

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Influence of Information Skills Instruction on Information Behaviour of Private Secondary School Students' In Eti-Osa Local Government Area, Lagos State**

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The information behaviour of secondary school students has been identified as a phenomenon that is germane to their educational lives and thus, require urgent attention of all stakeholders in the sector since information has become a key requirement in the 21st century for basic human survival, hence, this study aimed at investigating the information behaviour of private secondary school students alongside their exposure to information skills instruction. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Three research questions and one hypothesis formed the basis of eliciting responses from two hundred and ninety-three (293) respondents drawn from six secondary schools using the stratified random sampling technique with the aid of a self-designed questionnaire tagged "ISIBS" Information Skills Instruction Information Behaviour of Students. Findings revealed that the information skills of senior secondary school students were just as the "Google Generation" as indicated in previous researches. They believed everything called "information" could be easily retrieved from "Google", a popular search engine used by today's youth. Findings also showed that instruction on information skills was lacking in all the sampled schools and have been mistaken as the same as instruction on library use and information technology. The study revealed that there was positive significant relationship between the information skills of secondary school students and their parental background ( $r=.398^{**}$ ,  $N=293$ ,  $p<.05$ ). This implied that student's information behaviour could be improved by instruction in information skills. All stakeholders in education should ensure that information skills instruction is integrated in the educational curriculum of all the levels of education starting from the primary level to the tertiary level of education in the country. This would ensure that information abilities become part and parcel of the lives of every citizen in the 21st century.

**Keywords:** Information behaviour, Information skills instruction, Secondary schools students

## **INTRODUCTION**

Private education is on the contrary characterized by a fee-paying system that could sometimes be selective in terms of its patrons. Most often, only high income earners are able to afford the exorbitant fees; though the fees could be attached to the fact that the private institutions are usually run by an individual and such endeavor would

surely require a huge capital to be able to meet accreditation requirements and also attract potential customers (parents/guardians). Parents' seemed to be more bothered about the quality of education regardless of the financial implications so far whoever providing the service could justify the ends. Usually, private schools had facilities and amenities that surpass their public counterpart which makes them a healthy choice. The Federal Ministry of Education stipulates that privately established schools must undergo accreditation process

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before it is lawfully permitted to run its business. Requirements for accreditation are strictly followed by private school owners to enhance their identity in the educational market. As part of the physical facilities to be present before accreditation, is a functional school library expected to aid pedagogical activities.

The 9-3-4 educational system i.e. nine years of continuous basic education, three years of secondary education and four years of tertiary education that is being operated in Nigeria, has been observed to have placed the secondary school education at the mediating level, thus, indicating that the secondary school education is important to making it through to the higher institutions. This is in support of Bamgbade (2013 as cited in Nick and Robert, 2004, p. 11) that reported that “the senior secondary school one to three consists of three classes of specializations which are science, art and commercial and the successful completion of senior secondary school guarantees the eligibility to matriculate into the higher institutions if the students are being successful in the senior secondary school certificate examination and the higher institution matriculation examination”. The secondary school education created a platform to strategically build a knowledge base composed of ethics and experiences supportive in the post-secondary education endeavors. This is in support of Ehigiamusoe (2012) that acclaimed that secondary education in Nigeria is aimed at promoting a progressive and united Nigeria. It is expected to function as a preparation for life and for higher education. Secondary education in Nigeria is one of the levels of education for the achievement of the philosophy and objectives of Nigerian Education as highlighted in the National Policy in Education (2004). The objectives include: a free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy and a land of bright and full opportunity for all citizens.

Moreso, Hyldegard (2012, p.4) in his study on Danish secondary school students, mentioned that the upper secondary school leaving examination is expected to reform pupils to become independent, responsible, reflective, result oriented, being able to find, explore and gain new knowledge being critical, creative and innovative and able to collaborate with other people. It is pertinent to study this category of population so as to understand their learning needs and proffer lasting solutions.

Secondary school students would basically require information to survive throughout their stay in the secondary school. In the course of handling information, which is a primary need when it comes to satisfying educational needs, various actions and activities are actively or passively engaged in to bridge the knowledge gap which ultimately defines their information behavior.

