

Moderating Roles of Socio-Demographic Factors between Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and Individual Work Performance (IWP): A Conceptual Framework for Academic Staff in South-East Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is needed to navigate information as technology grows. Due to COVID-19 epidemic, teaching and learning was implemented through online learning which require academicians and students to be equipped with media and information literacy. In the digital age, where business success depends on staff performance, MIL integration is crucial. MIL empowers people to be curious, to search, to critically evaluate, to use, and to contribute information and media content wisely. MIL calls for competence in knowing one's rights online; combating online hate speech and cyberbullying; misinformation, disinformation and understanding the ethical issues surrounding access and use of information. Academic personnel needs knowledge, skills, and psychological capacity to teach, research, and serve the community. These age-, gender-, socio-religious-, educational-, and literary-diverse people behave differently. This study proposed the moderating role of socio-demographic factors between MIL and individual work performance to improve academic staff capabilities and service delivery.

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions in Nigeria have embraced the new digital culture spawned by the COVID-19 epidemic, meaning online learning, which has spread globally, including in Nigeria. Students and educators must have more freedom and participation in the online environment as part of the change in the learning method and environment (COVID-19). Online learning refers to open education and instruction delivered via the Internet. It is a technique of training that requires academic professionals to have media and information literacy skills. In today's digital world, online education is a critical right that promotes the social integration of all nations. According to research conducted by Egielewa, Idogho, Iyalomhe, and Cirella (2021), students in Nigerian higher education have a low tolerance for online learning resources. As a result, they will need to devote more time to online learning to receive the most up-to-date education and information. Daily, we are exposed to a piece of vast and diversified information through the Internet, mainstream media, and published works. Information is accessible via an infinite number of formats and sources. There is a considerable variation in quality between the numerous available information sources. During a typical Internet search, a user can access and receive authoritative, up-to-date, and trustworthy information sources and biased, out-of-date, misleading, or inaccurate ones. In addition, a single online search is likely to yield more results than you might anticipate. Therefore, users demand numerous and diverse information literacy skills. Information literacy is essential for personal, professional, and academic success. These skills are helpful in the school's administrative offices for research papers, projects, and presentations. Academics often need new information to make sound decisions. At home, we are continually pressed to make consumer and social/political judgments. (Research Foundations – Information Literacy, 2021). Information Literacy requires active participation in the information society. We should always strive to improve our hard and soft skills, notably information literacy. By promoting our skills, we may become valuable assets to an organization. Next, we will explore some basic principles: human resources, educator and learner skills, and media and information literacy.

With the advent of the knowledge economy, it has become essential for individuals to continuously improve their media and information literacy skills to adapt to the always-evolving information environment. Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is vital in this digital environment, where success in any endeavour depends mostly on the performance of the employees. In the information age, media and information literacy (MIL) has become crucial for work and study (Kamilova & Orazymbetova, 2023). Media and information literacy is an important skill that not only forms the basis for lifelong learning but is also essential to the mission of higher education institutions (Latifah et al., 2019; Liu & Zhang, 2021), as it helps to develop individuals' intellectual abilities to think critically and enable them to learn how to learn (Chan et al., 2017; Churchill, 2020). In a wide range of media today it is vital to know not only where and how to find the necessary information, but more importantly, how to set apart the truth and lies, to detect and reject misinformation, fake news, and, based on this knowledge, create new, trustful information. Several studies indicate that media and information literacy skills are part of critical thinking skills, help improve student writing skills and academic performance, (Shao & Purpur, 2016) and are associated with higher levels of student academic motivation and self-efficacy (Ross et al., 2016), and allow students to be able to connect in learning networks without barriers or restrictions (Khlaisang & Koraneekij, 2019). Thus enhancing MIL among learners and all citizens requires that educators themselves become media and information literate (UNESCO, 2021).

According to Emisiko and Severina, (2018), inadequate information skills have impeded lifelong education. Information literacy is the capacity to decide if specific information is required, locate it, analyze it, and successfully use it to address a given issue or problem. (The American Library Association (2010), cited by Emisiko and Severina (2018). Information search is becoming increasingly vital, particularly for academic and research purposes. Similarly, sifting through a great deal of material available in libraries and online to uncover meaningful and accurate data is becoming increasingly important. Media and information literacy competency provides academic personnel with a wide range of information resources as well as the capacity to identify and assess resources, which is required for researchers. However, this set of skills

required for effective research and information use is insufficient. (Madu and Akinboro (2012); Mtebe and Raisao (2014); Oyedipe and Popoola (2019). Unfortunately, researchers have discovered that many academic professionals have poor or no information literacy skills, preventing them from fully using electronic resources in their educational professions, Madu and Akinboro (2012).

