

# Assessing The Freshers' Experience and Perceptions on the Importance of Information Literacy Skills for Their Academic Success

**Nurudeen Mohammed Rabi'u**

Department of Library and Information Science, Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi State, Nigeria

**Adamu Mohammed**

Department of Library and Information Science, Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi State, Nigeria

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/ijliss.15/vol11n4617>

Published December 31, 2025

**Citation:** Rabi'u N.M. and Mohammed A. (2025) Assessing The Freshers' Experience and Perceptions on the Importance of Information Literacy Skills for Their Academic Success, *International Journal of Library and Information Science Studies*, 11(4), 6-17

**Abstract:** *The main objective of this paper is to determine the effects of demographic factors such as gender, age, and university on freshers' experiences with information literacy skills. The current research adopts a cross-sectional survey design with participants from two universities. The study employed a stratified random sampling technique to select the sample size. The quantitative method through questionnaire was designed and used to assess and confirm whether freshers understand information literacy skills. The findings indicate that gender, age, and university affect freshers' experiences with information literacy skills, meaning that there were no significant differences in the experience of information literacy skills across age, gender, and university among freshers. The findings also revealed that male respondents, 20-24-year-old respondents, and students from the Federal University of Health Sciences showed significantly greater experience with information literacy skills. The findings of this research provide support for the postulated hypotheses. Undergraduates in the early stages of their university education should be exposed to preliminary research activities by faculty members to enhance their experience and knowledge of information literacy, including copyright understanding and the ability to effectively cite and paraphrase existing knowledge to avoid plagiarism. This research highlighted on how IL transform university freshers into information-literate individuals who can locate, access, and use information resources ethically and effectively.*

**Keywords:** information literacy skills, freshers, experience with ILS, perceptions with ILS, FUHSA, SAZU

## INTRODUCTION

An information literacy skills course is essential for assisting freshers in understanding the digital components utilized in 21st-century libraries. Researchers agree that information literacy encompasses the ability to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively from various sources, including online databases, libraries, and the internet. For instance, Al-Maskari et al. (2020) posited that information literacy skills represent the ability to access, evaluate, and use information from diverse sources to create and communicate new knowledge.

However, this study observed that freshers may lack the necessary information literacy skills to navigate the complex information landscape of higher education due to their inexperience in locating, accessing, and using information. Freshers may struggle with information literacy skills due to lack of experience and familiarity with academic research, difficulty in identifying credible sources, and confusion about proper source citation (Panchal & Patel, 2021). Thus, the study recommended that additional library instruction be integrated into undergraduate curricula to increase students' competence in information evaluation and proper citation of information resources from reputable sources.

Freshers enrolling at the university for the first time may have limited experience with academic research and information retrieval and may require additional support to develop their information literacy skills. For this reason, the university library offers an information literacy skills course for all freshers to develop the experience and ability to locate, access, and use relevant information for their research and assignments. Consequently, the information literacy skills course is regarded as mandatory and constitutes part of the graduation requirements.

Therefore, this study seeks to explore freshers' experiences and perceptions of the information literacy skills course attended at the beginning of their undergraduate programme. Additionally, the research aims to assess the levels of freshers' experience with information literacy skills based on their demographic variables. The findings of this study will provide insights into information literacy skills among fresher students and identify areas where additional instruction may be needed to enable freshers to become confident in searching for and using required information resources throughout their academic careers. The results will inform the development of information literacy skills programming at Sa'adu Zungur University (SAZU) library and Federal University of Health and Science Azare.

### Statement of the Purpose

Academic libraries cannot achieve their mandate without teaching library users proper information literacy skills. At the beginning of each new academic session at the university, freshers are eager to use information resources for their research work and assignments to meet their lecturers' demands. Therefore, this study explored freshers' experiences and perceptions of the information literacy skills course attended during their first semester at Sa'adu Zungur University (SAZU)

library and Federal University of Health Sciences Azare, guided by the established research objectives.