Information skills instruction is a structured process of developing in an individual, competencies that enable

critical thinking, self-discovery and purposeful learning which eventually improve knowledge acquisition necessary for self-development in everyday activity. These “instructions” which could also be referred to as “teaching”, if properly designed is expected to produce desirable outputs that would shape the behaviors of its recipient. Most often, individuals that receive adequate information skills instruction are those referred to as information literates and with the following competencies:

- i. Recognizes a need for information;
- ii. Distinguishes ways in which information gap may be addressed;
- iii. Able to construct strategies for locating information;
- iv. Locates and access information;
- v. Compares and evaluates information obtained from different sources;
- vi. Organises, applies and communicates information to others in ways appropriate to situation, and;
- vii. Synthesis and build upon existing information contributing to the creation of new knowledge (SCONUL, 1999).

And particularly, students that engage in information skills instruction are able to:

- i. Acquire a clearer understanding of the research process
- ii. Produce better assignments
- iii. Use a wide variety of information resources
- iv. Evaluate information critically and systematically; and
- v. Discuss plagiarism and address it more effectively (CONUL, 2004 as cited in CONUL, 2011).

It is against these backdrops that the researcher is interested in investigating whether information skills instructions influence information behaviour of private secondary school students’ in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objectives of this study is to examine the influence of information skills instruction on information behaviour of private secondary school students’ in Eti-Osa local government area of Lagos state and the specific objectives are to:

- i. find out the information behaviors of secondary school students in the selected private secondary schools;
- ii. examine the extent to which information skills instruction influence information behavior of secondary school students in the selected private secondary schools;
- iii. find out the methods of information skills instruction that determines the information behavior of secondary

school students in the selected private secondary schools.

### Research Questions

1. What are the information behaviors of private secondary school students in Eti-Osa L.G.A of Lagos state?
2. To what extent do information skills instruction influence information behavior of private secondary school students in Eti-Osa L.G.A of Lagos state?
3. What method of information skills instruction determines information behavior of secondary school students in Eti-Osa L.G.A of Lagos state??

### Research Hypothesis

**H<sub>0</sub>1:** There is no significant relationship between information skills instruction and information behaviour of private secondary school students in Eti-Osa local government area, Lagos State.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Information skills instruction and information behavior of secondary school students

The ideal information skills instruction is the one that is part of the curricular because information literacy requires a sustained development throughout all formal educational levels, primary, secondary and tertiary (IFLA guidelines and Infolit, 2006). These instruction covers all aspect of information recognition, information location, information handling (access, organization, evaluation) and information use (ethics), hence a carefully planned information skills could be expected to impact on all action, activities and attitudes that may be exhibited during information-related situations.

According to Fitzgibbons (2012), skill development could be better facilitated by instructional interventions as information skills and information behaviors are inseparable concepts. Averil and Lewis (2013) asserted that it is crucial to understand that information literacy is best addressed at multiple levels in the education process. The skills are built upon with appropriate instruction at each stage of learning as information professionals' work with classroom teachers to design appropriate assignments, provide library instruction for classes along with one-on-one assistance to students.

The goal of an instructional program based on media and information literacy curriculum is to develop students who are competent self-directed learners. They should be aware of their information needs and actively engage in the world of ideas. They should display confidence in their ability to solve problem and how to locate relevant

and reliable information, and to communicate what they have learned. They should hold high standards for their work and create quality products (IFLA, 2015).

The researcher opined that secondary school students aspart the information consumers should be guided and instructed on how to recognize their information need, locate, access, evaluate, use, and communicate it ethically in a manner that is morally and socially acceptable in the information society.

Fitzgibbons (2012) indicated that information skills instruction is a factor that could influence students' information behavior to a large extent. Duncan andVarcoe (2012) also reported that information literacy strategic plan supports students' success and engagement in research activities both academically and personally.

However, information behavior of secondary school students has been observed to be contrary to the belief that they are self-sufficient in skills related to information activities. Averil and Lewis (2013) reported that high school students lack the ability to effectively use the vast array of information sources now available to them and rely heavily on search engines and questionable tertiary sources such as Wikipedia. Students are also unable to determine how to find cited sources and equally unable to appropriately cite the sources they use. Plagiarism, intentional or otherwise is rampant (Averil and Lewis, 2013). Williams and Rowlands (2008) asserted that, "contrary to the popular view, there is little evidence that young people are expert searchers, or even that their search prowess has improved with time". Hyldegard (2012) in his research on Danish secondary school students discovered that secondary school students had preferences for internet sources such as Google and Wikipedia and as such describes them as the "Google Generation". Hyldegard (2012) also described the "Google Generation" as those born after 1993 and have been growing up with the internet, mobile phones etc. Based on this and other research studies, there has been a misconception on the IT literacy status of young people as it assumed that they are more internet savvy based on the ubiquitous presence of information communication technology (ICT) during their birth year.