Even though media literacy, a subset of information literacy, is becoming increasingly important as a critical skill in all disciplines and professions, a lack of competence in information literacy skills on the part of academic staff was viewed as a critical factor in preparing students for a successful career (Hallam, Thomas, & Beach, 2018). The primary objective of this study is to explore the level of possession of media and information literacy skills among academic staff and examine the relationship between MILS and the work performance of academicians. It also examines the moderating role of socio-demographic factors (Academic faculty ranks, gender, age, educational qualification, working experience, and income level) on the relationship between them in public sector colleges of education in Nigeria. In line with the digital environment, media and information literacy skills still need to be basic to support their work performance. Employee performance is an important one in an organization, because organizational performance is an accumulation of employee performance. Individual work performance is the ability of employees to perform according to the task given that is parallel with the organization's goals and objectives. Rahim, Baharuddin, Jalil, Amin, & Rahmad, (2023). Therefore, the aims of this paper to propose the conceptual framework for moderating role of socio-demographics between MIL and individual work performance among academic staff in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The 21st-century talents are the skills, abilities, and learning dispositions that educators, corporate leaders, researchers, and government programs have identified as essential for success in the society and workplaces of the 21st century. This is part of a growing international trend emphasizing the abilities students must learn to flourish in a rapidly transforming digital society. According to Ashiver, Agoh, and Ihongo (2018), talent is the ability and capacity to execute complex concepts (cognitive skills), things (technical skills), and people (social skills) via deliberate, methodical, and persistent effort (interpersonal skills). In addition, it entails the formation of attitudes or the ability to demonstrate what has been learned through education, practice, and experience.

The implementation of electronic learning aids in higher education institutions has increased the institutions' and students' interest in achieving high performance by acquiring new human skills. Teaching and personal growth have climbed to the top of institutions' and individuals' agendas, promoting lifelong learning. People are revising their knowledge, abilities, and skills (Eze, Chinedu-Eze, Okike, and Bello, 2020). Academics are sometimes sluggish in integrating e-learning, but they must embrace technological improvements (Flawell, Harris, Price, & Peterson, 2019). Improving teachers' and students' self-efficacy is one of the most successful approaches to promoting technology-based adaptive learning (Solangi, Shahrani, & Pandhiani, 2018). Since the 2004/2005 academic year, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in Nigeria has mandated all instructors at Nigerian Colleges of Education to be literate and adept in information and communication technology. (Ishayku, 2007, as quoted by Olafere, Adeyanju, and Fakorede, 2017). The NCCE considers college professors to be critical in the development of students' ICT skills. As a result, many schools require professors to incorporate ICT into their curriculum. They are information literate if they can access, handle, integrate, and analyze data using appropriate ICTs.

Online instruction demands a commitment to online learning principles to develop and maintain a teaching, social, and cognitive presence. Effective online instructors encourage and facilitate students' active communication, contact, collaboration, and course involvement (Palloff & Prout, 2011). In addition, these educators must be highly motivated, supportive, visible, organized, analytical, respectful, approachable, active, responsive, adaptive, open, honest, compassionate, and able to set an example (Keengwe, Schnellert, & Kungu, 2014). Online education has been described in numerous ways by authors,

scholars, and academics in their respective fields. For example, Albrahim (2020), citing Ally (2008), defines online learning as an educational experience that allows students to develop personally, acquire knowledge, and construct their learning by providing access to learning materials via the Internet, interacting with the content instructor and other students, and receiving support while acquiring new information. Moreover, it is a learning experience that occurs in synchronous or asynchronous environments using various Internet-connected devices (such as PCs, laptops, smartphones, and others) (Zalat, Hamed & Bolba, 2021).

Information Literacy

Information Literacy (IL) is a key to lifelong learning and achieving educational goals. It is crucial for lifelong learning, especially in education, where knowledge must be transferred to creative, critical thinkers and lifelong learners (Durodolu & Ochalla, 2017). Information literacy improves learning, skills, values, beliefs, and cultural awareness (Ashiver, Agoh & Ihongo, 2018). Information literacy encourages people to think critically about the information they receive and to generate new knowledge. Authors, scholars, and researchers define information literacy differently. According to the US National Commission on Library and Information Science, information literacy is the ability to recognize, locate, evaluate, generate, use, and share information to handle challenges and problems (Naik & Padmini, 2014). Each person has the freedom to participate meaningfully in the information society. To achieve information literacy, subject-specific knowledge, access to information resources, good research methodologies, and the smart use of information sources are required (Ogbo, Uzoagba & Nwebiem, 2017).

Information Library (IL) is the capacity of an individual to locate and evaluate information critically, as well as use information effectively in decision-making and knowledge generation (Webber & Johnston, cited in Ekong & Ekong, 2018). Ashiver, Agoh, and Ihongo (2018), citing Doyle (2008), state that an information-literate person can recognize the need for accurate and complete information as a basis for intelligent decision-making: formulate questions based on the needs, identify potential sources of information, access sources of information including computers and other technologies, evaluate information, and organize information to integrate new information into the existing body of knowledge. A person with information literacy should be able to access diverse information sources independently and effectively and comprehend and evaluate them. IL is a collection of abilities required for the successful application of information. Information literacy includes computer literacy, information technology literacy, Internet literacy, digital literacy, and media literacy, among others (Ashiver, Agoh & Ihongo, 2018). Upon acquiring these talents, the individual would be able to achieve independence.

As the volume of information grows, acquiring and utilizing the correct information for academic and research objectives becomes increasingly essential. However, according to Nwosu, Obiamulu, and Udem (2015), the difficulty is not producing, storing, or accessing information but instead encouraging individuals to obtain access to and utilize information resources. In conjunction with this, Okiti & Mabawonku (2013) emphasized that the availability and accessibility of information are insufficient to ensure that information users have the necessary skills to reach a realistic outcome. Therefore, the academic staff of colleges of education must learn how to research and exploit information to effectively interpret and utilize it for national decision-making to enable them to discharge their duties efficiently.

