

# Information Literacy Among Users of Selected Children's Library in Nigeria

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## Abstract

Information literacy among children in the contemporary world has bring about the need to investigate the importance of children libraries in acquiring literacy among library users. The study investigated information literacy skills for effective information resource utilization among users of Children Center Library, University of Nigeria Nsukka. The study used qualitative study design, data was collected using focus group discussion. Content analysis was use for data analysis. Instrument was validated by three (3) experts (two from Department of Library and Information and one from measurement and evaluation unit of the Department of Science Education), University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Findings revealed that children in CCL lacks the ability to recognize the needed information, to search and locate needed materials on catalogues. It also revealed that important skills are needed by the children. The extent of application of information literacy skills among the children is on the average. The barriers to information literacy among the users includes lack of access to information sources in the center library, limited parental involvement, information overload, peer pressure, spending much time on television, poor knowledge of librarians, fear of rejection among mates, language barriers, etc. Solutions include provision of unlimited access to information sources, parents assisting their kids at home, adequate training of librarians, good relationship between the children and staff, giving children sufficient time in the library and language tutoring among others.

**Keywords:** Information, Information literacy, Children, Library, Nigeria

## Introduction

The continuously expanding realm of information necessitates robust information literacy abilities, making it increasingly crucial to cultivate these skills in children. Therefore, it is necessity for library to see themselves as the guardian of knowledge throughout the years. The library is seen as the access point to knowledge and offers the fundamental prerequisites for continuous learning, autonomous decision-making, and the cultural advancement of individuals and social collectives. The library provides a means to educate every child by teaching them how to effectively utilize the resources available in the library (Ogbebor, 2011). According to Anumkua, Alaehie, and Igbokwe (2016), a library is an information center situated in a peaceful environment. Its main duties include identifying, collecting, organizing, storing, preserving, retrieving, and distributing information to various users such as teachers, students, non-tutorial staff, and organizations. The goal is to meet their evolving and diverse information requirements. According to Chan (2018), there is a substantial amount of research conducted over the last three decades that suggests a strong connection between the presence of well-functioning libraries and higher societal accomplishments.

Children's libraries are educational institutions that aim to familiarize young individuals with global literature and foster a passion for reading. Their work complements the efforts of public schools (Aina, et al. 2011). Children's libraries often offer a range of services, such as storytelling sessions for infants, toddlers, preschool children, and after-school programs. These activities aim to foster early literacy abilities and cultivate a passion for books. Summer reading programs for children, families, and adults are highly sought-after programs at children's libraries (Udomisor, Udomisor & Smith, 2013). Children's libraries must carefully curate content that will captivate the students, as this will stimulate their interest in reading within the library (Adeyemi, 2021). The New York Public Library and Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library both offer various programs and spaces to cater to children's needs. Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library has been recognized by the ALA for its award-winning space, which includes dedicated areas for babies, children, and teens.

These libraries aim to create a conducive environment for children to appreciate books by utilizing advanced technology. They provide educational initiatives such as mouse proficiency training for children, lending laptops to youngsters, engaging with interactive cubes, and organizing summer reading programs (Alabi, 2013). The establishment of children's libraries aims to fulfill the informational requirements of students in educational institutions. A school librarian, Busayo (2021), oversees the management of a library specifically designed for children. The children's library offers a variety of educational possibilities for students, with an emphasis on intellectual content, information literacy, and cultural and social development. Children's libraries house a variety of resources including books, films, recorded sound, realia, and digital media. A children's library can function either within or outside of a school as an educational facility that offers a dynamic instructional program integrated into the curriculum. This program focuses on developing resource-based, thinking-based, knowledge-based, reading and literacy, personal and interpersonal, and learning management capabilities (Buchanan, S., Harlan, M., Bruce, C., & Edwards, S. 2016). Children's libraries are akin to public libraries since they house storybooks, videos, recorded sound, realia, and digital material (Ibrahim, 2014). Public libraries in the United States, such as The New York Public Library and Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library, offer children's library services in addition to their other services (Alabi, 2013).

