

Communication Skills and Information Sharing Behaviour of Library and Information Science Undergraduates of Two Federal Universities in South-Western, Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study examines the impact of communication skills and information sharing behaviour of Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduates in two federal universities in South-western, Nigeria. The study aimed to explore how effective communication skills, such as clarity, active listening, and message delivery affect the willingness and frequency of information exchange among students. The reflective nature of the communication is visible in the information sharing habits of present-day undergraduates in this field. Effective communication skills allow undergraduates to express the information clearly, concentrate attentively on classmates and actively participate in ranging discussion and group projects. The study adopted descriptive survey design of the correlational type, using a structured questionnaire to collect data from 209 undergraduates across the two universities. The total enumeration method was used for the study. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation, and inferential statistics such as Pearson's product-moment correlation with SPSS package. The result shows that some of the information sharing behaviour exhibited includes: use of blogs or personal websites to share information and face-to-face interactions for sharing information. The result reveals that the respondents indicated that some of the dominant communication skills possessed include: listening speaking writing and reading. The findings of the study showed that a positive correlation between strong communication skills and higher levels of information sharing behaviour was found to significantly affect the nature and reliability of shared information. The study recommendations include: integration of communication skills training in the curriculum and the promotion of collaborative learning environments to enhance positive information sharing practices among students particularly library and information Science LIS undergraduates.

Keywords: *Communication skills, information sharing behaviour, Library and Information Science undergraduates.*

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Introduction

The rapid evolution of technology and the globalisation of social media platforms have ushered in the digital era, which empowers communication by facilitating the sharing and accessibility of information. Publishing news stories, disseminating instructional materials, and sharing personal updates on social media are just a few of the easy ways that information can be communicated. Information sharing is a natural part of our existence. Similarly, despite the trend's seeming insignificance, its intricacy stems from a number of unique causes, cultural elements, and moral considerations. Laitinen and Sivunen (2021) opine that information sharing behaviour comes in many ways and emanate from different occasions and diverse platforms. Social media space, such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter and Instagram, have invited a big transformation in the way people spread the information at their disposal such as; experiences, opinions, and academic contents among their circles.

Information sharing behaviour as an act of either disseminating, exchanging, or transmitting information in-between individuals, groups, or especially among entities. It includes all the diverse activities such as emotional personal experiences, discussions, foundation, and resources that help others. Alhubaishy and Aljuhani (2021). The behaviours are strongly influenced by the motivations of individuals, societal norms, and contextual factors. Apart from that, the emergence of collaborative platforms and digital communities is a powerful driver of the culture of knowledge sharing, which is developed through a practice of reciprocating the expertise, resources, and support through which information can be shared. Sites such as Reddit, Quora and Stack Overflow display well such a tendency, where users just drop in their knowledge and experience enhancements for the benefit of the community in general (Strukova, Ruipérez-Valiente and Gómez Mármol, 2024) The information sharing behaviour is not a simple

phenomenon, it is rather the result of the influences among the motivations of individuals, norms of society, and the technological opportunities available. Though it has a greater probability of assisting in partnership, innovation, and creating a feeling of community, it also has crucial effects related to privacy, security and misinformation. Ethical considerations must be respected in information sharing practices so that individual information as well as transparency and accountability harmonised. The rightful sharing of information including digital citizenship can be advanced therefore, the positive impact of the knowledge society can be maximised whilst the negative implications will be reduced.

For example, Facebook groups frequently function as unofficial forums where students may exchange course materials, seek assistance, and talk about business trends. LIS students frequently utilise programme like Dropbox, Google Drive, and Microsoft OneDrive to share documents, presentations, and research data. These platforms facilitate group collaboration by enabling real-time editing and contribution to shared files by numerous users. Most students now prefer to use digital platforms due to their wide accessibility and quick dissemination capabilities. However, for more in-depth engagement and tailored communication, in-person contacts and print media are necessary. The type of information being shared, the intended audience, and the communication setting all influence the mode chosen. Even with the growing dependence on digital channels, in-person encounters continue to be an important way for LIS undergraduates to share information. Seminars, workshops and class discussions give students the chance to converse in person, exchange ideas, and gain knowledge from one another's experiences.

