

Exploring the Information Literacy Skills Development Strategies of Senior High Schools in Tolon District of Ghana

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Abstract:

This research paper delves into the Information Literacy (IL) skill development strategies implemented by Senior High Schools (SHSs) in the Tolon District of Northern Ghana. The study employs a phenomenological approach and qualitative method to explore the perspectives of students, teaching staff, and management within these institutions. Through purposive sampling and focus group interviews, the research investigates both the institutional and individual efforts in enhancing IL skills of students. The findings illuminate the proactive measures taken by SHS management, including fresh students' orientation programs and dedicated library time and creation of conducive learning environment. There is no IL course in the curriculum of the SHS. The findings further reveal that teaching staff, recognizing the significance of IL, employ varied strategies to enhance students' IL skills. Despite these efforts, a noteworthy challenge emerges: teaching staff lack the requisite IL skills. Finally, students of these institutions rely on Google, teachers, parents and colleagues for the needed information. The research recommends a holistic approach to IL education, incorporating policy reforms, teacher training programs, and targeted interventions to address the identified challenges.

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Exploring the Information Literacy Skills Development Strategies of Senior High Schools in Tolon District of Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This research paper delves into the Information Literacy (IL) skill development strategies implemented by Senior High Schools (SHSs) in the Tolon District of Northern Ghana. The study employs a phenomenological approach and qualitative method to explore the perspectives of students, teaching staff, and management within these institutions. Through purposive sampling and focus group interviews, the research investigates both the institutional and individual efforts in enhancing IL skills of students. The findings illuminate the proactive measures taken by SHS management, including fresh students' orientation programs and dedicated library time and creation of conducive learning environment. There is no IL course in the curriculum of the SHS. The findings further reveal that teaching staff, recognizing the significance of IL, employ varied strategies to enhance students' IL skills. Despite these efforts, a noteworthy challenge emerges: teaching staff lack the requisite IL skills. Finally, students of these institutions rely on Google, teachers, parents and colleagues for the needed information. The research recommends a holistic approach to IL education, incorporating policy reforms, teacher training programs, and targeted interventions to address the identified challenges.

Keywords: Information Literacy, Strategies, Skills, Development, Management

INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by an unprecedented proliferation of information, the ability to navigate, evaluate, and utilize diverse sources is paramount. As society becomes increasingly reliant on digital platforms and interconnected networks, the concept of information literacy emerges as a critical skill set for individuals to effectively engage with, interpret, and contribute to the evolving landscape of knowledge (Kovalik, 2013)

In an era dominated by the rapid evolution of information and communication technologies, fostering information literacy skills among senior high school students has become a critical imperative. As today's students navigate an increasingly complex digital landscape, the

ability to access, evaluate, and utilize information effectively is paramount to academic success, lifelong learning, and informed citizenship (Osunrinade, 2018).

Information literacy is a multifaceted concept encompassing a set of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable individuals to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information. The American Library Association (ALA) (2000) defines information literacy as the ability to "access, evaluate, and use information from a variety of sources." It involves critical thinking and problem-solving skills that empower individuals to make informed decisions in an information-rich environment. A fundamental aspect of information literacy is the capacity to navigate the vast landscape of digital and traditional information sources. Bruce (2008) also defined information literacy as the adoption of effective strategies for locating information, selecting and evaluating information sources, and using information effectively to address a specific issue or problem. In the context of SHS education, students need to develop these competencies to succeed academically and prepare for the challenges of higher education and the workforce. Furthermore, the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) (2016) emphasizes the importance of information literacy in higher education, asserting that it 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. This definition underscores the holistic nature of information literacy, incorporating not only practical skills but also ethical considerations and a broader understanding of the information ecosystem.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of information literacy as an essential skill for academic success and lifelong learning. However, The World Bank's "World Development Indicators 2019" report highlights persistent educational disparities in Ghana, particularly in remote districts. Tolon District, being one such area, may face unique challenges in implementing effective information literacy programs, affecting the students' readiness for higher education and the workforce (World Bank, 2019). Again, UNESCO's "Effective Literacy and Numeracy Practices Database" underscores the importance of considering local contexts and cultural factors in literacy initiatives. Tolon District's cultural distinctions may impact how information literacy is perceived and acquired among SHS students, necessitating a closer examination of context-specific strategies (UNESCO, 2014). Also, researchers have reported limited access to information resources such as libraries, internet connectivity, and educational materials, as this may hinder the development of information literacy skills. Understanding the existing challenges in Tolon District is crucial for devising targeted strategies to improve access and utilization of information sources.