Information is a collection of processed data that must possess certain qualities in order to be considered valuable. These qualities include accessibility, accuracy, timeliness, completeness, cost-effectiveness, flexibility, reliability, relevance, simplicity, verifiability, and security (McGonigle & Mastrian, 2012). Information literacy encompasses a range of competencies and aptitudes that are necessary for individuals to effectively engage in tasks linked to information. These tasks include the ability to locate, retrieve, comprehend, analyze, organize, generate, convey, retain, and distribute information (CILIP 2018). Information literacy refers to the ability to recognize the need for information, effectively arrange and utilize information, and do so in an ethical manner (Buchanan, Harlan, Bruce, & Edwards, 2016; Pickard, Shenton, & Johnson, 2014; Faraz, 2020). The information literacy of users at the children's center library at the University of Nigeria Nsukka is a crucial component of their comprehensive education and learning experience. The University of Nigeria Children's Centre Library (CCL) was established in 1978 as an initiative of the University Women's Association at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The Children's Centre Library initially targeted the children of the university

community in Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria. These parents, who were familiar with the benefits of volunteerism and educational enrichment through libraries and recreational activities in other countries, noticed a lack of available libraries, recreational facilities, and reading materials that were relevant to the local environment. They sought to address this gap in order to help their children integrate effectively into society. The concept was then expanded to encompass youngsters beyond the University community who are deprived of any form of reading materials due to poverty and the lack of knowledge among their parents regarding the significance of purchasing textbooks and recreational reading materials for their children. The Centre extended its assistance to several elementary schools in the region by facilitating the establishment of school libraries and providing training programs for teacher librarians (Njoku, Okore, & Osadebe, 2020).

Although the Children's Centre Library at the University of Nigeria has made significant contributions, new data indicates that many children face challenges when seeking information in the library (Knight & Mercer, 2017). According to Wu, Tang, & Tsai (2014), these challenges may encompass insufficient understanding of library cataloguing, limited familiarity with table of contents and search terms or filters, and a low degree of technical literacy. This could be attributed to inadequate instruction or direction provided by the librarians. Students must engage in the process of interpreting information while obtaining it, as this is necessary for comprehending and deriving meaning from the material. They are also expected to make judgments regarding the significance and worth of the information. The information literacy of users at the Children's Centre Library at the University of Nigeria Nsukka is a crucial component of their comprehensive education and learning experience. The library in the children's centre at UNN is specifically built to meet the informational requirements of young students. The institution provides a diverse array of materials, such as books, digital media, and online databases, to facilitate their study and cultivate a passion for reading and learning. Nevertheless, the extent of the users' information literacy remains to be determined. This uncertainty arises from the limited number of library patrons who make use of the library. In light of this context, the study aims to examine the information literacy abilities of children at the Children's Centre Library, University of Nigeria Nsukka.

Information literacy is indispensable in the contemporary, rapidly changing world, and it has a pivotal impact on molding the academic and professional trajectories of individuals. Developing information literacy abilities enables individuals to proficiently assess and utilize information, therefore facilitating informed decision-making and problem-solving. Information literacy is crucial for success in contemporary society; however, the level of knowledge and skill in youngsters about information literacy might vary significantly. It is crucial for children to acquire information literacy abilities at an early stage of their schooling, as they increasingly depend on external sources of information for both academic and recreational activities. These abilities are crucial for youngsters to effectively navigate their career growth and lead fulfilling personal and professional lives. The importance of information literacy cannot be exaggerated, since it enables individuals to find pertinent sources of information and easily retrieve the information they require. Information literacy skills empower youngsters to engage in lifelong learning. Individuals have the ability to continuously gain additional information and expertise, ensuring they remain informed about the most recent advancements in their specific area of expertise. Conversely, lacking information literacy skills can result in various drawbacks, ultimately leading to the spread of false or inaccurate information.

