

## **Assessment of the Information Literacy Skills among the Undergraduate Students of University of Ilesa, Ilesa Osun State, Nigeria**

**BY**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined the information literacy skills of undergraduate students at the University of Ilesa, Osun State, Nigeria, focusing on library usage patterns, levels of information and computer literacy, training needs, and satisfaction with existing library information literacy programmes. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted. The study population comprised 5,763 undergraduate students across nine faculties during the 2024/2025 academic session. Using a stratified random sampling technique, 400 students were selected to ensure proportional representation. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The findings revealed a high level of library engagement among students, with most respondents using the library daily or weekly. Overall, undergraduate students demonstrated high information literacy skills, particularly in identifying information needs, using search engines, evaluating information sources, and citing references. However, a significant weakness was observed in students' ability to use the library catalogue system independently. In addition, respondents exhibited high computer literacy skills, especially in basic computer operations and the use of word processing and presentation software. Despite these competencies, students expressed strong needs for further training in key areas, notably plagiarism avoidance, database searching, and effective use of the library catalogue. Regarding satisfaction, students were generally satisfied with the library's information literacy programmes and staff support, but dissatisfaction was reported concerning the availability of training materials. The study concludes that while undergraduates at the University of Ilesa actively use the library and possess relatively high information and computer literacy skills, targeted training and improved instructional resources are necessary to address identified skill gaps and enhance overall information literacy outcomes.*

**Keywords:** Computer literacy, Information literacy, Information literacy training, Library use.

### **Introduction.**

The capacity to read and write is considered to be a prerequisite for literacy. The definition of the term has been broadened to encompass the use of language and information from several sources in a variety of formats, including databases, websites, printed text, graphics, and CD-ROMs.

A person who is information literate must understand when and why information is needed, as well as how to locate it, use all of these resources, and critically evaluate the information that is already available. According to Afnan (2024), at every stage of Bloom's Taxonomy; "remembering, comprehending, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating", students must be

able to deal with information efficiently. Traditional skills like reading, writing, and research are all part of information literacy, but new approaches to reading and writing have also brought forth new abilities. It is undeniable according to Ullah and Ameen (2014) that information literacy is essential for learners to succeed in educational institutions in this day and age.

Sharma and Upadhyay (2021) defined Information literacy (IL) as the ability to find, access, evaluate, and use information from a variety of sources in an ethical manner to meet one's information need. It entails recognising the need for information, being aware of where and how to obtain it, evaluating its quality critically, and using it suitably in a variety of settings, including academic, professional, and personal ones. Information literacy extends beyond simply being able to look up information online or in a book. It entails having the capacity to assess the veracity and accuracy of the information gathered as well as applying it when necessary (Hamizak & Uzir 2024).

The expansion of information sources and output at the start of the twenty-first century has led to the term "information age." The fact that students cannot acquire what they need to know in their subject of study in a few years of university has become more obvious. Students acquire the essential abilities needed to become self-sufficient lifelong learners through information literacy.

Higher institutions have introduced "Use of Library Course" as a strategy to help students develop their Information Literacy skills and abilities. Information literacy is crucial for a successful academic career, claim (Oakleaf & Owen 2010). According to Horton (2008), in the digital age and the global information society of the twenty-first century, it is one of the skills that promote individuals to perform in a productive and competitive manner. The importance of information literacy education, according to Abbas (2014), is in its capacity to promote in-depth learning as opposed to surface-level learning and to change reliant learners into autonomous, self-directed, lifelong learners. The ability to find, access, use information, manage information, and make key decisions on information resources are all examples of information literacy skills. A far broader definition of information literacy skills includes aptitudes for communication, synthesis, critical thinking, and research techniques. As a result, the concept's definition and comprehension appear to be connected to the definition and perception of competence and skills. Undergraduate students who are not groomed have poor proficiency in determining the credibility of sources and identifying the information's source (Naik & Padmini 2014).

