



INFORMATION NAVIGATION

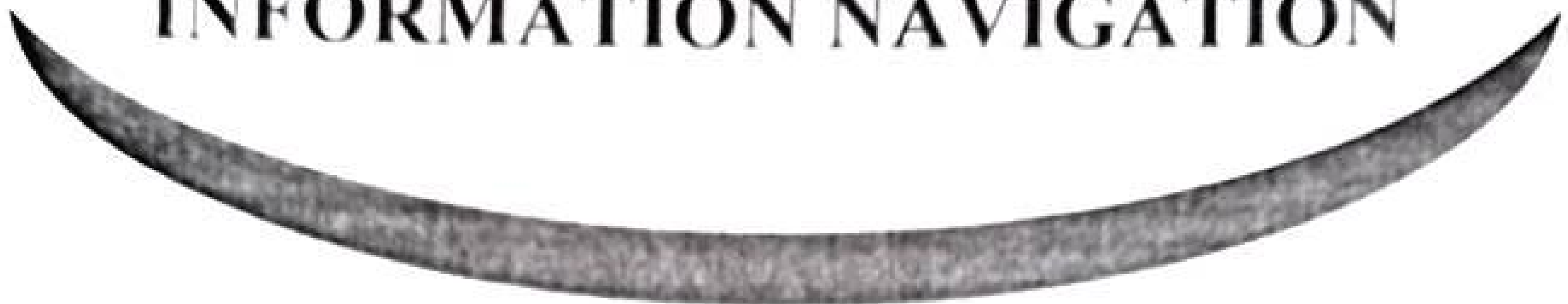
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AN ASSESSMENT OF INFORMATION RETRIEVAL COMPETENCE AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN

by

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Abstract

The study examined the information retrieval competence among international students at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. The quantitative approach was adopted for the conduct of this study. The research design adopted the descriptive survey research design. From the population of the students, a stratified random sampling technique was used to sample the students for the study. This is because the population was divided into strata of the respondents. Male and female students duly participated in the study; a self-designed or structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Four (4) research questions were answered and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that the level of information literacy skills and information retrieval competence of the International students at the University of Ilorin was high. The study identified challenges, such as poor electricity supply, poor Internet facilities were factors that hindered their retrieval competency to information sources. The study concluded that their level of information literacy skills is high. Also, their level of Information Retrieval Competency is high at the University of Ilorin. The study recommends that the University and library management should organize more training for the international students to acquire information literacy skills for using information retrieval tools. In addition, they should emphasize different search and retrieval strategies that can adequately retrieve information for learning and research, and also the university management should make provision for good internet facility and standby generator that will address the issue of fluctuation of internet facility and epileptic power supply. The total population used for this study was 500 students. Four (4) research questions were used and two (2) hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance were used for the study.

Keywords: Library, Information Retrieval, Informational Retrieval Competency International Student, University etc.

Introduction

Information has become a major prerequisite for the survival of business, academics, career, governance nowadays. People see information as a necessity for daily activities and in executing tasks, such as decision making. Advancement in information technology has led to information explosion such that competency in information retrieval (IR) is now required to electronically retrieve information from the web. Competency is a specific practical ability possessed by someone to do a given task (Okechukwu, 2014). Today, Information Retrieval Competency (IRC) is crucial as the field of information retrieval has mainly migrated from information science to Information technology and has developed systems used in search engines such as Google, which are extremely successful (Hjorland, 2021). Adekannbi (2016) stated that information retrieval competency is concerned with the skills of retrieving documents that are likely to be relevant to users' information need. It is the ability to do something well, especially an ability acquired through experience or training.

Therefore, the establishment of various large databases, which are mounted on computers and made available to anyone who wishes to search them, has a significant impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the retrieval of information. It is in the light of this that information

retrieval competencies are critical for retrieving information in this era of information technology because most of the information that students need for research and their studies is available in electronic format.

Igwe and Ndubuisi-Okoh (2016) defined information literacy skills as a set of competencies that information users are expected to possess for identifying, accessing, retrieving, evaluating, using, and communicating information resources of all kinds in adherence to principles of information ethics. These skills are essential for stakeholders in the academic environment, be it lecturers or students. The researchers further explained that the possession of these skills by students enhances their participation in core academic activities, and facilitates academic productivity and performance among them. Students' ability to develop appropriate information literacy skills is significant in their ability to source and retrieve relevant information and its effective use is required to make them strive academically, (Abayomi, Adesanya and Adeyemi, 2019).

