

Full Length Research

Information Literacy Skills and Visibility of Lecturers in The Department of Library and Information Science Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike

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This study examined information literacy skills as correlate to visibility of lecturers in the department of library and information science Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike. The study was guided by three specific objectives and three research questions. The study employed descriptive survey research design, while the population of the study is eight (8), comprising of librarians in NRCRI Library. The complete census method was used. Only one instrument (questionnaire) was used. The questionnaire was validated by three professionals from the Department of Library and Information Science, MOUAU. Mean was used in analyzing data for the study. The study identified ability to recognize the need for information timely, ability to identify potential sources of information and ability to integrate new information into an existing body of knowledge as the greatest information literacy skills acquired by librarians in NRCRI library. The most source of information literacy skill for librarians in NRCRI library is engaging in the editing of research works. Referral services and indexing/abstracting services are the services on which librarians apply their literacy skills. Promotion of indexing and abstracting services are the greatest effect of information literacy skill on librarian's service delivery in NRCRI library. Inadequate fund to engage in information literacy programme is the greatest challenge librarians in NRCRI library face in the course of acquiring information literacy skills. The study therefore recommended that: NRCRI as the mother institution should ensure that librarians should be well trained on the ability to evaluate information obtained critically.

Keywords: Information Literacy skills, Library and Information Science, librarians in NRCRI library.

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INTRODUCTION

The digital age has transformed the way information is accessed, evaluated, and utilized in academic settings (Kuhlthau, 2004). Information literacy skills (ILS) are crucial for academics to navigate complex information environments and apply knowledge effectively (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2000). For lecturers in Library and Information Science (LIS) departments, possessing strong ILS is essential for teaching, research, and professional development (Ojedokun, 2007). ILS enable lecturers to stay current with emerging trends and technologies, critically evaluate

information, and effectively disseminate research findings. Moreover, LIS are vital for LIS lecturers to provide high-quality education and training to students, equipping them with the necessary skills to succeed in the information profession (Bent & Stubbings, 2011). The importance of LIS in academia cannot be overstated, and it is imperative that LIS lecturers possess strong LIS to excel in their roles. By examining the relationship between LIS and visibility, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature on the importance of LIS in academia. The study will investigate the impact of LIS on the visibility of LIS lecturers, identifying strategies for enhancing LIS and visibility. Effective LIS are essential for LIS lecturers to navigate the complexities of information management and dissemination in the digital age (Liao & Liu, 2016).

Information literacy skills are essential for academics to stay current with the latest research and trends in their field (Liao & Liu, 2016). For LIS lecturers, strong LIS enable them to effectively teach and conduct research, enhancing their visibility within the academic community (Fourie, 2009). LIS also enable lecturers to critically evaluate information, identify gaps in the literature, and develop innovative research questions (Hjørland, 2000). Furthermore, LIS are vital for LIS lecturers to provide high-quality education and training to students, equipping them with the necessary skills to succeed in the information profession. By possessing strong LIS, LIS lecturers can effectively navigate complex information environments, apply knowledge, and make informed decisions (Kothari, 2004). The importance of LIS in academia is well-documented, and it is essential that LIS lecturers prioritize the development of these skills. Strong LIS are critical for LIS lecturers to stay competitive in the academic job market and to contribute meaningfully to their field (Creswell, 2014).

The visibility of lecturers in LIS departments is critical for their professional development and the reputation of their institutions (Creswell, 2014). Visibility can be achieved through research publications, conference presentations, and online presence (Babbie, 2010). For LIS lecturers, visibility is essential for establishing themselves as experts in their field, attracting research funding, and building collaborations with other academics (Field, 2013). Moreover, visibility can enhance the reputation of LIS departments, attracting top students and faculty, and establishing partnerships with other institutions. By examining the relationship between LIS and visibility, this study aims to identify strategies for enhancing the visibility of LIS lecturers. Visibility is a key factor in determining the impact of research and the reputation of academic institutions (Fourie, 2009).

There is a significant relationship between LIS and visibility among academics (Kuhlthau, 2004). Lecturers with strong LIS can effectively communicate research findings, increasing their visibility within the academic community (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2000). LIS enable lecturers to critically evaluate information, identify gaps in the literature, and develop innovative research questions, all of which contribute to increased visibility (Ojedokun, 2007). Furthermore, LIS are vital for LIS lecturers to provide high-quality education and training to students, equipping them with the necessary skills to succeed in the information profession. By possessing strong LIS, LIS lecturers can effectively navigate complex information environments, apply knowledge, and make informed decisions, all of which contribute to increased visibility. The relationship between LIS and visibility is complex and multifaceted, requiring further investigation to fully understand its dynamics.

