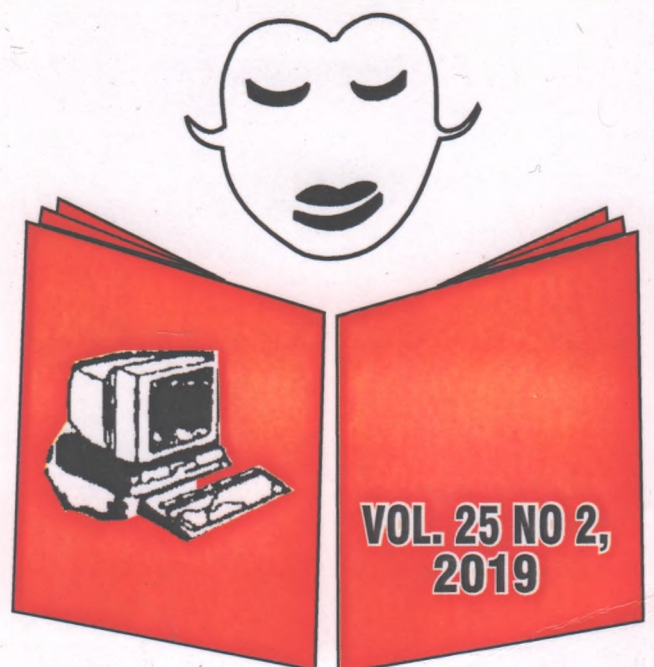


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## CONTENTS

- Sunday Olusola LADIPO; Kolawole Akinjide ARAMIDE and Fadekemi Omobola OYEWUS**  
Technology Appropriation in Electronic Media Houses: What Impact do Information and Digital Literacies Have? 1
- Monsuru Omotayo QUADRI and Oyesola Oyetunji OLUWASINA**  
Information Seeking Pattern of Users as a Panacea to Information Technology in Nigeria University Library 9
- O. J. ALUKO; A. O. BOBADOYE; H. O. SHAIB-RAHIM and O. ENIOLA**  
Knowledge Level of the Use of Mobile Phones among Forest Guards in Monitoring Illegal Activities in Oluwa Forest Reserve Area of Ondo State, Nigeria 27
- Olukunle Akinbola OSUNRINADE**  
Creative Thinking Skills and Web 2.0 Competencies of Undergraduates in Universities in Osun State, Nigeria 35
- Samson Oyeniyi AKANDE**  
Cultural Competence of Library Personnel and Multicultural Library Resources and Services Provision in School and Public Libraries in Oyo State, Nigeria 52
- Dr Omamomo OBAGUONO (CLN) and Benjamin Kenechukwu NWOBU**  
Effect of Poor Funding on Service Delivery in Medical Libraries in the South-South Zone of Nigeria 64
- Magnus Osahon IGBINOVIA and Juliet C. ALEX-NMECHA (CLN)**  
Libraries and Information Services for a Truly Democratic Nigeria 77
- Shola Temitope FAMUYIWA; Gabriel Oluwabunmi ALEGBELEYE and Obinna Jeremiah OKORO**  
Institutional Support, Preservation and Conservation Practices in Academic Libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria 88
- Catherine Oluchi UMEBALI. Ph.D and Ebere ARISIUKWU**  
Accessibility and Utilisation of Library Information Resources by Students in Federal Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria 98
- Adefunke Sarah EBIJUWA; Thomas Ayinla OGUNMODEDE and Solomon Olusegun OYETOLA**  
Building Strong Libraries and Professional Association through Mentoring in Nigeria 110
- Hafsoh Olajumoke SHAIB-RAHIM; Fausat Motunrayo-IBRAHIM Ph. D; Bolanle Tawakalitu OLATUNJI and Marufat Bukola OYEDEJI**  
Media Exposure and Agricultural Marketing Needs Among Farmers in Ido Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria 119
- Airen ADETIMIRIN and Rahamat BADMUS**  
Information Literacy Skills of Primary School Teachers in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria 128