Universities over the world irrespective of the types and structure whether federal, state and private require information resource to achieve their different goals. The basic function of any university is to conserve the existing knowledge, transmit knowledge through teaching and create

new knowledge through research (Daramola, 2016).

In modern times, the content of libraries is no longer restricted to physical formats due to the presence of information and communication Technology (ICT) and other electronic driven services. Israel and Edesire (2014) stated that changes that have occurred in the world of ICT are what have shifted the content of libraries resources from printed to online information resources. Despite the provision of access to e-resources by the university libraries to aid the students' academic performance, previous studies such as Adekanbi (2016) and Tella, Anyin, Memudu, & Olaniyi, (2017) among others have indicated that most undergraduate students have difficulties in using e-resources in Nigeria university libraries due o several factors among which is lack of information retrieval skills.

Information retrieval is concerned with the exploitation and extraction of information and other contents of documents from different information sources (Echem and Udo-Auntanwu, 2018). According to Iwona in Israel and Edesiri, (2014), for undergraduate students to utilize the growing ranges of e-resources they must possess and practice the skills necessary to exploit them. The adoption of ICT in libraries helps to ease access and retrieval of information materials, particularly through the online public access catalog (OPAC), while the library users can have

access to a vast range of the library's collections (Prabhakar and Rani, 2017). Most importantly, the introduction of Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities in the academic libraries and other information centers has tremendously enhanced information generation, access, storage, and dissemination to the users (Ulcachi, 2013). To gain access and use these vast resources effectively, information users must learn to overcome information anxiety and as well explore the available information to enable them to interpret and utilize the information for rational decision-making. This is because the change in formats and organization of information shows that users of information resources need guidance and education to achieve realistic expectations (Adeleke and Emeahara, 2016).

The Centre for International Education (CIE) is a unit in the University of Ilorin, licensed by the University Senate with the responsibility to initiate, promote, facilitate and coordinate international programs and linkages. The center was established in April 2009 to enhance building relationships with other world-class universities, ranging from Africa to Europe to Asia and America. The center's vision is "connecting with the world through education". The first set of international students admitted into the University of Ilorin were admitted on scholarship. This was a deliberate attempt

to encourage more international students to come to the University of Ilorin. Students that come from Francophone countries i.e., French-speaking countries, are mandated to undertake an emersion program called proficiency in English. They can only be admitted to study their desired course when they pass this course based on the institution's requirements (<https://www.unilorin.edu.ng/index.php/linguistic-immersion-centre-2/5917-programme-description>).

The center for international education of the University of Ilorin helps to meet the educational and psychological needs of international students through its mission statement, which are to: provide orientation and guidance to international students after they have been admitted to the university; ensure the educational and professional success of international students who had chosen to get higher education in this country (<https://www.unilorin.edu.ng/index.php/centre-for-international-education/5886-centre-for-international-education>). With the importance of information retrieval skills, it is pertinent to examine the information retrieval competence among international students in the university of Ilorin because of their different cultural backgrounds, styles of learning, and language barrier. Furthermore, as the volumes of information are constantly increasing, search skills are required to gain access to the information that is

available which will help students excel in their education. It is against this backdrop that this study was designed to examine the information retrieval competency of the international students at the University of Ilorin.

Statement of the Problem

It is needful that libraries, the Internet, and other web technology have improved access to information resources that can help students in meeting their information needs in this era of information explosion. Hadimani and Rajgoli, (2010) opined that as education is going online, and much of the information is available in electronic formats, information retrieval competency (the ability to use a computer and its software to accomplish a task) plays a greater role. Most importantly, a study carried out by Fordjour, Badu and Adjei (2010) discovered that the poor performance of students in various universities has been attributed to the inability of students to effectively retrieve information for academic work.

