School Libraries and Student Information Literacy: A Study of Model Secondary School, FUT Minna, Niger State, Nigeria

[1]Hussaini Musa; [2]Abu Isa Omali [3]Patricia I. Chukwu
[1-3] University Library Services, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State, Nigeria
[1]hussaini.musa@futminna.edu.ng; [2]isaomali@futminna.edu.ng; [3]pat.chuk@futminna.edu.ng

Abstract
This study investigated the role of the school libraries in fostering information literacy skills among students of Model Secondary School, Federal University of Technology (FUT) Minna, Niger State, Nigeria. The study assessed the availability and accessibility of library resources, frequency and purpose of library use, students' self-rated information literacy levels, and the perceived support provided by the library. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected from 200 students using a structured questionnaire. Findings revealed that textbooks (89.0%) and fiction/storybooks (80.0%) were the most available and accessible resources, while only 17.5% of respondents reported access to internet/ICT facilities. Library usage was moderate; 32.5% of students used the library 2–3 times a week, while 14.0% reported daily use. The primary reasons for library visits were reading for assignments (55.0%) and personal study (45.0%). Students' information literacy levels generally ranges from low to moderate. Only 15.0% rated themselves as very good at identifying information needs, 12.5% in searching for information, and 7.5% in referencing sources properly. In terms of library support, 45.0% of students agreed that staff provided research guidance, while a significant majority (82.5%) reported no digital literacy support. The study concludes that while the library moderately supports academic needs through print resources, it falls short in promoting comprehensive information literacy due to inadequate infrastructure, poor digital access, and limited instructional support. It recommends investing in ICT infrastructure, implementing structured information literacy programmes, and training library personnel to deliver effective user education.

Keywords: *School library, Information literacy, Library usage, Digital resources, Secondary education, Nigeria.*

Introduction
School libraries play an indispensable role in 21st-century education, serving as foundational pillars for student learning,

literacy development, and academic achievement. Beyond their traditional function as repositories of print materials, they have evolved into dynamic learning environments that cultivate a wide range of competencies, including reading culture, critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, and independent learning (IFLA, 2015). The school library today is expected to be more than a physical space, but also a pedagogical partner in the teaching and learning process, contributing significantly to intellectual development and the pursuit of lifelong education In the context of today's digital and information-driven society, the demands on learners have increased exponentially.

Students are now required not only to read and comprehend but also to critically engage with a multitude of information formats, including textual, visual, and digital. This makes information literacy a central competency for academic success. Information literacy refers to the ability to recognise an information need, locate and evaluate relevant resources, and apply information ethically and effectively for decision-making and problem-solving. According to the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, 2016), information literacy is a crucial learning outcome that empowers learners to become independent thinkers and informed citizens. Within the school setting, well-functioning libraries play a vital role in developing these skills through structured programmes, access to diverse resources, and librarian-guided instruction.

However, in Nigeria, the potential of school libraries remains largely underutilised. While education policies, such as the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013), emphasise the importance of school libraries as essential components of learning institutions, the reality in many schools reflects systemic neglect. Studies have consistently reported challenges such as poor funding, lack of professional librarians, outdated collections, insufficient integration with curriculum delivery, and an overall lack of administrative commitment to library development (Esan, 2022; Adebayo, 2022). These constraints not only limit students' access to meaningful learning resources but also hinder their acquisition of information literacy skills. In many Nigerian secondary schools, especially public ones, the absence of modern library infrastructure, including access to internet facilities, digital databases, and multimedia tools, further exacerbates the gap between students and the 21st-century learning tools they require. Even in institutions where library facilities exist, such as Model Secondary School at the Federal University of Technology (FUT) Minna, the quality of services, availability of resources, and the role of the librarian in fostering information literacy remain not fully explored.