However, in the Tolon District of Ghana, there is a lack of research addressing the specific information literacy development strategies employed by stakeholders of Senior High School (SHS) operating in the district. This study was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the information literacy development strategies implemented in Tolon District's SHSs. This study aims to contribute valuable insights to educational policymakers, practitioners, and researchers, facilitating the design of context-specific interventions to enhance information literacy among SHS students in Ghana.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study was conducted to:

- i. explore the strategies adopted by SHSs to develop the IL skills of students

ii. examine students' IL skills development processes.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE STUDY

As Senior High School (SHS) students navigate an increasingly information-saturated world, the need for effective information literacy development strategies is paramount. This study adopted notable framework that has gained prominence in this domain known as the Big Six Model. Originally developed by Michael Eisenberg and Robert Berkowitz (1987), the Big Six Model is an information problem-solving process designed to enhance information literacy skills.

The Big Six Model comprises six stages: task definition, information seeking strategies, location and access, use of information, synthesis, and evaluation. Each stage guides students through the process of defining a problem, efficiently seeking information, critically evaluating sources, and synthesizing information to solve real-world issues. The current study will therefore use this model as a guide to understand the activities SHSs are engaging to aid the development of students' IL skills. The model will also help the researcher to determine whether the students' IL skills development processes matches with the identified steps in the model.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The global significance of information literacy (IL) has garnered widespread attention, spanning both developed and developing nations (Tachie-Donkor & Dadzie, 2017). According to the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, 2016), IL encompasses skills such as thoughtfully uncovering information, understanding information creation processes, and ethically using information to generate new knowledge within learning communities. The evolution of the internet and technological advancements has led to changes in IL over time, paralleling the increasing technological proficiency of individuals (Kankam, 2023; Moto et al., 2018; Whitmore, Agarwal and Xu, 2015).

Presently, the global repository of information, available in both print and electronic formats, is expanding exponentially due to continuous technological advancements (Tachie-Donkor & Dadzie, 2017). This surge poses challenges for information seekers who must navigate diverse formats, discern the authenticity of information, and distinguish valuable content from misleading sources. Recognizing the importance of IL competencies, the 21st Century Skills Framework emphasizes that students need these skills to succeed in academic pursuits (Kankam, 2023; Scott, 2015).

The American Library Association (ALA) underscores core IL skills for students, including recognizing information needs, accessing diverse sources effectively, evaluating information critically, using information ethically and responsibly, organizing and managing information, synthesizing knowledge from various sources, and communicating information persuasively (ALA). In a study by Kankam (2023) on Senior High School students in Accra Metropolis, participants displayed low IL competencies, highlighting the need for more IL teaching, coupled with infrastructure and policy challenges inhibiting effective IL instruction. Similarly, research on Kenyan SHS students by Gekara, Namande, and Makiya (2021) revealed inadequately implemented IL practices, a lack of awareness among school librarians, and limited opportunities for meaningful IL instruction.

Osunrinade's (2018) study in Nigeria found that secondary school students possessed a moderate level of IL skills. Jorosi & Isaac (2021) reported poor information skills, heavy reliance on textbooks, and curriculum barriers in Botswana. In Botswana, Dipetso & Moahi (2019) discovered low to fair IL skills among high school students, with teachers being aware but not intentional in teaching IL skills. Gyesei & Ohene's (2020) study in Ghana identified students' diverse information needs and their reliance on knowledgeable individuals and teachers for academic tasks.