However, many researchers such as Onuoha, Akidi and Chukwueke (2019), Obat (2019) and Sarfo, Amankwah, Oti-Agyen, and Yidana (2016) among others had carried out studies on the information retrieval competency among undergraduate students, not much study had been carried out to examine the information retrieval competency among international students in the University of

Ilorin. Examining the information retrieval competency of international students is very important because of their different cultural backgrounds, styles of learning, and language barrier. It is in this light that the study was designed to carry out an assessment of Information Retrieval Competency Among International Students at the University of Ilorin.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the information retrieval competency of international students at the University of Ilorin. The study was designed to:

1. identify categories of information retrieval competency among international students in University of Ilorin;
2. determine the level of information literacy skills of international students while retrieving information in University of Ilorin;
3. determine the level of information retrieval competency of international students at the University of Ilorin;
4. Identify challenges encountered by international students in their course of retrieving information resources.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated in preference of the study:

1. What is the level of Information Literacy Skills of international students in the University of Ilorin?
2. What is the level of information literacy skills of international students in retrieving information in University of Ilorin?
3. What is the level of information retrieval competency of international students in University of Ilorin?
4. What are the challenges encountered by international students in retrieving information resources?

Hypothesis

The study was tested by the following null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance:

- H01 There is no significant relationship between information retrieval competency and use of information resources.
- H02 There is no significant difference in information retrieval competency between male and female international students in University of Ilorin.

Literature Review

The library plays major role in information providing system to supports teaching, learning and research with information materials of various types (Anyaoku, 2015). For the library to support the academic activities in higher institutions. There should be various types of materials available in academic libraries to satisfy the diverse needs of its users. Information is available in two main formats namely. Print and non-print and these include published and unpublished sources. Print materials include books, Periodicals, Maps, technical repots. Indexes, abstracts, and journals.

Igwe and Ndubuisi-Okoh (2016) defined information literacy skills (ILS) as set of competencies, which information users are expected to possess for identifying, accessing, retrieving, evaluating, using, and communicating information resources of all kinds in adherence to principles of information ethics. These skills are essential for stakeholders in the academic environments, be it lecturers or students. The researcher further explained that the possession of these skills by students enhances their participation in core academic activities, and facilitates academic productivity and performance among them.

Kovalik, Jensen, Schloman and Tipton (2010) defined ILS as the researcher's ability to recognize the time and extent of

information need, locate, access, evaluate and use for solving the information problem at hand. Similarly, Madu and Dike (2012) defined the term as an aspect of information literacy that has been seen as a process of gaining the abilities that will help in the establishment of information literate person. Consequently, the researchers explained further that the term in an online environment refers to the capabilities to complete a task and the amount of time spent in completing the task. This shows that people without ILS may spend much time in retrieving information, and they may encounter challenges when they are trying to download information stored in electronic format. Based on the submission of the previous scholars, it can be deduced that the use of information resources require library-use skills and computer use skills, online catalogue use skills, information retrieval skills, or online accessibility and self- efficacy skills (Igwe&Ndubuisi-Okoh, 2016).

Competency is a specific practical ability possessed by someone to do a given task. According to definition of competency by Merriam Webster, (2021), the quality or state of having sufficient knowledge, judgment, skill, or strength (as for a particular duty or in a particular respect) no one denies her competence as a leader. In other word. Competency is the ability to do something well, especially ability acquired through experience or training

(Okechukwu, 2014). In the same vein, Ekenna and Mabawonku (2013) postulated that information retrieval skills are crucial for retrieving information in the era of technology. Most of the information needed for research can be retrieved from electronic sources. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (2017) defined information retrieval skill as a set of abilities requiring individuals to identify when information is essential and have the ability to locate evaluate and effectively use the needed information.

Ajiboye, Oyedipe and Alawiye (2013) opined that information retrieval is concerned with the exploitation and extraction of information and other contents of documents from different information sources. They further ascertained that there are some tools that information users need while retrieving information resources and these tools have developed into widely used services and have become essential tools for finding information. According to Onyebuchi, (2020). Information retrieval tools can also be defined as Bibliographic control mechanisms aimed at facilitating access, location, retrieval and used Wikipedia encyclopedia (2015) also defines information retrieval as the activity of obtaining information resources relevant to an information need from a collection of information sources. Many universities and public libraries use information retrieval systems (tools) to provide access

to books, journals and other documents. According to Echem and Udo-Anyanwu, (2018). Asserted that information retrieval tools are crucial for retrieving information for positive educational outcomes. Similarly, Adekannbi (2016) defined information retrieval skill as the ability to find information in such a way that non-relevant data (noise) are excluded while relevant information is found.