### **Objectives and Scope of the Study**

The scope of this research is northeastern universities but two universities were selected among them due to the research funding and time constraint. The objective of this research sought to achieve the following:

1. To determine the effects of demographic factors such as gender, age, and university on freshers' experiences with information literacy skills.
2. To explore freshers' experiences with information literacy skills among undergraduates in the Sa'adu Zungur University (SAZU) and Federal University of Health Sciences, Azare (FUHSA).
3. To identify freshers' perceptions of information literacy skills among undergraduates at Sa'adu Zungur University (SAZU) and Federal University of Health Sciences, Azare (FUHSA).

### **Research Hypotheses**

Four null hypotheses ( $H_0$ ) were tested in this study in alignment with the research objectives:

1.  $H_{01}$ : There are no statistically significant mean differences in freshers' experiences with information literacy skills between male and female students.
2.  $H_{02}$ : There are no statistically significant mean differences in freshers' experiences with information literacy skills across age groups (15–19, 20–24, and 25 years and above).
3.  $H_{03}$ : There are no statistically significant mean differences in freshers' experiences with information literacy skills between SAZU students and FUHSA students.
4.  $H_{04}$ : There is no statistically significant correlation between freshers' experiences and freshers' perceptions of information literacy skills.

## **REVIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS**

Numerous studies have examined the importance of information literacy globally. Among the most recent, Zhou (2024) focused on using an information literacy course to cultivate students' theoretical learning, particularly in information source collection. The study identified a lack of information ethics education among students at Hunan Open University, China. Similarly, Muhammadi (2024) conducted a study on digital information literacy and found that the Interest-Driven Creator (IDC) hybrid instruction was more effective in strengthening digital information literacy and personal knowledge management.

Additionally, Gao (2024) suggested incorporating information literacy courses into innovation and entrepreneurship education to improve the overall quality of such programs among students at Changsha Normal University, China. Regarding the abundant importance of information literacy education, Hicks et al. (2023) highlighted the significance of information literacy outreach with scholars and practitioners. Likewise, Rahimi (2023) emphasized the advantages of information

literacy at the university level and urged the incorporation of 21st-century digital competencies and skills, particularly information literacy, into university curricula. Tachie-Donkor and Ezema (2023) confirmed that the majority of respondents were confident information users due to the information literacy education received at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. Lund et al. (2023) reported that ChatGPT improved adults' proficiency in information literacy and privacy literacy in a four-county region in northern Texas over a two-week period in late 2022.

The current study examines freshers' experiences and perceptions of information literacy skills to enhance awareness of the usefulness and effectiveness of information literacy instruction in academic activities. Therefore, this study will determine freshers' experiences and perceptions of information literacy skills, enabling university libraries and librarians to assess the importance of information literacy skills among their users, particularly those who have attended information literacy training programs conducted at the university library.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The present study adopted the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standards model established in 2000 by ACRL. The purpose of this model was to assist information literacy instructors in tertiary education to achieve their instructional goals using five core standards. This framework was designed to serve as a guideline for tertiary education institutions (Hopkins et al., 1987, as cited in Tachie-Donkor & Ezema, 2023). The model was developed as a tool to support students' experiences with information literacy instruction, particularly in higher education settings. According to Doyle et al. (2019), the ACRL framework serves as a guide to facilitate the development of information literacy skills and competencies among students, contributing to their academic success. Therefore, this model assisted the researcher in understanding freshers' experiences and perceptions of information literacy skills, and the researcher determined that the framework aligned appropriately with the objectives of this study.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This research adopted a cross-sectional survey design to assess freshers' experiences and perceptions of information literacy skills in relation to their academic success. The method employed was purely quantitative due to the instruments and sampling technique (stratified random sampling) utilized in the study. The study involved freshers from two universities: Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi, and Federal University of Health Sciences, Azare. These institutions were selected due to the new curriculum introduced by the Nigerian University Commission (NUC), known as the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS). The population identified through the students' portal comprised nine hundred and twenty-nine (929) students. A sample size table was used to determine the appropriate number of participants. Accordingly, the sample size of two hundred and seventy-four (274) was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) statistical table.