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# Information Literacy Skills of Primary School Teachers in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

*The study investigated the Information Literacy Skills (ILS) of 476 teachers in 57 primary schools in Lagos Mainland Local Government using a descriptive survey. A stratified random sampling was used to select a sample of 173 teachers and a questionnaire was used to collect data which was analysed using frequency distribution. The findings revealed the major information needs of primary school teachers as academic (71.1%) and economic (67.6%). The ILS of the teachers was high (Mean = 37.6) and the major methods of ILS acquisition were: training programmes (86.1%), library user education (81.6%), use of school library media centre (73.9%) and engaging in information search process (72.3%). Primary school teachers possessed high ILS and this can be improved upon through user education by school librarians and professional development.*

Information literacy skills, information needs, primary school teachers, Lagos State, Nigeria

## Introduction

Primary school is the foundation school for pupils aged between 5 - 10 years and it is relevant to the educational growth of children as this is the early stage for knowledge and skills acquisition outside the home setting. Therefore, it is important that the teachers who teach these pupils in primary schools must be well trained and able to meet the learning abilities of pupils. For the teachers to have the requisite knowledge, they need to search and use information from various sources to meet the needs of pupils which are diverse such as educational and others. The satisfaction of the information needs of pupils should be the fundamental goal the teacher should aim to

achieve. This is affirmed by Laine and Tirri (2016) in a study on elementary school teachers and reported that teachers are the determining factor in meeting the needs of students through the various subjects taught to them.

With the availability of many information resources such as print and electronic, teachers must be information literate, that is they must possess good information literacy skills. Information literacy is the ability to think critically and make balanced judgement of any information found and used. Information literacy skills is the application of the competencies, attributes and confidence needed to make the best use of information and interpret

it judiciously (CILIP, 2018). Everyone including primary school teachers should be information literate to be able to identify locate, evaluate, organize and use information to satisfy their information needs which may include job-related, health, financial, and professional development. A primary school teacher that has good information literacy skills will be able to source relevant educational materials to use for teaching and impacting the necessary knowledge to the pupils.

With the era of the Internet and many open educational resources, it is necessary for primary school teachers to have good information literacy skills so as to equip themselves with the necessary knowledge to impact unto the pupils. However, teachers with poor information literacy skills may not know where to source for information, how to appraise the information and when to use the information and this may affect the kind of information they pass to their pupils during the learning process. Garoufallou, Antonopoulou, Pervolaraki, Siatri, Zafeiriou, and Virkus (2016) reported that there are very few studies on information seeking behaviour and information literacy skills of primary school teachers.

Many of these ILS, such as question formation, brainstorming, categorising, skimming and scanning, use of search engines and databases, evaluation of online and printed materials, use of contents pages and indexes, note taking methods, synthesis of information and methods of presentation are generic and can be used across many areas of school curricula at all levels. Other skills may be more subject specific, such as those used in mathematics or science. There is increasing recognition of the need to teach ILS skills explicitly as the

acquisition of such skills cannot be assumed to happen as some teachers believe, but must be taught rigorously (Walraven, Brand-Gruwel and Boshuizen, 2008).

Primary school teachers need to develop their ILS and this can be done through professional development such as education. Information Literacy (IL) education is claimed to be embedded in school curriculum (Batool and Webber, 2016; Battol and Webber, 2019). In terms of its implementation, IL education was considered as a way of teaching students how to learn IL skills, and should therefore, be infused in the teaching and learning activities in primary schools. The rationale of ILS particularly, and learning skills wholly, is to assist students to learn independently. The extent of IL education implementation depends upon the IL education implementers (such as teachers in the classrooms, Library and Media Teacher (LMT) in the school resource center and collaborative teaching in classroom, and school head in administrative matters) to be aware of the importance of IL education to the students. Teachers and LMT are expected to continuously lay emphasis on IL until the skills are practiced and internalised by the pupils. Presently, studies on the extent of information literacy implementation in teaching and learning process in primary school curriculum in Nigeria are few.