Methodology

Quantitative approach was adopted for the conduct of this study. According to Creswell, (2014), quantitative research approach refers to method of research which involves collecting and analyzing data, presenting the results, making an interpretation, and writing the research in a manner consistent with a survey or experimental study, justifies the reason why this study adopts quantitative approach. The target population for this study consists of all the international students in all the faculties in University of Ilorin. The study used international students because of their different cultural background, style of learning and also language barrier. As it 2018/2019 academic session the total number of the international undergraduate students in university of Ilorin was 400, while the total number of international postgraduate students in university of Ilorin was 50 and institution has a total number of 50 emersion students. Sum up the total of international student in university of Ilorin

to be 500. Out of the 500 copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents, 326 copies were returned and completely filled. This gives 65% response rate. Data of the study were analyzed using frequency consists and percentages while the hypothesis of the study are tested using Pearson product movement correlation (PPMC).

Results and Discussion

This segment presents the analysis of the data collected for the study using the questionnaire. The basis for the analysis presented in this segment was the 326

copies of the completed and returned questionnaire out of the total number administered. The high return rate of 65%, was achieved in this particular regard can only be attributed to the strategy employed in personally administering the copies of the questionnaire by the researchers and staying back to ensure, not only that they were completed alone, but more importantly, that they were correctly completed by the respondents. Given the fact that the study adopted the total enumeration technique of sampling because the population was small, and therefore manageable seize.

Research Question 1: What is the level of information literacy skills of international students in University of Ilorin while retrieving information?

Table 2: Level of Information Literacy Skills of International Students (N = 326)

S/N	Information Literacy Skills	VH	H	L	VL
1	Ability to recognize a need for information resources	208 (63.8%)	100 (30.7%)	18 (5.5%)	-
2	Ability to distinguish potential information resources	151 (46.3)	175 (53.7%)	-	-
3	Ability to construct strategies for locating information resources	197 (60.4%)	106 (32.5%)	23 (7.1%)	-
4	Ability to compare and evaluate information obtained from different sources	151 (46.3%)	105 (32.2%)	47 (14.4%)	23 (7.1%)
5	Ability to locate and access information resources	133 (40.8%)	110 (33.7%)	83 (25.5%)	-
6	Ability to organize, apply and communicate information	134 (41.1%)	151 (46.3%)	23 (7.1%)	18 (5.5%)
7	Ability to synthesize and build on existing information	184 (56.4%)	59 (18.1%)	47 (14.4%)	36 (11.0%)

Note: VH+H=High while L+VL=Low

Result in Table 2: showed the level of information literacy skills of international students in University of Ilorin. From the table, the results revealed that out of 326 respondents, 308 (94.5%) claimed that

their level of ability to recognize a need for information resources is high while 18 (5.5%) claimed that their level of ability on this statement is low. Furthermore, the result showed that 326 (100.0%) stated

that their level of ability to distinguish potential information resources is high. Also, the results confirmed that 303 (92.9%) affirmed that their level of ability to construct strategies for locating information resources is high while 23 (7.1%) affirmed that their ability to do this is low. In the same vein, the result revealed that 255 (78.5%) stated that their ability to compare and evaluate information obtained from different sources is high while 70 (7.1%) stated that their ability to do this is low. The result also confirmed that 243 (74.5%) claimed that their level of ability to locate and

access information resources is high while 83 (25.5%) stated that their level of ability to do this is low. In addition the result illustrated that 285 (87.4%) revealed that their ability to organize, apply and communicate information is high while 41 (12.5%) revealed that there is low. Lastly, the result showed that 243 (74.5%) affirmed that their ability to synthesize and build on existing information is high while 83 (25.2%) affirmed that their ability on this is low. In summary, it can be noted that the level of information literacy skills of international students in University of Ilorin is high.

Research Question 2: What is the level of information retrieval competency of International Students in University of Ilorin?

Table 3: Level of Information Retrieval Competency of International Students (N = 326)

S/N	Information Retrieval Competency	VH	H	L	VL
1	Ability to use search engines such as Yahoo, Google, Alta Visa, Google Scholar etc.	179 (54.9%)	93 (28.5%)	36 (11.0%)	18 (5.5%)
2	Ability to use truncation search techniques (S, *, +) to retrieve information	115 (35.3%)	128 (39.3%)	23 (7.1%)	60 (18.4%)
3	Ability to combine two terms to retrieve information	128 (39.3%)	69 (21.2%)	82 (25.2%)	47 (14.4%)
4	Ability to use boolean operators (OR, AND, NOT) to retrieve information	100 (30.7%)	87 (26.7%)	93 (28.5%)	46 (14.1%)
5	Ability to download files from online databases	129 (39.6%)	110 (33.7%)	64 (19.6%)	23 (7.1%)
6	Ability to copy into and retrieve information from storage devices such as flash drive and diskette	128 (39.3%)	157 (48.1%)	41 (12.6%)	-
7	Ability to use author or title to search for information resources through OPAC	193 (59.2%)	46 (14.1%)	69 (21.2%)	18 (5.5%)