Moreover, Yeboah, Dadzie & Owusu-Ansah's study (2017) in Ghana revealed that students lacked effective information access skills for academic work, highlighting a broader issue of insufficient IL skills among students in the region. These collective findings underscore the pressing need for comprehensive information literacy development strategies in high schools, particularly in the Tolon district in Northern Ghana, to enhance students' abilities to navigate and critically engage with information effectively.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in Tolon district, Ghana, specifically at Tolon SHS and Kasuliyili SHS, in response to observed reductions in the academic performance of students in the district.

A phenomenological research approach was adopted to gain a profound understanding of the strategies implemented by the participating schools to develop Information Literacy (IL) skills among students. Phenomenology is chosen for its ability to explore lived experiences and perceptions, aligning with the study's goal of comprehensively understanding IL development strategies. This allows the researcher to employ a qualitative research method to capture the context-specific nature of IL skills. Qualitative research allows for a rich exploration of experiences, attitudes, and practices related to IL development.

The participants included students from Form 1, 2 & 3, staff, and management of Tolon SHS and Kasuliyili SHS. This inclusive approach aimed to gather diverse perspectives from key stakeholders involved in the IL development process. Purposive sampling was employed to select students and staff who could provide insightful responses regarding IL skills development. This method was chosen to ensure that participants who had relevant experiences and perspectives relevant to IL were chosen for the study.

Focused groups consisting of 8 students each were formed for SHS 1, 2, and 3 in both schools. The inclusion of all levels of students was justified by the essential nature of IL skills for every student, aiming to provide potential solutions tailored to their specific needs. Focus groups of 7 staff were formed, including ICT teachers, library staff, and other staff members, such as staff secretaries, who play a key role in organising the staff for the sessions. Staff were considered for this study because they are perceived as 'coaches' of the students, and the researcher aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies they employ in developing IL skills among students.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Introductory letters were sent to the schools through gatekeepers, seeking permission to undertake the study. The letters included information about the researcher, details about the research, and the

intended participants. Verbal permission was obtained from the schools' management, and a scheduled date for data collection was agreed upon. Staff secretaries and colleague staff supported the data collection process, with the latter serving as a co-moderator in the focus group discussions. Students were purposively selected to form diverse focus groups, and interview guides were used to guide the researcher's questioning. Follow-up questions were employed to elicit further information. Two recorders were used during focus group discussions to ensure data integrity and prevent data loss.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY SETTING

The research was conducted within the unique educational landscape of Senior High Schools (SHS) in the Tolon district, focusing on two distinct institutions: Tolon SHS and Kasuliyili SHS. Tolon SHS is situated in Tolon, a district in the Northern Region of Ghana. The school originated as a day school in 1991 and has since evolved to become a prominent second-cycle institution. Tolon SHS currently offers a diverse range of academic programs, encompassing Home Economics, Agricultural Science, General Science, Visual Arts, Business, and General Arts. The school boasts a dedicated teaching staff of 115 individuals and accommodates a student population of 2,457.

Kasuliyili SHS is located in Kasuliyili within the Tolon district. Established in 2012 as a community day school, Kasuliyili SHS was later absorbed by the government of Ghana in the 2019/2020 academic year. Kasuliyili SHS runs three distinct academic programs, namely Business, General Arts, and Home Economics. The school has 45 teaching staff and a student population of 1,135.

RESULTS

Management Support in IL programs

The study aimed to investigate the level of support provided by school management for the development of Information Literacy (IL) skills among students in Senior High Schools (SHSs). The results of the research shed light on the absence of formal policies explicitly dedicated to IL in the schools, but also highlighted the implementation of indirect strategies by school management.

The study findings unequivocally indicated that there is no formal policy in place within the SHSs concerning the development of IL skills among students. Respondents emphasized the lack of IL as a subject in the curriculum, making it challenging to incorporate IL into the school timetable. The perception was that as implementers of policies, the schools couldn't introduce IL independently without explicit guidelines.