Without the capacity to critically assess sources of information, youngsters may accept inaccurate or deceptive information, resulting in erroneous decision-making. Children who lack information literacy abilities are more likely to underperform in exams and miss out on opportunities for personal and professional development. In order to prevent these repercussions, youngsters should make use of libraries.

Nevertheless, even with the abundance of resources and services in children's libraries, it remains unknown if children possess the skills to effectively explore, assess, and utilize the available information and resources. Children may encounter difficulties when trying to navigate the diverse range of sources at their disposal, and the capacity to use them proficiently is crucial for cultivating vital skills that will enhance their academic advancement. This could be the explanation for why the children's centre library at the University of Nigeria Nsukka is consistently empty, and therefore not being used to its full potential. Hence, the objective of the study is to examine the level of information literacy among patrons of the Children's Centre Library at the University of Nigeria Nsukka.

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the information literacy skills among users of children center library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Ascertain the literacy skills expected among users of children center library, University of Nigeria Nsukka.
2. Examine the barriers of information literacy among users of children center library, University of Nigeria Nsukka.
3. Proffer solutions to the barriers of information literacy among the users of children center library, University of Nigeria Nsukka

The following research question will guide this study:

1. What are the literacy skills expected among users of children center library, University of Nigeria Nsukka?
2. What are the barriers of information literacy among users of children center library, University of Nigeria Nsukka?
3. What are the solutions to the barriers of information literacy among the users of children center library, University of Nigeria Nsukka?

The topic is important in both theoretical and practical domains. This study is based on Palmer's Self-selection theory from 1977, which suggests that individuals intentionally choose and use information that aligns with their personal needs, interests, and goals. It implies that consumers have the freedom to determine which information is important to them and how they will engage with it. When examining the level of information literacy among users of CCL, UNN, the self-selection theory becomes relevant in understanding how children in this community interact with library resources to meet their information needs. The theory highlights that users' information-seeking behavior is influenced by their individual interests and motivations. Within this framework, it suggests that children tend to select knowledge that aligns with their personal interests, like books related to specific topics or their favorite hobbies. The theory emphasizes the importance of user autonomy in making decisions about information selection, suggesting that children should have the freedom to choose their reading materials and explore subjects that interest them, ultimately enhancing their development of information literacy. The results of this study will either support or challenge this concept.

Essentially, the study will be valuable for children, parents, teachers, librarians, curriculum planners, government officials, and future academics.

The findings will provide educators with insights into the information literacy needs of young learners and identify gaps in the current curriculum. The study aims to improve instructors' understanding of how to assist children in developing skills such as information retrieval, evaluation, analysis, and utilization for academic purposes. The findings will help teachers enhance their teaching methods, leading to improved academic performance among students.

The results will be used by children's center librarians to assess information needs and preferences in the center, as well as in other similar facilities. This information will guide them in expanding and diversifying their collections to meet those demands, ultimately enhancing the relevance and utilization of library resources.

The findings will assist curriculum developers in identifying weaknesses in the current educational framework regarding information literacy, with the goal of enhancing the curriculum by ensuring the integration of information literacy skills across various subjects and grade levels.

The findings will also encourage policymakers to create policies related to information literacy in schools and libraries, including resource allocation, investment in library infrastructure, and strategic planning to enhance information literacy among children.

The study is limited to the Children's Centre Library at UNN. The focus is to evaluate the level of information literacy among users of the children's library center at the University of Nigeria Nsukka. Specifically, it aims to assess how users apply information literacy skills, identify barriers that hinder information literacy, and propose solutions to overcome these obstacles. The study population will consist of users of the children's center library at the University of Nigeria Nsukka.