A questionnaire instrument was employed to collect data for this study. The instrument was developed by the researchers based on existing literature in the field of information literacy skills to align with the study's objectives. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the data according to the aforementioned objectives and stipulated hypotheses. The quantitative data collected through the questionnaires were subjected to normality testing before proceeding with descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Demographic Information of the Respondents

The sample of this study consisted of two hundred and seventy-four (274) respondents, all of whom completed the questionnaires. In terms of gender, the results revealed that the majority of respondents were male (153 respondents, 55.8%), while 121 (44.2%) respondents were female. Regarding age distribution, the majority were between 20–24 years old (159 respondents, 58.0%), followed by those aged 15–19 years (60 respondents, 21.9%), and those aged 25 years and above (55 respondents, 20.1%). In terms of institutional affiliation, Sa'adu Zungur University (SAZU) respondents represented the highest percentage (164 respondents, 59.9%), while Federal University of Health Sciences, Azare (FUHSA) respondents comprised 110 respondents (40.1%). Overall, the findings indicate that the majority of respondents who completed the self-administered questionnaire were male, predominantly aged 20–24 years, and primarily from SAZU (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents**

S/N.	Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	<b>Gender</b>		
	Males	153	55.8
	Females	121	44.2
2.	<b>Age</b>		
	15-19	60	21.9
	20-24	159	58.0
	25&above	55	20.1
3.	<b>University</b>		
	FUHSA	110	40.1
	SAZU	164	59.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Parametric Tests on Freshers' Experience with Information Literacy Skills

Based on the normality of the data, the study employed parametric tests. Parametric tests were used to test the four null hypotheses formulated in accordance with the research objectives. These statistical tests were conducted to address the first objective: to investigate whether gender, age, and university influence freshers' experiences with information literacy skills. The tests employed

included independent samples t-tests, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Pearson correlation tests.

### Gender and Freshers' Experience with Information Literacy Skills

This section reports the results of the independent samples t-test with gender as the independent variable and freshers' experience with information literacy skills as the dependent variable.

#### Null Hypothesis

- i. There are no statistically significant mean differences in freshers' experience about information literacy skills between male and female students.

**Table 2: Gender and Freshers' Experience with Information Literacy Skills**

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Freshers' experience about the information literacy skills	Male	153	8.4510	2.64063			
	Female	121	8.1570	2.85484	.883	272	.492

The results of the independent samples t-test revealed no statistically significant mean differences [ $t(272) = .883, p > .05$ ] between male respondents ( $M = 8.45, SD = 2.85$ ) and female respondents ( $M = 8.16, SD = 2.64$ ) regarding their scores on freshers' experience with information literacy skills. This indicated that gender does not significantly influence freshers' experience with information literacy skills. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. However, the mean score (8.45) of male respondents was higher than the mean score (8.16) of female respondents, suggesting that males reported slightly higher experience with information literacy skills than their female counterparts (see Table 2).

### Age and Freshers' Experience with Information Literacy Skills

This section reports the results of the one-way ANOVA test with age as the independent variable and freshers' experience with information literacy skills as the dependent variable.

#### Null Hypothesis

- ii. There are no statistically significant mean differences in freshers' experience with information literacy skills between 15-19, 20 - 24, and 25 and above years old.

**Table 3: Age and freshers experience in information literacy skills**

Age	N	Mean	SD	df	F	Sig.
15-19	60	7.7667	2.27266	2	1.649	.194
20-24	159	8.5157	2.87472	271		
25&above	55	8.3212	2.75119			



The results of the one-way ANOVA test revealed no statistically significant mean differences in freshers' experience with information literacy skills,  $F(2, 271) = 1.649$ ,  $p > .05$ , across age groups: 15–19 years ( $M = 7.77$ ,  $SD = 2.27$ ), 20–24 years ( $M = 8.52$ ,  $SD = 2.87$ ), and 25 years and above ( $M = 8.32$ ,  $SD = 2.75$ ) (see Table 3). Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. This indicated that age does not significantly influence freshers' experience with information literacy skills. However, the mean score (8.52) of 20–24-year-old respondents was the highest, followed by the mean score (8.32) of respondents aged 25 years and above, and then the mean score (7.77) of respondents aged 15–19 years. Despite these descriptive differences, the results confirmed that respondents' age bracket does not significantly contribute to freshers' experience with information literacy skills.

### University and Freshers' Experience with Information Literacy Skills

This section reports the results of the independent samples t-test with respondents' university affiliation as the independent variable and freshers' experience with information literacy skills as the dependent variable.