Based on the level of information retrieval competency of international students, result in table 3 showed that out of 326 respondents, 272 (83.4%) claimed that their ability to use search engines such as yahoo, google, altavisa, google scholar etc is high while 54 (16.5%) claimed that their ability to use the search engines is low. Furthermore, the result showed that 243 (74.6%) stated that their ability to use truncation search techniques (\$, *, +) to retrieve information is high while 83 (25.5%) stated that their ability to use this technique is low. Also, the results confirmed that 197 (60.5%) affirmed that their ability to combine two terms to retrieve information is high while 129 (39.6%) affirmed that their level of ability to combine two terms to retrieve information is low. In the same vein, the result showed that 187 (57.4%) claimed that their ability to use boolean operators

such as OR, AND, NOT to retrieve information is high while 139 (42.6%) claimed otherwise. Similarly, the result revealed that 239 (73.3%) stated that their ability to download information from online database is high while 87 (26.7%) stated that their ability to retrieve information from online database is low. In addition, the result confirmed that 285 (87.4%) revealed that their ability to copy into and retrieve information from storage devices such as flash drive and diskette is high while 41 (12.6%) revealed that their ability to do this is low. Result illustrated that 239 (73.3%) stated that their ability to use author or title to search for information resources through electronic OPAC is high while 87 (26.7%) stated that their ability to use OPAC to search for information resources is low. In summary, it can be deduced that the level of information retrieval competency of the international students is high.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges encountered by international students in the course of retrieving information?

Table 4: Challenges International Students encountered while Retrieving Information Resources (N= 326)

S/N	Challenges	Yes	No
1	Inadequate information resources in the library	238 (73.0%)	88 (27.0%)
2	Poor internet facilities	198 (60.7%)	128 (39.3%)
3	Epileptic power supply	174 (53.4%)	152 (46.6%)
4	Lack of proper organization of information resources	244 (74.8%)	82 (25.2%)
5	Lack of search skills	156 (47.9%)	170 (52.1%)
6	Insufficient funds to subscribe to databases	133 (40.8%)	193 (59.2%)

The results in Table 4: confirmed the challenges international students encountered while retrieving information resources. The result showed that 283 (73.0%) agreed that inadequate information resources in the library is one of the challenges that they encountered while retrieving information resources, while 88 (27.0%) disagreed with this. Furthermore, the result revealed that 198 (60.7%) respondents claimed that poor internet facilities is another challenge they encountered, while 128 (39.3%) were against this statement. In the same vein, the result illustrated that 174 (53.4%)

affirmed that epileptic power supply is another challenge they encountered while 152 (46.6%) were against this statement. The result showed that 244 (74.8%) stated that lack of proper organization of information resources is another challenge they encountered while 82 (25.2%) were against this statement. In summary, it can be deduced that inadequate information resources in the library; poor internet facilities; epileptic power supply; and lack of proper organization of information resources are the major challenges international students in University of Ilorin encountered while retrieving information resources.

Testing of Hypotheses

H01 There is no significant relationship between information retrieval competency and use of information resources among international students in University of Ilorin. Table 5: Relationship between Use of Information Resources and Information Retrieval Competency (N = 326)

Variable	Mean	SD	N	Df	R-cal	P-value	Remark
Information Retrieval Competency	28.9287	8.25362	326	324	.821	.000**	Sig...
Use of Information Resources			25.0273		5.7262		

** Correlation is significant at .001 level (2-tailed)

The results in table 5: show the summary of the test of the hypothesis which therefore confirmed that there is a significant relationship between information retrieval competency and use of information resources. This is shown in the table where $r\text{-cal} = 0.821$; $df = 324$ and $P = 0.000$ which is less than the level of

significant. This means that there is a significance relationship between information retrieval competency and use of information resources. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, the study in turn established that there is a relationship between information retrieval competency and use of information resources.