### **Statement of the problem**

Primary school teachers are very important to the knowledge acquisition of pupils. Therefore, the need to know why, what their information needs are, the sources available, those to use and how to use them is critical in their responsibilities to their learners. The level of information literacy skills teachers

teachers will have an impact in the way they disseminate information and knowledge to their pupils. Lack of these basic information literacy skills may translate into poor service delivery in the primary schools in this era of resource based learning. Studies on information literacy skills of different user groups have been carried out globally and in Nigeria. However, there seems to be no study on information literacy skills of primary school teachers in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area, Lagos State, therefore the need for this study.

### Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to assess the information literacy skills of primary school teachers in the selected primary schools in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area (LGA), Lagos State.

### Research questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. What are the information needs of primary school teachers in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area?
2. What is the level of information literacy skills of primary school teachers Lagos Mainland Local Government Area?
3. How do primary school teachers in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area acquire information literacy skills?

### Literature review

Primary school teachers need to possess required Information Literacy Skills (ILS) to inculcate the basic knowledge in the process of teaching and learning to young pupils. Shoeb (2011) defined ILS as the capacities which aid an individual to realize the need for information and the ability to search, evaluate and use the required information to satisfy the information need. It means ILS is the ability that an

individual should possess to recognize when information is needed, where to locate it, evaluate and use effectively the needed information.

Information Literacy Skills (ILS) entails individuals' including primary school teachers' ability to know when there is need for information, how and where to get the information and use such information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose. Therefore, an information literate primary school teacher should have the ability to: identify when information is needed; access the needed information effectively and efficiently; evaluate information and its sources critically; incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base and use information effectively to create knowledge to pass unto the pupils. ILS becomes very pertinent with the overload of information from the Internet and other sources.

Sasikala and Dhanraji (2011) posited that an information literate person is one that is knowledgeable at searching, retrieving, evaluating, analysing, managing and disseminating information to others effectively. The authors concluded that such a person will be successful at solving challenges, providing solutions and new ideas. Consequently, it is important that primary school teachers should be information literate in order to impart the necessary knowledge to pupils to make them creative and innovative pupils that will be useful to the society as they grow up. This is corroborated by Soh (2017) who reported that the behavior of teachers has an impact on fostering creativity in students.

In the information age, where information can easily be accessed not only from the print, but from electronic sources such

as the Internet, electronic databases and others, it becomes necessary for primary school teachers to possess high information literacy skills to fit into the new role of student-centered learning globally. Thus, an information literate teacher should possess good online searching skills which include the ability to select appropriate search terminology, construct a logical search strategy, evaluate information appropriately and use the relevant information to satisfy the various information needs.

Teachers have a role in imparting high ILS to students and so they need to possess high ILS themselves. Zhu, Yang, MacLeod, Yu and Wu (2019) conducted a study on the information literacy skills of teenagers and the sample consisted of secondary school students, their parents and teachers. The findings revealed that the parents and teachers' information literacy skills were positive determinants of the teenagers' information literacy skills. This reiterates the importance of the possession of high ILS by teachers including primary school teachers.

Saglam, Çankaya, Üçer and Çetin (2017) studied the level of ILS possessed by 626 teachers from 22 secondary schools collecting data using Information literacy scale and California critical thinking scale. The authors reported a low ILS and critical thinking disposition of the teachers. This invariably means that the students these teachers teach will also not be motivated to acquire ILS because the teachers possess low ILS and will not educate the students on the relevance of possessing high ILS and using it.