Information refers to processed data that has been analysed or interpreted using knowledge or understanding. In order for information to possess value and significance, it must possess a high level of quality. Information refers to processed data that has been analysed and interpreted using knowledge and expertise. In order to possess value and significance, information must exhibit high quality. According to Knight and Mercer (2017), the development of information literacy abilities during childhood serves as the basis for continuous learning throughout one's life. Children who acquire the skills to locate, assess, and utilise knowledge proficiently are more aptly prepared to excel academically and thrive in all aspects of their lives. Information literacy teaching enhances children's critical thinking abilities through the assessment of information sources and the scrutiny of their trustworthiness. This process fosters analytical thinking and cultivates children's ability to make informed judgements as consumers of information (Hassen, 2016). Valuable and high-quality information possesses several important characteristics. These include accessibility, which means that the information is easily obtainable; security, which ensures that the information is protected from unauthorised access; timeliness, meaning that the information is up-to-date; accuracy, indicating that the information is free from errors; relevancy, which means that the information is directly related to the topic or subject at hand; completeness, indicating that all necessary details are included; flexibility, meaning that the information can be adapted or modified as needed; dependability, which ensures that the information is trustworthy and consistent; objectivity, indicating that the information is unbiased and free from personal opinions or biases; utility, meaning that the information is useful and applicable; transparency, indicating that the sources and methods used to gather the information are clearly disclosed; verifiability, meaning that the information can be confirmed or validated; and

reproducibility, indicating that the information can be replicated or reproduced by others (McGonigle & Mastrian, 2012). Comprehensive information comprises all the required and fundamental details. Information literacy refers to data that may be utilised for a multitude of different purposes. Furthermore, Njoku, Okore, & Osadebe (2020) concluded that information literacy equips students with the skills to be self-reliant learners and critical thinkers, enabling them to do independent research, solve problems, and actively engage in their educational pursuits.

The National Literacy Trust, as stated in the IFLA Section CHILD Newsletter (2014), defines literacy as the capacity to comprehend and interpret written, spoken, and listened language, hence facilitating persons' understanding of the surrounding world. Research has indicated that children who possess literacy skills have superior cognitive development compared to their peers who lack such skills (Clack & TeravainenGoff, 2018). An information literate society is one that possesses the ability to acquire, assess, utilise, and convey information in a manner that is both effective and efficient. By imparting essential information literacy skills to our youngsters, we may effectively cultivate an information literate society (Olubiyo & Olubiyo, 2023). According to Amegashie & Ankamah (2020), the responsibility of providing information literacy instruction in schools mostly falls on libraries. This idea was initially introduced by Paul Zurkowski, who served as the president of the American Information Industry Association in 1974.

Information literacy is an essential skill for acquiring knowledge. It involves the ability to identify when information is required and efficiently find, assess, utilise, and communicate information in different formats. Information literacy skills are utilised in teaching and learning to guide and support students in their educational endeavours. Gossen and Nurnberger (2013) elucidate the intricate relationship between the complexity of information seeking and utilisation in children and their cognitive, emotional, and linguistic development, as well as their fine motor skills. Young children allocate a significant portion of their working memory to acquire and process new skills, thereby requiring extra time to assimilate and reinforce new learning (Gossen & Nurnberger, 2013). Furthermore, students have a strong inclination to prioritise spending additional time with their friends and classmates engaging in recreational activities rather than staying at home and engaging in reading. Consequently, this could result in a decrease in the children's degree of information literacy. Aina, et al (2011) have argued that there is a strong association between poor information literacy and delinquency, school violence, and even incidents of test malpractice.

This is a crucial moment in the lives of youngsters that necessitates significant concentration. The development of literacy skills in children is contingent upon their age and stage of development. As children grow older, they can be introduced to more sophisticated activities using libraries, databases, and digital technologies. Integrating literacy skills into various courses can enhance their meaningfulness and development. In the study conducted by Lars, et al. (2021), it was found that parents and educators have a vital role in fostering the development of information literacy abilities in children. Parents can demonstrate information-seeking behaviours and establish learning chances based on inquiry in the home environment. Teachers have the ability to design captivating educational activities that aid in the development of these essential abilities in youngsters. Providing children with robust information literacy abilities enables them to excel in the era of abundant information (Udomisor, Udomisor & Smith, 2013).



