



INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN FOSTERING INFORMATION LITERACY: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON USER PERSPECTIVES AND EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

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ABSTRACT

In gathering information about the participants' viewpoints and personal experiences, a qualitative phenomenological research design was employed, involving in-depth interviews. Phenomenological research, as described by Bliss (2016), is a qualitative research method that aims to understand and describe the fundamental essence of a phenomenon by examining real-life experiences. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how individuals interpret and make sense of these experiences. Moreover, to analyze the collected data, a thematic analysis was performed. According to Namraksa and Kraiwanit (2023), this approach involves analyzing the data to discern prevalent themes—subjects, concepts, and patterns of significance that recur. Following are the key findings: Users widely acknowledge the importance of libraries in fostering skills growth, crediting their engagement with libraries for improving research abilities and critical thinking. Interactive learning modules are highly praised for their efficiency. Although there are many favorable views, there are also challenges that can hinder the seamless integration of libraries, such as technological evolution and resistance to change. The importance of resource accessibility, engaging interfaces, and relevant collections in determining library effectiveness is highlighted by user feedback. The findings offer valuable insights for enhancing library services to effectively support information literacy and academic achievement.

INTRODUCTION

In today's ever-changing world of information and technology, libraries have taken on a variety of new responsibilities. Libraries have evolved from being mere book repositories to becoming vibrant centers that provide a wide range of resources and services (Ashikuzzaman, 2018). In today's knowledge-driven society, libraries have a crucial role to play in fostering information literacy, which is an essential skill set (Harun Ar Rashid, 2023).

Information literacy involves the skill of finding, assessing, and utilizing information from different sources (Athiya, 2022). According to the Association for College and Research Libraries' 2017 Information Literacy Competency Standards, it serves as the foundation for continuous learning. Amidst the abundance of information available through digital channels, the importance of information literacy cannot be emphasized enough. In the modern era, libraries have embraced the digital revolution, offering a vast array of resources such as electronic databases, e-books, and multimedia materials (Simons, 2018). This study explored the viewpoints of library users in order to gain insight into the ways in which libraries contribute to the enhancement of information literacy.

Furthermore, the user perspective was essential to this study since it provides insightful information about the applicability and efficacy of library activities. Through the use of qualitative methods like interviews and focus groups, the researcher discovered the intricate ways in which individuals view the impact of libraries on their information literacy skills. Furthermore, gaining insight into users' experiences provides helpful understanding into the numerous obstacles encountered when navigating through a vast amount of information, and highlights the important role that libraries play in addressing these challenges.

In addition, this study examined the educational effects of information literacy skills gained through involvement with the library. Understanding how to find and evaluate information is crucial for academic achievement and continuous learning. Libraries play a vital role in enhancing educational results. Understanding the importance of information literacy has become increasingly crucial for academic achievement, as highlighted by the College Association and Research Library (2017). It is imperative to possess the skills to determine the need for information, as well as to assess, evaluate, and utilize it effectively.

In a scholarly study, Bruce (2017) emphasized the crucial role of libraries in equipping users with the necessary skills to locate, manage, and utilize information effectively for various purposes. Therefore, possessing this skill is crucial as it enables individuals to engage in productive decision-making, problem-solving, and research, all of which play a vital role in education. The researchers' analysis of library-based information literacy initiatives shed light on how library programs can be improved to better serve the changing needs of users in educational settings.

In summary, this study aimed to contribute to the academic discussion on the changing role of libraries in the digital era. It focused on understanding how libraries promote information literacy from the user's point of view and assessing the educational outcomes of these initiatives. This research has the potential to provide valuable insights for library practices, educational policies, and the overall understanding of the crucial role libraries play in creating informed and literate citizens in today's society.

Research Questions

1. How do users perceive the role of libraries in fostering information literacy?
2. Which specific library initiatives or resources have been most effective in fostering information literacy?
3. In what ways do users believe information literacy skills acquired through library engagement have influenced the users' academic success or lifelong learning?
4. What are the contextual factors and challenges that influence the successful integration of libraries to the users' information literacy, and how do these factors impact academic success?
5. How do users perceive the overall effectiveness of libraries in fostering information literacy and improving academic success?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research approach, namely in-depth interviews, to collect data on the perceptions and experiences of participants. The focus was on exploring how libraries contribute to information literacy and its impact on education, from the perspective of library users. More precisely, the study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design. Phenomenological research, as described by Bliss (2016), is a qualitative research method that aims to comprehend and depict the fundamental nature of a phenomenon. This is achieved by examining individuals' lived experiences to obtain profound understanding of how they interpret and comprehend such experiences. Moreover, the design seeks to analyze the participants' emotions, perspectives, and convictions in order to elucidate the fundamental nature of the topic being studied. A qualitative phenomenological research design was chosen for this study because it aimed to comprehend and interpret the user experiences and perspectives on libraries, with the goal of uncovering the underlying effects on promoting information literacy and academic success.