Solmaz (2017) investigated the ILS of 127 physical education and sports and prospective teachers using Lifelong learning

and information literacy scales as data collection instruments. A high level of ILS was reported to be possessed by the teachers. This implies that when such prospective teachers graduate to become employed as teachers, they will be able to inculcate ILS to the students they teach. The possession of high ILS by teachers will also have an effect on the students they teach, as these students will cultivate such ILS even when they proceed to secondary schools and tertiary institutions. It is also affirmed by Feng and Ha (2016) that the possession of high information literacy skills by students will assist them in learning and this should be a continuous activity throughout their lifetime.

Foo, Majid and Chang (2017) carried out a study to examine the ILS of 11 year old pupils in 17 primary school using a multi-choice question assessment instrument based on the i-Competent IL model and reported a low ILS especially in the areas of synthesising and using information

Table 1: Demographic Variables of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Age (years)	< 25yrs	24	13.9
	25 - 30yrs	48	27.7
	31 - 36yrs	42	24.3
	37 - 42yrs	43	24.9
	43 - 47yrs	8	4.6
Gender	Male	77	44.5
	Female	88	50.9
Highest Academic Qualification	NCE	64	37.0
	B.Ed,B.Sc	93	53.8
	PGDE/M.Ed	16	9.2
Years of Teaching Experience	1- 5yrs	32	18.5
	6- 10yrs	64	37.0
	11 - 15yrs	40	23.1
	20yrs and above	37	21.4

The results of the demographic variables revealed that the highest numbers of respondents were between ages 25 - 30 years (48, 27.7%) and only 8 (4.6%) were between 43 - 47years (Table 1). This means that the respondents were still in their youthful and active years of service as primary school teachers. Half of the respondents were female (88, 50.9%) and hold a bachelor's degree either

in education or sciences (93 or 53.8%), while only 16 (9.2%) possessed a Post Graduate Diploma in Education or Master's Degree in Education. The findings showed that the respondents had the necessary educational qualification for teaching in Nigerian primary schools which is a minimum qualification of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). Only

about one third (33.0%) of the respondents had been teaching for 6 - 10 years, while 18.5% indicated that they have been teaching for 1 - 5 years (Table 1).

**Research Question 1:** What are the information needs of primary school teachers in Lagos Mainland LGA Lagos State?

*Table 2: Information Needs of Primary School Teachers*

Types of Information	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Academic	123	71.1	42	24.3	-	-	08	4.6
Professional development	40	23.1	74	42.8	-	-	59	34.1
Financial, Legal and Economic	40	23.1	101	58.4	8	4.6	24	13.9
Legal	32	18.5	74	42.8	51	29.5	16	9.2
Economic	117	67.6	24	13.9	8	4.6	24	13.9
Health	32	18.5	58	33.5	16	9.2	67	38.7
Political	75	43.4	56	32.4	10	5.8	32	18.5
Religion	16	9.2	85	49.1	16	9.2	56	32.4

From Table 2, when strongly agreed and agree options were merged, the responses indicated that the information needs were academic (95.4%); financial, legal and economic (81.5%); economic (80.5%), political (75.8%); professional development (68.5%) and legal (61.3%). The major information needs were in the areas of academic (71.1%) and economic (67.6%). It can be implied that the primary school teachers in Lagos Mainland LGA, Lagos State need information mostly on academic and economic to fulfill their teaching responsibilities.

**Research Question 2:** What is the level of information literacy skills of primary school teachers in Lagos Mainland LGA Lagos State?

Table 3 shows the information literacy skills of the primary school teachers.