This study therefore aims to assess the role of the school library at Model Secondary School, FUT Minna, in developing students' information literacy skills. It explores how library resources are accessed and utilised, the extent of students' information literacy competencies, and the kind of instructional or support services provided. The study hopes to reveal both the strengths and gaps in library-based information literacy support, offering insights for policy makers, educators, and library professionals seeking to improve library services and integrate them meaningfully into secondary education in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem
In today's knowledge-driven global economy, students' ability to effectively access, evaluate, and use information is essential for academic and lifelong success. Although school libraries are intended to support the development of these competencies, many Nigerian school libraries remain underutilised or insufficiently equipped to promote meaningful information literacy learning (Olajide & Zinn, 2020). Students often engage with information, both print and digital, without the critical skills needed to assess credibility and relevance, which undermines their academic performance and independent thinking. Despite the presence of library facilities in some schools, there is a persistent gap between resource availability and actual student competency. Studies have shown that the lack of structured information literacy programmes, trained librarians, and integration with teaching practices weakens the library's impact (Ndagi, 2023; Esan, 2022). This challenge persists even in model secondary schools, raising concerns about how effectively libraries are functioning in practice. This study investigates the role of the school library in developing students' information literacy at Model Secondary School, Federal University of Technology (FUT) Minna. It examines the availability and use of library resources, assesses students' literacy skill levels, and evaluates the library's contribution to information-seeking and application. The findings aim to inform strategies for enhancing library-based interventions and shaping education policy and practice in Nigeria.

Research Objectives
The main objective of this study is to examine the contribution of the school library to the development of students' information literacy skills at Model Secondary School, Federal University of Technology (FUT) Minna. The specific objectives are to:
1. identify the types of information resources available in the school library of Model Secondary School, Federal University of Technology (FUT) Minna

2. determine the frequency and pattern of library use among students of Model Secondary School, Federal University of Technology (FUT) Minna

3. assess the level of information literacy possessed by students of Model Secondary School, Federal University of Technology (FUT) Minna

4. explore how the school library supports the development of information literacy skills in Model Secondary School, Federal University of Technology (FUT) Minna

Literature Review

The review was carried out both conceptually and empirically.

Conceptual Clarification

Information literacy is widely recognised as a foundational skill for navigating the modern information landscape. It encompasses the ability to recognise an information need, locate relevant resources, evaluate their credibility, and use information ethically and effectively. The American Library Association (ALA, 2000) defines it as the ability to "recognise when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information." These skills are essential not only for academic success but also for informed personal and societal decision-making. In educational settings, information literacy supports independent learning, critical thinking, and inquiry-based instruction. Lloyd (2010) emphasizes its role in fostering lifelong learning competencies, while the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, 2016) provides a conceptual framework with key pillars such as "Research as Inquiry," "Authority Is Constructed and Contextual," and "Information Has Value." These can be adapted to secondary education to build students' research habits and evaluative thinking from an early stage.

School libraries play a crucial role in promoting information literacy and academic development. They serve as access points for a variety of resources, both print and digital, and act as instructional partners that support curriculum delivery, reading engagement, and research competence. According to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2015), the primary function of a school library is to provide information and ideas fundamental to students' successful participation in an information-rich society. In practice, effective school libraries collaborate with teachers, facilitate reading and digital literacy, offer safe learning environments, and support diverse learning needs (Bamigbola & Onifade, 2024). However, in the Nigerian context, many school libraries are constrained by chronic underfunding, poor infrastructure, and a shortage of trained library professionals

(Olajide & Zinn, 2020). These limitations significantly reduce their capacity to contribute meaningfully to students' information literacy development, despite policy recognition of their educational value.

Empirical Review
Empirical evidence from Nigerian secondary schools highlights significant disparities in the availability and quality of information resources across institutions, particularly between public and better-funded private or model schools. Many public school libraries lack up-to-date textbooks, periodicals, and essential ICT tools required for 21st-century learning. This gap in infrastructure limits students' ability to access diverse and current sources of information necessary for academic growth and independent learning (Olajide & Zinn, 2020; Esan, 2022). Library usage among secondary school students in Nigeria is generally low, with most students visiting the library infrequently and primarily for compulsory academic activities such as completing assignments or preparing for examinations. Factors contributing to this low usage include poor awareness of available resources, limited opening hours, weak reading culture, and a lack of user orientation programmes (Georgina, 2024; Muhammad & Abubakar, 2023). These barriers discourage students from viewing the library as a space for exploration, creativity, and independent inquiry.

In terms of information literacy levels, Nigerian students often lack the foundational competencies to identify information needs, formulate effective search strategies, evaluate sources, or cite appropriately. Several studies have pointed out that information literacy instruction is rarely integrated into the school curriculum, and many school librarians or teacher-librarians lack the training needed to deliver such instruction effectively (Ndagi, 2023; Nnadozie, & Jude-Iwuoha, 2024). This skills gap weakens students' capacity to function effectively in academic and digital environments.

