

# An Assessment of Information Literacy Skills among Students of University of Yangon

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## Abstract

Information literacy is related to information technology skills. Information literacy is considered a skill that is needed for accessing information in the information age. The users need to have a special ability to retrieve the information needed. The present research is an attempt to make an assessment of information literacy skills among students of University of Yangon. Although there are different types of users for an academic library, the research covers students including postgraduates and undergraduates. A structured questionnaire was designed and randomly distributed to the target group. The research selected randomly 100 students for data collection. The result shows the level of information literacy skills of students of the University of Yangon. The research indicates that the information literacy instruction has a positive influence on effective learning of information literacy skills. Based on their skills, the library can support to develop library services.

Keywords: Information, Information Literacy, Information Awareness, Information Competencies, ICT Skills

## 1. Introduction

As today is age of information technology, information explosion is tremendously at every sector. Internet users faced with new challenges to solve problems concerned with information access. Mainly the information explosion has created the information overload. The growth and development of information has become to create a knowledge society and lifelong learners. Information literacy is an integral component of the quest for knowledge. It is a set of skills which requires an individual to recognize when information is needed and has the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information.<sup>1</sup>

Information-seeking and use have become complex processes for college and university students due to the proliferation of information technologies and resources in all types and formats. Students at the doctoral level frequently need detailed,

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<sup>1</sup> . F. Chanchinmawia and Manoj Kumar Verma, "Assessment of Information Literacy Skills among Students of Academy of Integrated Christian Studies, Aizawl: A Survey," *Journal of Library & Information Science Vol.7 No.3 (September 2017)*, accessed August 10, 2018, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321481507>

comprehensive information—particularly for thesis research—and therefore need strong information-seeking and use skills to accomplish their research goals.<sup>2</sup>

As Information literacy is the ability to recognize when and what information is needed, and the knowledge of how to define appropriate search strategies, determine relevant sources, locate, critically evaluate and ethically use information in all formats, Information literacy is a vital skill in the information age.<sup>3</sup>

Information literacy skills are necessary for everybody, especially students so that they can be successful in their academic program and job opportunities in their future. Besides, teachers or faculty members are greatly in need of information literacy skills, in order to carry out their teaching and research area efficiently and successfully. Information literacy plays a vital role to acquire right information during the shortest time. Thus, users in the academic field need to know information literacy.

### **1.1 Aim and Objectives of the Research**

The main aim of the research is to investigate the level of information literacy skills of university students. The objectives are:

- i. To examine the role of information literacy for academic library users
- ii. To identify how the students acquire information from online sources
- iii. To explore the level of students' awareness about various types of sources
- iv. To determine the ability to access and evaluate the information resources of students

### **1.2 Scope of the Research**

The study mainly emphasizes on information literacy skills of students at the University of Yangon. Students cover undergraduate and post graduate. Skills include the ability of searching, locating, arranging, evaluating and retrieving information.

### **1.3 Research Methodology**

The qualitative method has been used to determine the range of information literacy experiences of defined groups. The random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the study population for the research area. The 100 respondents were selected randomly in this research. A structured questionnaire was designed to capture and obtain required information with regards measure their information literacy competency.

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<sup>2</sup>. C. A Barry, "Information Skills for an Electronic World: Training Doctoral Research Students," *Journal of Information Science* 23 (3): 1997, accessed August 10, 2018, 225–38, accessed September 10, 2018, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/016555159702300306>

<sup>3</sup>. Association of College and Research Library. *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, accessed August 10, 2018, [www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework](http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework).

Descriptive statistics such as percentages, and correlation analysis were used to analyze collected data.