Information literacy includes much more than just being able to use a computer, even though it includes having some basic computer abilities. According to Amalahu, Oluwasina, and Laoye (2009), information literacy includes computer literacy, publication literacy, library literacy, and tool literacy. Information literacy, according to the Vamanu and Zak (2022), is the capacity to recognize information that is required, comprehend how information is organized, locate relevant information sources, critically assess those sources, and disseminate that information.

Despite the growing emphasis on digital learning and research skills, there is mounting concern that many undergraduate students may lack the necessary information literacy competencies to navigate and utilize information effectively in academic settings. At the University of Ilesa, a relatively young institution in Osun State, Nigeria, there is currently no empirical evidence on the level of information literacy skills possessed by its undergraduate students. This absence of data poses a challenge for administrators, librarians, and educators in designing appropriate interventions, resources, and curricula that enhance students' ability to engage with information critically and responsibly. Without a clear understanding of the current

skill levels and knowledge gaps, there is a risk that students may graduate without the necessary tools to thrive in an information-driven society. This study, therefore, seeks to assess the current state of information literacy skills among undergraduate students at the University of Ilesa, with a view to identifying areas of strength, weakness, and opportunities for institutional support and policy development.

### **Objective of the study**

The main research objective of this study is to examine the information literacy skills among the undergraduate students of University of Ilesa, Ilesa Osun State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Assess library usage patterns of university of Ilesa students
2. Assess information and computer literacy skills among the students.
3. Identify students' needs for library information literacy training.
4. Evaluate students' level of satisfaction with the library's existing information literacy programs.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Information literacy (IL) has emerged as a critical competency in higher education, particularly for undergraduate students navigating an increasingly complex digital information landscape and it encompasses the ability to recognize when information is needed, locate, evaluate, and effectively use it while adhering to ethical standards (Chaliha et al 2024). According to Sparks and Beile (2016), information literacy is not merely about finding information but involves higher-order cognitive skills such as analysis, synthesis, and critical evaluation. The Association of College and Research Libraries ACRL (2016) defines IL as a set of integrated abilities that enable individuals to engage with information ecosystems dynamically. For undergraduate students, IL is essential for academic success, lifelong learning, and informed citizenship. In university, students often encounter vast amounts of data through digital platforms, academic databases, and open web resources, making IL a predictor of creativity, problem-solving, and research efficacy. Studies emphasize that undergraduates frequently overestimate their IL skills, leading to gaps in areas like source evaluation and ethical citation, which can hinder scholarly work. Conceptually, IL aligns with broader educational goals, such as fostering critical thinking and adaptability in knowledge-based economies

Empirical research on the level of information literacy among undergraduate students in Nigeria reveals a complex and varied landscape of competencies, utilisation patterns, and challenges. Several descriptive survey studies indicate that Nigerian undergraduates possess varying degrees of information literacy skills, often influenced by institutional context, programme of study, and access to resources. In a study conducted by Edewor (2022), the information literacy competencies of undergraduate students at the Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun were examined using a structured questionnaire and descriptive statistics. The study found that students at this specialised university demonstrated high levels of information literacy, suggesting familiarity with basic information-seeking and evaluative skills. However, the study also identified significant infrastructural challenges, including poor internet access and erratic power supply, which impeded students' effective engagement with information resources. (Osiebe, Bassey, and Udoh (2023) also investigated information literacy skills and the utilisation of electronic information resources among undergraduate Computer Science students at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. Using a descriptive survey design with

stratified sampling and statistical analysis of data obtained from questionnaire, the authors reported that although students exhibited basic information literacy abilities, their overall level of information literacy was low. The research demonstrated that students' limited skills directly affected their capacity to search for and identify relevant electronic resources for academic work, indicating a gap between familiarity with electronic sources and the ability to employ them effectively for academic tasks (Osiebe et al., 2023).