Respondent Quote: "We do not have IL as a subject in the curriculum. We cannot, therefore, have it on the timetable of the school. As we are implementers of policies."

Despite the absence of formal policies, the study revealed that school management has implemented various indirect strategies to support IL skills development. These strategies were designed to educate students about available information sources and foster positive habits related to academic learning.

Respondent Quote: "Even though we don't have formal policies of IL in the schools, we have indirect ways of teaching the students how to search for information. For instance, we sometimes give them advice during headmaster's assembly about their learning."

Management demonstrated a commitment to IL skills development by organizing specific programs. Notably, orientation programs for freshers were conducted to provide comprehensive guidance on how students can succeed in the school environment. Furthermore, the allocation of time for students to use the school library, despite limited materials, reflected a strategic effort to instill positive reading habits among students.

Respondent Quote: "Even though we don't have formal policies of IL in the schools, we have indirect ways of teaching the students how to search for information. For instance, we sometimes give them advice during headmaster's assembly about their learning. We again organize an orientation program for freshers to teach them all they need to succeed in the school."

Respondent Quote: "Management of the schools has also allocated time for the students to use the school library. Though the libraries do not have adequate materials, it is part of management strategy to develop students' reading habits."

Staff Role in the Development of IL skills in Students

The interaction with teaching staff in Senior High Schools (SHSs) in the study revealed a lack of formalized activities specifically designed by schools or the Ghana Education Service (GES) to develop Information Literacy (IL) skills among students. Despite this absence, individual teachers showcased their initiative in assisting students to enhance their IL skills. The findings below include the responses from teaching staff regarding IL skills development strategies:

The study uncovered a dearth of formal strategies either at the school or GES level for IL skills development. However, individual teachers expressed their commitment to helping students obtain the information they need, emphasizing the teacher's role in a technologically advanced world.

Respondent Quote: "We do not have formal strategies designed either by the school or Ghana Education Service (GES) to help develop students' IL skill. However, individual teachers have a way of helping his/her class students to get the information that they want."

Respondent Quote: "We are living in a technological world, therefore, we teach our students how to use Google to get the information that they need."

Despite the absence of formal strategies, teachers employ various methods to assist students in developing IL skills. These strategies include assigning tasks, guiding students on information retrieval, directing them to knowledgeable colleagues, forming groups for assignments and presentations, utilizing the library, and recommending reliable information sources.

Respondent Quote: "We sometimes ask students to use Google to search for the needed information. The library also plays a key role in the students' learning, so we always advise them to use the library."

Respondent Quote: "Personally, I do refer students to many colleagues who I think possess the knowledge required to assist them. I again show them textbooks that contain the information they need."

Again, Teachers actively guide students in evaluating information, advising them on the selection of credible textbooks based on factors such as author credibility, language, presentation style, and publishers.

Respondent Quote: "I personally sometimes tell students to always pay attention to authors of textbooks. Some authors do not have background knowledge in the subject areas they write about."

Teaching staff play a pivotal role in developing students' presentation skills through assignments, class tests, and group presentations. Feedback is provided, emphasizing the correct methods for presenting answers.

Respondent Quote: "We teach the students presentation of information through the assignments, class test and group presentations we give them. After we mark their assignment we give the necessary feedback regarding the way they should have presented the answers."

The study revealed restrictions on the use of phones during lessons, with the school ICT lab serving as the primary space for teaching students how to access information online.

Respondent Quote: "On the issue of online information searching, the teachers indicated that students are not allowed to use phones. But at times, if there is the need for them to use phones during a particular lesson, the subject teacher will seek formal permission from school authority."

Availability of staff development opportunities on IL

The study delved into the professional development opportunities available to staff in Senior High Schools (SHSs) and their capacity to provide Information Literacy (IL) support to students. The findings uncovered the following key insights:

Staff acknowledged the existence of professional development workshops, with the ongoing Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions being a notable example. However, it was highlighted that these workshops primarily focus on enhancing teaching capabilities and are not tailored to include specific IL training.