Research Respondents

The study employed purposive sampling to select a sample of ten (10) key informants. Purposive sampling is a well-established qualitative research method that entails intentionally selecting a sample that aligns with the study's objectives, taking into account the researchers' experience. This approach aims to gather extensive information about a certain population or phenomenon of interest (Siripipatthanakul et al., 2022). In addition, in order to qualify for participation in the study, participants had to meet two specific inclusion criteria: being a regular library user and presently being in an academic setting.

Research Instrument

This study employed a key instrument in qualitative research, namely the primary instrument, which is the researchers themselves. Friese (2010) states that in qualitative investigations, the human investigator serves as the principal instrument for collecting and interpreting data. The study employed a method of data collection known as face-to-face individual interviews. Diccico-Bloom & Crabtree (2006) assert that interviews are employed to collect data from individuals regarding their thoughts, beliefs, and emotions about certain events, using their own language. More precisely, the study employed a semi-structured interview format, in which a predetermined set of questions and topics were prepared in advance for the conversation. The semi-structured interview allows researchers to address and resolve relevant concerns and questions that may arise during the interview process. In addition, it will enable the researchers to interpret non-verbal communication and reactions, which are crucial for data processing (Ferreira et al., 1988). Furthermore, the researchers obtained consent from the participants and utilized a cell phone's voice recorder to document the interview.

Data Analysis

This study employed Thematic analysis, a technique for examining qualitative data commonly used for assessing a collection of texts, such as interviews or transcripts. The researchers meticulously analyzed the data to discern prevalent themes—subjects, concepts, and patterns of significance that recur, as advised by Namraksa and Kraiwanit (2023).

RESULTS

The responses of the participants in each research question were examined using thematic analysis, wherein the answers are grouped in topics and coded based on how many synonyms there are in each response.

Table 1. Role of libraries in fostering information literacy as perceived by users

Themes	Codes
Crucial Resource Hub	Users continually view libraries as crucial centers for resources, acknowledging their key function in granting access to a wide array of knowledge. Libraries are not just seen as storage places, but also as active participants in the advancement of information literacy abilities.
Educational Support System	Libraries are commonly seen as educational institutions that actively aid users in gaining skills to properly find, evaluate, and use information. Users perceive libraries as essential collaborators in their educational endeavors.
Promotion of Critical Thinking	The significance of libraries in fostering critical thinking is acknowledged. Users value libraries for promoting critical thinking, enabling them to interrogate, scrutinize, and assess material, cultivating a mindset that surpasses mere passive consumption and contributes to a more discriminating approach.
Adaptation to Digital Age	Users value libraries for effectively adjusting to the digital era. The incorporation of technology and electronic resources is seen as essential for promoting modern information literacy, highlighting libraries as dynamic organizations that surpass traditional book collections.
Empowerment Center	Libraries are perceived by users as centers of empowerment, where individuals acquire the necessary abilities to become autonomous seekers and consumers of information. Libraries are seen as institutions that enable individuals to actively engage in a society that values knowledge, promoting a feeling of autonomy and effectiveness.

The participants' replies to the first research question about their perception on the role of libraries in fostering information literacy as perceived by users are shown in Table 1.

Table 2. Specific library initiatives or resources that have been most effective in fostering information literacy

Themes		Codes
Interactive Learning Modules		Interactive learning modules, whether accessed online or inside the confines of a library, are renowned for their efficacy. Users appreciate the interactive nature of these sessions, which enable them to actively apply and strengthen their information literacy abilities in a tangible and captivating way.
Personalized Assistance	Research	Users frequently acknowledge the efficacy of tailored research assistance offered by librarians. Having access to expert help while dealing with intricate research inquiries or tasks greatly enhances their development of information literacy.
Diverse Information Formats		Users value the wide range of information formats available, such as e-books, multimedia resources, and online databases. Having access to a diverse range of materials enables individuals to cultivate their information literacy abilities across many mediums.
Online Tutorials and Guides		The educational value of online tutorials and guides offered by libraries is generally recognized. Users value detailed guidance on how to effectively utilize library resources, do efficient searches, and assess the credibility of online content, which greatly enhances their overall information literacy.
Information Literacy Campaigns	Awareness	Users perceive information literacy awareness efforts as efficacious in highlighting the significance of these competencies. These campaigns utilize many mediums like as posters, social media, and events to foster a library culture that emphasizes the importance of information literacy.

The participants' replies to the second research question about the specific library initiatives or resources that have been most effective in fostering information literacy are shown in Table 2.

