

An Inquiry into Information Literacy (IL) Skills among Public University Students: A Developing Country Perspective

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Abstract - The main purpose of this paper is to explore the Information Literacy (IL) skills among the students of Business faculty students at University of Dhaka (DU). The more specific objectives of the study are to identify the strength and weakness of its IL programs and to provide some suitable recommendations to enhance the business faculty student's IL skills. The study employed descriptive research, applying a questionnaire-based survey. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed randomly, of which 253 were returned and used for the analysis. The results of the study reveal that there are considerable differences in IL skills among the faculty students. Most students are not able to answer relevant questions correctly. There were great differences in IL skills among students. It was found that a majority of students lacked skills in catalogue searching and information use, selection of e-resources, formulation of search and information seeking strategies, and even about proper procedures of borrowing books from the library. However, most respondents agreed that IL is essential in their academic work and research.

Keywords: Information Literacy, IL Skills, Developing Country, University of Dhaka, Business Faculty Students

I. INTRODUCTION

In the information age, it is difficult to think of living without information especially when information is available electronically on the web. The massive amounts of information present several challenges information seeking, and selection has become more complicated (Maguire, 2017). Knowledge seekers face many difficulties in finding out the expected information as well as accessing this information requires that individuals need to be more skilled at selecting relevant sources, determining accuracy and authenticity and knowing what fact is. For this reason, Information Literacy (IL) is gradually becoming a necessity in the information world. Mokhter and Majid (2008) described that Library and Information Institution perform as an intermediaries in bridging the IL with the users. Only this organization will be accountable to discourse the conception of IL to the users. The users can seize the chance to prepare themselves as information literate by experiencing different IL programs. IL denotes to the comprehensive set of abilities and identifications that empower a person to diagnose the desired information from the properties that will best reply to those desires and to identify how to use those properties efficiently and also to determine the information he/she has got (Molopyane and Fourie, 2015). IL has a deep influence

on quality of life, education and research, employment and information-rich environment (Batool and Mahmood, 2016). Though the concept of IL was first coined in 1974 by Paul G. Zurkowski, it is comparatively a new term in Bangladesh. But as a rising country in Bangladesh there is a tiny consciousness about the conception of IL and its effect (Salam and Islam, 2009). That's why in this paper we can explore IL skills among the business faculty students at the University of Dhaka.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

American Library Association (ALA) defined IL is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning. IL recycled habitually in the library and information studies dome and embedded in the ideas of library and bibliographic education is the aptitude to distinguish when information is required and has the facility to discover, assess, and practice competently the obligatory information (Tan, Kiran and Diljit, 2017). Radar (1991) stated that IL is an imperative for survival in the future and an information literate citizen will be able to sort out and apply information practices suitable to any circumstance, both nationally and internationally.

Kuhlthau (2001) described that IL as a critical part of education. It involves reading comprehension, writing and computing abilities used in communicating and presenting information. 2001 draft of certification standards for the Middle East, Characteristics of Excellence explains that to be an aware resident in the 21st century, all individual should have information-awareness as well as observant minds to determine the relevance and significance of information. Virkus (2003) stated IL is gaining more attention as it is fundamental in our modern life and scientific world where seeking information and knowledge is necessary to solve challenging problems. Beside these, IL is not only essential for library education but also significant for gathering information among researchers and students and information professionals, researchers and students. Donnelly and Craddock (2002) stated that IL involves capabilities to assess recognize authentic and relevant information, and to do so efficiently and effectively.

Hebrang (2016) described that the achievement of IL skills contributes to an individual's advancement as a critical thinker, problem solver and independent learner. An information literate person has the ability to recognize appropriate information and engage in activities to acquire information through appropriate networks. IL is the implementation of suitable information conduct to identify, through whatever channel or means, information well matched to information desires, principal to prudent and proper custom of information in society. In another study, Salam and Islam (2009) described IL is a scale of proficiency, performances, methodologies and standards that are so severely intertwined with the usages of information as to be a primary component of knowledge and research.

Shuva (2004) highlighted that the literacy rate among the people of Bangladesh of all ages rose from 17% in 1961 to 24.9% in 1991. He suggested that IL programs cannot be fruitful in developing countries without national and international support and cooperation. Islam and Tsuji (2010) found that graduate students in Information Science and Library Management had IL skills that were limited and even though IL was considered important among the students, the curriculum did not provide adequate guidance. They suggested incorporating IL instruction into the course curriculum.

Islam and Ahmed (2010) documented of training programmes which were organized and conducted in different secondary schools of rural Bangladesh. Feedback from the trainees indicated that before getting training, students had no clear idea about IL concepts, but at the end of the programs they had developed a clear concept of IL and understood how important it is. Singh and Begum (2010) highlighted in their work three pillars of nation building, the impact of ICT on the life and work of people and the paradigm shift in libraries. Islam and Rahman (2014) showed that Arts faculty students agreed on the importance of IL in their academic work and research. They also recommended that IL education should be embedded in the curriculum, and it should also be established

early in their education so that they could become more effective in using information.