#### Null Hypothesis

- iii. There are no statistically significant mean differences in freshers' experience with information literacy skills between FUHSA students and SAZU students.

**Table 4: University and freshers experience with information literacy skills**

University	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.
FUHSA.	110	8.6818	2.77912			
SAZU	164	8.0793	2.68827	1.794	272	.074

The results of the independent samples t-test revealed no statistically significant mean difference [ $t(272) = 1.794$ ,  $p > .05$ ] between FUHSA respondents ( $M = 8.68$ ,  $SD = 2.78$ ) and SAZU respondents ( $M = 8.08$ ,  $SD = 2.69$ ) regarding their scores on freshers' experience with information literacy skills. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. However, the mean score (8.68) of FUHSA respondents was higher than the mean score (8.08) of SAZU respondents, suggesting that FUHSA respondents reported slightly higher experience with information literacy skills than their SAZU counterparts.

### Freshers' Experience and Freshers' Perceptions of Information Literacy Skills

The Pearson correlation test was employed to evaluate whether there is a statistically significant correlation between freshers' experience with and freshers' perceptions of information literacy skills.

#### Null hypothesis:

- iv. There is no statistically significant mean relationship between freshers' experience and freshers' perceptions of information literacy skills.

**Table 5: freshers' experience and freshers' perceptions with information literacy skills**

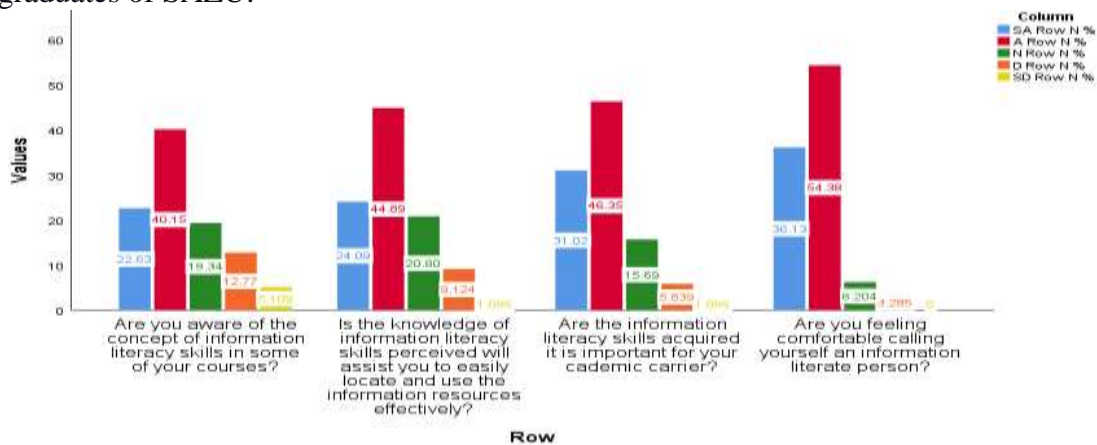
Variable	Freshers' experiences with information literacy skills	Freshers' perceptions with information literacy skills	Sig. (2-tailed)
Freshers' experiences with information literacy skills	1.00	.277**	.000
Freshers' perceptions with information literacy skills	.277**	1.00	.000

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the Pearson correlation test revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between freshers' experience with information literacy skills and freshers' perceptions of information literacy skills ( $n = 274$ ,  $r = .277$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected (see Table 5).

The correlation coefficient ( $r = .277$ ) indicates a weak to moderate positive relationship between freshers' experience with and freshers' perceptions of information literacy skills. This suggests that students with higher levels of experience with information literacy skills tend to have more positive perceptions of information literacy skills. The positive correlation demonstrates that as freshers' experience with information literacy skills increases, their perceptions of the importance and value of these skills also tend to increase (see Table 5)