Table 3: Information Literacy Skills of Primary School Teachers

Information Literacy Skills	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean $\bar{x}$
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
<b>Ability to define and articulate information needed</b>									
Recognition of information whenever it is needed	122	70.5	35	20.2	8	4.6	8	4.6	3.57
I can ask questions based on my information needs	48	27.7	101	58.4	16	9.2	8	4.6	3.09
<b>Ability to locate information</b>									
Identify sources of information	50	28.9	48	27.7	24	13.9	51	29.5	2.56
Locate information efficiently and effectively	59	34.1	66	38.2	32	18.5	16	9.2	2.97
Formulation of search strategies	26	15.0	107	61.8	8	4.6	32	18.5	2.73
<b>Ability to organise information</b>									
Searching the internet confidentially	40	23.1	90	52.0	-	-	43	24.9	2.73
Searching print information resources well	37	21.4	80	46.2	8	4.6	48	27.7	2.61
<b>Ability to assess and evaluate information</b>									
Evaluate information critically	80	46.2	40	23.1	37	21.4	16	9.2	3.06
Evaluation of information sources.	56	32.4	50	28.9	43	24.9	24	13.9	2.80
<b>Ability to communicate and ethically use information</b>									
Use information to communicate	43	24.9	56	32.4	24	13.9	50	28.9	2.53
Use information ethically and lawfully.	48	27.7	90	52.0	19	11.0	16	9.2	2.98
Use information critically to solve problems	80	46.2	56	32.4	16	9.2	29	16.8	3.17
Plan and integrate information into knowledge	61	35.3	64	37.0	-	-	48	27.7	2.80
<b>Weighted Mean = 2.89</b>									
<b>Grand Mean = 37.6</b>									

The indicators for measuring ILS were ability to: define and articulate information needed; locate information; organize information; communicate and ethically use information; and assess and evaluate information. Majority of the respondents (90.7%) were able to recognise when they needed information ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.57), while slightly above three quarters could formulate search strategies (76.8%), search the internet confidentially (75.1%) and use information ethically and lawfully (79.7%). The respondents that could evaluate information critically were found to be above two thirds (69.3%).

Table 4 presents the test norm score for

the level of Information literacy skills of the primary school teachers.

Table 4 Test norm score

Interval	Total Mean score	Remark
1-17.3		Low
17.4- 34.7		Moderate
34.8 -52	37.6	High

The test norm was used to determine the level of ILS of the respondents and the maximum score is  $13 \times 4 = 52$ . When this is divided into three, it gives an average of 17.33. Therefore, a score of 1-17.3 indicates low ILS, 17.4- 34.7 shows moderate, while 34.8 -52 indicates high ILS (Table 4). As indicated by the test norm result, it can be deduced that the level



of information literacy skills of the primary school teachers was high.

**Research Question 3:** How do primary school teachers acquire information literacy skills in Lagos Mainland LGA Lagos State?

The method of acquisition of information literacy skills by the primary school teachers was sought and the result presented in Figure 1.