From the above discussions, IL is a collection of abilities required to locate, retrieve, analyze, and utilize information. IL provides students with the fundamental knowledge and abilities needed to develop into self-sufficient lifelong learners. All teachers need to be up to date in order to fulfill student needs and deal with the rapidly advancing information technology.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this paper is to explore the IL skills among the Faculty of Business Studies students at the University of Dhaka. The more specific objectives of the study are to

1. Identify the strength and weaknesses of offering IL programs;
2. Provide some suitable recommendations to enhance the Faculty of Business Studies student's IL skills.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted by the Faculty of Business Studies students at University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. The study employed descriptive research, applying a questionnaire-based survey as instrument for eliciting information on IL among students. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed randomly, of which 253 were returned and used for the analysis. The data thus collected were analyzed through SPSS and MS Excel application.

V. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Some methods are used to collect data which is analyzed and construed and offered in graphs and tables. About 253 students were participated in this work. Majority of the respondents were Female 143 (56.5 %) and 110 (43.5 %) were male.

TABLE I DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESPONSE

Name of the Department	Ques. Distribution	Ques. Analyzed	Frequency (%)
Management	50	31	31 (12.3%)
Accounting and Information Systems	50	30	30 (11.9%)
Marketing	40	35	35 (13.8%)
Finance	40	31	31 (12.3%)
Banking and Insurance	50	36	36 (14.2%)
Management Information Systems	40	30	30 (11.8%)
International Business	40	25	25 (9.9%)
Tourism and Hospitality Management	40	35	35 (13.8%)
Total	350	253	253 (100%)

From the Table I, out of 253 students, the highest rate of return on the questionnaire about 14.2% was from the Department of Banking and insurance and the least 9.9% were from the Department of International Business.

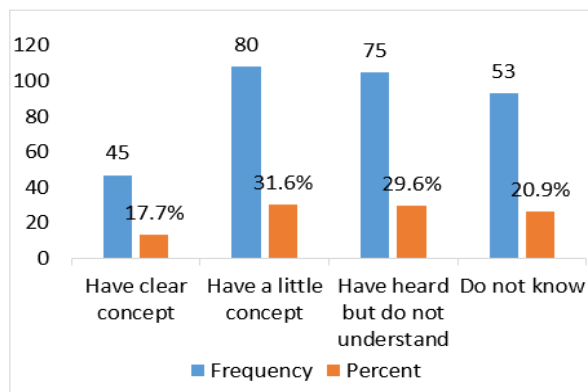


Fig. 1 Students knowing about the concept of information literacy

Fig. 1 indicates that 31.5% students have a little concept of IL where 17.7% students have clear concept about IL. On the other hand, 20.9% students do not know about IL.

TABLE II CURRENT INFORMATION NEED TO CONSULT

Existing Information Prerequisite to Access	Frequency	Percentage
E resources	65	25.7%
Books	30	11.9%
Encyclopedia articles	25	9.9%
Periodicals	50	19.8%
Journals	33	13.0%
Bibliographies	20	7.9%
No interest	30	11.9%
Total	253	100

Table II directs about Current information need to consult. Where maximum students preferred about 25.7% e resources, 19.8% Periodicals, 13.0% journals, 11.9% books, 9.9% Encyclopedia articles, 7.9% bibliographies as the main source of information.

TABLE III TOOLS FOR DISCOVERING DESIRED MATERIALS

Tools	Frequency	Percentage
Online database	65	26%
Web	75	30%
Library Catalogue	45	18%
Journals	45	18%
Do not Know	23	9%
Total	253	100

Table III shows highest percentage of students that is 30% used web to discover library materials. On the other hand, 26%, 18%, 18% used respectively online database, library

catalogue and journals. Beside these, 9% do not know different tools.

TABLE IV FINDING INFORMATION THROUGH ONLINE

Finding Information	Frequency	Percentage
Via search engine	123	48.6%
Via subject Gateway	35	13.8%
Website browsing	50	19.8%
Taking help from others	45	17.8%
Total	253	100

Table IV indicates maximum students that is 48% used search engine and 13.8% used subject gateway to find information.

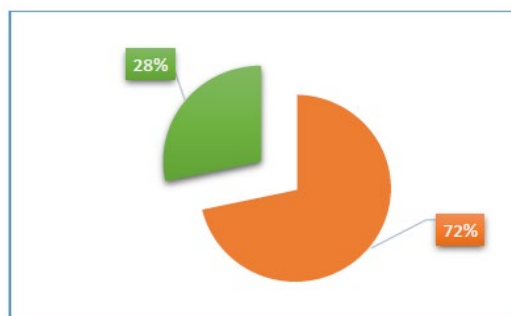


Fig. 2 Students knowing about book borrowing procedures from the library

Fig. 2 shows that 62% students do not know about the procedures of borrowing books from the library. On the other hand, 38% know how to borrow books from the library.