In a CIBER report cited in Hyldegard (2012), the "Google-Generation" is characterized by being more IT literate than earlier generations; the young people learn by doing and approach technology with high expectations of interactivity and speed and as well multitask in every part of their life and transfer their of IT for amusement to educational practice. In the same work, Hyldegard (2012) opined that, "when looking more deeply into the information seeking behavior of the young, a serious gap can be demonstrated between their experiences, and perception of own information skill and actual performance". This argument supports ALA (2015) findings through statistics, that, "75% of students have no idea how to locate articles and resources they need for

their research, 60% don't verify the accuracy or reliability of the information they find, and 44% do not know how to integrate knowledge from different sources".

William and Rowlands (2008) also suggested young people's apparent facility with computers' "disguises some worrying problems" such as the inability to evaluate information effectively or use appropriate search strategies. Shenton and Dixon, presented the situation young people usually finds themselves as a result of overdependence on internet sources which is a great misconception embraced by their generation. They stated that, "whilst many perceive it to be a major resource for information for school assignments, they are critical of the internet weakness. They are disconnected by the mass of irrelevant sites listed by search engines when a search is made, and are intolerant when downloading times are slow. Nor do they enjoy reading large sections of text on-screen" (Shenton and Dixon, 2004, p. 36). Nielson Norman Group (2005 as cited in Elliot 2006) also investigated the usability of website by teenagers concluded that:

*"Contrary to many misconceptions about teens, who are heavy users of technology products and therefore are presumed to be techno-savvy across the board - teenagers are not in fact superior Web geniuses who can use anything a site throws at them." The success rate, indicating the "proportion of times users were able to complete a representative and perfectly feasible task on the target site," was 55 percent. The study concluded that "teens' poor performance is caused by three factors: insufficient reading skills, less sophisticated research strategies, and a dramatically lower patience level [than adults, who scored 66 percent]" p. 3*

The study further indicated that teenagers "don't like to read a lot on the Web," that they prefer interactive features, photos and images, and that they will not use a web site with useful content but poor presentation. All these research findings pointed to the fact that it is more of a myth than reality to assert that secondary school students also in the category of "Google-Generation" also known as "Millenials", "Net-Generations", "Generation-Y" and "Digital-Natives" (Meyers and Eisenberg, 2009) are instinctively skillful in approaching and interacting with the web in the search of academic-related information. In fact, the researcher believed that more of their information behavior is characterized by the "cut and paste" approach which promotes plagiarism. According to Williamson, McGregor, Archibald and Sullivan (2007), Australian secondary school students are cavalier regarding plagiarism and the authority of sources, and rely extensively on the free web for information. Plagiarism, as observed by Shenton (2007), is described in his own words below:

*"While watching pupils at work, I have noticed that a particular pattern is typically apparent when they are finding and using information for assignments. It involve*

*going immediately to an internet browser; accessing a search engine (almost always "Google"); entering an*

*obvious keyword or phrase to represent the matter in question; clicking on the link to the first site listed; examining it cursorily for the information required; copying any appropriate content, pasting this into a Word file; and accepting the materials with a minimum of editing" p.5.*

Mallari, et.al (2014) posited that, "a possible explanation for the relatively low level of search competence observed in students surveyed may be that they acquired searching skills on their own, without any formal training, and as a result, they used the simplest and most common techniques for retrieving information". Williams and Rowlands (2008) also attributed lack of increase in information retrieval proficiency to the perceived ease with which digital system (as exemplified by the web) can be searched. Averil and Lewis (2013), however, reported that post-secondary school student wished they had received instruction in the research process at the secondary school level or that they had paid more attention to the instruction they were given.

Based on literature, the researcher affirmed that there has been a misconception on the capabilities of secondary school students in information problem solving situation, which has lead to the neglect of the need to intervene in their information activities through information skills instruction. In addition, the researcher agrees that information skills instruction will have impact on students' information behavior, if more attention is directed at the skills needed for information problem solving as well as the method of instruction employed by information professionals in collaboration with school administrators and teachers in the teaching and learning process. Students could also be motivated to receive information skills instruction if they discover its' relevance to their overall achievement in academic and personal life situations.