Supporting the finding of limited skills, research by Hassan (2025) at Umaru Musa Yaradua University, Katsina revealed significant gaps between access to information and students' competence in utilising available information resources. Hassan's study used a stratified random sampling of undergraduates across five faculties and both descriptive and inferential statistics to show that while students could access some information, they lacked deeper competencies in meaningful utilisation. The study recommended the integration of structured information literacy programmes into the general curriculum and improved awareness of library services to enhance undergraduate competencies. According to Ukachi (2015) correlational study across 12 university libraries in the south-western geopolitical zone of Nigeria, he found that many undergraduates did not possess adequate information literacy skills necessary for optimal use of electronic resources. The research revealed a strong positive correlation between undergraduates' information literacy levels and their utilisation of library electronic resources, indicating that insufficient skill levels directly undermine effective use of academic digital collections (Ukachi, 2015)

### **ACRL Information Literacy Framework.**

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education represents a significant shift in the conceptualisation of information literacy within academic libraries and higher education institutions. The Framework moves away from prescriptive, skills-based approaches to a more conceptual model grounded in threshold concepts (ACRL, 2016). It defines information literacy as "the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning" (ACRL, 2016). This definition emphasises the role of learners as both consumers and creators of information, influenced by concepts like metaliteracy (Mackey & Jacobson, 2011).

The Framework is structured around six interconnected frames, presented alphabetically rather than sequentially, to encourage flexible application. Each frame is anchored by a central threshold concept a transformative idea that acts as a portal to deeper understanding accompanied by knowledge practices (demonstrations of ways in which learners can increase their understanding) and dispositions (affective, attitudinal, or valuing tendencies that support learning) (ACRL, 2016). These elements distinguish the Framework from prior models by bridging novice and expert perspectives and fostering critical self-reflection.

1. **Authority Is Constructed and Contextual:** This frame posits that authority depends on context and community recognition, requiring informed skepticism toward sources. Knowledge practices include defining types of authority, using research tools to evaluate credibility, and acknowledging biases in information ecosystems. Dispositions involve maintaining an open mind to new perspectives, questioning traditional notions of authority,

and self-evaluating one's own biases (ACRL, 2016). Scholars like Witek (2016) highlight its role in mapping to curricula, allowing librarians to address power dynamics in information production

2. **Information Creation as a Process:** Emphasizing that information products result from iterative processes influenced by format and delivery methods, this frame encourages evaluation beyond surface-level format. Knowledge practices involve articulating creation processes in disciplines, assessing fit for needs, and transferring knowledge to new creations. Dispositions include valuing the matching of information products to needs and accepting ambiguity in emerging formats (ACRL, 2016). This frame has been praised for promoting hands-on instruction, as noted in implementation studies (Burns et al., 2019)
3. **Information Has Value:** This concept explores information's multifaceted value as a commodity, educational tool, and means of influence while addressing intellectual property, access inequities, and commodification. Knowledge practices include proper attribution, understanding copyright and open access, and recognizing marginalized voices. Dispositions emphasize respecting original ideas, viewing oneself as a contributor, and examining personal information privilege (ACRL, 2016). It responds to critiques of the Standards by incorporating socioeconomic factors (Yearwood et al, 2015).
4. **Scholarship as Conversation:** This views scholarship as ongoing discourse where ideas are debated and built upon, requiring seekers of multiple perspectives. Knowledge practices include citing works, identifying barriers to entry, and summarizing changes in scholarly perspectives. Dispositions involve recognizing one's role as a contributor and valuing user-generated content while understanding systemic disempowerment (ACRL, 2016). Critiques note its potential to address power imbalances, though implementation varies (Beilin, 2015).
5. **Searching as Strategic Exploration:** Searching is depicted as nonlinear and flexible, involving cognitive and social dimensions. Knowledge practices include matching strategies to tools, refining needs, and managing results. Dispositions emphasize mental flexibility, persistence, and seeking guidance when needed (ACRL, 2016). This frame supports interactive teaching methods, as evidenced in community college contexts (Reed, 2022).

Since its adoption, the Framework has influenced information literacy instruction by encouraging more interactive, conceptual approaches over rote skills training. Librarians report using it implicitly in sessions, fostering hands-on activities and collaborations with faculty to integrate concepts across curricula. It has enhanced librarians' ability to articulate their professional role, supported assessment redesigns, and promoted partnerships with teaching centers (Gross et al., 2018). In community colleges, it underpins instruction despite adaptations for diverse student needs, with COVID-19 accelerating virtual implementations (Reed, 2022). Broader impacts include its integration into disciplinary standards, though adoption varies by field (Franklin et al., 2020).