Despite these challenges, research suggests that effective library support can positively impact students' information literacy development. Students who receive structured guidance and research instruction from trained librarians tend to perform better in tasks involving critical thinking and independent learning (Lloyd, 2010; Bamigbola & Onifade, 2024). However, in most Nigerian schools, such support mechanisms are either inconsistent or absent, limiting the implementation of comprehensive, integrated information literacy programmes. These empirical trends highlight the need for systemic reforms, including better funding, staff development, and policy implementation, to ensure that school libraries can fulfill their

intended instructional and developmental roles in Nigeria's secondary education system.

Research Methodology
This study used a descriptive survey research design to investigate how the school library at Model Secondary School, Federal University of Technology (FUT) Minna contributes to students' information literacy development. The population included all junior and senior secondary students, from which a stratified random sample was drawn to ensure balanced representation across class levels. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, an observation checklist, and an interview guide administered to the school librarian. These tools assessed library usage, perceived information literacy skills, resource availability, and the instructional role of the library. Expert review and a pilot test ensured the instruments' validity and reliability, with the questionnaire yielding a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.78. Analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) summarised the data, while inferential statistics (e.g., chi-square tests) were used to explore relationships between library use and students' information literacy. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation of Results
Demographic Profile of Respondents
Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 200)

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	105	52.5%
	Female	95	47.5%
Class Level	JSS1–JSS3	110	55.0%
	SSS1–SSS3	90	45.0%
Age Range (in years)	10–13	78	39.0%
	14–16	92	46.0%
	17–19	30	15.0%

Table 1 presents the demographic distribution of 200 students from Model Secondary School, FUT Minna shows a nearly balanced gender composition, with 52.5% male and 47.5% female participants. The majority of respondents were from Junior Secondary School, with slightly higher participation from junior students. The majority of respondents were aged 14-16, with a typical age structure in Nigeria. This diversity enhances the reliability of findings on library usage and information literacy.

Availability and Accessibility of Library Resources

Table 2: Availability and Accessibility of Library Resources

Type of Resource	Available (Yes)	Not Available (No)	Easily Accessible (%)
Textbooks	178 (89.0%)	22 (11.0%)	70.5%
Reference Materials (Dictionaries, etc.)	150 (75.0%)	50 (25.0%)	62.0%
Newspapers/Magazines	90 (45.0%)	110 (55.0%)	40.0%
Internet/ICT Facilities	35 (17.5%)	165 (82.5%)	18.0%
Fiction and Storybooks	160 (80.0%)	40 (20.0%)	65.0%

Table 2 presents the availability and ease of access to different categories of information resources in the school library. The school library's availability and accessibility of information resources were analyzed. Textbooks were the most available, with 89.0% of students confirming their availability. Fiction and storybooks were also widely available, with 65.0% of students stating their accessibility. Reference materials like dictionaries and encyclopedias were present, but 62.0% found them easy to access. Newspapers and magazines were less accessible, with only 45.0% noting their presence and 40.0% indicating accessibility. Internet and ICT facilities were the most scarce, with only 17.5% of students reporting their availability and 18.0% easily accessing them. This highlights a lack of modern digital tools essential for 21st-century information literacy development. The findings suggest a need for targeted investment in digital resources and improved access mechanisms.

Frequency and Purpose of Library Use by Students

Table 3: Frequency and Purpose of Library Use by Students

Frequency of Use	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Daily	28	14.0%
2–3 times a week	65	32.5%
Weekly	50	25.0%
Occasionally	40	20.0%
Rarely/Never	17	8.5%
Purpose of Library Use	**Frequency (f)**	**Percentage (%)**
Reading for assignments/homework	110	55.0%
Personal study	90	45.0%
Recreational reading	60	30.0%
Internet use (if available)	20	10.0%

Table 3 presents data on how frequently students use the school library and the purposes for which they utilise the facility. The

study reveals that while the library is moderately used for academic purposes, its full potential, particularly in supporting digital literacy and diverse reading interests, is not being realised. The majority of students (32.5%) use the library 2-3 times a week, while 25.0% use it once a week. However, only 14.0% of students report daily use, and 20.0% use it occasionally. The library is primarily used for reading for assignments or homework, with 45.0% using it for independent study. Recreational reading is reported by 30.0%, while only 10.0% use the library for internet-related activities. The findings suggest a need for improved awareness, integration of library services with classroom activities, and investment in digital resources to enhance the frequency and diversity of library use.