## 2. Literature Review

There were several studies on information literacy carried out in educational institutions in the world. Some of the studies were as follows:

Maidul and Rahman examined the information literacy competency (ILC) of the arts faculty students at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and determine their strengths and weaknesses and it was found that students had limited skills in the area of information literacy and reasons behind it is not discussed extensively in their academic course curriculum.<sup>4</sup>

Murtaza examined the level of information literacy skills of faculty members of the University of Lahore. The majority of faculty members are deficient in searching catalogue and its use, selection of relevant sources and formulation of search strategies. The study helped to organize different information literacy programs in the university to promote and to develop the information literacy skills among faculty and to improve the teaching quality.<sup>5</sup>

F. Chanchinmawia and Manoj Kumar Verma did a research paper entitled "Assessment of Information Literacy Skills among Students of Academy of Integrated Christian Studies, Aizawl: A Survey". The research revealed that information literacy is a major prerequisite for academic community in present ICT era because the skills and abilities are enables students to retrieve the right information from the right source without wasting their valuable time. Evaluation of electronic resources may be added in the information literacy program of the library.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Christopher O. Ukpebor and Daniel Emojorho studied a paper concerning with information literacy skill entitled "Information Literacy Skills: A Survey of the Transition of Students from Secondary to University Education in Edo State, Nigeria". The findings

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<sup>4</sup>. Islam, M. I. and Rahman, M. A. . "Assessing Information Literacy Competency of Arts Faculty and Students at the University of Dhaka." *Library Philosophy and Practice (e journal) (May, 2014): 2-17*, accessed August 15, 2018, <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu//1110/>

<sup>5</sup>. Rafique, G. M. "Information Literacy Skills of Faculty Members: A Study of the University of Lahore, Pakistan," *Library Philosophy and Practice (e journal) (2014)* accessed August 20, 2018, <http://www.digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1072/>

<sup>6</sup>.F. Chanchinmawia and Manoj Kumar Verma, " Assessment of Information Literacy Skills among Students of Academy of Integrated Christian Studies, Aizawl: A Survey," *Journal of Library & Information Science*, Vol.7 No.3, (September, 2017): 449, accessed August 20, 2018. [https://www.Research\\_gate.net/publication/321481507](https://www.Research_gate.net/publication/321481507)

demonstrate that entry-level students have some little skills which are not enough for independent research work or library usage.<sup>7</sup>

Ebele N. Anyaoku and others compiled a research titled "Information Literacy Skills and Perceptions of Librarians in Colleges of Education in Nigeria". The study concludes that there is need for IL standards that will guide information literacy development in Nigerian Colleges of Education. Librarians in the study had shown good perceptions towards IL and rated their skills high.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Data Collection and Analysis

#### i. Purpose of Information Gathering

Different students required information for different purposes and generally the need of information differs from one person to another on the basis of their course, discipline and nature. This research is divided into five types such as research, presentation, dissertation, assignment, general knowledge and current awareness. The following table shows that 33% of respondents gather information for the purpose of doing research, 30% for presentation of class works, 2% for doing dissertation, 57% for general knowledge and current awareness and 52% for their assignment.

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<sup>7</sup>. Mr Christopher O. Ukpebor and Daniel Emojorho, " Information Literacy Skills: A Survey of the Transition of Students from Secondary to University Education in Edo State, Nigeria, " *Library Philosophy and Practice (e journal)* (November, 2012): 2-17, accessed August 15, 2018, <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>.

<sup>8</sup> . Ebele N. Anyaoku and others, "Information Literacy Skills and Perceptions of Librarians in Colleges of Education in Nigeria, " *Journal of Information & Knowledge Management* 5 (August, 2015) :83 – 89, accessed August 15, 2018, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283317949>.

**Table 1. Purpose of Information Gathering**

Research	Presentation	Dissertation	General Knowledge & Current information	Assignment
33	30	2	57	52

Source: Survey

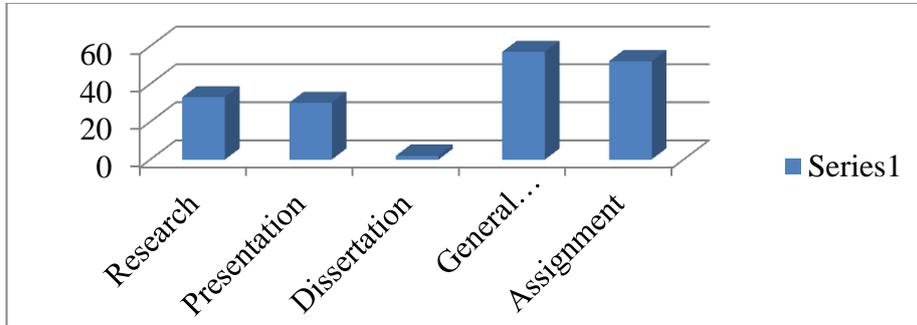


Figure 1. Purpose of Information Gathering

According to above graph, most of respondents acquire information for the purpose of general knowledge and current awareness. As they are students, the second most respondents gather information for the purpose of their assignment.