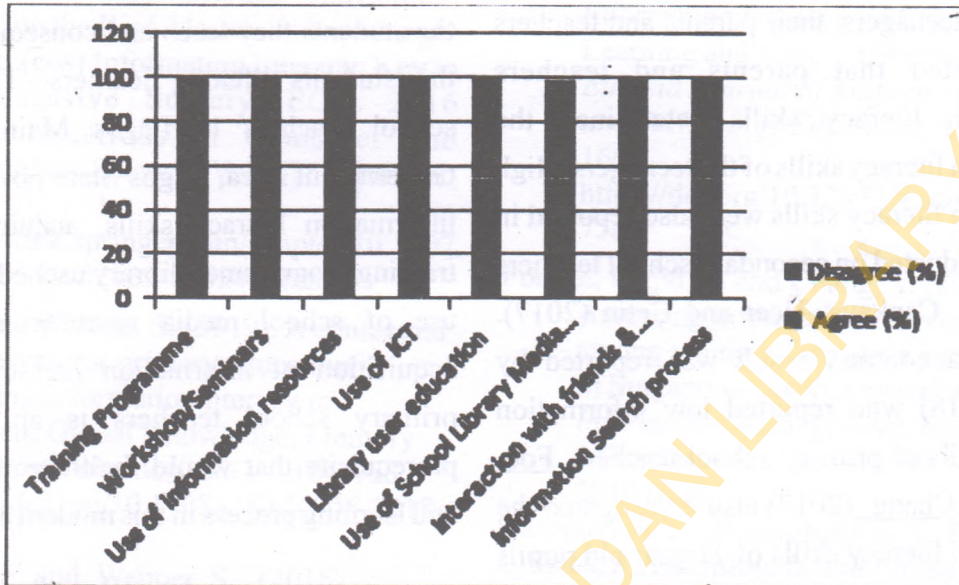


Figure 1. Method of Acquisition of ILS

The major methods were training programmes (86.1%), library user education (81.6%), use of school library media centre (73.9%) and engaging in information search process (72.3%). Use of ICT (48.0%) and seminar/workshops (34.1%) were the least methods used to acquire ILS by the primary school teachers (Fig. 1).

**Discussion of Findings**

The major information needs of the primary school teachers were academic information and economic information. This is expected as they will need information on the subjects they teach so that they can impact the knowledge to the pupils. This was emphasized by Gunasekera, and Balasubramani (2019) in their study on 440 teachers reported that most of the teachers needed information on the subjects they taught, classroom management and teaching resources. School teachers in Kuwait needed information to carry out their teaching

activities such as preparation of lesson plans, teaching techniques, curriculum implantation and their subjects as reported by Chaudhry and Al-Otaibi (2019). This states that the major needs of the teachers is academic to fulfill their responsibility to the pupils they teach in making them knowledgeable.

In another study by Awakan and Popoola (2017) on secondary school teachers revealed that the teachers needed academic information mostly for teaching in the classroom. Durodolu (2016) investigated the information needs of teachers in Lagos, Nigeria and Durham, South Africa and the findings confirmed that the teachers needed information for teaching, administrative and professional development. This further buttresses the result of this study that revealed that the primary school teachers in Lagos Mainland LGA of Lagos State, Nigeria needed primarily academic information.

The primary school teachers possessed

high information literacy skills as depicted from the test norm. This implies that the teachers can identify when information is needed, search, evaluate and use relevant information to satisfy their information needs. This affirms the findings of the study conducted by Zhu et. al. (2019) on teenagers, their parents and teachers and reported that parents and teachers information literacy skills determined the information literacy skills of the teenagers. High information literacy skills were also reported in a study conducted on secondary school teachers by Saglam, Çankaya, Üçer and Çetin (2017). However, a contrary result was reported by Leung (2018) who reported low information literacy skills of primary school teachers. Foo, Majid, and Chang (2017) also investigated the information literacy skills of 11 year old pupils and revealed that they possessed low information literacy skills. This was attributed to low information literacy skills of the teachers and the non-implementation of the information literacy curriculum.

The methods through which the primary school teachers acquire information literacy skills revealed training programmes, library user education, school library media centre and engaging in information search process. This indicates that to improve the information literacy skills of the primary school teachers, regular training programmes, library user education and practical searching to gain experience must be encouraged and provided by the school management. This is reiterated by Leung (2018) who reported that the school librarian has the responsibility of training primary school teachers on a regular basis to acquire high information literacy skills. This will consequently make them information

literate and improve their teaching productivity.

### Conclusion

Primary school teachers are the primary agents of educational innovation for children and therefore, they should possess high information literacy skills to impact the skills to the students they teach and consequently make the students lifelong learners. The primary school teachers in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area, Lagos State possessed high information literacy skills, acquired through training programmes, library user education and use of school media resource centre. The acquisition of information literacy skills by primary school teachers is an invaluable prerequisite that would facilitate the teaching and learning process in this modern age.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings:

- i. To improve these skills for the teachers, it must be entrenched in the curriculum for the colleges of education and universities where these teachers receive their trainings, so that they have moderate information literacy skills at the time of graduation.
- ii. The skills possessed at graduation should be improved upon through regular training programmes organised by the school authority, local government and state government

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