H02 There is no significant difference in information retrieval competency between male and female international students in University of Ilorin.

Table 6: Difference in the Information Retrieval Competency of Male and Female International Students (N = 326)

Variable	N	M	SD	T-cal	Df	P
Male	216	26.8273	4.21 2.53	86.627	324	.000**
Female	110			21.5543		

The results in table 6: gives information on the differences in the information retrieval competency between male and female international students in University of Ilorin. The results confirmed that there is a significant difference in the information retrieval competency of between male and female students. This is because the t-value which is 86.627 and the associated p-value is 0.000 which is less than the level of significant 0.05. Hence, the mean score of male students was found to be significantly higher than the mean score of female students, that is, the mean score of

male students is 26.8273 compared to the mean score of female students which is 21.5543. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, the study in turn established that there is a significant difference in the information retrieval competency between male and female international students in University of Ilorin.

Discussion of the Findings

Based on the findings of the study, the study examines the level of information literacy skills of international students in

university of Ilorin is high. This is because majority of the respondents claim their ability to recognize a need for information resources and ability to distinguish potential information resources that is high. In the process of accessing information resources that one needs, the concept of information literacy skills cannot be over emphasized, this is because without information literacy skills, people are bound to be misinformed. This finding is against the work of Ilogbo and Nkiko (2014) who investigated the knowledge of information literacy and search skills in five selected private universities in Ogun state, Nigeria. The researchers found that the students under study had low knowledge of information literacy skills.

The reason why this contrasts this present study may be subject to the different popular used. That is, this present study uses international students why the study Ilogbo and Nkilo used Nigerian students. Based on the level of information retrieval competency of international students in university of Ilorin, the study found that the level of information retrieval competency of information students in university of Ilorin is high. This is because majority of respondents claim their ability to use search engines and use traction

search techniques and Boolean operators is high. Information retrieval competency is crucial for refinery information in the era of technology. This is because most of information needed for both learning and research can be retrieved from electronic sources. In addition, students need to possess information retrieval skills as it is necessary for them to selectively retrieve accurate, relevant and up to date information stored in a document instead of all the information that may not be relevant their school work. This finding against the research work of Kausar and Mahmood (2013) who examined impact of information retrieval skills on students' utilization of electronic resources in university libraries in Nigeria. The researchers found that the students understudy do not have adequate information retrieval capability, that is their level of information retrieved competency is low.

Furthermore, the study identified challenges that international students have encountered while retrieving information resources. The study found that inadequate information resources in the library, poor internet facilities, epileptic power supply, and lack of proper organization of information resources are major challenges

that international students in university of Ilorin encounter while retrieving information resources. This finding collaborates the work of Bhatt Batoel and malik (2013) who reported similar challenges that students encountered while retrieving information resources such epileptics power supply, poor internet facilities among others. This finding collaborated, with this present study that may be subjected to the fact that they were conducted in African continent. In addition, most of the African countries experience similar challenge' in term of infrastructure development.

Null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the information retrieval competency between male and female international students in University of Ilorin was rejected, because the study found that there is a statistical significant difference in the mean score of male and female international students. The study also found the mean score of male is higher than the mean score of female students. This finding supports the work of Oyeniyi (2013) who investigated the gender differences in information retrieval skills and use of electronics. The implication of this finding is that male students will have access to more

information resources compare to female students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the study concludes that textbooks, journals, newspapers, research reports, reference materials, magazines, tapes, and e-databases are the major information resources available to international students' in University of Ilorin. The level of information literacy skills is high. It could be also concludes that the level of information literacy competency of the internationals students in University of Ilorin is high while inadequate information resources in the library; poor internet facilities; epileptic power supply; and lack of proper organization of information resources are the major challenges that international students in University of Ilorin encountered while retrieving information resources. It is also concluded that there is a significant relationship between information retrieval. The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between male and female international students in University of Ilorin.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are put in place:

1. Despite the fact that many information materials were available to international students, the library management can still improve their collections by acquiring more information resources in different languages that will meet the information needs of the students.
2. University and library managements should organize more training for the international students to acquire information literacy skills for using information retrieval tools. In addition, they should emphasis on different search and retrieval strategies that can adequately retrieve information for learning and research.
3. University management should make provision for good internet facility and standby generator that will address the issue of fluctuation of internet facility and epileptic power supply.

4. Library should properly organize their information resources in such a way that users can easily locate the information resources of their choice.

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