Exponentially more information has led to an information explosion. Academic staff must have remarkable talents to perform well. Academic employees must acquire information literacy skills to function effectively for academic institutions and national growth. IL talents can recognize, analyze, organize, use, and transmit information in any format. IL talents include research, critical thinking, computers, and communication (Indeed Education Team, 2021). A 21st-century educator who filters information for teaching, learning, and community service needs practical IL skills which would enable lifelong learning. Some occupations or procedures require specialized knowledge. IL's abilities include finding, using, and managing information resources. According to Panawecra, as cited by Anunobi and Uden (2011), IL skills help people become independent lifelong learners and transfer their knowledge to

other settings. Information literacy is a necessary ability in today's digitally advanced world. In this age of information proliferation, it is acknowledged by the international community and Nigeria as a vital tool for advancement and growth (Krubu, 2015). It includes understanding a person's information concerns and requirements. It encompasses the techniques, abilities, and knowledge required to determine information needs, access, analyze, synthesize, use, and share information ethically, and adopt proper information behavior (SCONUL 2011).

The Association of College and Research Libraries (2012), referenced in Ugwunna & Onyekweodiri (2019), established five information literacy standards, each with its own performance indicators and outcomes for monitoring the growth of users at all educational levels. These include an individual's capacity to:

- a) Determine the nature and quantity of the required information,
- b) Access and collect information efficiently and effectively,
- c) Evaluate and critique sources of information,
- d) Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and acquire and use information ethically and legally, either as an individual or as a member of
- e) Recognize that information literacy is an ongoing process and utilize various techniques and emerging technology to stay aware of developments in the field.

These standards are reflected in Kuhlthau's (2012) definition of information literacy as the capacity to locate, analyze, and use information judiciously for learning, thinking, and creating. Information literacy is the ability to recognize an information need, efficiently access information sources, and evaluate information to close the knowledge gap; It is a set of skills required in the 21st-century workplace, particularly as the uncertain quality and expanding quantity of information poses a significant challenge to society (Krubu, Idhalama, & Omigie, 2017, citing ACRL). Information literacy includes the acquisition of information literacy skills. It is the process of acquiring tools that facilitate a person's growth in information literacy (Idodi, 2010, referenced in Ndagi & Madu, 2018).

Information Literacy (IL) Skills

The development of information literacy skills is critical for professionals in a variety of industries and is dependent on individuals' cognitive talents (Krubu, 2015). Language proficiency and technical literacy are both important characteristics of information literacy (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011). Furthermore, information literacy abilities are seen as vital components of the graduate traits and skills demanded by the Nigerian labor force (Krubu, 2015; Krubu et al., 2017, citing Johnson & Weber). Information literacy enables users to successfully define their information needs, plan and strategize their search for appropriate information, and critically assess and use the information found (Krubu et al., 2017). Understanding the relationship between information sources and the technology used to access and obtain information is required. Information behavior is important in the fields of information access and information literacy. As a result, it is critical to evaluate socio-demographic aspects, which include a variety of social and demographic traits that can influence an individual's information literacy (Krubu et al., 2017). According to a study conducted by Mahmood et al. (2021), occupation and education have a significant impact on respondents' digital and information literacy skills. This emphasizes the importance of taking socio-demographic factors into account when analyzing information literacy levels among individuals. Understanding the impact of socio-demographic factors on information literacy allows educational institutions and policymakers to establish targeted interventions and initiatives to improve information literacy abilities among academic staff and the general workforce.

Media Literacy Skills

Media literacy (ML) refers to a set of skills, knowledge, and understanding that enable people to interact with media effectively and safely. According to Ciurel (2016), machine learning entails a set of integrated skills that allow users to actively access, analyze, understand, and question media messages. The United

Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines media literacy as the process of assimilating and utilizing the codes of the contemporary media system, as well as the operational skills necessary to navigate the technological systems that undergird these codes. It also includes the ability to access, analyze, and assess the power of pictures, sounds, and messages that shape our daily lives and play an important role in modern culture. Media literacy refers to an individual's capacity to communicate effectively through the media.

It is crucial to emphasize that media literacy extends beyond different types of media. It includes broadcast news, journalism, cinema, and theatre, as well as social media platforms such as blogs, tweets, and Facebook. With the changing media landscape, new competencies, particularly those connected to evaluation, are becoming increasingly important. How individuals evaluate the credibility of news sources, interpret political stances, engage in voting processes, and partake in civil society are key issues that intersect with media literacy. Advanced media literacy skills are required to enable citizens to access information and utilize, critically review, and produce media material ethically and safely. Media literacy should not be confined to learning about tools and technologies; rather, it should focus on providing citizens with the critical thinking skills needed to exercise judgment, analyze complicated realities, and distinguish between opinion and reality. Collaboration between media service providers, video-sharing platform providers, and relevant stakeholders is therefore critical in encouraging the development of media literacy across society, which includes citizens of all ages, all kinds of media, and all media platforms. Monitoring development in this area is critical, as stated in Article 59 of the EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

Media and Information Literacy (MIL)

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) has been recognized as a means to foster more equitable access to information and knowledge, promote freedom of expression, advance independent and pluralistic media systems, and improve the quality of education. By empowering "citizens to understand the functions of media and other information providers, to critically evaluate their content, and to make informed decisions as users and producers of information and media content," media and information literacy, while sometimes seen as separate and distinct fields, are conceptualized as a combined set of competencies necessary for life and work today (UNESCO, 2013).