Table 3. Ways users believe information literacy skills acquired through library engagement have influenced the users' academic success or lifelong learning

Themes	Codes
Improved Research Abilities	Users assert that the acquisition of information literacy skills through library involvement immediately enhances research capabilities, resulting in enhanced academic achievement. Acquiring these abilities enhances users' ability to navigate academic requirements with efficiency.
Development of Critical Thinking	Information literacy abilities are thought to enhance critical thinking, which in turn improves academic performance by facilitating a more analytical approach to courses and assignments. These talents enhance one's comprehension and assessment of information.
Efficient Time Management	Users emphasize that possessing information literacy abilities enables them to effectively and judiciously allocate their time. By developing the skill to efficiently locate, assess, and utilize knowledge, individuals can optimize research procedures, leading to more concentrated and fruitful learning encounters.
Foundation of Lifelong Learning Habits	Users acknowledge that libraries promote information literacy skills that have applications outside academic settings. They hold the belief that these talents establish the groundwork for enduring learning habits, fostering an ongoing quest for knowledge and personal growth.
Adaptability to Changing Information Landscapes	Users recognize the dynamic nature of information and credit their capacity to adapt to this evolving terrain to the information literacy skills they get from libraries. The ability to adapt is considered essential for achieving success in academia as well as lifetime learning.

The participants' replies to the third research question about the ways users believe information literacy skills acquired through library engagement have influenced the users' academic success or lifelong learning are shown in Table 3.

Table 4. Contextual factors and challenges that influence the successful integration of libraries to the users' information literacy and how do these factors impact academic success

Themes	Codes
Technological Evolution	The swift advancement of technology is a substantial obstacle for libraries according to users. Regular changes to systems and infrastructure are essential to stay in line with digital progress. Technological disparities can impede integration, hence hindering academic achievement by limiting users' ability to access information.
Resistance to Change	Opposition to change might hinder the process of incorporating libraries. Promoting the development of flexibility and receptiveness towards novel methods of accessing information is crucial for users to fully utilize the extensive capabilities of library resources.
Financial Constraints	The construction and maintenance of libraries are constrained by a lack of financial resources. Sufficient money is essential for the modernization of technology, procurement of materials, and provision of training, all of which significantly influence the quality of services and academic achievement.
Cultural and Linguistic Diversity	Libraries should exhibit sensitivity towards the diverse range of users. Promoting accessible and pertinent resources for a wide range of users encourages inclusive information literacy practices, which have a favorable effect on academic achievements.
Unequal Access	Unequal availability of library resources impedes the development of information literacy. It is imperative to guarantee equitable access for all users, irrespective of their socio-economic status. Inequity might potentially contribute to differences in academic achievement among individuals.

The participants' replies to the fourth research question about the contextual factors and challenges that influence the successful integration of libraries to the users' information literacy and how do these factors impact academic success are shown in Table 4.

Table 5. Perceptions on the overall effectiveness of libraries in fostering information literacy and improving academic success

Themes	Codes
Resource Accessibility	Library efficacy is determined by users' perception of the ease with which they may access resources. An assortment of various materials, encompassing both tangible and virtual forms, adds to a favorable perception. Facilitating user accessibility is vital, since it directly correlates the library's worth to their advancement in information literacy and academic achievements.
Usability of Interfaces	The design and usability of library interfaces are essential in shaping user perceptions. The library's efficacy is enhanced by the ability to easily navigate through catalog systems, databases, and online resources. This support aids users on their journey to develop information literacy skills and achieve success in their academic pursuits.
Engagement of Library Staffs	Library users highly appreciate the active involvement of library personnel. Providing help with research inquiries, offering coaching on information literacy skills, and offering support for academic projects improve the perception of the library's effectiveness, resulting in a pleasant user experience.
Integration of Technology	Libraries that successfully incorporate technology into their services and offer online resources are considered to be more efficient. The integration of traditional and digital resources creates a smooth and cohesive user experience, enhancing their perception of information literacy and academic support.
Relevance of Collections	The assessment of library efficacy is contingent upon the pertinence of collections to users' scholastic requirements. Matching collections with curriculum needs and research interests is considered beneficial in promoting information literacy and enhancing academic achievement.

The participants' replies to the fifth research question about their perceptions on the overall effectiveness of libraries in fostering information literacy and improving academic success are shown in Table 5.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study have provided insights about the perceptions of users regarding the role of libraries in fostering information literacy and its educational impact. The following are the discussion of the responses in each research question relative to the study:

I. Role of libraries in fostering information literacy

The thematic analysis for research question 1 shows that libraries' continuous portrayal as resource hubs reflects their transformational function in information literacy. Users see libraries as skill-developers, not just storage. Libraries' function as educational support systems emphasizes their importance in helping people learn information skills, making them vital educational partners. Libraries' role in promoting critical thinking suggests they help cultivate a more discriminating perspective. Libraries are active and relevant beyond traditional media due to their digital transformation. Libraries help users to navigate a knowledge-driven world by fostering independence and self-efficacy.

