to explore diverse study methods that may enhance their growth.

Low level of critical thinking skills among the students: critical thinking skills are a major component of information literacy. Students who cannot critically evaluate and synthesize information may lack the capacity to engage deeply with their study materials, which may discourage independent learning emphasized by information literacy.

Research Methodology

The researcher adopted the descriptive survey design. This research design permits the researcher to describe the relationship between study habit and academic performance of student. Descriptive survey design enables the researcher to investigate the events or things that existed at the time the research was conducted. The sample of this study consisted of 200 undergraduate students from five departments. In each sampled department, 40 students were selected to take part as respondents. The simple random sampling technique using the ballot procedure was used in the selection in the study.

The instrument used in generating data for this study is a self-designed questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on the impact of Information Literacy Skills on Students Study Habits. It is made up of four sections (A, B, and C). Section 'A' covers the demographic information of the respondents. Section 'B' contains seven items designed to determine students' study habits. Section 'C' contains ten items designed to ascertain information literacy of students'. The questionnaire was designed in Likert-type scales with four options of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire is scaled thus for positively worded items: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree

= 1. The reverse is the case for negatively worded items. A scale of 2.5 (the average of the scale) was set as the decision marker. When the mean of the responses to an item is greater than or equal to 2.5, the item is accepted and vice versa. The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach alpha and it yielded a reliability coefficient of .87 which was deemed suitable for the study. Copies of the questionnaire were administered personally by the researcher to the respondents. The collection of the instrument was on-the-spot. For the data analysis descriptive and inferential statistics were used.

Results

Table 1: ANOVA of Students' Information Literacy Skills and Study Habits and Subject Selection

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.826	2	.28	.23	.90
Within Groups	284.20	197			
Total	284. 84	199			

Table 1 shows that p (.90) > 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that students do not vary in their information literacy skills and study habits based on their course selection.

Table 2: t-test on Undergraduate Students' Study Habits and Gender

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	t-Cal.	t-Critical	Sig (2 - tailed)	Decision
Male	106	8.04	1.09	198	.19	1.96	.88	N.S
Female	94	8.09	1.14					

Table 2 shows that p (.88) > 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that students do not vary in their study habits based on gender. However, the mean for the female students is higher than that for the males which indicate

that female students have better study habits although the difference is not significant.

Discussion of Findings

For the discussion of findings, result for hypothesis one indicated that students do not vary in their information literacy skills and study habits based on their course selection. In other words, regardless of their department, there was no difference in their study habits. This result is contrary to the findings of Kumar (2017), Lalzawmliana and Lalnunfeli (2021) and Rana and Deepika (2020) studies in which Science students reported better study habits than Arts students. A possible reason for this result may be because generally, the students' study habits level was high across all subject groups.

Moreover, the result for hypothesis two indicated no gender difference in undergraduate students' study habits. Although the female students had a higher mean than the males, the difference was not significant. This result is in line with the study of Aransi (2020), Ugwuja (2007) whose studies found no significant gender differences in students' study habits. However, the result contradicts those of Ehiozuwa and Anaso (2013) and Ossai (2012) who all reported a significant gender difference in students' study habits.

Conclusion

This paper presents the intrinsic nexus between information literacy and study habits. The paper highlights that students with adequate information literacy have a better chance of navigating academic challenges with confidence, independence and efficiency compared with students who lack it. However, despite the potential of information literacy in fostering study habits that can enhance students'' academic performance and prepare them for lifelong learning, several issues persist including limited awareness, socio-economic barriers and inadequate digital skills among Nigerian students. These challenges hinder the development of effective study habits, thus, leading to reduced academic engagement and performance. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach, including incorporating information literacy training into students' academic curricula, enhancing access to digital resources and providing teachers and lecturers with training that helps them model these essential skills. Nigerian students can cultivate good study habits that support not only their academic excellence but also foster critical thinking, adaptability and informed citizenship when information literacy is prioritized as the foundational element of Nigerian education.

The Way Forward

Developing information literacy skills among Nigerian students goes beyond merely an academic necessity, it's a national imperative to unlock students' full potential and make them become independent learners and critical thinkers. It therefore becomes essential to address some issues affecting students' ability to acquire and effectively use information literacy skills to enhance their study habits. This will help to foster effective study habits and strategies, improve academic performance and prepare students to adapt well in an information-driven world. The following are suggested as a way to address the issues raised:

- Concerted eConcerted efforts must be made to introduce or incorporate information literacy training into students' academic curricula. This will help them to acquire basic skills that may help them to locate, evaluate and use information effectively.
- Educational stakeholders must invest in infrastructural facilities that can enhance students' access to digital and physical resources such as libraries, internet connectivity, and affordable or subsidized digital devices that can bridge technological and socio-economic gaps among the students.
- A rigorous awareness campaign should be embarked upon to enlighten students about the importance of information literacy in their academic success and personal development in the 21st-century knowledge-driven economy.
- Teachers and lecturers should be adequately trained to teach and model information literacy.
- Academics can use group-based project method to develop student's critical thinking and information literacy skills.

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