UNESCO defines media and information literacy (MIL) as "The basic competencies that allow citizens to interact with the media effectively and develop critical thinking and lifelong learning skills for socialization that make them active citizens" (cited in Al-Tawisi, Hamed, & Al-Banna, 2016). Media and information literacy contribute to increasing the quality of education because both aim to foster critical thinking and are competency-oriented approaches that our current knowledge societies demand (Cited by Bintoro & Winarsih, 2022).

The MIL's role is to enhance some of the multiple competencies' students require to be fully capable citizens. Media and information literacy are part of the change's education needs to adopt to enable young adults to be lifelong learners by acquiring vital information skills. Meaningful education content needs to include the information skills that citizens need to be able to feed themselves to make decisions in life intellectually: at school, at work, and in society, and to meet every challenge and opportunity that life offers (UNESCO, 2008, cited by Bintoro & Winarsih, 2022). If information is regarded as a basic knowledge input, individuals ought to know how to find it, evaluate it, use it, and communicate it.

Related Theories and Models of MIL

a) Explore, Engage, Empower (EEE) Model

Alagaran II (2015) proposed an explore, engage, empower model of media and information literacy. This model is based on the UNESCO (2013) definition of MIL as a set of competencies that empowers citizens to access, retrieve, understand, evaluate and use, create as well as share information and media content in all formats using various tools, in a critical, ethical, and effective way, in order to participate and

engage in personal, professional and societal activities. Alagaran et. Al, (2015) argues that the model tries to provide a general process framework for understanding and practicing media and information literacy. According to him, competencies in media and information literacy can be grouped in three major practical applications: explore, engage, and empower. Alagaran et.al, (2015) argues that the EEE model ‘encapsulates all the relevant competencies that students in the digital age must be able to acquire in a more concise and straightforward fashion.

b) UNESCO’s Conceptual Model of MIL

This model recognizes the importance of all forms of media (including community media) and of all other information providers including libraries, archives, museums, publishers, and those on the Internet (UNESCO, 2013). According to UNESCO, “The concept draws on the convergence between telecommunication and broadcasting and among many forms of media and information providers.” This model also includes different oral traditions. As per this model of MIL, the centre circle ‘represents the information resources and the means by which information is communicated and the media as an institution.’ “The availability and access to information and media and other information providers, including those on the Internet are important aspects of the enabling environment of MIL to flourish.”

The second circle from the centre of this model looks at the reasons on why people use information and engage with media and other information providers like entertainment, association, identification, surveillance and enlightenment. The third circle from the centre of this model refers ‘to the basic knowledge that all citizens should have about the operations, functions, nature, established professionals and ethical standards of all forms of media and other information providers.’ The final circle talks about the process and practice. It tries to communicate different steps that ‘should be taken or competencies citizens should possess to effectively create and use information and media content ethically, as well as engaging with media and other information providers in their social, economic, political, cultural, and personal lives’. None of these models/theories involve the moderating role of socio-demographics in the relationship between media and information literacy and individual work performance.

From the onset, media literacy and information literacy have been treated as separate fields of research, but at the present stage, sometimes for convenience of reference, they tend to be combined into a broad field with some common objectives and competencies that are vital for people’s everyday life, work, or study. However, the main thing that unites IL and ML is their aim -to grow educated people capable of making decisions based on the use of various information (Lee, So, 2014). The most obvious point of convergence between these two disciplines is the application of critical thinking skills to their areas of focus. But although these disciplines are clearly related and, in some instances, overlap, they remain distinct areas of study: Information Literacy applies critical thinking skills to the assessment of Information. Media Literacy is a critical thinking skill that is applied to the source of most of our information – the channels of mass communication” (Silverblatt, 2016).

UNESCO has contributed to this development by introducing the concept of media and information literacy (MIL) with an explicit focus on strategy, guidelines, policy assessment frameworks, and curricula. UNESCO has advocated for a set of competencies that citizens in the 21st century must have as a prerequisite for sustainable development (Fedorov & Mikhaleva, 2020; Rahayu & Wirza, 2020). Critical media literacy builds skills of analysis and critique in the deconstruction and interpretation phase where students learn to recognize hegemonic aspects of media. During the media production phase, critical media literacy can give voice to students and empower them to take action to make changes in society. In the process, critical media literacy can lead students to deeper understandings of literacies and discourses in society than previously considered possible. Robertson, & Scheidler-Benns, (2016). Critical media literacy is important because media’s ubiquitous presence has become the digital wallpaper of life, and students need to learn how to use media responsibly for learning, communicating, and participating in democratic societies. Theory of information processing. The theory is based on the idea that humans process the information they receive, rather than merely responding to stimuli. The information processing theory

describes how information is processed and consumed, that is, how individuals record, store, and retrieve information in their brains which affects the motivation and the behavior of a person. This ultimately influences the actions and behavior of individuals and society. Information processing theory is an approach to cognitive development studies that aims to explain how information is encoded into memory. It is based on the idea that humans do not merely respond to stimuli from the environment, but rather process the information they receive (Bouchrika, 18 January, 2024). The brain processes information, which process begins with receiving input, also called stimulus, from the environment using various senses, then describes and stores in the memory, which is retrieved when needed. In the expectancy theory of motivation, an individual processes information about behaviour-outcome relationships. Then, they can form expectations based on the information and make decisions. Information Processing Theory has its origin with George Armitage Miller whose studies were based on Edward C. Tolman's sign and latent learning theories, which propose that learning is an internal and complex process which involves mental processes (Çeliköz, Erişen, & Şahin, 2019).