Students' Level of Information Literacy (Self-Rating)

Table 4: Students' Level of Information Literacy (Self-Rating)

Skill Area	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Fair (%)	Poor (%)
Identifying information needs	30 (15.0%)	60 (30.0%)	75 (37.5%)	35 (17.5%)
Searching for information effectively	25 (12.5%)	58 (29.0%)	80 (40.0%)	37 (18.5%)
Evaluating credibility of sources	20 (10.0%)	50 (25.0%)	90 (45.0%)	40 (20.0%)
Referencing or citing sources properly	15 (7.5%)	40 (20.0%)	70 (35.0%)	75 (37.5%)

Table 4 presents students' self-assessed levels of information literacy across four key skill areas: identifying information needs, searching for information, evaluating sources, and referencing or citing information properly. The study reveals that students have limited information literacy skills, particularly in higher-order competencies like source evaluation and referencing. Only 15.0% of respondents rated themselves as very good in identifying information needs, while the majority fell into the fair and poor categories. This suggests a lack of clarity in defining and articulating information problems. The distribution of students in searching for information is also low, with only 12.5% rating themselves as very good and 29.0% as good. The majority, 58.5%, rated their skills as fair or poor, indicating a noticeable deficiency in search strategies and navigation of information sources. The lowest self-ratings were observed in referencing or citing sources properly, with only 7.5% rated as very good and 20.0% as good. This suggests a need for structured information literacy instruction, possibly integrated into the curriculum and supported by trained library staff.

Perceived Library Support for Information Literacy Skills

Table 5: Perceived Library Support for Information Literacy Skills

Library Service/Support Area	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Library staff provide guidance on research	30 (15.0%)	60 (30.0%)	70 (35.0%)	40 (20.0%)
Orientation on using library resources	25 (12.5%)	55 (27.5%)	80 (40.0%)	40 (20.0%)
Materials support curriculum needs	35 (17.5%)	75 (37.5%)	60 (30.0%)	30 (15.0%)
ICT support or digital literacy guidance	15 (7.5%)	20 (10.0%)	80 (40.0%)	85 (42.5%)

Table 5 presents students' perceptions of the school library's role in supporting the development of information literacy skills through various services and support mechanisms. The study found that 45.0% of students agreed that library staff provide guidance on research, while 55.0% disagreed. This suggests that students feel inadequately guided, indicating inconsistency or limited librarian-student interaction. Only 40.0% of respondents received orientation on using library resources, which may contribute to low levels of information literacy. However, over half of respondents agreed that library materials align with their academic requirements, suggesting that the library's full potential might be underutilized due to poor awareness or limited instructional support. The most critical concern was the lack of ICT support and digital literacy guidance, with only 17.5% agreeing and 82.5% dissatisfied. This lack of support severely limits students' ability to search for and evaluate online information, a crucial skill in contemporary education. The findings highlight significant gaps in active library-based instruction and support services, requiring policy, staff training, and resource allocation to maximize the educational impact of the school library.

Summary of the Findings

The study investigated the role of the school library in developing students' information literacy skills at Model Secondary School, FUT Minna. Key findings across the research objectives are summarized as follows:

1. The library has a good collection of traditional resources like textbooks and fiction/storybooks, but critical resources like internet/ICT facilities and current newspapers/magazines are either lacking or underutilised. Reference materials are moderately available but not easily accessible to all students.
2. Most students visit the library 2-3 times per week or weekly, with reading for assignments/homework and personal study

being the most common purposes. Recreational reading is practiced by 30.0% of students.

3. Students self-reported low to moderate levels of information literacy, with a minority rated very well in identifying information needs and searching for information.

4. Most students perceived weak library support for developing their information literacy, with only 17.5% acknowledging such support and 82.5% expressing dissatisfaction.