**Objective 2:** To explore the fresher's experience with information literacy skills among undergraduates of SAZU.

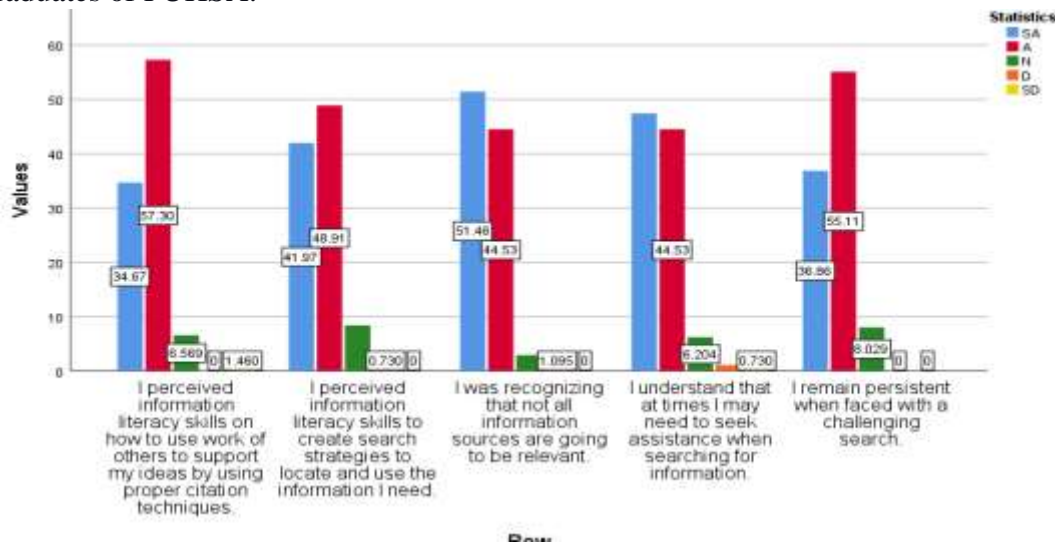
**Chart 1: Freshers experience with information literacy skills**

To explore freshers' experience with information literacy skills based on the multiple-choice items provided, the findings indicate that most respondents were aware of the concept of information



literacy in some of their courses. Data from the survey indicated that the majority of respondents (62.7%) were aware of information literacy skills concepts in some of their courses, while 17.9% disagreed with the statement and 19.3% were undecided. The majority of respondents (69.0%) agreed that they had experience with the ability to locate and use information resources effectively, while 10.2% disagreed and 20.8% were undecided.

Regarding the acquisition of information literacy skills knowledge for their academic careers, a majority of respondents (77.4%) agreed with the statement, while 6.9% disagreed and 15.7% were undecided. Similarly, the majority of respondents (90.5%) agreed that their experience with information literacy made them comfortable identifying as information-literate individuals, while only 3.3% disagreed and 6.2% were undecided. These findings demonstrate that the majority of respondents developed experience with information literacy skills, which may be attributed to the rigorous training provided through the information literacy course offered by the university library. **Objective 3:** To identify the freshers' perceptions of information literacy skills among undergraduates of FUHSA.



**Chart 2:** Freshers' perceptions with information literacy skills

To determine freshers' perceptions of information literacy based on the multiple-choice items provided, the findings indicate that most respondents perceived information literacy skills to be effective and useful. Data from the survey showed that the majority of respondents (92.0%) agreed that they perceived ILS as teaching them how to use proper citation to support the development of new ideas, while only 1.5% disagreed with the statement and 6.6% were undecided. The majority of respondents (90.9%) agreed that they perceived ILS as enabling them to create search strategies when locating or accessing information, with only 0.7% disagreeing and 8.4% undecided.

Moreover, the majority of respondents (96.0%) recognized that not all information sources are relevant, while 1.1% disagreed and only 2.9% were undecided. Additionally, the majority of respondents (91.9%) agreed that they would seek assistance when searching for information

resources, while 1.8% disagreed and 6.2% were undecided. Finally, the majority of respondents (96.9%) perceived ILS as helping them remain persistent when facing challenges in searching, while 1.8% disagreed and 6.2% were undecided. These findings demonstrate that freshers understood information literacy skills (ILS) to be effective for those who attended the program or course.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this research provide support for the postulated hypotheses. The survey revealed that the majority of fresher students perceived information literacy skills positively, which enabled them to develop experience as independent users of information resources. Furthermore, Information Literacy Skills (ILS) can transform university freshers into information-literate individuals who can locate, access, and use information resources ethically and effectively. The results showed that demographic factors such as gender, age, and university affect freshers' experience with information literacy skills. The findings also revealed that male respondents demonstrated slightly higher levels of experience with information literacy skills. Therefore, further research is needed to ascertain whether statistically significant mean differences exist between male and female students regarding freshers' perceptions of information literacy skills.