Individual Work Performance (IWP)

In line with the digital era, media and information literacy skills still need to be basic to support their work performance. Work performance comprises behaviors that workers demonstrate in their jobs that are relevant to the establishment's goals. Job performance is of interest to organizational behavior, and the result is an important factor for individual work effectiveness evaluation. Thus, an organization's success or failure depends on the job performance of the individuals in that organization (Popoola & Tabuke, 2021). Luthans et al. (2007), cited in Popoola and Tabuke (2021), stated that psychological capital might be seen as positive psychological resources (confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience) that a person possesses and uses to succeed in work and life situations. Muhammed (2018) and Adeyemi (2019) remarked that psychological capital has a great potential for fostering creativity, innovation, and increased performance in university library personnel. There is a great tendency for psychological capital to assist university employees in having career resilience, job satisfaction, problem-solving ability, low turnover intentions, and job performance.

Performance is anything done by employees in their workplaces following the goals and ideas of the organization (Ramdali, Marlioni, and Rahman, 2019). This can be described as measurable (observable) behavior, which may include physical activities and activities that may occur in the psychological individual, such as cognitive processes and problem-solving. He also emphasizes work performance based on behavior rather than results. The behavior follows organizational goals and is multi-dimensional (Koopmans et al., 2012). Citing Berry, Ramdani et al. (2019) argue that three things occur in performance: declarative knowledge (understanding and knowledge of work and tasks), procedural knowledge and skills (abilities and more specific knowledge about the procedure for daily things), and motivation. Employees will be encouraged to increase their work performance level to boost the institution's performance and productivity and to increase the chances of surviving any possible re-organization with a reduction in personnel. Therefore, it becomes paramount that management maintains, improves, and optimizes individual work performance.

IWP is generally defined as "behaviors or actions relevant to the organization's goal (Koopmans et al., 2014). Thus, IWP is defined in terms of the behaviors or actions of the employees rather than the results of these actions. Also, IWP consists of behaviors under the individual's control, thus excluding behaviors constrained by the environment. Employee performance is a source of concern for the survival and competitiveness of any establishment. The vision and mission of an organization can be achieved only through employees willing to exert effort and extra effort to carry out the duties and responsibilities assigned to them (Abun, Ubasa, Magallanes, Encarnacion & Ranay, 2021). The employer or manager should undertake a regular evaluate on of work performance to ascertain the performance of the employees, find reasons for non-performance and provide solutions to them. Academic staff are required to possess

substantive knowledge, skills, and, most importantly, the psychological capacity required to perform their functions of teaching, research, and community services effectively and efficiently.

Socio-Demographic Factors

Nowadays, human resource management and development is becoming more significant because a man has gained a new place and a new role in all social processes and in their management. The sheer employees' characteristics, i.e., demographic factors, besides the organizational factors, have a certain influence in this area. By adequate understanding of both demographic factors and their influence, it is possible to apply measures to make the employees satisfied and motivated. Several studies in various scientific disciplines have focused on the interrelation of socio demographic factors and job performance. This body of research has consistently shown that these variables greatly influence the performance of workers, whether in private or public institutions. (Kotherja, & Hamzallari, (2022). Academic staff comprise many individuals of diverse ages, gender, socio-religious, and educational or literary attributes. These individuals exhibit not only similar behavior patterns and characteristics to a certain degree but also many dissimilarities (Vikram Ender, 2011, cited in Popoola, 2021).

Socio-demographic factors help to ascertain what members of a group have in common. Socioeconomic or demographic characteristics cover marital status, age, family size, academic qualification, monthly salary, gender, rank or academic status, employment status, and work experience (Olakunle & Olanrewaju, 2019). Different socio-demographic characteristics affect how and why a consumer, for instance, chooses one product or service over another. Literature shows that socio-demographics influence the personalities of individuals and the way they think and act in accomplishing individual and organizational goals (Fehr & Schmidt, 2000; Olakunle & Olanrewaju, 2019). They further stated that socio-demographics, to an extent, determine individuals' workplace behavior and achievement. In this study, socio-demographics that will be considered include age, academic qualification, monthly salary, work experience, and academic status or rank, as shown in the conceptual framework.

Various studies have revealed that socio-demographic factors influence the individual work performance of academic staff in tertiary institutions of learning (Ugwu & Ugwu, 2017). Demographic characteristics are widely acknowledged as having a great influence on staff performance. Demographic characteristics greatly influence how well an employee performs, even though the employee might have other factors determining their performance. Fletchl (2010) points out that demographic characteristics influence whether employees will be committed to their work or not. Olakunle & Olanrewaju (2019) studied the relationship between ILS and the research productivity of the academic staff of Nigerian research institutes. The study showed that monthly salary, academic status, age, education, Qualification, work experience, and employment nature have mediating effects on the relationship between ILS and the research productivity of the academic staff. They accounted for 47% of the variance in the relationship between ILS and the research productivity of the respondents. In a study to analyse the effect of soft skill on the work productivity of academic library professionals in Pakistan, Hamid, and Younus (2021) adopted quantitative survey method, collecting data through a self-compiled online questionnaire from academic professionals with a response rate of 83%. Findings of the study reveal that library professionals are proficient in soft skill with a high level of different soft skill of interpersonal, emotional intelligence, leadership, motivation, and communication. The correlation test result shows a significant relationship between soft skill and work productivity. Also, soft skills have profound effects on the work productivity of library professionals and no difference in their perception based on demographic features. Ugwu, and Ugwu, (2017) revealed that the constructs like age, education, and experience and job position are significantly related to the work performance of academic employees in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, significant predictors of librarians' task-based and contextual performance with education as the most significant predictor.