TABLE V MEDIUM OF BORROWING LIBRARY MATERIALS

Borrowing Medium	Frequency	Percentage
Online	108	42.7%
Manually	50	19.8%
Have no idea	95	37.5%
Total	253	100

Table V shows 42.7% students borrow books via online and 19.8% borrow through manually.

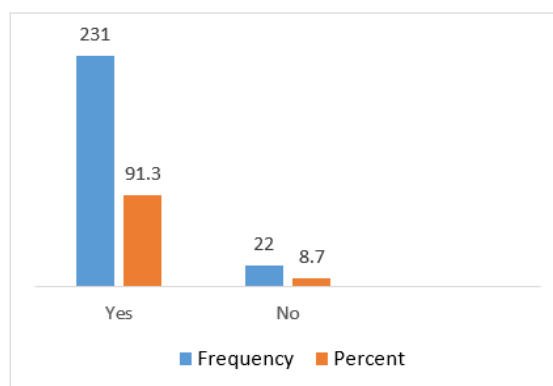


Fig. 3 Information literacy is essential for education

Fig. 3 shows maximum students that is 91.3% think IL is essential for education but 8.7% think it is not essential.

TABLE VI USE CITATION STYLE FOR A JOURNAL ARTICLE

Citation Style	Frequency (%)
APA	75 (29.6%)
CHICAGO	25 (9.9%)
MLA	50 (19.8%)
Have no idea	103 (40.7%)
Total	253 (100%)

Table VI shows maximum students do not have any idea about citation. On the other hand, 29.6% students used American Psychological Association (APA) citation style for their research purposes.

TABLE VII SEARCH TO IDENTIFY A SUBJECT

Identify a Subject	Frequency	Percentage
Online database	50	19.8%
Journal	125	49.4%
Book	45	17.8%
Encyclopedia	28	11.1%
Don't know	5	2.0%
Total	253	100

Table VII presents maximum students 49.4% preferred journal to identify a subject. On the other hand, 19.8%, 17.8%, 11.1% preferred respectively online database, book & encyclopedia.

TABLE VIII FINDINGS AN ARTICLE, A BOOK OR LIBRARY MATERIALS VIA LIBRARY CATALOGUE

Findings Library Materials	Frequency	Percentage
Internet guide	53	20.9%
Author	91	36.0%
Tittle	65	25.7%
All options are correct	35	13.8%
Don't know	9	3.6%
Total	253	100

Table VIII shows 36.0% search materials via author. 25.7%, 20.9% students choose respectively title and internet guide.

TABLE IX USE OF BOOLEAN OPERATORS FOR FINDING LIBRARY MATERIALS

Boolean Operators	Frequency	Percentage
AND	80	31.6%
OR	120	47.4%
NOT	53	20.9%
Total	253	100

Table IX shows most of the student's 47.4% preferred OR Boolean operators to find library materials.

TABLE X REQUIRED TOOLS TO GET OTHER LIBRARY MATERIALS

Required Tools	Frequency	Percentage
Index	51	20.2%
Bibliography	63	24.9%
Glossary	55	21.7%
Tables of content	45	17.8%
Others	30	11.9%
Don't know	9	3.6%
Total	253	100

Table X indicates that most of the students that is 24.9% are familiar with bibliography to get library materials. On the other hand, 20.2%, 21.7%, 17.8%, 11.9% students are familiar with respectively Index, Glossary, Table of contents and others. Beside these, 3.6% do not know how to access library materials.

TABLE XI SEARCH ITEMS TO FIND THE DOCUMENT

Search Items	Frequency	Percentage
Author	80	31.6%
Title	75	29.6%
Publisher	45	17.8%
Subject	35	13.8%
Don't know	18	7.1%
Total	253	100

Table XI shows most of the students preferred author search items to find the document. On the other hand, 7.1% students do not know about the search items.

TABLE XII IL BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS ARE INCLUDED IN THE BOTH GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

IL Based Program	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	197	77.9%
No	51	20.2%
Don't know	5	2.0%
Total	253	100

Table XII shows most of the student 77.9% agreed IL based education and training programs should be included in both graduate and undergraduate program.

VI. PROBLEMS OF THE STUDY

From the analysis of the study, it seems that the faculty has not been included IL as part of their programs. This has resulted in some problems that hinder students' acquiring an

understanding of what IL is and how IL skills will be using in their studies. Some of the problems identified through this study are described below.