5. The study suggests policy reforms, investment in digital resources, structured user education, and stronger librarian involvement to enhance the library's capacity in nurturing information-literate learners.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that although textbooks and fiction/storybooks are widely available and relatively accessible in the school library, significant gaps exist in the provision of up-to-date resources such as newspapers, reference materials, and ICT facilities. This finding is consistent with Adebayo (2022), who reported that many Nigerian school libraries suffer from inadequate funding, outdated collections, and limited access to electronic resources. Muhammad & Abubakar, (2023) further observed that while textbooks often dominate the collection, essential digital tools for 21st-century learning, such as internet access and computer terminals, are typically absent or non-functional in public secondary schools. The limited availability of ICT facilities in this study (17.5%) reflects broader infrastructural deficits that hinder students' ability to acquire digital competencies and access online information. Without adequate and diverse resources, school libraries struggle to fulfill their role in equipping students with the tools needed for effective information engagement (Esan, 2022).

The study found that most students used the library between once and three times a week, primarily for academic-related purposes such as completing assignments (55.0%) and personal study (45.0%). However, daily use was low (14.0%), and about 28.5% of students used the library only occasionally or not at all. These results suggest underutilisation of the library's full potential. According to Georgina (2024), many students perceive the library solely as a study venue rather than as a place for inquiry and exploration, particularly when resources and instructional support are limited. Olajide & Zinn (2020) highlighted similar challenges, attributing irregular library usage to lack of user orientation, insufficient librarian engagement, and an overall poor reading culture among Nigerian secondary school students. Moreover, the limited recreational and internet-based use observed in this study reflects the narrow scope of services currently offered, which

limits the development of independent learning and digital fluency.

Students' self-assessed information literacy levels were generally low to moderate, especially in key areas such as evaluating the credibility of sources and proper referencing. Only 7.5% of students rated themselves as very good in citing sources, while 72.5% rated their skills as fair or poor. This confirms earlier findings by Ndagi, (2023), who reported that Nigerian students often lack systematic instruction in information literacy, including how to critically assess and use information ethically. Similarly, Fabunmi (2020) emphasized that the absence of structured information literacy programmes in secondary schools leads to weak competencies in information search, evaluation, and referencing. The results of this study affirm that without deliberate pedagogical efforts and support from trained librarians, students may be ill-equipped to navigate the increasingly complex information landscape.

The majority of respondents indicated that the school library provides limited support for developing their information literacy skills. Although 55.0% of students agreed that the library provides materials relevant to their curriculum, only 45.0% felt they received any research guidance, and a striking 82.5% reported that they did not receive ICT or digital literacy support. This aligns with the findings of Nnadozie, & Jude-Iwuoha, (2024), who observed that secondary school libraries rarely offer structured user education or research instruction, often due to lack of collaboration between teachers and librarians or absence of qualified staff. Lloyd (2010) emphasized that information literacy is not just a technical skill but a situated practice that requires instructional support and social engagement. In the absence of such support, particularly digital literacy training, students remain passive users of information rather than critical and independent thinkers. The findings underscore the need to reposition school libraries from static resource centers to dynamic learning hubs that actively support the development of lifelong learning skills.

Conclusion
The study at Model Secondary School, FUT Minna, found that while basic print resources are moderately available, the library lacks critical components like ICT facilities, reference materials, and internet access. Students primarily use the library for academic support, but their self-reported information literacy levels are generally low. The library's support for developing these competencies is perceived as inadequate, with limited orientation, insufficient staff guidance, and virtually no ICT or digital literacy training. The findings highlight the need to reposition the school library as a proactive partner in teaching

and learning, addressing infrastructure, instructional support, and user engagement to ensure students become critical thinkers and ethical users of knowledge in an information-saturated world.

Recommendations

1. School management should allocate more funds for updating and expanding library resources, including acquiring current reference materials, newspapers, magazines, and digital resources. Physical arrangement should be improved to make them more user-friendly and accessible to all students. An open-shelf policy can support independent exploration and usage of library materials.

2. Integrating library-based tasks into the school curriculum, assigning classwork and projects that require library resources, and establishing a structured timetable for library visits can normalize usage across different classes. The library should also promote its role beyond academics by supporting recreational reading, literacy clubs, and co-curricular learning.

3. A structured information literacy programme is essential to address low levels of information literacy among students. This programme should be age-appropriate, embedded in both library and classroom instruction, and include practical workshops, reading challenges, and interactive sessions.

4. Librarians should be empowered through professional development to take on instructional roles, collaborate with classroom teachers, and provide regular orientation on library use.

5. Institutional support from school leadership is crucial to ensure the library functions as an active partner in the educational process.

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