A communication skill is a set of basic effective tools that help to express thoughts, to show feelings, to develop relationships and to deal

with the difficulties of human influence. Robert and Meenakshi (2022). Communication skills act as the base for human intercommunication, supplying information, ideas and emotions sharing within and among the people and the community. Successful communication is the driver of understanding, involvement and connection, which contributes to people building strong relationships, solving problems, and efforts toward joint goals achievement. Simon, Biró and Kárpáti (2022) affirm that communication is not just about what is said but also what is not said. It may be with gestures, a spoken language or through written letters, but communication is key in social networking among friends and colleagues. Communication is one of the most significant aspects of any programme of study, as it is connected to success in all areas. It enables scholars to demonstrate concepts fascinatingly, engaging others in working negotiate moderately and handle teams when leading toward accomplishing a goal.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the communication skills and information sharing behavior among LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the information sharing behaviour of LIS undergraduates in two federal universities in South-western Nigeria;
- ii. find out the level of communication skills of LIS undergraduates in two federal universities in South-western Nigeria;
- iii. find out the relationship between communication skills and information sharing behavior of LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in South-western Nigeria;

Research Questions

To achieve the stated objectives, the following major research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What is the information sharing behaviour of LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in South-western Nigeria?
2. What is the level of communication skills of LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in South-western Nigeria?
3. What is the relative influence of communication skills on information sharing behaviour of LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in South-western Nigeria?

Literature Review

Information sharing is the exchange of information among members of a group. Members of the group may be involved in an official institution, such as among coworkers in a company, or they may be informal, such as among friends, and interactions may take place between two or more people. The fundamental goal is to use the knowledge at hand to enhance the group's performance in carrying out its duties. However, people impart their knowledge to those who share their interest and find the information valuable by sharing what they have learnt. Information is gathered, arranged, and communicated between parties as part of the sharing process (Udem, Aghoghovwia, and Baro, 2020).

The Latin word "*communi*," which meaning "the same," is the source of the English word "*communicatio*," which is used to refer to communication. Here, "same" refers to the same concept. According to Agunsoye (2023), communication is the exchange of information between two people, but the information must make sense to the recipient. For instance, a conversation is a discussion or a communication from the communicator to the communicant between two people. As a result, dialogue is a

component of communication in which the communicator delivers the message to the communicant. The meaning of the discourse does not always translate into the same language. To put it another way, knowing the language by itself does not always translate into understanding its meaning. If both parties are able to understand the meaning of what is being stated, then it is obvious that the conversation between the two can be considered communicative. According to the definition given above, a communicator initiates and ends a process communication. A person who needs or wants to share an idea or thought with others is a communicator. The individual who gets the message from the communicator is known as the communicant. In other words, communication is the message that the communicator delivers to the communicant. According to Akinwoye (2023) communication is essentially the act of purposefully conveying a message to another person with the intention of changing that person's behaviour. Comprising communication skills and information sharing behaviours, these are tightly linked features of undergraduates from library and information studies which have huge importance for both their academic and professional experience. Listening skills are the most important ones for library and information studies undergraduates as they move closer to information collection and research campaigns. Knowledge sharing activities among students can contribute to the development of their communication skills. Students who engage in knowledge sharing have the opportunity to listen to and appreciate diverse viewpoints, which helps them improve their social and communication skills. Additionally, sharing knowledge with classmates can help build good relationships and enhance understanding of concepts discussed in class. However, there may

be barriers to knowledge sharing, such as low English language proficiency, cultural barriers, shyness, and lack of confidence. Instructors play a crucial role in motivating and helping students overcome these barriers, particularly in the Asian context. By creating empowering learning environments and providing opportunities for students to participate in class discussions, instructors can support the development of students' communication skills and encourage knowledge sharing.

Research methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design of the correlational type. descriptive survey design of the correlation type best suits this study because the design determine the relationship between

the dependent variable (information sharing behaviour) and independent variables (communication skills) The population of the study consists of 400 level Library and Information Science (LIS) Undergraduates in the University of Ibadan, Oyo State and Federal University of Oye – Ekiti. Ekiti - State. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation, and inferential statistics such as Pearson's product moment correlation with (SPSS) package. The populations of LIS Undergraduates in the two selected universities are 209 and 194 were retrieved and deemed suitable for the use, reflecting a notable response rate of 92%.