## ii. Awareness of Library Website

Awareness of the library website helps to gather information about its resources which improve the resource utilization. The website of UCL (Universities' Central Library) is "[www.uclmyanmar.org](http://www.uclmyanmar.org)". The University of Yangon Website provides the information about of its library. These libraries provide this address link at the circulation counter. The research used the Yes/No question to ask to the respondents awareness of library website.

**Table 2. Awareness of Library Website**

Yes	No
49	51

Source: Survey

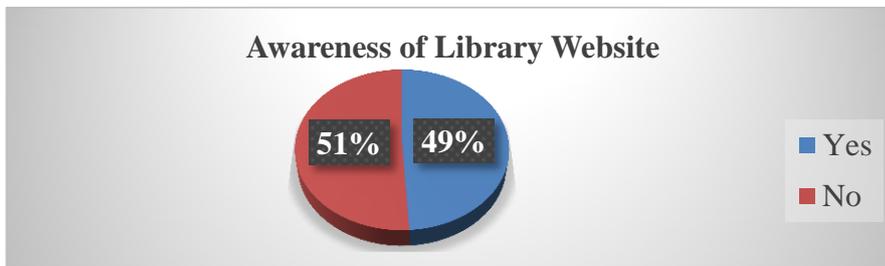


Figure 2. Awareness of Library Website

The survey showed that 51% of students did not know the library website.

### iii. Types of Using Library Materials

For the types of using library materials, there are three main categories in this research such as Online sources, Databases and Printed sources. Among the respondents, only 6 students utilize all types of sources. Use of Online sources and Databases are made by 36% and 32%. 53% of students use printed sources.

**Table 3. Use of Types of Library Sources**

Online sources	Databases	Printed sources
36	32	53

*Source: Survey*

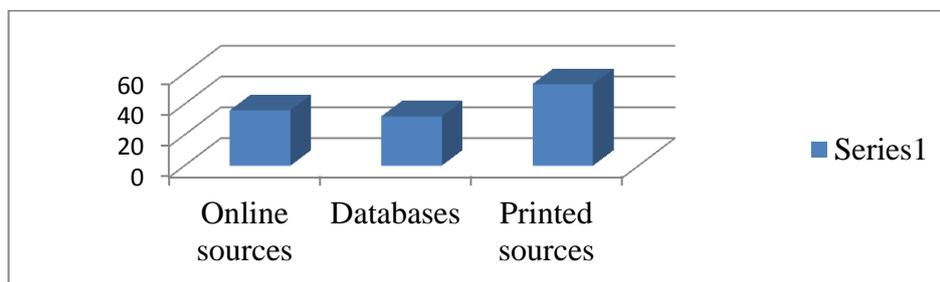


Figure 3. Use of Types of Library Sources

Among the printed sources, periodicals, reference books, government publications, thesis and text books are included. Among the respondents, only two utilized all types of printed materials. 21% used periodicals, 63% utilized reference sources. 28% used texts, 17% used thesis and dissertations, 12% used government publications.