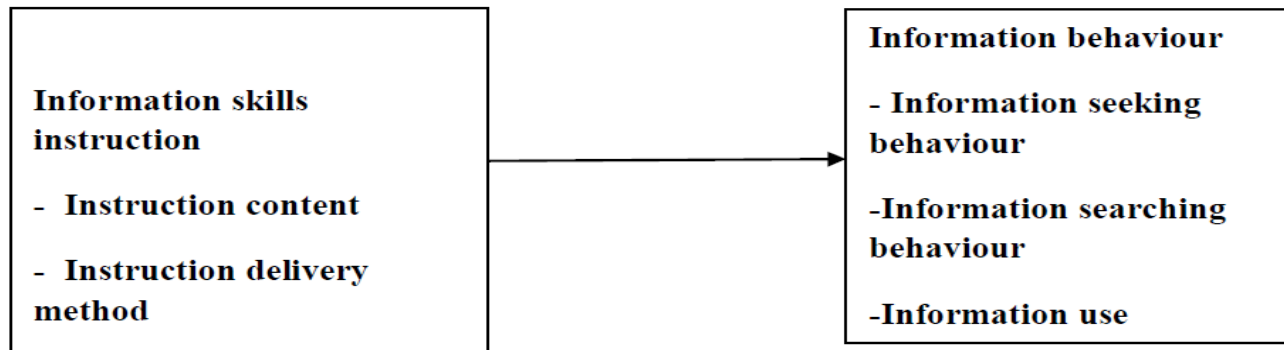
## METHODOLOGY

The research design used was descriptive survey and the study population was 489 of which stratified random sampling was used to select 293 sample shared among six (6) private secondary schools in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State.

### Hypothesis Testing

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between information skills instruction and information behavior of private secondary school students in Eti-Osa local government area, Lagos State. The result from Table 4.9 showed that there is a positive significant relationship between information skills instruction and information

### Conceptual Model



**Figure.1** A self-constructed model of information skills instruction and information behavior of secondary students in secondary schools

**Table 4.9: Relationship between information skills instruction and information behavior**

Variables		Information skills instruction	Information behavior	Df	Level of sig	Rem
Information Skills instruction	Pearson Coefficient Sig. (2 tailed) N	1	365** .002 293	291	0.05	Dig
Information Behaviour	Pearson Coefficient Sig. (2 tailed) N	365** .002 293	1 093			

Source: SPSS Output, 2018 \*\* Sig. at 0.05 level

behavior of private secondary school students as the calculated p-value of 0.002 at 291 degree of freedom is lesser than the significant level 0.05 ( $0.002 < 0.05$ ) where ( $r = .365^{**}$ ,  $N = 293$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted that: there is significant relationship between information skills instruction and information behavior of private secondary school students in Eti-Osa local government area, Lagos state. In Table 4.8, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.365 show a mild positive correlation between information skills instruction and students' information behavior. This implies that information skills instruction and information behavior move in pari-passu as improvement in information skills instruction should be observed alongside changes in information behavior.

## DISCUSSION

### Information Behavior of secondary school students

The study revealed that information needs is totally central to the information behavior of secondary school students when solving school related assignments. Information comes in as a key to help students complete

their school assignments or term projects which is the major reason they require information. This is corroborated by the findings of Otoide (2015) that academic purposes rank first among the information needs of secondary school students and that information is a valuable resource to every individual even secondary school students. Google was also viewed by two-thirds of the respondents as having all the information they might require for school work. This was in line with the findings of Hyldegard (2012) that secondary school generally used Google as the starting point to all their information needs. With 70% of the respondents across the selected school agreeing to the statement that it was easy to find information they needed on Google supported the myth that describes the "Google generation" as being confident about the ease of internet use. Williamson et al (2007) also discovered that secondary school students used the 'Google' for reasons which included being easily able to find information they understood to complete their school work which was one of the most important activities to the students. About two-thirds of the students also believed that knowledge in the use of I.T gadgets was a prerequisite to the ease of doing their school assignments or term projects. This outcome supported that of Baird and Fisher (2005 as cited in William and Rowlands, 2008) that young people are "technologically

savvy” and especially adept at quickly scanning a web page and deciding which links hold the promise of producing a ‘mother load’ information or valuable content. Just a little below 50% of all the respondents, saw classnotes and textbooks as enough information source to do their school assignments, as well as a few percentage above 50% preferring Google and Wikipedia to classnotes and textbooks when doing school assignments. This implies that secondary school students believed Google and Wikipedia holds more information than the content of their classnotes and subjects textbooks and thus would prefer using Google and Wikipedia. Hyldegard (2015) findings corroborated that students’ preference for information sources was based on the type of assignment and the specific step in the assignment process which could be an explanation for the thin line between the choices of information sources.