Multiple tactics can be utilised to augment the acquisition of literacy skills in children. The tactics encompassed in this list are Read aloud, storytelling, engaging children in play, project work, interactions, explorations, reading, phonological activities, literacy scaffolding, and literary dramatisation. Additionally, including children in book clubs is also recommended (Onuorah, 2021). Researchers such as Dickson, Griffith, Golinkoff, and Hursh-Pasek (2012) and Gold and Gibson (2018) have noted that the acquisition of literacy abilities commences at a very young age. According to the authors, reading aloud to children at a young age aids in the development of their language abilities and improves their ability to read and write. The publication "Readout and Read" (2014) suggests that reading aloud to children helps them learn a variety of words, increases their motivation, interest, and recall. According to Gold and Gibson (2018), reading aloud enhances children's confidence and proficiency in reading. It also helps them relate the reading material to universal themes and connect books to their unique life experiences. Dickson, Griffith, Golinkoff, and Hirsh-Pasek (2012) argue that children's language skills emerge at an early stage, influenced by the frequency of parental reading and the presence of a nurturing home setting (Waldfogel, 2012). Therefore, the act of reading aloud to children and instructing them is the ability of reading work together to enhance children's literacy abilities. Engaging with a child in their primary language or native tongue can be an effective approach in fostering the child's literacy skills. According to Massa (2018), narrative has a crucial role in developing and enhancing literary and imaginative abilities. According to Macdonald, as mentioned in Massa (2018), storytelling enhances several skills such as listening, speaking, imagination, and composing phrases, while also fostering the creation of narratives. Teachers often utilise play and literature-dramatization as effective ways to promote active listening and engagement among students during instruction.

Information literacy is a crucial skill for children, as it enables them to efficiently and ethically locate, assess, and utilize information. In today's world, it is essential to possess the skill of confidently and efficiently navigating through a wide range of information sources. This skill is not only important for achieving academic success but also for enhancing future career opportunities and active engagement in civic activities (Stevens & O'Connor, 2018). Studies indicate that it is advantageous for children to acquire information literacy abilities from their early years. Maker and Schellner-Rogers (2014) advocate for teaching information literacy from the early stages of childhood. By instilling information literacy ideas in children from an early age, they can cultivate cognitive habits that enable them to become engaged, lifelong learners capable of adapting to emerging technologies and information landscapes. Additionally, imparting information literacy skills to children might enhance their capacity for critical thinking and problem-solving. Julius and Gross (2017) assert that information literacy skills are intricately linked to critical thinking skills. As youngsters develop the ability to assess information critically, they not only enhance their understanding of the surrounding world but also improve their ability to integrate multiple sources of information and make well-informed choices. Information literacy skills can also facilitate the promotion of digital citizenship among children. Singh and Kaushik (2016) state that information literacy plays a crucial role in digital citizenship by promoting the development of reflective thinking, questioning, and critical assessment of information among young individuals. By teaching children how to safely and responsibly navigate digital settings, they can develop a strong understanding of digital ethics and social responsibility. This, in turn, will enable them to become productive and responsible contributors to their communities.

### **Barriers Affecting information literacy among children**

The significance of information literacy for children cannot be overstated, but there are various obstacles that can hinder their ability to acquire and apply these skills. Limited access to technology or resources is a common obstacle to information literacy among youngsters. Some children may not have access to computers, the internet, textbooks, storybooks, or other resources, which limits their ability to find and evaluate information. According to Julius and Gross (2017), teachers and librarians may also lack the necessary training or understanding to effectively teach children how to develop information literacy skills, further hindering their progress.

Language barrier is another significant obstacle to children's information literacy. Children who are not proficient in the language of instruction may struggle to understand and evaluate information. Additionally, a child's socioeconomic background can impact their literacy development. Children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds may have limited access to resources compared to their more affluent peers, making it harder for them to obtain information. The vast amount of online information available can also make it difficult for children to locate and evaluate relevant information (Julius & Gross, 2017).