**Table 4. Use of Printed Sources**

Periodicals	Reference Books	Texts	Thesis & Dissertations	Government Publications
21%	63%	28%	17%	12%

*Source: Survey*

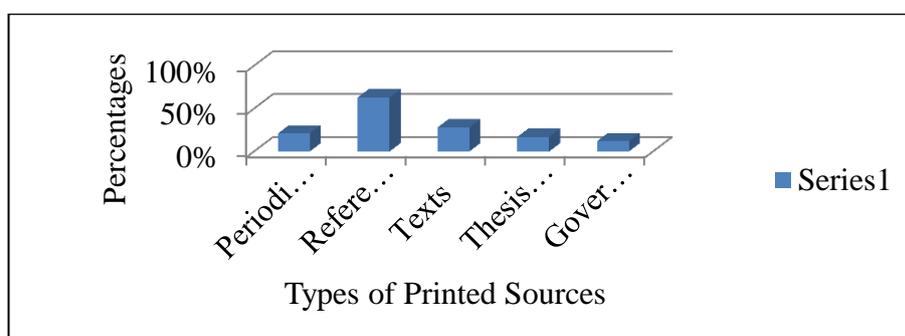


Figure 4. Use of printed Sources

The research shows that most of students consulted reference materials among the printed materials.

#### iv. Awareness of Open Sources

Open sources is a source that promotes the free access and distribution of an end product. These sources can be available on internet. Open sources contain various subject matters. The research asked awareness of open sources to the respondents.

**Table 5. Awareness of Open Sources**

Yes	No	No response
45	49	6

Source: Survey

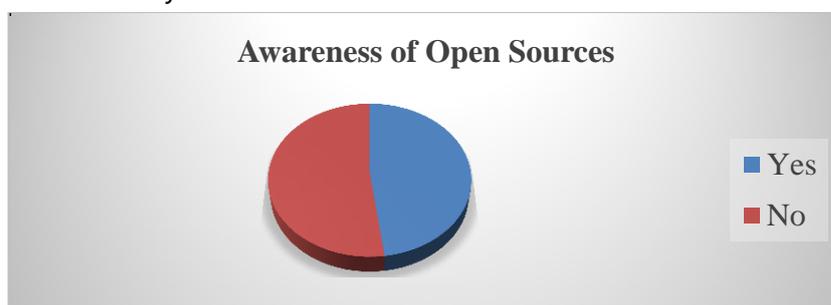


Figure 5. Awareness of Open Sources

According to above table, 45% of students have awareness for open sources. Thus, it can be said that most of respondents have not awareness for open sources.

#### v. Way of Information Gathering

There are two ways used to gather information in this research: using cataloguing, and internet. Among the respondents, two didn't response the questions and 30% of respondents search information by using two ways. Among the rest, 91 respondents, 29% gather their needs through library catalogues. 39% search information on the internet.

**Table 6. Ways of Information Gathering**

Catalogue	Internet	Both	No Response
29	39	30	2

Source: Survey

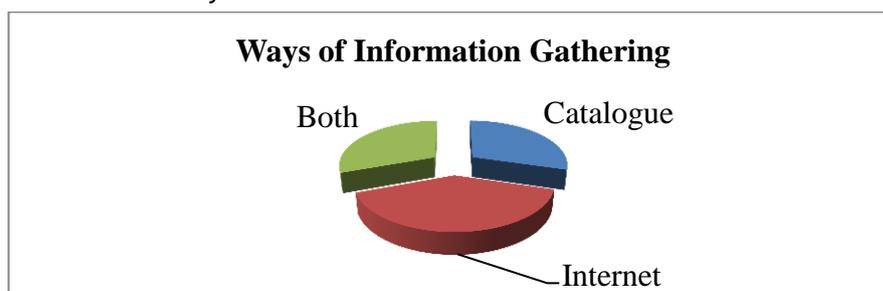


Figure 6. Ways of Information Gathering

According to the survey, some of the users acquire their needs through internet and library catalogues. In this case, the number of students who relied on internet using is greater than the number of students who relied on library catalogues.

**vi. Awareness of Library Catalogue**

Library catalogue is an important tool to retrieve information recorded in library. All library community needs to know how to use catalogues from library. The research inquired to find out their awareness of library catalogue. The following table shows their awareness.