Averil and Lewis (2013) asserted that students at both secondary and undergraduate level rely heavily on Google and sources such as Wikipedia than monographs (textbooks) and databases listing peer reviewed journal articles. The study also showed that most students did not like spending much time on information search which could be responsible for students easily getting bored using the school library’s resources for school assignments or term projects. William and Rowlands (2008) findings corroborated that younger generation are impatient and have zero tolerance for delay though, it is truism of the age which we live in and crosses all generational boundaries in the digital environment. Hyldegard (2015) also asserted that students often spoke negative of library resources as being difficult and time consuming in contrast to the internet. Finally, the study revealed that copying from information sources was a normal behavior for secondary school students though, a higher percentage of respondents agreed that copying from Google and Wikipedia could help get enough good marks in school assignments or term projects. This finding is in agreement with that of Williamson, et al (2009) that the examination of assignments revealed that more students copied from the internet than they did from books. Shenton (2007) also identified that young searchers had information behaviors such as restricting their searches to Google and cutting and pasting information into essays without passing it through their brains.

### **Relationship between information skills instruction and information behavior**

The survey revealed that there was positive significant relationship between information skills instruction and information behavior. This implies that the display of some set of actions in the state of uncertainty by an individual is dependent on some level information skills instruction that has occurred over a period of time. This findings is supported by that of Mokhtar (2004) that

information literacy equips an individual with intellectual and social skills to use information tools wisely, and create new ideas from prior ones that could subsequently improve situations that range from personal to global. CONUL (2004) also asserts that students need to develop the cognitive, transferable skills to be able to work efficiently with information in the quest of satisfying their information needs.

### **Method of information skills instruction affecting information behavior.**

The study revealed that senior secondary school students were not receiving the right instruction on information skills. Apart from identifying the owner of an information source, other information skills were not learnt through the instruction students received on information technology and library use. Pask and Saunders (2004) supported that information technology or computer skills focuses on a separate and concretely defined set of skills that has less broader implications than information skills instruction, while IFLA (2006) pointed out that library use or library instruction emphasizes on the location of library resources. Moreso, the fairly related instruction (library use) was treated as a standalone course which did not have impact on students’ information behavior. Mallari, et al (2014) suggested the need to embed information skills instruction into secondary school education with information literacy outcomes incorporated in the curriculum. Also Khulthau (1987 as cited in Pordis and Palsdottir, 2015) argued for integrating information skills into the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on teaching “information skills required to use resources effectively in the context of classroom learning not as isolated library skills lesson”. CONUL (2011) concluded that information literacy, knowledge and skills, are like other similar skills, best learned when they are developed within the context of a particular discipline, rather than bolting on a library element to a particular module or course and assuming students will ‘acquire’ the necessary skills. Students are rarely motivated in such scenarios and often complain that they cannot see the relevance or need for such interventions.

### **CONCLUSION**

Information is an essential commodity in the schools lives of secondary schools student which are regarded as the ‘Google Generation’ because of the over-dependence on internet source which seems as the ultimate source for all required information for school work. Though other information source such as class notes, textbooks, school library resources exist to provide information, secondary schools students regard them as time wasting or difficult to use and understand resources. Secondary schools

student have zero tolerance for delay when doing school assignment and as such end up copying unethically from any information source they use for school assignment or term project. Secondary schools student behavior could be positively shaped if instruction on information skills is integrated into the school curriculum used in teaching students in schools.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. The information behavior of student should be monitored by all stakeholders in education because it is a behavior that would affect the cognitive and behavioral outcomes of students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
2. Information skills should be tackled with an integrated approach by curriculum planners so that student will automatically absorb it as part of their educational requirement.
3. Information skills instructions should begin from the foundation because it is a skill that require gradual approach, hence, it should be embedded in all the levels of education in the country.
4. Information professionals should be included in all levels of curriculum planning and implementation so that information skills are properly diffused into every subject that is taught in schools.
5. Teachers should stress the use of diverse information resources to student when doing school assignment or term project and create more time to carefully examine students' assignments or term project for unethical use of information.
6. Educators should regularly improve their information skills so as to equip themselves with the necessary skills for producing information literate student that can survive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Contributions to knowledge

This study has contributed to the body of existing knowledge. It has established that information skills instruction is crucial to achieving information competencies that can help in solving information problems. Hence, exposure to information skills instruction will improve behaviors that students will display to ensure that information needs are effectively and efficiently satisfied in an ethical manner.

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