Moderator variables provide useful information about how, why, or when a phenomenon occurs. They explain the circumstances that cause a weak or ambiguous association between two variables that were expected to have a strong relationship. Thus, the consideration of a mediator or moderator allows a more

precise description of the relationship between independent and outcome variables. A moderator is an independent variable that affects the strength and/or direction of the association between another independent variable and an outcome variable. The moderator interacts with the independent variable of interest so that the independent variable's association with the outcome variable is stronger or weaker at different levels of the moderator variable. In other words, the association of the independent variable with the outcome variable "depends on" the value (or level) of the moderator variable (Bernett, 2000).

Development of Conceptual Framework

To empirically accomplish the objectives of the study, a framework has to be proposed and developed to enable further conclusions to be drawn. The conceptual framework shows the beliefs of the researcher and their association with each other about existing phenomena (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In this case, these phenomena are referred to as concepts or variables. Based on previous discussions, it is determined that socio-demographic characteristics are a moderating variable in media and information literacy skills and the individual work performance of academic staff.

Media and Information Literacy Skills (MILS) are essential concepts for this study. Information Literacy has been considered in different ways. Naik and Padmini (2014), quoting the US National Commission on Library and Information Science, state that Information Literacy encompasses knowledge of one's information concerns and needs and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively locate, use, and communicate information to address issues and problems at hand. It is a concept that focuses on a person's ability to interact with information and the cognitive and behavioral processes that are involved (Hepworth, Al-Mehmadi, & Maynard, 2014).

The model's moderating variable is socio-demographic characteristics. Information Literacy Skills (ILS) and Media Literacy Skills (MLS) refer to a set of abilities connected to efficiently accessing, analyzing, and utilizing information and media. These abilities are critical to improving an individual's capacity to complete work activities efficiently and successfully. Individuals who are fluent in information and media literacy are better equipped to traverse the large quantity of information and media messages available in today's digital world, helping them to make educated decisions, critically analyze material, and effectively communicate. However, socio-demographic factors can influence the impact of information and media literacy abilities on individual work performance. Age, gender, educational background, and cultural background can all impact people's perceptions, experiences, and behaviors in the workplace. These factors may modify the association between information and media literacy skills and individual job performance, magnifying or diminishing its impacts.

Understanding the moderating role of socio-demographic characteristics is essential for a complete comprehension of how information and media literacy skills translate into individual work performance. The conceptual model provides a framework for investigating the complex interactions between information and media literacy abilities, socio-demographic traits, and individual work performance by taking these moderating elements into account. The proposed conceptual model lays the groundwork for empirical research that can study and validate the indicated relationships. Researchers can acquire insights into the aspects that contribute to optimal work performance in information- and media-rich workplaces by investigating the interplay between information and media literacy abilities, socio-demographic traits, and individual work performance. Such knowledge can be used to influence treatments, training programs, and policies targeted at improving people's information and media literacy skills and optimizing their work performance in a variety of professional settings.

ILS is extremely important in today's scenario, which is characterized by rapid technological breakthroughs and a multitude of information sources. The advancement of information and technology, as well as the widespread use of electronic resources, particularly the Internet, provide a bright potential for better information distribution across research and academic communities (Manda, 2005, as cited in Okiki and Mabawonku, 2013). In contrast, media literacy refers to the ability to access media, interpret and critically assess various parts of the media and its contexts, and develop communications across diverse situations. According to Ciurel (2016), machine learning is a set of integrated skills that allow people to actively access, analyze, understand, and question media messages. MIL is defined by UNESCO as a comprehensive set of knowledge, attitudes, abilities, and practices required to access, analyze, evaluate, use, produce, and disseminate information and knowledge in a creative, ethical, and legal manner that respects human rights (UNESCO, 2012).

Employee performance has been a key factor in attaining the objectives of the organization. The vision and mission of an organization can be achieved only through employees who are willing to exert effort and extra effort to carry out the duties and responsibilities assigned to them (Abun, Ubasa, Magallanes, Encarnacion & Ranay, 2021). Work performance is very important in determining consistency and maintaining employee resilience. Individual work performance (IWP) is one of the key indicators for team and company performance, and consequently, it contributes to the productivity and competitive ability of companies. Employees will be encouraged to increase their individual work performance levels to boost the performance and productivity of the institution and increase their chances of surviving any possible reorganization with a reduction in personnel. Therefore, it becomes of paramount importance that management maintains, improves and optimizes individual work performance. IWP is defined in terms of the behaviors or actions of the employees rather than the results of these actions. IWP refers to "behaviors or actions that are relevant to the goal of the organization (Campbell, 1990, cited in Koopmans et al., 2014). Also, IWP consists of behaviors that are under the control of the individual, thus excluding behaviors constrained by the environment.