Respondent Quote: "No, we don't have a specific workshop for staff on IL but there are workshops that geared towards developing the teaching capabilities of teachers. For example, we are currently attending PLC workshop that is designed to take us through the new curriculum that will be implemented soon."

Respondent Quote: "We are not trained as professional information searchers like librarians but the workshops that we always attend are related to teacher professional development."

A critical observation was made regarding the lack of librarianship training for the individual responsible for the library. The staff designated to manage the library, while attending

to other responsibilities, did not receive specific training in librarianship, leading to limitations in providing comprehensive support to students.

Respondent Quote: "We don't have a professional librarian. The school has appointed a teacher to take care of the library but he does not have any librarianship training, so his support to the students is limited."

The study identified a lack of IL skills among staff as a significant challenge in offering adequate support to students. Additionally, the absence of current materials in the library related to the courses offered in the schools hindered effective IL assistance. Teachers expressed difficulty in providing IL support without it being part of recognized subjects.

Respondent Quote: "We the staff who are supposed to provide IL support to students are not ourselves skillful in IL, so it is a hindrance to our support to the students."

Respondent Quote: "Our library is an empty library. It does not have any current material on the current subjects that we do in the school. The environment of the library too is not conducive to attract the students."

Students' IL abilities

Why Students Need Information

The study aimed to uncover the motivations behind students' information-seeking behaviors. The research findings shed light on the diverse reasons why students engage in information searches, revealing the following key insights:

A prominent reason for students searching for information is the need to fulfill academic requirements. Students expressed a necessity to acquire information to complete assignments and class tasks effectively.

Student Quote: "We search for information to clarify what our teachers have taught us in class. We also search for information for more details about the topic our masters teach us in class."

Student Quote: "If we do not understand what our teachers teach us, we search for more information about it."

Students articulated a desire for in-depth comprehension of subjects covered in class. Information searches are driven by the motivation to gain a more comprehensive understanding of topics discussed during lectures.

Student Quote: "We read to acquire knowledge for future use. So that if one day our colleague asks us a question about something, we can get the answer for him/her."

Beyond immediate academic needs, students emphasized the importance of acquiring knowledge for future applications. This includes being prepared to answer questions from peers and building a reservoir of knowledge for future use.

Student Quote: "We read to acquire knowledge for future use. So that if one day our colleague asks us a question about something, we can get the answer for him/her."

Student Quote: "Again, sometimes if we do not understand what our teachers teach us, we search for more information about it."

Sources of Information for the students

The study again aimed to explore the diverse sources from which Senior High School (SHS) students in Tolon district acquire information. The findings provide valuable insights into the multifaceted approach students employ to gather information, emphasizing both traditional and digital channels. Key sources identified by students include:

Students consistently rely on their teachers for information, seeking clarification and further explanation on various concepts covered in class.

Student Quote: "We mostly ask our teachers for explanations of some concepts to us. I always send questions to my subject teachers for further explanation."

For information related to cultural and traditional aspects, students turn to their parents and grandparents, recognizing them as valuable repositories of cultural knowledge.

Student Quote: "Sometimes, if the information we want is not in the books, we ask our parents or grandparents for the information, especially the information that is related to culture and traditions. Parents hold more information to them."

Students engage in peer learning by seeking information from knowledgeable peers within their class. Group discussions are seen as effective forums for sharing and understanding information.

Student Quote: "As for me, I always ask knowledgeable people in my class and the colleagues that I think know what I want to learn. I will again put the question before the class for us to discuss in the absence of our teachers. We sometimes get a lot of information from these discussions. Sometimes we understand our colleagues' explanation better than our teachers."

The internet, particularly Google, plays a significant role in information retrieval for students. While they may encounter challenges in finding precise answers, students adapt their search queries for optimal results.

Student Quote: "Whenever I need information, I go on Google and type the question. At times Google will give me the answer I want or it may not. If it doesn't give me the answer I want, I will rephrase the question."

Despite not being a primary source, students occasionally utilize the school library for information. However, challenges such as limited resources in the library affect its regular use. Students also access information through traditional media channels, including television programs, radio, newspapers, and textbooks.