Research question one: What is the information sharing behaviour of LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in South-western Nigeria? Presents the result of information sharing behaviour of LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria.

Table 1. Information sharing behaviour of LIS Undergraduates

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std Dev	Remark's
Type of information shared								
1.	I frequently share personal academic experiences with others.	1 0.50%	13 6.70%	92 47.40%	88 45.40%	1.62	.634	
2.	I often share professional or work-related information with my fellow students.	0 0.00%	13 6.70%	110 56.70%	71 36.60%	1.70	.588	
3.	I share academic or course content with others.	0 0.00%	7 3.60%	96 49.50%	91 46.90%	1.57	.565	
4.	I share information about subject of interests with others.	1 0.50%	9 4.60%	123 63.40%	61 31.40%	1.74	.563	
5.	I share new articles or technology updates with my network.	3 1.50%	35 18.00%	103 53.10%	53 27.30%	1.94	.717	
Weighted mean=1.71; Std. dev =0.61								
Mode of sharing information								
6.	I prefer sharing information through social media platforms (e.g., whatsapp, telegraph, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).	1 0.50%	14 7.20%	73 37.60%	106 54.60%	1.54	.653	
7.	I often share information via messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Telegram).	1 0.50%	16 8.20%	87 44.80%	90 46.40%	1.63	.657	
8.	I use email to share information frequently.	13 6.70%	44 22.70%	80 41.20%	57 29.40%	2.07	.888	
9.	I prefer face-to-face interactions for sharing information.	12 6.20%	43 22.20%	96 49.50%	43 22.20%	2.12	.824	
10.	I use blogs or personal websites to share information.	8 4.10%	57 29.40%	82 42.30%	47 24.20%	2.13	.829	
Weighted mean=1.90; Std. dev =0.77								
Frequency of the methods used								
11.	I share information on social media platforms multiple times a week.	2 1.00%	29 14.90%	66 34.00%	97 50.00%	1.67	.765	
12.	I use messaging apps to share information daily.	2 1.00%	23 11.90%	87 44.80%	82 42.30%	1.72	.710	
13.	I send emails to share information at least once a week.	16 8.20%	44 22.70%	74 38.10%	60 30.90%	2.08	.929	
14.	I have face-to-face conversations about information-sharing daily.	7 3.60%	31 16.00%	104 53.60%	52 26.80%	1.96	.758	
15.	I update my blog or website with new information at least once a month.	9 4.60%	45 23.20%	67 34.50%	73 37.60%	1.95	.892	
16.	I contribute to online forums or discussion groups regularly (at least once a week).	6 3.10%	24 12.40%	92 47.40%	72 37.10%	1.81	.766	
Weighted mean=1.87; Std. dev =0.80								
Weighted mean=1.83; Std. dev =0.73								

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Source: Field work, 2024

Table 1. examines the information sharing behaviour of Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduates of two federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria. This is categorised into three groups comprising type of information shared, mode of sharing information and frequency of the methods used. The result shows that the respondents indicated that some of the information sharing behaviour exhibited include: use of blogs or personal websites to share information ($\bar{x}$ =2.13; std dev. = .829); preference in favour of face-to-face interactions for sharing information ($\bar{x}$ =2.12; std dev. = .824); sending emails to share information at least once a week ($\bar{x}$ =2.08; std dev. = .929); use of email to share information frequently ($\bar{x}$ =2.07; std dev. = .888); engaging in face-to-face conversations about

information-sharing daily ($\bar{x}$ =1.96; std dev. = .758) while the least information sharing behaviour exhibited was preference for sharing information through social media platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram). ($\bar{x}$ =1.54; std dev. = .653), followed by share academic or course content with others ($\bar{x}$ =1.57; std dev. = .565).