Libraries have a crucial function in fostering information literacy in children, and there are various approaches that libraries can employ to minimise the obstacles to acquiring these abilities. These techniques involve ensuring that libraries provide laptops, iPads, and internet connection, which can be utilised by children from diverse socioeconomic situations to obtain knowledge. Libraries have the ability to cooperate with instructors in order to incorporate information literacy education into the curriculum, so guaranteeing that pupils consistently receive assistance in acquiring these abilities (Rwandan Education Board, 2017). Librarians should receive training to enhance their expertise and proficiency in information literacy, enabling them to offer efficient assistance to youngsters (Kariuki & Masinde, 2014). Furthermore, libraries have the ability to establish a hospitable atmosphere that fosters children's curiosity and education, utilising interactive exhibits, games, and various other activities. Libraries should offer culturally-sensitive resources that mirror the cultural diversity of the community they cater to. This can aid in engaging youngsters and fostering a sense of belonging (Rwandan Education Board, 2017). By employing these measures, libraries can mitigate the obstacles to information literacy among youngsters, and foster lifelong learning and success in the digital world.

In 2018, Yebowaah conducted an analysis of the information literacy skills of undergraduate students at the University for Development Studies, specifically at the Wa-Campus in Tamale, Ghana. The study was a preliminary investigation. The study indicates that the majority of participants lacked awareness regarding the aspects of information literacy. Furthermore, pupils lack familiarity with information, sources, information retrieval, and information utilisation, indicating a poor degree of information literacy among them. Njoku, Okore, and Osadebe (2020) conducted a study on the impact of the Children's Centre at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, on improving literacy skills among primary school children in the Nsukka Local Government Area. The research demonstrates that the centre has made significant contributions to the development of Nsukka children, while also working towards creating a future free from child poverty. The study highlights the importance of literacy in securing employment and improving living conditions. Eze and Aduba (2022) conducted a study on information literacy (IL) instruction at library schools in Nigeria. They found that there was a notable enhancement in the information literacy



skills of university students. Olubiyo and Olubiyo (2023) conducted a literature review on information literacy education in the digital era. They found that educators worldwide, in various educational settings such as primary, secondary, tertiary, and professional education, have been creating strategies and policies to design learning opportunities that empower learners to effectively utilise available information literacy resources.

## Methodology

The study utilized a descriptive research design to investigate the level of information literacy among users of the Children's Centre Library at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. According to Nworgu, Mesagan, et al. (2022), a descriptive survey research design is a type of survey research that focuses on gathering data and systematically defining the characteristics of a specific population in a sequential manner. The study employed a descriptive research design to investigate the level of information literacy among users of the Children's Centre Library at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In their study, Nworgu, Mesagan, et al. (2022) define a descriptive survey research design as a purposeful type of survey research that focuses on systematically collecting data and providing a sequential description of the characteristics of a particular community.

The study focuses on the specific location of the Children's Centre Library at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, situated in Southeast Nigeria. The Children's Centre was established in 1978 by the University Women's Association of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Initially, the primary emphasis of the Children's Centre activities was on the children belonging to the university community. The Centre supports select elementary schools in the region by facilitating the establishment of school libraries and providing training programs for teacher librarians.

The population of the study consists of all individuals who are registered users and tutors (both staff and pupils) of the Children's Centre Library at UNN. The population, upon reinstatement in 2024 as indicated by the center's statistics, consisted of 250 registered users. The data collection process relied on unintentional sampling to gather responses from a total of eight (8) participants, who were selected based on their availability. This group consists of 5 youngsters and 3 staff members who work in the library.

The tool used in this study underwent content validation by three experts: two individuals from the Department of Library and Information Science and one lecturer from the measurement and evaluation section of the Department of Science Education at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The experts were asked to provide amendments and recommendations on the instrument used to extract information for the study.