## **Methodology**

The study utilised a descriptive cross-sectional survey design in assessing the information literacy skills of the respondents. This design is appropriate as it enables the collection of data at

a single point in time, providing a snapshot of the level of information literacy skills among students. It also facilitates the identification of patterns and correlations within the data.

The target population comprises all the 5,763 undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Ilesa during the 2024/2025 academic session. All undergraduate students of the University of Ilesa across the nine (9) faculties would make up this study population. The University of Ilesa has 3,781 students in 100 level and 1,892 students in 200 level. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure that students from different faculties and departments were proportionately represented. The sample size of 400 undergraduate students was determined using Cochran’s (1977) formula to achieve a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed specifically for this study and were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages and means.

**Results of the Findings**

The findings of the study on the frequency of library use by the undergraduate students of University of Ilesa are presented in table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Frequency of Library Use

Frequency of Library Use	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	96	24.0
Weekly	148	37.0
Monthly	72	18.0
Occasionally	54	13.5
Never	30	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Data on table 1 reveals that most respondents use the library either weekly (37.0%) or daily (24.0%), indicating regular library patronage among undergraduate students.

**Table 2:** *Information Literacy Skills of Respondents*

Item	Mean	Remark
Ability to identify information needs	3.10	High
Ability to use library catalogue (OPAC)	2.18	Low
Ability to use search engines effectively	3.25	High
Ability to evaluate information sources	2.74	High

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Remark</b>
Ability to cite and reference information sources	2.59	High
<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>2.77</b>	<b>High</b>

The results in table 2 above indicate that respondents generally possess high information literacy skills in most areas. However, the ability to use the library catalogue recorded a low mean score ( $\bar{x} = 2.18$ ) indicating that many students lack the necessary skills to independently locate library materials using the library catalogue card.

**Table 3:** Computer Literacy Skills of Respondents

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Remark</b>
Basic computer operations	3.32	High
Use of word processing software	3.20	High
Use of presentation software	3.06	High
<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>High</b>

The findings shown in table 3 reveal that undergraduate students possess a high level of computer literacy, suggesting competence in basic and academic-related computer usage.

**Table 4 :** Information Literacy Training Needs

<b>Training Area</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Use of library catalogue	284	71.0
Database searching	298	74.5
Referencing and citation	286	71.5
Avoiding plagiarism	324	81.0
Advanced computer skills	234	58.5

Table 4 shows that a large proportion of respondents indicated a need for further training, particularly in avoiding plagiarism (81.0%), database searching (74.5%), and use of library catalogue (71.0%), which corresponds with the low library catalogue skill level observed earlier.

**Table 5:** Level of Satisfaction with Information Literacy Programmes

<b>Programme Aspect</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Remark</b>
Library orientation programme	2.82	Satisfied
Information literacy training sessions	2.64	Satisfied
Availability of training materials	2.46	Not Satisfied
Support from library staff	2.90	Satisfied
Overall effectiveness of programmes	2.69	Satisfied
<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>2.70</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>

The results from table 5 show that respondents are **generally satisfied** with the library’s information literacy programmes. However, dissatisfaction with the availability of training materials suggests a need for improved instructional resources.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The findings of this study clearly highlight a relatively high level of library engagement among undergraduate students of the University of Ilesa. With the majority of respondents indicating that they use the library either weekly or daily, it is evident that the university library remains a central academic support system for students. Regular library patronage suggests that students recognise the importance of library resources for learning, research, and academic success. This finding aligns with earlier studies by Monu et al.,(2020) and Buco et al.,(2023) which have established that frequent library use is positively associated with effective study habits and improved academic performance among undergraduates.

Despite this encouraging level of library use, the study also reveals varying levels of competence across different dimensions of information literacy. The results indicate that students generally possess high information literacy skills, particularly in identifying information needs, using search engines effectively, evaluating information sources, and citing and referencing materials. These skills are essential in navigating the modern information environment and suggest that students are reasonably capable of engaging with academic information. This outcome supports findings of Oseghale (2023) which report that increased exposure to digital resources and academic tasks enhances students’ general information literacy competencies.