II. Specific library initiatives or resources have been most effective in fostering information literacy

The thematic analysis for research question 2 shows that user feedback emphasizes interactive learning modules, tailored research assistance, various data forms, online tutorials, and information literacy awareness campaigns. Users appreciate interactive modules' hands-on approach to information literacy training. Librarians are regarded for their personalized research aid with challenging questions, improving information literacy. Variety in information formats helps skill practice across mediums. For its step-by-step direction, online tutorials are widely credited with improving information literacy. Through multiple methods, information literacy awareness campaigns successfully develop a library culture that values these skills.

III. Ways do users believe information literacy skills acquired through library engagement have influenced the users' academic success or lifelong learning

The thematic analysis for research question 3 reveals that users frequently underline the clear link between information literacy skills developed via library

involvement and increased research and academic success. Beyond academic accomplishment, these talents promote critical thinking and analytical coursework. Users note that information literacy abilities streamline research processes for focused and productive learning experiences, improving time management. The fact that these abilities foster lifelong learning beyond academia emphasizes their value. Users credit these talents for their adaptation to the changing information world and their importance in academic and lifelong success.

IV. Contextual factors and challenges that influence the successful integration of libraries to the users' information literacy, and how do these factors impact academic success

The thematic analysis for research question 4 shows that libraries must upgrade systems and infrastructure to stay up with technology's rapid progress. Technology gaps can inhibit integration and academic performance by limiting user access to information. Adaptability is needed because change resistance can hinder library incorporation. Limited funds limit library development and maintenance, affecting service quality and academic achievement. Inclusive information literacy strategies improve academic performance by respecting user diversity. To reduce academic achievement gaps, resource parity regardless of socioeconomic background is essential.

V. Perceptions on the overall effectiveness of libraries in fostering information literacy and improving academic success

The thematic analysis for research question 5 reveals that users value resource accessibility and variety when assessing library effectiveness. Library interfaces must be easy to use and foster information literacy. Active library staff support and advice improves user experience and library effectiveness. Technology and a seamless blend of traditional and digital resources improve users' perceptions of the library's information literacy and academic performance assistance. Resources that meet academic needs promote information literacy and academic performance.

Conclusions

The research findings illustrate the diverse function of libraries in promoting information literacy and impacting academic achievement. The thematic analysis of responses to five specific research questions indicated that users regularly view libraries as active contributors to the development of skills, acknowledging them as crucial collaborators in educational endeavors. The usefulness of growing information literacy abilities is emphasized through specific initiatives, such as interactive learning modules and individualized research assistance. Users ascribe better research capabilities, discerning analysis, and effective time allocation to the skills learned through library involvement, emphasizing their influence on academic achievement and beyond. Nevertheless, obstacles such as the advancement of technology, reluctance to adapt, and limited financial resources might hinder the smooth integration of libraries and, consequently, impede academic achievement. In general, users believe that the accessibility of

resources, user-friendly interfaces, and relevant collections are crucial factors in determining the overall effectiveness of libraries in promoting information literacy and academic achievement.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Research user preferences for resource accessibility, identifying the most useful materials (physical and digital). Understanding user preferences can help libraries develop academically relevant and information literacy-enhancing collections.
2. Explore the technological issues libraries confront in keeping up with rapid improvements. Evaluate how technology barriers affect user information access and develop integration strategies. This research can help libraries adapt to changing technology to improve information literacy and academic achievement.
3. Investigate causes influencing academic community resistance to library integration transformation. Explore ways to get consumers and library staff to adapt to new information access techniques. Addressing these elements can improve library-academic integration.
4. Evaluate the long-term effects of library efforts including information literacy campaigns and lifelong learning programs. Evaluate how these programs help users expand intellectually beyond academic needs. Understanding the long-term benefits of such programs can help libraries promote lifelong learning.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The paper's quality and integrity were assessed by adhering to multiple ethical standards. First, the researchers obtained consent from the participants to provide them with comprehensive details regarding the study, enabling them to make an informed decision regarding their participation. Second, the researchers assured that the participants would engage in the study on their own accord and possess the autonomy to withdraw at any given moment. Third, the researchers took great care to uphold the confidentiality of the participants, ensuring that their personal information remained undisclosed to any party. Fourth, the researchers also took measures to guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of the collected data from the participants. Fifth, the researchers took measures to mitigate potential hazards and optimize the advantages of the study for the participants. Sixth, the researchers shown a profound regard for the values and interests of all participants and took measures to safeguard them from any potential harm. Seventh, the researchers ensured that there was an absence of bias in the interpretation of the data and that the results were exclusively utilized for research purposes. Eight and lastly, the researchers took measures to prevent any instances of plagiarism in both the composition and execution of the research.

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