How students determine the authentication of Information

Finally, the study delved into the ways students in Senior High Schools (SHSs) within Tolon district evaluate the information they access. The findings highlight diverse and thoughtful

approaches employed by students to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information they utilize. Key methods of information evaluation include:

Students often adopt a cautious approach by cross-referencing information obtained from one source with other reliable sources. This method serves as a means of confirming the accuracy of the information.

Student Quote: "Sometimes when we get the information, we confirm it from other sources too to ensure that the information is true. For example, we can read a book about a topic, then ask our subject teacher to explain the concept, or we can also ask our colleagues about that topic, just to confirm it."

Seeking clarification from teachers is a common practice among students. This involves approaching subject teachers to validate information and gain a deeper understanding of the concepts covered.

Student Quote: "For example, we can read a book about a topic, then ask our subject teacher to explain the concept, just to confirm it."

Students consider the standard of English language used in information materials as a criterion for evaluation. This underscores the importance of linguistic clarity in ensuring the comprehensibility and reliability of the information.

Student Quote: "We sometimes look at the correctness of the English language used in the document. If there are errors in the book, it means it is not good."

Students engage in conversations with multiple individuals, such as peers, teachers, and elderly people, to gauge the consistency of information. Comparing responses from different sources contributes to the overall evaluation process.

Student Quote: "Concerning information from the old people, we sometimes contact more than one elderly person to be sure of the information we are getting."

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study aimed to explore the strategies employed by Senior High Schools (SHSs) in Tolon district for Information Literacy (IL) skills development. The findings reveal that management utilizes freshmen orientation programs and headmaster's assemblies as platforms to advise students about their overall learning. Notably, efforts are made to cultivate a reading habit among students by allocating dedicated time for library use, during which students are guided by library teachers. However, the absence of IL in the SHS curriculum raises concerns, as there are no formal programs dedicated to IL skills development.

Strategies Use by Staff to Develop the IL skills of Students

Teaching staff employ individualized strategies to enhance students' reading skills. These strategies include assigning tasks such as group presentations, directing students to subject teachers for assistance, providing advice on information searching processes during classroom visits, conducting ICT sessions to teach basic information searching skills, and guiding students to use Google on their phones for information searches. Despite these efforts, the study uncovers a

significant challenge: teaching staff lacks the necessary IL skills to effectively guide students. This deficiency is attributed to the absence of training opportunities for teachers in IL.

These findings corroborate earlier studies by Tachie-Donkor & Dadzie (2017) and Gekara, Namande, and Makiya (2021). Tachie-Donkor & Dadzie (2017) highlighted the lack of IL training programs for SHS teachers in Ghana, aligning with our study's revelation. Similarly, Gekara, Namande, and Makiya (2021) identified orientation programs as a primary means of providing information to students in SHSs in Kenya, echoing our findings. The absence of a subject specifically linked to IL in SHSs is a shared concern across different regions.

The study suggests that SHS management act as implementers of policies set by educational authorities, such as the Ghana Education Service (GES). This role limitation poses challenges, as SHSs cannot independently engage in IL skills development without approval from higher education authorities. The findings underscore the need for a comprehensive review of educational policies to integrate IL into the formal curriculum and provide opportunities for teachers' IL training.

Information Literacy Skills Development Processes of SHS Students

The investigation into the Information Literacy (IL) skills of students in Senior High Schools (SHSs) within the Tolon district yielded valuable insights into the strategies adopted by students to acquire IL skills. Students employed various approaches, including consulting teachers, parents, and peers, watching TV programs, using the internet, and relying on textbooks. Additionally, the study identified diverse sources of information to the students, encompassing teachers, parents, colleagues, TV programs, textbooks, the school library, and the internet. Notably, a significant reliance on Google for information retrieval emerged as a prevalent trend among students.