Research question two: What is the level of communication skills of LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria? A discussion on the level of communication skills possessed by the LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria is presented in Table 5.5

Table 2. Level of communication skills of LIS Undergraduates

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std Dev
Listening skills							
1.	I pay full attention to the speaker when someone is talking to me.	1 0.50%	7 3.60%	72 37.10%	114 58.80%	1.51	.906
2.	I can accurately recall information from lectures or discussions.	3 1.50%	6 3.10%	97 50.00%	88 45.40%	1.61	.628
3.	I often paraphrase what I have heard to ensure I understand it correctly.	1 0.50%	10 5.20%	97 50.00%	86 44.30%	1.62	.610
4	I am good at interpreting the tone and emotions of the speaker.	1 0.50%	34 17.50%	116 59.80%	43 22.20%	1.96	.647
5.	I avoid interrupting others while they are speaking.	2 1.00%	12 6.20%	106 54.60%	74 38.10%	1.70	.630
Weighted mean=1.68; Std. dev =0.68							
Speaking clearly							
6.	I articulate my thoughts clearly and effectively in conversations.	1 0.50%	15 7.70%	127 65.50%	51 26.30%	1.82	.576
7.	I am comfortable speaking in front of groups.	2 1.00%	38 19.60%	111 57.20%	43 22.20%	1.99	.679
8.	I use appropriate tone and volume when speaking in different situations.	1 0.50%	30 15.50%	115 59.30%	48 24.70%	1.92	.647

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std Dev
9.	I use examples and analogies to clarify my points when speaking.	0 0.00%	31 16.00%	97 50.00%	66 34.00%	1.82	.685
10.	I adapt my speaking style depending on the audience.	2 1.00%	18 9.30%	114 58.80%	60 30.90%	1.80	.638
Weighted mean=1.87; Std. dev =0.65							
Writing skills							
11.	I can express my ideas clearly in writing.	0 0.00%	11 5.70%	89 45.90%	94 48.50%	1.57	.600
12.	I organise my written work in a logical structure.	2 1.00%	21 10.80%	105 54.10%	66 34.00%	1.79	.669
13.	I have a good command of grammar and punctuation.	1 0.50%	15 7.70%	111 57.20%	67 34.50%	1.74	.615
14.	I can write effectively for different audiences (e.g., academic, professional, personal).	1 0.50%	13 6.70%	107 55.20%	73 37.60%	1.70	.614
15.	I review and revise my written work to improve its quality.	1 0.50%	8 4.10%	86 44.30%	99 51.00%	1.54	.603
Weighted mean=1.67; Std. dev =0.62							
Reading skills							
16.	I can understand and analyse the main ideas of texts.	2 1.00%	7 3.60%	108 55.70%	77 39.70%	1.66	.600
17.	I read critically and can identify the author's purpose and arguments.	1 0.50%	11 5.70%	101 52.10%	81 41.80%	1.65	.611
18.	I am able to interpret complex written materials, such as academic articles.	0 0.00%	14 7.20%	105 54.10%	75 38.70%	1.69	.601
19.	I effectively use reading strategies to find specific information.	2 1.00%	27 13.90%	106 54.60%	59 30.40%	1.86	.683
20.	I enjoy reading and frequently engage with various types of texts.	3 1.50%	13 6.70%	87 44.80%	91 46.90%	1.63	.680
Weighted mean=1.70; Std. dev =0.64							
Weighted mean=1.73; Std. dev =0.65							

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strosngly Disagree
Source: Field work, 2024

Table 2 explores the communication skills possessed by Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduates of two federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria. This is grouped into

four categories comprising listening skills, speaking skills, writing skills and reading skills. The result reveals that the respondents indicated that some of the dominant

communication skills possessed include: feeling comfortable speaking in front of groups ($\bar{x}=1.99$; std dev. = .679); they are good at interpreting the tone and emotions of the speaker ($\bar{x}=1.96$; std dev. = .647); usage of appropriate tone and volume when speaking in different situations ($\bar{x}=1.92$; std dev. = .647); effective use of reading strategies to find specific information ($\bar{x}=1.86$; std dev. = .683); ability to articulate their thoughts clearly and effectively in conversations ($\bar{x}=1.82$; std dev. = .576) while the least communication skills

possessed was ability to pay full attention to the speaker when someone is talking to them ($\bar{x}=1.51$; std dev. = .906), followed by ability to review and revise written work to improve its quality ($\bar{x}=1.54$; std dev. = .603).