**Table7. Awareness of Library Catalogue**

Yes	No	No response
74	23	3

Source: Survey

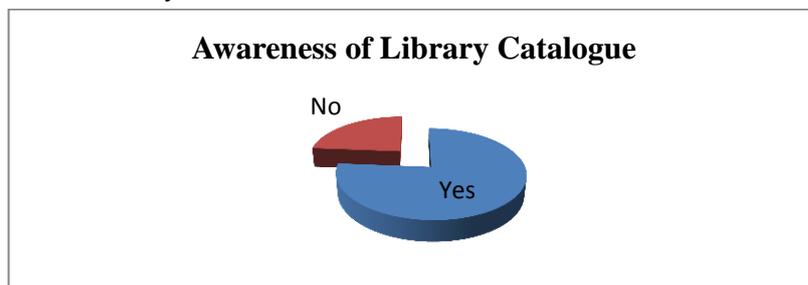


Figure 7. Awareness of Library Catalogue

The survey points out that 23% of respondents have not awareness how to use library catalogues although the library guide to use catalogue. The catalogue provides necessary information for the materials such as ISBN or ISSN, Subject Heading, Call Number, Author and Title. The research asked to respondents these five basic items. According to the survey, 45% of the respondents know three and above items in the catalogue. 34% of the respondents know only one or two items of the five items but 21% haven't awareness about which contents are included in the catalogue.

**vii. Using Internet**

The research identifies that 88% of respondents utilize internet daily. Internet is a new platform for researchers because e-sources can be accessed through internet. The research categorized four types on Internet service such as E-mail, [WWW.resources](#), Downloading Sources, and Facebook under the using Internet. The survey points out that majority of students use Facebook and the second most students use of [www.resources](#) for their needs.

### viii. Computer Skills

Due to IT age, users need to have basic skills of computer operation system such as word-processing, spreadsheets, desktop publishing, power point presentation, and so on. This research asked to know these skills of respondents. The skills categorized in the research are word-processing, spreadsheets, desktop publishing, power point presentation, Converting to PDF, and Burning CD Rom.

According to the survey, only 2% of respondents have all types of skills but 22% haven't any skills concerned with computer technologies. 24% of respondents have only one skill, 21% have two skills, 14% have three skills, 11% have four skills, and 6% can operate computer with five skills.

**Table 8. Computer Skills**

All Skills	Five Skills	Four Skills	Three Skills	Two Skills	One Skill	Nothing
2	6	11	14	21	24	22

Source: Survey



Figure 8. Computer Skills

According to the survey, most of students can operate computer with only one skill generally. The students who have not any skills of computer technology are second greatest number. Students who have competence in all skills are the smallest number. Among the skills, students are more familiar with skill of Word-processing is more familiar than other skills. The skill for converting to PDF is unfamiliar for most of the students.

The majority of students acquired their required information on Internet using memory stick or CD Rom. The library staff is assigned to help user's problems or troubles while they are searching e-sources on internet. But, most of students can search online sources without assistance of staff.

Regarding types of search strategy, all students utilize Google Search by key words although there is a Search by Specific types of strategy from Databases because some of search engines are confusing and sophisticated for them and all types of users are familiar with Google search. .

### ix. Awareness of OPAC and Current Information

Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) is an online bibliography of library materials held by a library or group of libraries. The Union Catalog of Myanmar Academic Libraries is a combined catalog of the major 25 University Libraries in Myanmar. It supports browsing, keyword searching and expert (Boolean) searches in both Myanmar and English. Currently, the Union Catalog of Myanmar Academic Libraries has detail catalogs of more than 278,000 Book Titles and 36,000 Thesis Titles in Myanmar and English.<sup>9</sup> The users can access these resources through its website. Users can consult library collections where it is located remotely. The research shows that 70% of respondents have not awareness of OPAC.

Current Awareness (CA) is the one kind of reference services. It keeps the latest information and continuously gives it to the users. The library always announces the new arrivals at the front of the circulation counter and its website. The result of the survey shows that 47% of respondents have to take notice but 53% hasn't noticed it.