The findings align with earlier research by Osunrinade (2018), Jorosi & Isaac (2021), and Dipetso & Moahi (2019), which similarly concluded that high school students tend to exhibit poor IL skills. The consistency of these findings across different studies underscores the pervasive challenge of inadequate IL skills among high school students. However, our study diverges from the conclusions drawn by Dipetso & Moahi (2019), who highlighted students' heavy reliance on textbooks for information. In contrast, the findings of this study emphasize a significant dependence on Google for information retrieval. This discrepancy suggests that information-seeking behaviors may vary across different educational contexts and regions.

The identified strategies employed by students to develop IL skills underscore the importance of a multi-faceted approach to IL education. The heavy reliance on Google signals a need for targeted interventions to enhance students' digital literacy, promoting critical evaluation of online sources. The consistent reliance on teacher advice for information authentication and presentation suggests that educators play a crucial role in shaping students' IL competencies.

CONCLUSION

Our study set out to investigate the strategies utilized by Senior High Schools (SHSs) in the Tolon district for Information Literacy (IL) skills development. The findings shed light on the diverse approaches employed by both management and teaching staff, as well as the IL skills exhibited by students. Management initiatives, such as freshmen orientation programs and designated library

time, demonstrate a commitment to fostering a conducive learning environment. However, the absence of formal IL programs within the SHS curriculum highlights a critical gap that warrants attention. The findings underscore the need for policy reforms to integrate IL into the formal curriculum, providing structured opportunities for IL skills development. Teaching staff, recognizing the importance of IL, employ individualized strategies to enhance students' reading skills. Despite these efforts, the study reveals a significant challenge: teaching staff lack the necessary IL skills to effectively guide students. This underscores the urgent need for teacher training programs in IL to equip educators with the tools and knowledge required to support students in developing IL competencies. The identified strategies employed by students to develop IL skills underscore the importance of a multi-faceted approach to IL education. The prevalence of Google as a primary information retrieval tool signals a need for targeted interventions to enhance students' digital literacy. Additionally, the reliance on teacher guidance for information authentication and presentation emphasizes the pivotal role of educators in shaping students' IL competencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations were given from the study

- The absence of Information Literacy (IL) as a formal component in the Senior High School (SHS) curriculum is a significant concern. To address this gap, educational authorities, particularly the Ghana Education Service (GES), should initiate a comprehensive review of educational policies. This review should aim to integrate IL into the formal curriculum, ensuring that students receive structured and standardized IL education throughout their academic journey.
- The study reveals a critical deficiency in IL skills among teaching staff, limiting their effectiveness in guiding students. To address this issue, there is a pressing need for the establishment of IL training programs for teaching staff in SHSs. These programs should be designed to enhance educators' IL competencies, equipping them with the necessary skills to effectively guide students in developing their own IL skills.
- In addition to existing efforts such as freshmen orientation programs and headmaster's assemblies, SHS management should consider implementing formal IL skills development programs. These programs could be integrated into the academic calendar, offering dedicated sessions focused on IL education. Such initiatives would contribute to a more structured and holistic approach to IL skills development.
- Given the significant reliance on Google for information retrieval among students, there is a need for targeted interventions to enhance digital literacy. SHSs should incorporate digital literacy training into their IL education programs, emphasizing critical evaluation of online sources. This would empower students to navigate the digital landscape responsibly and effectively.
- SHS management, acting as implementers of policies set by educational authorities, should actively collaborate with the Ghana Education Service and other relevant bodies. This collaboration is essential for advocating policy changes that support the integration of IL into the curriculum and the establishment of IL training programs for teaching staff.
- While the study identifies diverse sources of information used by students, the heavy reliance on Google raises concerns about potential information bias. SHSs should

encourage students to explore a variety of information sources, including library resources, academic databases, and authoritative online platforms. This broader exposure will contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of information.

- SHSs should implement a system of periodic assessment and adaptation of IL programs. Regular evaluations will allow institutions to gauge the effectiveness of their IL initiatives and make necessary adjustments to better meet the evolving needs of students. This adaptive approach ensures that IL education remains relevant and impactful.

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