The role of information literacy in promoting health and well-being for sustainable development in Nigeria

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Abstract
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the 2030 agenda of the United Nations (UN) which aimed at offering a broad and inclusive framework for ending poverty worldwide. The SDGs comprised of 17 goals and 169 targets. Goal No. 3 of the SDGs is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Considering the importance of health and wellbeing for sustainable development, this paper looked into the role of information literacy in promoting health and well-being which will translate into sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper examined the concepts of information literacy (IL), health and wellbeing and sustainable development and provides an insight into the issue of health and wellbeing and sustainable development. The paper argued that IL is an important tool that enhances health decisions, healthy lifestyles and healthy communities that engages in the three dimensions of the SGDs: social, environment and economy which underpin the UN platform for achieving integrated and indivisible sustainable development. Problems associated with IL also identified and some recommendations advanced.

Keywords: Information literacy, Health and well-being, Sustainable development, Nigeria

Introduction
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nation (UN) General Assembly in September 2015 which replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is the UN platform for achieving ‘integrated and indivisible Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across three dimensions: social, environment and economy. The SDGs came into action in January, 2016 aimed at offering a broad and inclusive framework for ending poverty worldwide in the next 15 years (Osborn, Curtter & Ullah, 2015). The SDGs comprised of 17 goals and 169 targets. Goal No. 3 of the SDGs is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Health and well-being cannot be ignored, especially for development. Health is one of the main driving forces stimulating development. Any development agenda that does not include health care and health delivery system is not development (Olise, 2010). Olise added that child health, maternal health, disease prevention, etc., should be a primary concern in Africa, if the current development strides are to be sustained. It is against this backdrop that this paper discusses the role of information literacy in promoting health and well-being for sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper conceptualizes information literacy, health and well-being and sustainable development; the relationship between health and well-being and sustainable development, barriers affecting IL as well as conclusion and recommendations.

The concept of information literacy (IL)
The concept of IL has been defined and interpreted in various ways by different scholars and organization since its inception in the nineteen seventies. Different terms have been used to refer to IL, these include: information skills, library skills, research skills, study skills, bibliographic instruction, library orientation and information
competency (Grassian, 2017). The term ‘information literacy’ was first used by Zurkowski in 1974, in a proposal to the national communication on libraries and the National Commission on Library and Information Science (NCLIS). In his report, he stated that information literates were people trained to apply information as a resource to their work, especially those who had learned techniques to use information as tools to find solutions to problems at their workplaces (Zurkowski 1974).

According to ALA (2000), information literates are those who have learnt to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information and how to use information, so that others can learn from them. They are the people who are prepared for lifelong learning because they can always find the information for any task or decision at hand. IL is about people’s ability to operate effectively in an information society. It includes awareness of professional ethics, critical thinking, the need for evaluation and organizing of information to the effective use of the same. As derived from the Alexandria Proclamation of 2005, adopted by UNESCO’s Information for All Programme (IFAP), IL is the capacity of people to recognize their information needs; locate and evaluate the quality of information; store and retrieve information; make effective and ethical use of information, and apply information to create and communicate knowledge. These are sets of competencies that empower 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 (UNESCO, 2013). Bundy (2002) in his contribution to the debate advanced that:

Of the responses to the many challenges facing the planet and humankind in the 21st century, none is more important than growing the global community of the informed as rapidly as possible. Whether these challenges are environmental, health, political, democratic, economic or cultural, the one thing they have in common is that their solution can only be advanced by people of goodwill and broad vision. People who recognize their own need for good information, and who have the skills to identify, access, evaluate, synthesize and apply the needed information are thus information literate.

IL refers to the mastery of necessary knowledge of gathering, synthesizing, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating information, and the proper attitudes for information processing with an understanding of the rationale behind using information (Kong, 2014). Once an individual can have a mastery of knowledge gathering, synthesizing, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating information then that person can be said to have the necessary skills to know more about his health and health status and how to take good care of himself and his environment, thereby promoting health and well-being in the society.