Problem Statement

The educational system of the Nigerian universities is improving in the absorption of new technologies into its teaching, learning and research processes. In the same vein, universities in Abia State, Nigeria have invested heavily in ensuring that lecturers especially lecturers in the field of librarianship acquire information literacy skills that will enable them to be visible in a bid to enhance teaching, learning and research in their institutions. Information literacy skills have become very important for the lecturers in accessing current and up-to-date information that will prepare them for lecture. Information literacy skills enable researchers especially librarians in the universities to access first hand information which is timely, current and also open the possibility of searching for information on scholarly networking sites, engaging in collaboration, knowledge sharing and dissemination of result findings. All these are accomplished more easily and visibility enhanced when librarians possess information literacy skills.

However, despite all these advantages derivable from the acquisition of information literacy skills by lecturers, information literacy ability to self-archive research publications and ability to publish in Open Access journals seems to be poor. Review of available literatures show that a lot of works have been carried out on information literacy skills, but none has been done on information literacy skills as correlate to visibility of lecturers in the department of library and information science Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. It is therefore based on this gap in the literature that this study is carried out to examine the information literacy skills as correlate to visibility of lecturers in the department of library and information science Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike.

The general objective of the study is to examine the information literacy skills and visibility of lecturers in the Department of Library and Information Science, MOUAU...

The Specific Objectives are to:

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the information literacy skills and visibility of lecturers in the department of library and information science Michael Okpara University of Agriculture. The Specific Objectives are to:

- (1) To ascertain lectures ability to archive research publications in the Department of LIS, MOUAU.
- (2) To ascertain lectures ability to publish in Open Access journals in the Department of LIS, MOUAU.
- (3) To find out lecturers visibility in the Department of LIS, MOUAU?

Research Questions

- (1) What are lectures ability to archive research publications in the Department of LIS, MOUAU.?
- (2) What are lecturers ability to publish in Open Access journals in the Department of LIS, MOUAU?
- (3) What is lecturer's visibility in the Department of LIS, MOUAU?

Archiving: Enhancing Researcher Visibility and Impact

Archiving research publications in open access repositories increases accessibility and discoverability, boosting researcher visibility and impact. Moreover, it facilitates the dissemination of research findings, allowing more scholars to access and cite the work. Studies indicate that self-archived publications receive significantly higher citation rates compared to non-archived counterparts. This increased visibility enhances the researcher's reputation and recognition within the academic community. Additionally, self-archiving broadens the reach of publications, attracting attention from researchers outside the immediate field of study. (Antelman, 2015)..

The availability of archived publications facilitates collaboration among researchers by fostering open exchange of ideas and allowing for cross-disciplinary interaction (Salehi et al., 2019). Moreover, it supports knowledge transfer and innovation by making research findings readily accessible to practitioners, policymakers, and the general public (Swan, 2010). Many funding agencies worldwide now mandate self-archiving to ensure the accessibility and transparency of publicly funded research (Jubb, 2018). Additionally, self-archiving aligns with ethical responsibilities to share knowledge and contribute to the advancement of science (Delamothe & Marusic, 2020).

The benefits of archiving extend beyond individual researchers. By making their work more accessible, researchers can contribute to the development of a more comprehensive and interconnected body of knowledge (Harnad, 2018). Moreover, self-archiving can help to break down barriers to access, particularly for researchers in developing countries (Swan, 2020). While self-archiving has many advantages, it is important to note that there are also some potential drawbacks. One concern is that self-archived articles may not be subject to the same level of peer review as articles published in traditional journals (Li et al., 2021). Additionally, self-archiving can be time-consuming and may require researchers to learn new technical skills (Tennant et al., 2018). Despite these drawbacks, the potential benefits of self-archiving outweigh the risks. Researchers who are interested in increasing the visibility and impact of their work should consider self-archiving their publications (Liu et al., 2022).

Publishing in Open Access Journals and Researcher Visibility

Publishing in open access (OA) journals has gained significant attention in recent years due to its potential to increase the visibility and reach of research findings (Gargouri et al., 2018). OA journals provide free, unrestricted online access to research articles, making them accessible to a wider audience compared to traditional subscription-based journals (Björk et al., 2017). This increased visibility can lead to higher citation rates, which is a key indicator of research impact (Alperin, 2015). Several studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between OA publishing and citation rates. For instance, a study by Piwowar et al. (2018) found that OA articles received significantly more citations than non-OA articles in various disciplines. Similarly, a meta-analysis by Zhang et al. (2021) showed that OA articles had a 60% higher citation advantage compared to non-OA articles.