1. Deficiency of Proper Awareness: In the Faculty of Business Studies at the University of Dhaka, there is no section for improvement where awareness and understanding of IL is concerned. On the other hand, there are deficiencies which exist such as a lack of awareness, lack of training facilities and no IL skills development databases for the students

2. Want of Idea: There have a want of the significance of IL and indifferences of IL programs among the students of Business faculty.

3. Insufficient Knowledge: Most of the students do not have proper knowledge about the importance of IL Program. They don't even know what is IL? They don't know how one can easily and successfully retrieve one's relevant information.

4. Lack of IL Course Based Curriculum and Education Program: There is no IL course based Curriculum in the syllabus except some particular departments. There is the lack of IL based education programs in the business faculty.

5. Students Ignorance: The study reveals that students are not aware of different types of IL programs which are organized by Business faculty e-library and the central library. Their unwillingness makes the authority disappointed to organize such kind of programs. There will be no logic behind this kind of initiative unless ultimately the students are attracted to this programme.

6. Shortage of Proper Steps by the Authority and Information Professionals: Shortage of proper steps by the authority of business faculty as well as Dhaka University to develop IL skills. On the other hand, all of the information

professionals are not so much alert about raising IL skills among its academic library users.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In the light of the above mentioned problems following recommendations are made to improve IL programs at the Faculty of Business Studies

1. Introducing IL Programs in Different Institutions: IL programs should be introduced to the students in the Faculty of Business Studies, so that they can understand IL skills are helpful to their studies. If it can be ensured to make students informed of the benefit of being information literate person, there would be a revolutionary and an exemplary change in the present status of IL programs at the Business faculty of Dhaka University.

2. Creating Awareness Among Students: Students seem unaware about IL skills and the benefits of these skills in their studies. In this regard, the faculty members or the university librarians or both together should take necessary steps towards creating awareness among students by organizing various training programs and workshops from the university, department as well as library.

3. Policy Formulation: To increase the skills of IL among students existing policy must be formulated. IL related course must be included in their syllabus.

4. Collaboration: To develop the importance of IL skills it is essential for business faculty members and librarians to plan and teach together so that IL skills are embedded into the business courses.

5. Establishment of ICT Facilities in Libraries: IL programs are not possible without sufficient ICT support. In this regard both Dhaka university central librarian and subject librarian should give more concentration to establish ICT based library.

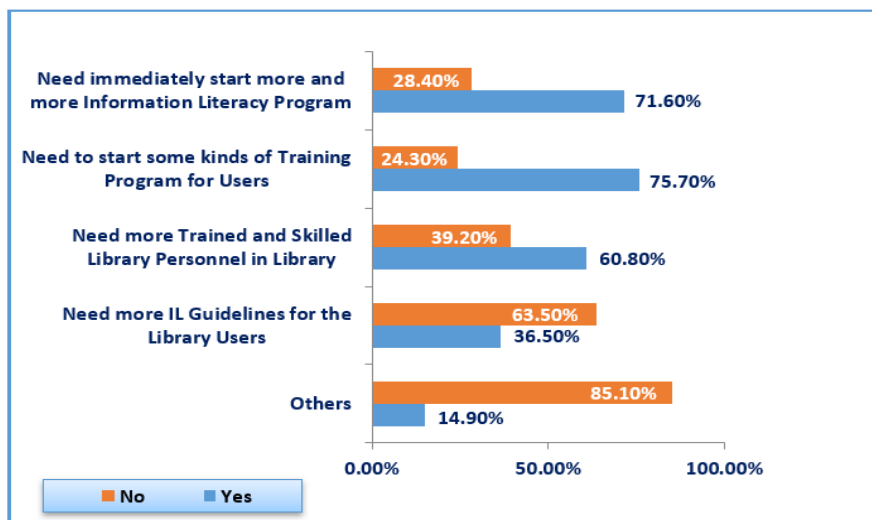


Fig. 4 Recommendations to improve IL Initiatives at business faculty

6. *Organize Training Programmes*: Intensive and extensive training programs should be organized to develop different IL skills. These IL programs should not only be conducted for business students but also for library personnel and faculty.

7. *Allotment of Sufficient Budget*: To conduct IL education and training Program among students regularly, sufficient financial facilities must be allotted. University librarian should give more attention on this issue.

8. *Consciousness of Higher Authority*: Sincerity and consciousness of higher authority is the main factor to modernize (IL) programs in the Business faculty. To conduct (IL) programs for students, teachers, personnel consciousness of the library authority must be presented. Beside these, students also asked to provide some recommendations ranging from Yes/No.

Finally, IL programs have gained importance as we become emerged in the information age. The study has gathered information about the present state of IL skills among some of the Faculty of Business students at Dhaka University. It is apparent that the Business faculty must work to understand the importance of IL programs and how to encourage their students in developing their IL skills. And finally, each library and department of Dhaka university should have well-trained Library Information Service professions so that they can manage the IL programs more efficiently.

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