Attitude and behavior are two components that cannot be separated because attitude can influence a person's behavior. Attitude is the mental and emotional disposition of a person towards a certain object (Perloff, 2016). According to Myers (2013), attitude is the favorable or unfavorable reaction of someone towards a certain object or person, which is shown through one's beliefs, feelings, and intended behavior. The reaction of employees towards work can be favorable or unfavorable. Thus, attitude is evaluated because it involves a preference for or against the attitude object (Cunningham & Zelazo, 2007; cited in Abun et al., 2021). Gil (2020) stressed that a positive attitude towards work would not only affect organizational and individual performance but was also the key to success. To improve the performance quality of lecturers who teach at higher education institutions, support, and encouragement are needed to increase their performance. The increase in teaching staff performance is influenced by several factors, including organizational culture, work motivation, and performance appraisals for employees, in this case, lecturers. Besides that, it must also be supported by lecturer job satisfaction, which is important to pay attention to. In this study, two major variables of individual work performance will be considered: online teaching and the research productivity of academic staff.

Socio-demographic characteristics consist of social and demographic factors such as marital status, age, family size, academic qualification, monthly salary, gender, rank or academic status, employment status, and work experience that influence action. Literature shows that socio-demographic characteristics explain individual and organizational behaviors to an extent and determine to some extent the workplace behaviors and achievements of individuals (Olakunle & Olanrewaju, 2019, citing Fehr & Schnid, 2000). This study is aimed at determining the influence of MILS on the individual work performance of the academic staff of Colleges of Education in South-East Nigeria, with socio-demographic characteristics moderating the relationship between MILS and their work performance. The socio-demographic characteristics shown in the model include age, monthly salary, academic status or rank, educational qualifications, and work experience. Citing Baron and Kenny (1989), Olakunle & Olanrewaju (2019) state

that moderating variables specify reasons why a particular relationship occurs. Moderators describe the psychological process that located the relationship and explain how external events took on psychological significance. They further postulated the conditioner criteria to analyse a moderator effect, which includes the following:

- a) There is a significant correlation between the independent and dependent variables.
- b) Independent variables must be significantly associated with the moderator that predicts dependent variables.
- c) The correlation between the independent variable and dependent variable must be eliminated or reduced when the moderating factor is simultaneously entered.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In Nigeria, colleges of education are recognized as a kind of educational institution with a higher level of study. The target audience for these programs, which are intended to provide excellent preparation and instruction, is individuals who wish to pursue a successful academic career. The academics who work in educational institutions are responsible for conveying essential knowledge to pupils, with the goal of developing the students' independence and self-confidence. Academics must be able to identify when information is needed, know the sources of information that can meet their needs, understand how to access information to fill the knowledge gap, and be able to minimize the barriers that obstruct their access to information to carry out their primary functions of teaching and research effectively. Only then will they be able to fulfil their jobs as instructors and researchers effectively. The knowledge and skills contained in the information literacy concept could benefit both students and teachers. A student's academic career will be considerably more gratifying and trouble-free if they have a firm foundation in the appropriate abilities. If lecturers are equipped with the skills necessary for media and information literacy, they can train students to become critical thinkers, intellectually curious observers, information makers, and information consumers.

Given the centrality of the phenomenon of communication, and its presence and mediation by digital culture, it should be a subject matter of absolute importance in teacher training curricula (UNESCO, 2023). While critical thinking is the starting point, critical action is the subsequent step that empowers individuals to become agents of change in their own lives and in their communities. For Freire (2017), education in general, and this applies to contemporary media education, according to Buckingham (2019) – is that which inspires not only reflection, but also transformative action. The implication of this study is that periodic workshops on job performance should be instituted to private and public organizations especially colleges of education in Nigeria to promote performance and productivity among workers. There is a critical need for user-centered instruction programmes on MIL for the academic staff as well as for future educators. This study would make a worthy contribution to the existing scanty research on workplace media and information literacy as no such study was found addressing the context of academic staff in colleges of education in Nigeria. MIL instruction sessions designed for faculty may improve the research output of scholars in their respective colleges of education. It was recommended that the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), Abuja, Nigeria, should make proficient utilization of media and information literacy skills by academic librarians as part of the requirement to assess their suitability for performance within the scholarly communities. Also, the management of colleges of education should give attention to constant media and information literacy skills programs to enhance the literacy skills of the academic staff to be able to produce quality and rich research, teaching and community service. As literacy is such an important skill set in the digital age, the College of Education Management should identify personnel that require literacy training and provide specific and relevant training to help them acquire new