Additionally, the findings revealed that respondents' age bracket contributed to their experience with information literacy skills. FUHSA students demonstrated slightly higher experience with information literacy skills. Consequently, more research is needed to ascertain whether statistically significant mean differences exist between institutions. This finding serves as a starting point, as it established the relationship between freshers' experience with and freshers' perceptions of information literacy skills. Thus, additional studies are needed to gain a deeper understanding of freshers' competencies and perceptions of information literacy skills.

Conclusively, this study revealed that the majority of freshers perceived information literacy skills positively, which led them to develop experience and become more likely to function as independent users of information. Information Literacy Skills (ILS) can transform university freshers into information-literate individuals who can locate, access, and use information resources ethically and effectively.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are proposed for future studies:

1. Undergraduate students in the early stages of their university education should be exposed to preliminary research activities by faculty members to enhance their experience and knowledge of information literacy, including copyright understanding and the ability to effectively cite and paraphrase existing knowledge to avoid plagiarism.
2. The population of this study was limited to undergraduate students from SAZU and FUHSA who attended the information literacy skills course. Future research should be conducted with a larger sample size to ascertain whether different population groups or

larger samples will produce significant mean differences among the variables. For future studies, data from larger samples should be collected, and disciplinary differences should be examined among both undergraduate and postgraduate students who attend information literacy skills courses. This would make the analysis and general findings more robust and comprehensive.

3. University and library management should continue organizing conferences, classes, and workshops related to information literacy skills. This will enable undergraduate students to familiarize themselves with the resources available in the library and become independent users of information resources and library services.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research was sponsored by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), under Institutional Based Research (IBR), 2025.

## REFERENCES

- Al-Maskari, A. H., Al-Azawei, A., & Al-Maamari, F. (2020). Assessing Information Literacy Skills among University Students in Oman. *Education and Information Technologies*, 25(6),5207-5225.
- Doyle, A., Foster, B., & Yukhymenko-Lescroart M. A. (2019) Initial development of the perception of information literacy scale (PILS). *Communication of information literacy*, 13(2), 205 – 227.
- Gao, P. (2024). Research on Information Literacy of College Students from the Perspective of Cultivating Innovation and Entrepreneurship Abilities. *International Journal of Mathematics and Systems Science*, 7(1), 124 – 126.
- Hicks, A., McKinney, P., Inskip, C., Walton, G., & Lloyd, A. (2023). Leveraging information literacy: Mapping the conceptual influence and appropriation of information literacy in other disciplinary landscapes. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 55(3), 548-566.
- Hopkins, K. D., Glass, G. V., & Hopkins, B. R. (1987). *Basic statistics for the behavioral sciences*. Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *EducPsychol Measurement*, 30, 607- 610.
- Lund, B., Agbaji, D., & Teel, Z. A. (2023). Information literacy, data literacy, privacy literacy, and chatgpt: Technology literacies align with perspectives on emerging technology adoption within communities.. *Human Technology*, 19(2), 163-177.
- Mohammadi, M. (2024). Digital information literacy, self-directed learning, and personal knowledge management in critical readers: Application of IDC Theory. *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning*, 19, 004-004.  
<https://doi.org/10.58459/rptel.2024.19004>
- Panchal, V. K., & Patel, A. K. (2021). Information Literacy Skills Among Fresher Students: A Review. *International Journal of Library Science and Research*, 8(1), 123-128.

- Rahimi, A. R. (2023). A bi-phenomenon analysis to escalate higher educators' competence in developing university students' information literacy (HECDUSIL): The role of language lectures' conceptual and action-oriented digital competencies and skills. *Education and Information Technologies*, 1-28.
- Tachie-Donkor, G., & Ezema, I. J. (2023). Effect of information literacy skills on university students' information seeking behaviour and lifelong learning. *Heliyon*, 9(8). 2 – 11.
- Zhou, H. (2024). Research on the Construction of Information Literacy Education System in Universities under AI Environment. *Advances in Education, Humanities and Social Science Research*, 9(1), 71-71.