To achieve this detailed descriptions of the study's' population, participants and data collection process were made available for other scholars/academics. The Department of Library and Information Science on behalf of the Faculty of the Education Research Ethics Committee of the University of Nigeria approved the research. All respondents provided informed consent.

The researcher conducted the interviews personally with the respondents. It required a consistent three-week visit before the participants could successfully recruit the kids for the study. The respondents were informed that their information would be used exclusively for academic purposes, safeguarding their rights. Every participant willingly answered all the questions without hesitation. The responses were depicted in the following manner: Teacher Librarians (TL) and Children (C). The

collected data were evaluated by content analysis, which involved reporting the precise terms used by the respondents.

## Results

### ***What is the literacy skills expected among users of the Children Center Library, University of Nigeria Nsukka?***

Participant responses revealed based on C1-C5 that users of the children's center library are required to have information literacy abilities, which will benefit them both in utilizing the library and in their ongoing pursuit of knowledge. These skills encompass the capacity to identify necessary information, conduct information searches, locate relevant materials in catalogs, extract information collected from various sources, and distinguish between different types of information.

As teacher librarians (TL1), we maintain that children must possess numerous essential literacy skills to proficiently utilize the library and avail themselves of the accessible resources. These encompass fundamental reading and comprehension abilities, proficiency in navigating the library's structure and resources, and the capacity for critical thinking to assess the information they discover. Additionally, TL2 expressed their anticipation for the children to possess a comprehensive understanding of information literacy principles, including the capacity to recognize their information requirements and proficiently explore and discover pertinent resources. TL3 included the requirement for children to possess proficient communication abilities, encompassing both written and verbal skills, in order to effectively articulate their thoughts and actively interact with library personnel and fellow patrons.

### **What are the barriers to information literacy among users of the Children Center Library?**

The obstacles to information literacy among users of the children's library at the University of Nigeria Nsukka include limited access to information sources within the library, minimal parental engagement, excessive information overload, peer influence, excessive television consumption, inadequate knowledge of librarians, and fear of social rejection. According to TL1, one of the major obstacles we face is the restricted availability of technology and digital resources. A significant portion of the children we assist come from economically disadvantaged households, face language problems, have limited access to visual aids, lack sufficient time to spend in the library, and experience peer pressure. This hinders their ability to fully develop their search skills. TL2 has confirmed that the youngsters are currently located at the library. However, our collection of books and computer equipment is frequently overused and obsolete. It can be very frustrating for them when they try to retrieve information. Additionally, TL3 indicated that a notable obstacle is the linguistic and cultural disparities encountered by many of our consumers. Many of the available information sources are in English, posing a significant difficulty for youngsters who do not have English as their first language. Additionally, there is a need for a greater variety of materials in the library collection that are relevant to other cultures.

The youngsters have identified several challenges they encounter, including language barriers, poor visual representation of information, inadequate time in the library, and a lack of freedom of expression. C1 emphasized that one significant challenge is the feeling of boredom induced by the abundance of available information. With a vast selection of books, it can be difficult to choose the most suitable one, leading to confusion in discerning between high-quality and low-quality options. C2 acknowledged that while librarians or teachers sometimes provide

guidance on book searching techniques, it can be challenging to remember all the necessary procedures and tactics. More opportunities for practice are desired to become more comfortable with the process. According to C3, many of the books and resources in the library are dull and lack appeal. C4 indicated that the primary issue he frequently encounters is related to understanding the meaning of words. C5 also believes that the physical arrangement of the library can sometimes act as an obstacle, with shelves being excessively tall and densely packed, leading to disorientation or frustration while searching for specific materials.

### ***What are the solutions to the barriers of information literacy among users of the Children Center Library, University of Nigeria Nsukka?***

There are multiple solutions to the obstacles in information literacy faced by users of the children's library at the University of Nigeria Nsukka. TL1 has prioritised enhancing the resources in the library, specifically the books and materials. TL2 We are actively seeking additional financing to acquire more up-to-date books, enhance our computer systems, and improve access to digital educational resources. TL3 emphasised their strong commitment to improving our information literacy teaching. We are creating interactive and practical learning experiences, while also fostering closer collaboration with classroom instructors to include these skills throughout the curriculum.