This increased visibility also translates into greater recognition for researchers. OA journals allow researchers to disseminate their work more widely, making it more likely to be discovered by potential collaborators and employers (Gadd, 2015). Additionally, OA publishing can enhance a researcher's online presence and reputation, leading to increased opportunities for funding and career advancement (Huang, 2017). However, it is important to note that not all OA journals

are created equal. Some OA journals may have lower editorial standards and rigorous peer-review processes, which can affect the credibility and impact of the published research (Xia, 2015). Therefore, researchers should carefully evaluate the reputation and quality of OA journals before submitting their work.

METHODOLOGY

The population of the study is 27 lecturers drawn from the department of library and information science Michael Okpara University of Agriculture. The sampling technique adopted was the complete census method, and the reason for this method is because the population is manageable. The instrument that was used in collecting data is the questionnaire. The instrument is titled: Information Literacy Skills and Librarians Visibility Questionnaire (ILSLVQ). The descriptive survey design was used in conducting the study. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) For answering the research questions, any item with the mean value of 2.50 and above was regarded as accepted, otherwise, they were regarded as rejected. Mean and standard deviation were used for all the research questions, where 2.50 were used as benchmark. Hence, any item with mean value of 2.50 and above was interpreted as agreed and strongly agreed, while any item with mean value of less than 2.50 was interpreted as disagreed and strongly disagreed. The ratings of the questionnaire was assigned as follows: 0.50-1.49 – Strongly Disagree, 1.50-2.49 – Disagree, 2.50-3.49 – Agree and 3.50- 4.00 – Strongly Agree

Table 1.
Cluster A: Researchers' Ability to Archive Research Publications
Mean Response of Lecturers' Ability to Create Researcher Profile = 27

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	SD	RMK
1	Ability to prepare my publications for archiving.	10	8	5	4	2.89	1.74	A
2	Ability to identify the copyright policies on my archived publications.	15	7	3	2	3.30	1.06	A
3	Ability to obtain the necessary permissions for archiving my works.	12	6	5	4	2.96	1.20	A
4	Ability to format publications according to archiving guidelines.	11	7	6	3	2.96	1.16	A
5	Ability to upload publications to my institutional repositories.	9	10	5	3	2.93	0.98	A
Grad Mean						3.01	6.14	

Keys: (SA) – Strongly Agree, (A) – Agree, (D) – Disagree, (SD) – Strongly Disagree

The data presented in Table 1 above shows that the cluster mean of the responses of lecturers in LIS Departments MOUAU of all the 5 items is 3.01 (cluster mean), which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicated that lecturers have the ability to create researcher profile. The standard deviation values of the 5 items ranged from 0.98 – 1.74 which indicated that the responses of the respondents were close to one another and to the mean.

Table 2.
Cluster B: Publishing in Open Access Journals
Mean Response of Lecturers' Ability to Publish in Open Access Journals = 27

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	SD	RMK
7	Ability to prepare a manuscript for open access publication.	13	5	4	5	2.96	1.23	A
8	Ability to identify suitable open access journals for my research.	15	5	5	2	3.22	1.04	A
9	Ability to understand and comply with open access journal policies.	10	9	5	3	2.96	1.10	A
10	Ability to format manuscripts according to open access journal guidelines.	11	8	6	2	3.04	1.06	A
11	Ability to pay article processing charges (APCs) for open access publication.	9	10	5	3	2.93	1.06	A
Cluster Mean								
3.02 5.49								

Keys: (SA) – Strongly Agree, (A) – Agree, (D) – Disagree, (SD) – Strongly Disagree

The data presented in Table 2 above shows that the cluster mean of the responses of lecturers in LIS Department MOUAU in of all the 5 items is 3.02 (cluster mean), which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicated that lecturers' have the ability to publish in open access journals. The standard deviation values of the 5 items ranged from 1.04 – 1.23 which indicated that the responses of the respondents were close to one another and to the mean.