To be able to determine the level of communication skills possessed by the LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria, a test of norm was conducted and the result is presented in Table 6

Table 3. Test of norm showing the level of communication skills possessed by the LIS undergraduates

Interval	Level of communication skills by LIS undergraduates	Mean
0-1.33	Low	1.73
1.34-2.66	Moderate	
2.67-4.00	High	

Source: Field work, 2024

Result in Table 3. shows that scale between 0-1.33 is low, 1.34-2.66 is moderate, while 2.67-4.00 is high. The overall mean for the communication skills possessed by the LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria is “1.73” which falls in the scale between “1.34-2.66”. It can therefore be concluded that the level of communication skills possessed by the LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria is moderate.

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between communication skills and information sharing behaviour of LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria.

Table 7 presents the result of the relationship between communication skills and information sharing behaviour of LIS undergraduates of two federal universities South-western Nigeria.

Table 4. Pearson’s product moment correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between communication skills and information sharing behaviour of LIS undergraduates

Variables	N	Mean	St. Dev	Df	r	P	Sig
Information sharing behavior	194	1.83	0.36	193	.657	.000	Sig
Communication skills	194	1.73	0.32				
Sub-communication skills							
Listening skills	194	1.67	0.42	193	.548	.000	Sig
Speaking clearly	194	1.87	0.40	193	.554	.000	Sig
Writing skills	194	1.67	0.41	193	.471	.000	Sig
Reading skills	194	1.70	0.38	193	.534	.000	Sig

Note: Hypothesis is tested at 0.05 significant level

Source: Field work, 2024

Table 4. describes the relationship between communication skills and information sharing behaviour of LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria. The result shows that communication skills ($r = .657$; $p < 0.05$) has significant positive relationship with information sharing behaviour of LIS undergraduates. This implies that there is positive linear association between communication skills and information sharing behaviour of the LIS undergraduates.

An extension of the analysis along the four dimensions of communication skills shows that the dimensions has a significant relationship with information sharing behaviour of LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria. The analysis further shows that the most potent relationship comes from speaking clearly ($r = .554$; $p < 0.05$), followed by listening skills ($r = .548$; $p < 0.05$), reading skills ($r = .534$; $p < 0.05$) and writing skills ($r = .471$; $p < 0.05$) respectively. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between communication skills and information sharing behaviour of LIS undergraduates of two federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria is hereby rejected.

Conclusion

The study concluded that, enhancing communication skills is essential for fostering effective information-sharing behavior among LIS undergraduates. The findings underscore that communication skills significantly shape how students share information, pointing to the critical role of personal competencies and social interactions in academic collaboration. The moderate levels of communication skills observed among the students indicate room for improvement. While these levels facilitate basic academic interactions, they may not suffice in equipping students for the demands of the digital age and professional environments. The

preference for a blend of face-to-face interactions and digital platforms for information sharing suggests a dual reliance on traditional and modern communication methods, consistent with global trends in higher education. Furthermore, the findings of the study's align with global research, affirming the universal importance of communication in shaping information sharing behaviour. However, the context-specific dynamics in Southwestern Nigeria reveal unique cultural, technological, and institutional factors that shape these interactions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The study recommends that universities should priorities these areas in their curriculum and extracurricular programmes to prepare students for global academic and professional competitiveness.
2. Universities should incorporate structured communication skills training into their curricula. These programmes should cover speaking, writing, listening, and digital communication to equip students with the competencies required for effective information sharing and academic success.
3. Given the reliance on both face-to-face interactions and digital platforms, the study also recommends that universities should provide training in the use of modern information-sharing tools, such as blogs, discussion forums, and collaborative applications, to better prepare students for the demands of the digital era.
4. Institutions should design extracurricular activities that foster social and emotional intelligence, encouraging healthy peer relationships. These programmes can reduce negative aspects of peer influence,

such as anxiety and unhealthy comparisons, while promoting confidence and boldness in academic and social settings.

5. Universities should implement regular assessments of students' communication skills dynamics. This would help identify gaps and tailor interventions to address the specific needs of LIS undergraduates.

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