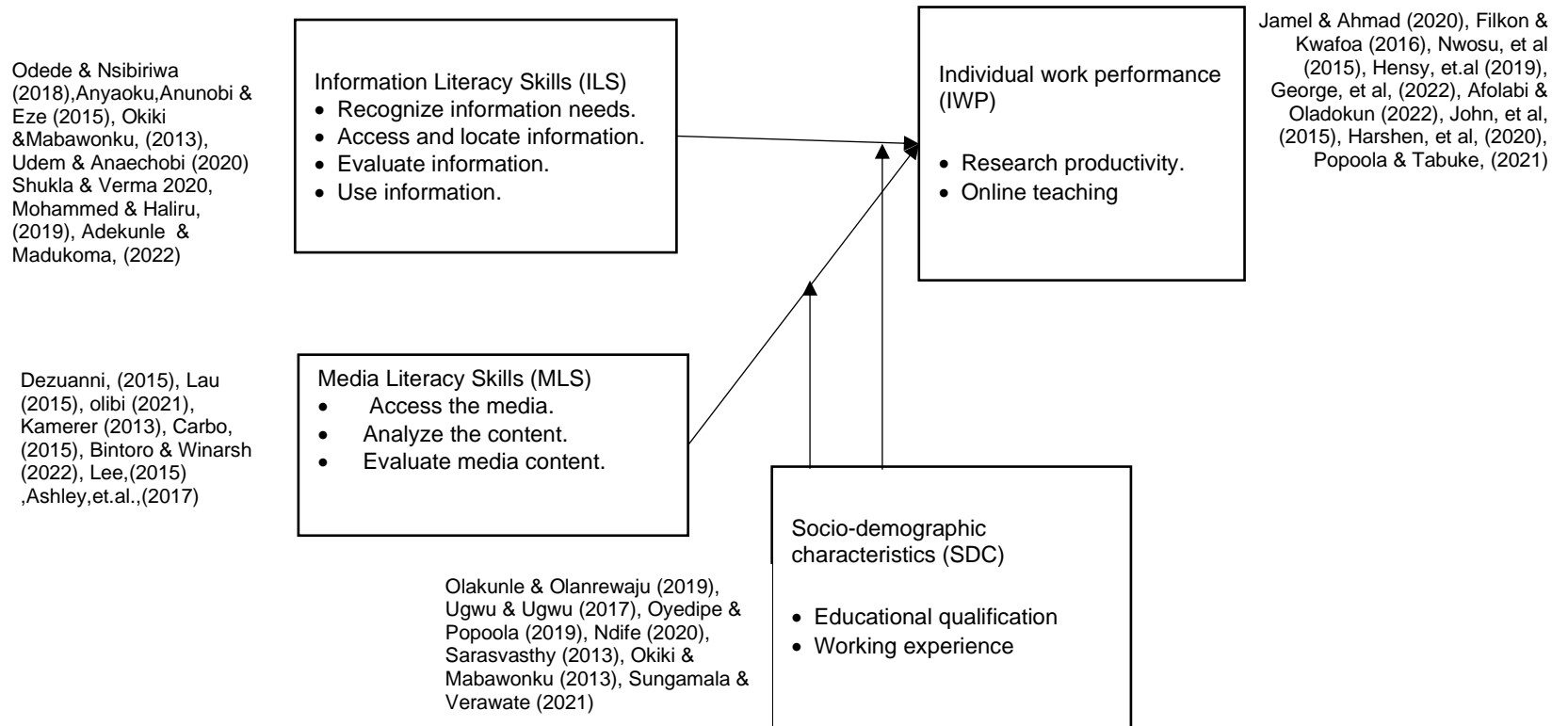


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

skills in their job, to meet the demands of the challenging work environment. The relevant training or literacy interventions are aimed at helping those who lack sufficient literacy to update their skills. The employer should undertake a regular evaluation of work performance to assess the performance of the employees, find reasons for non-performance, and provide solutions to them.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The conceptual model represented below proposes an association and interactions between media and information literacy (the independent variables) and individual work performance (dependent variables) of the study, with the socio-demographic factors moderating the relationship between them. For future research, the study's proposed conceptual framework should be researched upon by researcher in other geographical zone and with other categories of academic staff.

These results generated useful insights for academicians and organizations about the importance of MIL in the workplace and its influence on organizational effectiveness and performance in gaining a sustainable competitive advantage. This knowledge might be crucial for employers to initiate training programs for their academic personnel to impart MIL education. This research would be a worthwhile contribution to the existing research on workplace MIL, particularly in the context of college of education workplace as no such comprehensive study using these variables has been conducted so far.

Considering the ongoing discussion on MIL and job performance, this study fills the gap by providing a research framework focusing on the impact of MILS on work pperformance and which researchers can utilize to conduct further research on academic staff of other categories of higher institutions. While a growing body of literature suggests that employees' digital skills are important to enable both individuals and organizations to make the most of the digital workplace, empirical understanding of their effect on technology adoption and performance is currently limited.

Since the performance of lecturers is the key contributor to academic excellence, colleges of education need to empower their human capital to be competitive and subsequently achieve world-class status. Unfortunately, efforts to research measuring the performance of higher education institutions face a major setback compared to other industries due to its complex nature and difficulty in measuring its outputs. Furthermore, a review of literature indicates that research conducted in the education environment mainly focuses on organizational performance rather than work performance. This study is limited to academic staff of colleges of education in Nigeria due to constraints of time and budget. Future studies may be undertaken to ascertain the relationship between media and information literacy skills of academic personnel of colleges of education in other geographical zones of Nigeria, as well as other categories of higher education in Nigeria such as polytechnics, universities, colleges of technologies, etc.

In addition to filling knowledge gaps, this study aims to provide a solution by providing a deeper understanding of current academic online learning and their use of information resources regarding the media and information literacy skills possessed or not possessed by academics in Nigeria to meet the most recent teaching and research demands. This will be done to meet the most recent teaching and research standards. Academics are the primary and most influential users of information resources in higher education; thus, they must be well-versed in emerging information resources and possess the skills necessary to access, process, and evaluate material for their academic works. This is because academics influence the use of information resources by others.

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