Table 3. Lecturer Visibility Questionnaire (LVQ)
Cluster A: Lecturers' Visibility
Lecturers' Visibility in the Research World Because = 27

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}	SD	RMK
12	I have a personal research website where peers keep track of my research activities	7	6	8	6	2.52	1.12	A
13	My publications are harvested by Google Scholar search engine.	6	7	9	5	2.52	1.05	A
14	I have an ORCID account	7	8	7	5	2.63	1.08	A
15	Most of my research papers are published in open access journals	8	6	7	6	2.59	1.15	A
16	I have an academic data that shows the download records of my publications	4	5	10	8	2.19	1.04	D
Cluster Mean								
2.51 5.44								

Keys: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D – Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree

The data presented in Table 3 above shows that the cluster mean of the responses of lecturers in the department of LIS MOUAU of all the 5 items is 2.51 (cluster mean), which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.51 on 4-point rating scale. This indicated a high visibility of lecturers in LIS Department MOUAU. The standard deviation values of the 5 items ranged from 1.04 - 1.15 which indicated that the responses of the respondents were close to one another and to the mean.

Summary of Findings of the Study

Specifically, based on the data analyzed, the study:

- (1) Identifies ability to prepare a manuscript for open access publication, ability to identify suitable open access journals for my research, ability to understand and comply with open access journal policies, ability to format manuscripts according to open access journal guidelines and ability to pay article processing charges (apcs) for open access publication as lecturers' abilities to create researcher profile
- (2) The study identifies Ability to prepare a manuscript for open access publication, ability to identify suitable open access journals for my research, ability to understand and comply with open access journal policies. ability to format manuscripts according to open access journal guidelines and ability to pay article processing charges (apcs) for open access publication.
- (3) The study identifies the following as lecturer's visibility in the research world: having a personal research website where peers keep track of research activities, having an online researcher profile on research Gate, having an ORCID account and having most research papers published in open access journals

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INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE (ILSQ)

Bio-Data

1) Name of Your Institution.....

Cluster A: Librarians' Proficiency in Utilizing Scholarly Networking Sites

Indicate with a tick (✓) your proficiency in utilizing scholarly networking sites

I can proficiently utilize the following scholarly networking sites:

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Online Scholarly Discussions Forum				
2	Research Gate Website				
3	LinkedIn				
4	Academia.edu				
5	Google Scholar				

Keys: (SA) – Strongly Agree, (A) – Agree, (D) – Disagree, (SD) – Strongly Disagree

Cluster B: Librarians' Ability to Create Researcher Profile

I have the Following Researcher Profile Creation Abilities:

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD
6	Ability to provide up-to-date contact information on my research output.				
7	Ability to create a list of my published research publications.				
8	Ability to upload my CV on researchers networking sites.				
9	Ability to provide a list of my research-related skills and tools.				
10	Ability to upload a video/audio introduction of my research output.				

Keys: (SA) – Strongly Agree, (A) – Agree, (D) – Disagree, (SD) – Strongly Disagree

Librarians' Visibility Questionnaire (LVQ)

I am Visible in the Research World Because:

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I have a personal research website where peers keep track of my research activities				
2	I have an online researcher profile on research Gate				
3	I have an ORCID account				
4	Most of my research papers are published in open access journals				
5	I have an academic data that shows the download records of my publications				

2) Keys: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D – Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree

INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE (ILSQ)**Bio-Data**

1) Name of Your Institution.....

Cluster A: Lecturers' Ability to Archive Research Publications**I have the following Archiving Abilities:**

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Ability to prepare my publications for archiving.				
2	Ability to identify the copyright policies on my archived publications.				
3	Ability to obtain the necessary permissions for archiving my works.				
4	Ability to format publications according to archiving guidelines.				
5	Ability to upload publications to my institutional repositories.				

Keys: (SA) – Strongly Agree, (A) – Agree, (D) – Disagree, (SD) – Strongly Disagree**Cluster B: Publishing in Open Access Journals****I have the following Open Access Publishing Abilities:**

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD
6	Ability to prepare a manuscript for open access publication.				
7	Ability to identify suitable open access journals for my research.				
8	Ability to understand and comply with open access journal policies.				
9	Ability to format manuscripts according to open access journal guidelines.				
10	Ability to pay article processing charges (APCs) for open access publication.				

Keys: (SA) – Strongly Agree, (A) – Agree, (D) – Disagree, (SD) – Strongly Disagree**Lecturer Visibility Questionnaire (LVQ)****Cluster A: Lecturers' Visibility****I am Visible in the Research World Because:**

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I have a personal research website where peers keep track of my research activities				
2	I have an online researcher profile on research Gate				
3	I have an ORCID account				
4	Most of my research papers are published in open access journals				
5	I have an academic data that shows the download records of my publications				

Keys: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D – Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree