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INFORMATION LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN SELECTED SCHOOL LIBRARIES: PRACTICES, ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the content, instructional methods, assessment practices, and implementation challenges of information literacy (IL) instruction in selected school libraries in Northern Mindanao. It used the findings to propose an information literacy program. The study conducted a descriptive survey of 30 professional librarians, designated library personnel, and other library workers with IL instructional responsibilities from 19 educational institutions during School Year 2025–2026. The researchers collected data through an adapted, pilot-tested questionnaire and analyzed them using frequencies, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations. The challenges scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's α = .73). Library rules and regulations (100%) and orientation or guided tours (90%) were the most frequently taught topics. In contrast, respondents paid less attention to information evaluation (30%), citation practices (33.3%), and information ethics (33.3%). Beginning-of-year library orientation (93.3%) was the leading instructional approach. Oral feedback was the most common assessment method (56.7%), and 30% of respondents reported conducting no assessment. Overall, respondents rated implementation challenges as a problem (M = 2.76, SD = 0.93), particularly limited librarian participation in curriculum design (M = 3.06), inadequate funding (M = 3.03), and insufficient resources and facilities (M = 3.00). The findings support a proposed, curriculum-aligned information literacy instructional program emphasizing information evaluation, responsible information use, librarian–teacher collaboration, and IL assessment practices. Researchers purposively selected participants; therefore, the results describe only the participating personnel.

Keywords: *information literacy*, *school libraries*, *library instruction*, *assessment practices*, *curriculum integration*, *implementation challenges*

INTRODUCTION

Information literacy (IL) helps students locate, evaluate, use, and communicate information responsibly. Its scope now extends beyond library orientation and access to resources to include source evaluation, misinformation, digital information practices, metacognition, and the interpretation of AI-generated information (Burns et al., 2021; Spisak, 2021; Hirvonen, 2024; Saunders, 2024). School libraries provide important academic support for developing these competencies, as students build research and information-use skills before entering higher education.

Research on school librarians and secondary-school learners identifies ongoing difficulties in evaluating information, synthesizing sources, transferring IL competencies across subjects, and sustaining library instruction beyond one-time sessions (Dipetso & Moahi, 2021; Garrison & Oddone, 2025). Recent work also underscores the need to consider AI literacy in school-library instruction (Wong & Chiu, 2026). Reviews of library instruction continue to document evolving expectations for teaching and assessing IL across educational contexts (Caffrey et al., 2025).

Sustained IL instruction requires purposeful cooperation between librarians and teachers, flexible delivery, and evidence of student learning. Research on instructional partnerships and performance-based assessment suggests that authentic student tasks can demonstrate IL competencies more clearly than informal reactions alone (Cox et al., 2023; Rieh et al., 2022; Miller et al., 2023; Reeves et al., 2024). Online tutorials and digital guides can supplement scheduled library instruction and support independent learning (Eclevia, 2022; Kowalik, 2022; Amsberry & Behler, 2024).

Emerging approaches to source evaluation emphasize critical investigation, reflection, and informed judgment rather than relying solely on simple checklists (Tardiff, 2022, 2024; Chomintra, 2024; Goodsett & Gagich, 2025). These priorities raise a practical concern: whether school-library IL instruction focuses mainly on learning to use the library or also addresses the information practices students need for academic tasks and everyday digital environments.

Despite this broader understanding of IL, instructional content, delivery modes, assessment practices, and constraints in selected school libraries in Northern Mindanao remain a significant gap, especially for school libraries with a one–person librarian/staff. The present study assesses these practices among library personnel with instructional responsibilities and uses the results to develop a proposed, context-responsive IL instructional program. The study is descriptive; it does not test the proposed program's effectiveness.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the current information literacy instructional practices of the selected school libraries in terms of

1.1. program content,
1.2 methods of instruction; and
1.3 methods of evaluation or assessment?

2. What challenges do school librarians and library workers encounter in implementing information literacy instructional programs?

3. Based on the findings, what information literacy instructional program may be proposed for possible sharing with library and information professionals through the Lanao Library and Information Workers Association (LLIWA)?

Conceptual Framework

The study uses the Big6 information problem-solving process as an organizing perspective. The study examined IL instructional content, teaching methods, and assessment practices, along with perceived implementation barriers, as inputs for developing a proposed program. The framework emphasizes practical activities, collaboration, and ongoing assessment rather than a single library orientation, consistent with recent discussions of contextualized IL instruction (Flood, 2022; Cox et al., 2023; Aytac et al., 2025). This conceptual framework guided the interpretation and proposed instructional response; it was not separately tested as a statistical model.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a descriptive survey research design to document current IL instructional practices and perceived barriers. The study observed and summarized existing conditions without manipulating variables. The study used both online and printed questionnaires to collect respondents' self-reports.

Locale, Respondents and Sampling

The study was conducted during School Year 2025–2026 in 19 selected educational institutions in Northern Mindanao, Philippines. Participants included 30 professional school librarians, designated library personnel and other library workers directly involved in IL instruction. To protect confidentiality, the names of institutions and the distribution of respondents across individual institutions are not disclosed.

Table 1. Summary of research participants

Selected educational institutions	19
Professional librarians/designated library personnel and library workers with IL instructional roles	30

Note. The names of participating institutions and institution-level respondent counts were withheld to reduce the possibility of indirect identification.

Criterion-based purposive sampling was used. Eligible respondents were professional school librarians, designated library in-charge personnel, or library workers with direct IL instructional functions. Their roles provided first-hand knowledge of the practices and challenges under study.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire was adapted and modified from the Survey of Information Literacy Instructional Practices in U.S. Academic Libraries by Julien et al. (2018). Part I covered respondents' profiles and target groups of instruction; Part II asked about IL topics, instructional methods, and evaluation or assessment; and Part III measured barriers to IL implementation. The barriers section used a 4-point Likert response scale interpreted as 3.26–4.00 (highly a problem), 2.51–3.25 (a problem), 1.76–2.50 (less of a problem), and 1.00–1.75 (not a problem). Subject matter experts reviewed the questionnaire, and it underwent pilot testing. The implementation-challenges scale yielded Cronbach's alpha of 0.73.

Data-Gathering Procedure

LLIWA officers were asked for permission and assistance in contacting prospective participants. The researcher explained the nature and purpose of the research, and participation was voluntary. The survey was distributed through Google Forms and printed questionnaires. The researcher encoded and tabulated completed responses for descriptive analysis. The report did not present participant or institution names; results were summarized in aggregate form.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Frequencies and percentages described the IL content, instructional methods, and assessment practices indicated on the multiple-response checklist. Weighted means and standard deviations summarized perceived barriers to implementation. Percentages in the multiple-response tables are based on 30 respondents and do not necessarily total 100%.

Scope and Limitations

The findings are limited to self-reported practices of 30 purposively selected respondents in 19 participating institutions. Student IL competencies were not assessed directly, instruction was not observed, and institution-level comparisons were not conducted to preserve confidentiality. The descriptive results should not be generalized to all school libraries in Northern Mindanao or elsewhere. The study developed the proposed IL program from the findings but did not implement or evaluate it.

RESULTS

Information Literacy Program Content

Table 2. Frequency distribution of IL topics covered in instructional programs

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
Library rules and regulations	30	100%
Library orientation/guided library tour	27	90%
Use of online databases	23	76.7%
How to identify different resources in the library	21	70%
Proper care and handling of library materials	21	70%
Library classification system	21	70%
Use of periodicals	20	66.7%
Use of audio-visual materials	18	60%
Library reading activities	16	53.3%
Introductory/advanced information skills/research skills	16	53.3%
Book talks	11	36.7%
How to properly cite sources	10	33.3%
Copyright, libel, intellectual property, plagiarism, piracy, FOI, cybercrime	10	33.3%
How to evaluate information	9	30%
Others: E-library	1	3.3%
Others: National Book Week activities	1	3.3%

Note. Multiple responses were permitted (n = 30); percentages may exceed 100% when combined.

As shown in Table 2, all respondents reported teaching library rules and regulations (100%), followed by library orientation or guided tours (90%) and online database use (76.7%). Fewer respondents included information evaluation (30%), proper citation (33.3%), and legal and ethical issues related to information use (33.3%). This pattern indicates that the participating school libraries emphasized library-use orientation and resource access more often than critical evaluation and ethical use of information.

Methods of Instruction

Table 3. Frequency distribution of IL instructional methods

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
Library orientation at the beginning of the school year	28	93.3%
Face-to-face instruction	18	60%
Group/class library instruction in the library	17	56.7%
Day-to-day interaction with students or faculty	16	53.3%
Printed library guides/handbooks	14	46.7%
Individual instruction at reference/librarian's desk	13	43.3%
Group library tours	11	36.7%
Web-format library guides/handbooks	10	33.3%
During library periods/class library research	9	30%
Lectures/demonstrations in subject classes	8	26.7%
Library website	7	23.3%
Social media sites	3	10%

Note. Multiple responses were permitted (n = 30).

As shown in Table 3, beginning-of-school-year library orientation was the most frequently reported instructional approach (93.3%). Face-to-face instruction (60%) and group or class library instruction conducted in the library (56.7%) were also common. Only 10% of respondents reported social media, indicating that digital outreach channels were used less frequently than in-person methods.

Evaluation and Assessment Methods

Table 4. Frequency distribution of IL evaluation and assessment methods

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
Oral feedback	17	56.7%
Written feedback	9	30%
No assessment	9	30%
Students' research outputs	5	16.7%
Faculty/subject teacher feedback	4	13.3%
Short quizzes/tests/assignments	3	10%
Student academic performance	2	6.7%

Statements	Frequency	Percentage
Suggestion/improvement box	1	3.3%

Note. Multiple responses were permitted (n = 30).

Table 4 shows that oral feedback was the most frequently used assessment method (56.7%), followed by written feedback (30%). Nine respondents (30%) reported that they did not assess IL learning. Student research outputs (16.7%), short quizzes or assignments (10%), and academic performance (6.7%) were used less frequently. The results describe limited use of systematic or performance-based evidence of learning.

Challenges in Implementing Information Literacy Programs

Table 5. Challenges and barriers in implementing IL instructional programs

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Librarians are not involved in curriculum designing	3.06	0.98	A problem
Lack of budget/funding	3.03	0.89	A problem
Lack of library resources and facilities	3.0	0.83	A problem
Faculty/students are not well versed in the importance of IL skills	3.0	0.83	A problem
Lack of time due to professional workload/one-person library	2.9	0.92	A problem
Librarians perform more non-professional/administrative work	2.8	0.89	A problem
Lack of collaboration between librarians and teaching faculty	2.8	1.0	A problem
IL instruction is not part of the curriculum	2.77	1.0	A problem
Lack of awareness regarding the importance of IL instruction	2.77	1.0	A problem
Lack of policy on IL instruction in libraries	2.77	1.0	A problem
Administration prioritizes physical infrastructure over IL instruction	2.73	0.9	A problem
Students/teachers are overloaded and lack time for IL instruction	2.7	0.88	A problem
Lack of training opportunities for librarians/library workers	2.7	0.91	A problem
Lack of interest by users	2.67	1.0	A problem
Lack of library staff/personnel	2.67	1.06	A problem
Library positioned under administration rather than academics	2.57	0.86	A problem

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Librarians are not expected to facilitate IL instruction	2.63	1.0	A problem
Lack of commitment among school librarians for IL instruction	2.53	1.0	A problem
Lack of IL expertise among school librarians	2.4	0.78	Less of a problem

Note. Based on a four-point scale. Overall weighted mean = 2.76 and reported overall SD = 0.93; interpreted as "A problem."

The overall weighted mean of implementation challenges was 2.76 (SD = 0.93), interpreted as "A problem." The highest-rated barriers were limited librarian involvement in curriculum design (M = 3.06), inadequate funding (M = 3.03), insufficient resources and facilities (M = 3.00), and limited awareness of the importance of IL among teachers and students (M = 3.00). Lack of IL expertise among librarians was the only item interpreted as "Less of a problem" (M = 2.40).

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that participating school libraries provide a foundation in library use but devote less attention to the broader abilities students require to evaluate, communicate, and use information critically. Library rules, orientation, and resource access were prominent, whereas information evaluation and citation received limited coverage. This result suggests a gap between current instruction and the broader range of IL competencies discussed in recent scholarship (Burns et al., 2021; Saunders, 2024).

The low coverage of information evaluation, citation and ethical information use is especially relevant in a digital environment shaped by misinformation, fast-changing information sources, and AI-generated content. Research describes challenges secondary students face in evaluating and applying information and recommends critical investigation and metacognitive approaches rather than exclusively checklist-based instruction (Dipetso & Moahi, 2021; Tardiff, 2022, 2024; Goodsett & Gagich, 2025). These considerations support prioritizing source verification and responsible information use in information literacy program (Hirvonen, 2024; Wong & Chiu, 2026).

Respondents reported instructional methods centered on beginning-of-school-year orientation and face-to-face sessions. Although these activities make essential services visible, established IL sessions and classroom-aligned IL instruction could provide additional opportunities for students to apply skills to research assignments. Previous studies have associated librarian–teacher collaboration with stronger integration of IL into learning activities (Stoeckle et al., 2022; Cox et al., 2023; Reeves et al., 2024). Online tutorials and web-based resources also offer instructional options beyond the physical library (Eclevia, 2022; Kowalik, 2022; Amsberry & Behler, 2024).

The assessment findings raise questions about how much libraries can demonstrate gains in student learning. Oral feedback was reported more frequently than assessment through actual research products, quizzes, or academic outcomes, and some respondents reported no assessment at all. Performance tasks, simple analytic rubrics, and short pre- and post-instruction exercises may offer more direct evidence of students' abilities to locate, evaluate, and cite information (Nierenberg et al., 2021; Rieh et al., 2022; Miller et al., 2023). Such measures should be feasible for libraries with limited time and personnel.

Implementation challenges were not restricted to librarians' knowledge or confidence. The most prominent concerns involved curriculum participation, budget, facilities, and recognition of IL's importance. These results suggest that improvements will require institutional commitment and clear cooperation between library and academic units, rather than additional librarian effort alone. This interpretation aligns with research emphasizing structural support, librarians' instructional role, and collaboration with faculty (Spisak, 2021; Gross et al., 2022; Garrison & Oddone, 2025). However, the findings reflect respondents' perceptions and do not establish causal effects of these barriers.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the selected school libraries reported IL activities focused on library rules, orientation, and access to resources. Librarians most often delivered instruction through beginning-of-year orientation and face-to-face sessions, while evaluation was commonly based on informal feedback. Instruction on competencies in critical information evaluation, citation, and information ethics received less attention.

For the second research question, respondents perceived implementation barriers as an overall problem. Limited librarian involvement in curriculum planning, budget constraints, inadequate resources, and insufficient recognition of IL competencies emerged as the principal challenges. These findings indicate that both instructional development and institutional support are necessary.

The findings also provide a basis for a proposed information literacy instructional program that connects Big6-informed inquiry activities with source evaluation, ethical information use, teacher – librarian collaboration, and IL outcome assessment.]

Recommendations

School librarians and library workers may develop a structured, grade-appropriate IL instructional program that extends existing orientation sessions into classroom-aligned learning opportunities. School administrators and teachers may support its implementation through curriculum planning, adequate library resources, shared teaching time, professional development, and regular assessment. LLIWA may use the results as a basis for collaborative instructional materials, benchmarking, and capacity-building activities.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The study reports voluntary participation after respondents were informed of the survey's nature and purpose. The study withheld respondent names, institutional identities, and institution-level respondent counts to reduce the likelihood of indirect identification. Findings were presented only in aggregate form and used for research purposes. The researcher obtained informed consent from participants and explained their right to withdraw; data were kept secure, and only the researcher has access to the raw data; there is no conflict of interest with this study; the researcher used ChatGPT, Gemini, and Grammarly for writing and editing. After using these tools or services, the researcher reviewed and edited the content as needed and accepted full responsibility for the paper's content.

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