**Table 9. Awareness of OPAC and Current Information**

Types	Yes (%)	No (%)
OPAC	30	70
CA	47	53

Source: Survey

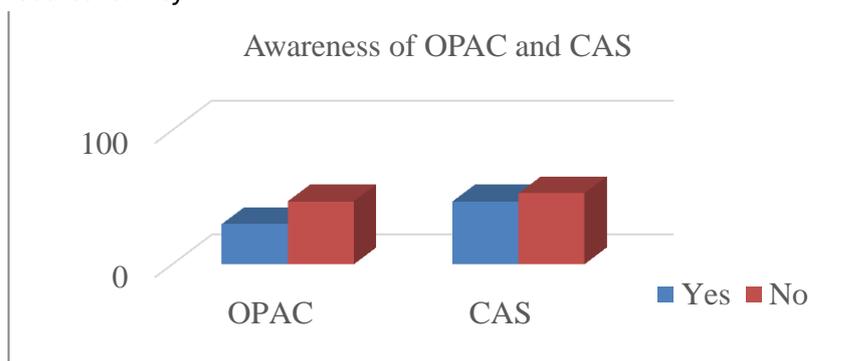


Figure 9. Awareness of OPAC and Current Information

The research indicates the level of awareness of OPAC and current information in the library. It can be said that they have low level of knowledge.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

The research finds out that 33% of students search information for the doing research, 30% are for presentation, 2% are for their dissertation, 57% are for general knowledge and current awareness and 52% are for their assignment. For the awareness of library website, 51% of students didn't recognize the library website. A few of students, only 6 students utilize all types of sources. Among the rest, use of Online sources and Databases are 36% and 32 %. 53% of students use printed sources.

Regarding using printed materials, only two utilized all types of printed materials. 21% used periodicals, 63% utilized reference sources. 28% used texts, 17% used thesis

<sup>9</sup> *Universities' Central Library*, accessed January 20, 2019, [http:// www. uclmyanmar.org..](http://www.uclmyanmar.org..)

and dissertations, 12% used government publications. Among the students, 45% are aware of open sources. 30% of respondents search information by using both library catalogue and internet. Among the rest, 29% of students gather their needs through library catalogues. 39% of students search information on the internet. 23% of students are not aware how to use library catalogues. Among the students, most of respondents visit library frequently. Only 7% of respondents visit library daily. According to survey, 56% of students are satisfied with the library services partially. 88% of respondents utilize internet daily. The students were asked about computer skills such as word-processing, spreadsheets, desktop publishing, power point presentation, Converting to PDF, and Burning CD Rom. The result shows that only 2% of respondents have all types of skills but 22% can't operate computer properly. 24% of respondents have only one skill, 21% have two skills, 14% have three skills, 11% have four skills, and 6% can operate computer with five skills. 70% of respondents are not aware of Online Public Access Catalogue. For Current Awareness Service, 47% of respondents have to take notice but 53% hasn't noticed it.

### **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The research points out the level of information literacy skills to acquire university students' requirements. The skills studied in the research are ways of information gathering, formats of library materials, computer skills, awareness of library catalogue and services, using internet and its sources.

The research identifies that most of students acquire information for the purpose of general knowledge and current awareness. Although the library provides printed materials, online sources and databases, 53% of students utilize printed sources. Under printed sources, use of reference sources is more than other types of sources. In two ways of searching information such as using catalogues and internet, the students are more interested in using internet than library catalogues. But, 74% of students have awareness of library catalogue.

All students use internet daily but majority of them use Facebook or social networks. Second most of them use resources on the Web for their assignment and research. For computer skills, only 2% of students have basic skills. 22% of students have nothing skills. Among these skills, Word-processing programme is well known programme for them. The survey points out that those students should approach computer training because of IT age. For the awareness of OPAC and CA, majority of respondents didn't recognize the OPAC. The library always shows list of new arrivals at the front of the library but over half of students didn't notice it.

In the campus of University of Yangon, there are two libraries: Universities' Central Library and University of Yangon Library. In the academic year of 2018–2019, over 12000 students enrolled to the University of Yangon. But, among them, only 646 students joined to the Universities' Central Library and 1654 to University of Yangon Library as member. Thus, it can be said that only 5% of them had made membership to the Universities' Central Library and 13% to University of Yangon Library.

Thus, based on the findings of this study, the research recommends that University Librarians should conduct the training programmes concerning with information literacy is needed to promote ICT skills for library users such as seminars, workshops, conferences, short courses and other related programmes.

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