As per the children's perspective, C1 believes that it is crucial to have increased opportunities for utilising the library resources in order to practise well. C5 suggested that the librarians may potentially enhance the user-friendliness of the actual library as well. TL2 determined that it is imperative to collaborate closely with the school administration and other stakeholders in order to obtain the required financing and resources to implement these improvements.

In summary, the solutions to the barriers of information literacy among users of the children's library at the University of Nigeria Nsukka include: offering unlimited access to information sources, encouraging parents to assist their children at home, providing adequate training for librarians, promoting good relationships between children and librarians, allowing children ample time in the library, and offering language tutoring.

## **Discussion**

The findings revealed that the expected literacy skills of users at the children's center library include the ability to identify necessary information, conduct information searches, locate materials in catalogs, extract information from various sources, and distinguish between different types of information. This aligns with the findings of Eze and Aduba (2022), who asserted that students possess similar skills.

The obstacles to information literacy among users of the children's library at the University of Nigeria Nsukka include limited access to information sources within the library, minimal parental engagement, excessive information overload, peer influence, excessive television consumption, inadequate knowledge of librarians, fear of social exclusion, language barriers, limited visual representation of information, insufficient time allocated for library use, and restricted freedom of expression for children. According to Shenton and Pickard's (2014) analysis, low family income and low self-esteem are identified as impediments to information literacy.

The strategies for overcoming obstacles to information literacy among users of the children's center library at the University of Nigeria Nsukka include granting unrestricted access to information resources in the library, encouraging parental involvement in supporting their children's learning at home, providing comprehensive

training for librarians, fostering positive relationships between librarians and children, allowing ample time for children to spend in the library, and offering language tutoring services. According to Njoku, Okore, and Osadebe's (2020) report, the challenges to information literacy can be addressed by implementing school library development and conducting workshops for head teachers and teacher librarians.

### ***Recommendations***

1. The center should collaborate with nearby schools and communities to advocate for the development of information literacy skills. This collaboration will enhance the recognition of the significance of information literacy skills and attract a larger audience to the library.
2. It is necessary to allocate additional resources to accommodate a wide variety of learning styles. Utilizing visual and aural resources will effectively cater to youngsters with diverse learning styles.
3. Management should routinely conduct evaluations to gauge the efficacy of the library's information literacy resources. The assessment should be used to pinpoint areas that need improvement as well as areas that show strength.

### **Study Constraints**

1. The inadequate presence of individuals responsible for attending to a particular matter. The presence of children in the library poses a significant constraint on the study, resulting in prolonged efforts to gather the five youngsters who took part in the research.
2. Certain youngsters exhibited shyness, while others displayed a lack of responsiveness. It was challenging to assemble individuals who possessed expertise and participated in the study.
3. The study was conducted at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Therefore, the conclusions of this study are limited and cannot be generalized to all children's centers.

### ***Recommendations for Further Academic Pursuits***

1. This study was conducted at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. It can be investigated at alternative children's centers in Nigeria.
2. The study utilized descriptive and interview methods, which may have had limitations. The same study can be conducted utilizing a mixed method technique.

## **Conclusion**

The findings indicate that users of the children's center library are expected to possess literacy skills such as the ability to identify relevant information, conduct information searches, locate materials using catalogs, extract information from various sources, and distinguish between different types of information. The study examined the obstacles to information literacy among users of the children's library, which encompassed factors such as inadequate availability of information sources within the library, insufficient parental participation, excessive information overload, peer influence, and limited freedom of speech for the children, among other factors. Possible solutions were proposed, such as granting unrestricted access to information resources in the central library, parents assisting their children at home, thorough training of librarians, ensuring positive interactions between librarians and children, allocating ample time for children in the library, and offering language tutoring.

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