Conversely, the ability to use the library catalogue system recorded a low mean score, indicating a notable weakness among respondents. This suggests that although students frequently use the library, many may not be independently locating materials through the catalogue system and may instead rely on assistance from library staff or alternative information sources. This gap highlights a disconnect between library usage and effective utilisation of library tools. Similar findings have been reported by Abdulsami and Esievo (2024) which noted that inadequate training in catalogue use limits students’ ability to fully exploit library collections.

The findings also reveal that undergraduate students possess a high level of computer literacy, as demonstrated by strong competence in basic computer operations, word processing, and presentation software. This suggests that the students are well equipped with essential digital skills required for academic activities such as assignments, research writing, and presentations. The high level of computer literacy may be attributed to increased integration of information and communication technology into the educational system and widespread access to digital devices among students. This level of competence provides a strong foundation for advanced information literacy development.

Furthermore, the study shows that a substantial proportion of respondents expressed a need for additional training in specific areas of information literacy. Notably, avoiding plagiarism, database searching, and use of the library catalogue were identified as major training needs. This finding corresponds with the earlier observation of low competence in catalogue use and reflects students' awareness of their skill deficiencies. The strong demand for training in plagiarism avoidance also suggests heightened concern about academic integrity and proper scholarly practices, which is consistent with contemporary academic expectations.

In terms of satisfaction with information literacy programmes, the findings indicate that respondents are generally satisfied with the library's orientation programmes, training sessions, staff support, and overall effectiveness of the programmes. This suggests that the library's efforts in user education are positively perceived by students. However, dissatisfaction with the availability of training materials points to a critical area for improvement. Inadequate instructional resources may hinder students' ability to practise and reinforce learned skills independently, thereby limiting the long-term effectiveness of information literacy initiatives.

Overall, the findings suggest that while undergraduate students of the University of Ilesa demonstrate regular library use and possess relatively high information and computer literacy skills, there are persistent gaps in specific areas such as library catalogue use, database searching, and plagiarism avoidance. Addressing these gaps through targeted training programmes, improved access to instructional materials, and continuous user education would significantly enhance students' ability to effectively locate, evaluate, and use information for academic purposes.

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that undergraduate students of the University of Ilesa demonstrate a strong engagement with the university library, reflecting its continued role as a central academic resource. The findings also reveal that students generally possess high levels of information and computer literacy, equipping them with essential skills to navigate academic tasks and the digital information environment effectively. Notable gaps exist, particularly in the use of the library catalogue system, database searching, and plagiarism avoidance. The demand for additional training in these areas further highlights the need for targeted interventions to strengthen students' competencies.

Although students are generally satisfied with the library's information literacy programmes and staff support, limitations in the availability of training materials may impede the reinforcement of acquired skills.

## **Recommendations**

In view of the findings of this study, it is recommended that the University of Ilesa Library places greater emphasis on targeted information literacy training, particularly in areas where students

demonstrated noticeable weaknesses. Special attention should also be given to improving students' ability to use the library catalogue system, conduct effective database searches, and avoid plagiarism as these areas recorded lower competence levels and were also identified by students as priority training needs.

The high level of computer literacy demonstrated by the students provides an opportunity for the library to expand technology-based information literacy initiatives. Incorporating online tutorials, virtual training sessions, and interactive learning platforms would not only align with students' digital competencies but also increase the reach and effectiveness of information literacy programmes beyond physical library spaces. The library should sustain regular user education programmes to ensure that students continuously develop their information literacy skills as academic demands evolve. Periodic workshops and refresher sessions would help address emerging challenges in information use and promote lifelong learning habits.

Finally, the library should adopt a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating its information literacy programmes by regularly collecting feedback from students. Such feedback would help identify gaps in service delivery, assess the effectiveness of training interventions, and guide improvements aimed at enhancing students' overall information literacy experience.

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