The concept of health and well-being
Health is more than the absence of disease; it is a resource that allows people to realize their aspirations, satisfy their needs and to cope with the environment in order to live a long, productive, and fruitful life. In this sense, health enables social, economic and personal development fundamental to well-
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Health is defined by World Health Organization (WHO) (1946) as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Broadly speaking, health is a concern to all people, and is influenced by and as well contributing to policies across a wide range of sectors (WHO, 2012). On the other hand, there is no consensus around a single definition of well-being, but there is general agreement that at minimum, well-being includes the presence of positive emotions and moods (e.g., contentment, happiness), the absence of negative emotions (e.g., depression, anxiety), and satisfaction with life, fulfillment and positive functioning (Kutcher, Wei & Hasbish, 2019). Good living conditions (e.g., housing, employment) are fundamental to well-being (Kapri & Kathpalia, 2019). Well-being generally includes global judgments of life satisfaction and feelings ranging from depression to joy (Kamble & Pathak, 2016).

Well-being is associated with numerous health, job, family, and economically-related benefits (Lyubomirsky, King & Diener, 2005). For example, higher levels of well-being are associated with decreased risk of disease, illness, and injury; better immune functioning; speedier recovery; and increased longevity (Pressman & Cohen, 2005). Individuals with high levels of well-being are more productive at work and are more likely to contribute to their communities (Tov & Diener, 2008). Good health and well-being is a tool for promoting as well as sustaining development in the society. It is a common knowledge that healthy people are productive people. People tend to engaged themselves in economic activities when they are hale and healthy. Thus, there is symbiotic relationship between health & well-being, economic growth and sustainable development.

The concept of sustainable development
The concept of sustainable development has become a term of recurrent use by governments, policy makers, academics, and environmental activists as well as national and international organization. It denotes a process of human development through which resources are used to meet human needs while preserving the quality of natural environment and the objective of which is to meet the needs of the current and future generations. It has been described as a global crusade movement (Nwanwene, 2007) as well as a process rather than an end goal, and this process requires constant evaluation and analysis of the emerging trends in the discussion so as to take the issue of sustainable development to the next level (Amodu, 2003). Sustainable development, simply put, is developing for the present and future, the process of ensuring that the present development is sustained and maintained for the future. The most popular definition of ‘Sustainable Development’ is that offered in the Brundtland Commission’s Report (1987), ‘Our Common Future’ which states, ‘sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. The definition incorporates two aspects; 1) the concept of ‘needs’, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and 2) the idea of limitations imposed on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs (Sands & Peel, 2012).

Operationally in the methodological literature, there seems to be a consensus that sustainable development encompasses at least three dimensions: the social, the economic and the environmental (Oslen, 2006 as cited in Jiang, 2013). Examples of general SD criteria for each of the

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dimensions are: 1) social criteria: poverty alleviation, equity and improved quality of life, 2) economic criteria: financial returns to local entities, a positive balance of payments and technology transfer, 3) environmental criteria: reduction of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and the use of fossil fuels, conservation of local resources, improved health and reduced pressure on local environments (Olhoff, Markandya, HalsHaes & Taylor, 2004).

Sustainable development consists of both substantive and procedural elements. The procedural elements of sustainable development are found in principles 10 and 17 of the Rio Declaration dealing with public participation in decision making, access to information and environmental impact assessment. Thus, information is a key to decision making towards achieving sustainable development. Hence the needs for IL skills to enable people to identify, selects and use relevant and more appropriate information for decisions that will impact on health & well-being and sustainable development.

Relationship between health & well-being and sustainable development
Having defined IL, health and wellbeing and sustainable development, it is imperative to examine the relationship between the three concepts. Health and well-being are important to the development of all countries of the world. This was why UN made it a key goal in its 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Health and well-being are not only viewed as single goal for sustainable development, but are regarded as being essential for achieving all the three pillars of sustainable development (Hill, Buse, Brolan, et al., 2014 as cited in Nunes, Lee & O’Riordan, 2016). Health, well-being and sustainable development are considered to be intrinsically connected with health regarded as precondition indicators, as well as an outcome of successful sustainable development (WHO, 2012). Within the health promotion literature, sustainable development refers to the use of resources, direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional development in ways which ensure that the current development and use of resources do not compromise the health and well-being of future generations (Nunes, Lee & O’Riordan, 2016).

Without ‘good health and well-being for all’, achieving the SDGs will be extremely problematic (Wilkinson & Hulme, 2012). For health and well-being to be achieved and development to be sustainable, it must focus on capacity building, enhancing people’s capacity to participate fully in their society, and this can be achieved through effective use of information which is an indispensable factor for development (Onyeyan & Adesina, 2014). This means that people must be trained and information literate to be able to use information as means to find solutions to all their health problems, help policy makers to make informed decision about health and well-being of the generality of the people (Stansfield, Walsh, Prata, & Evans, 2006).

Health is ensured by caring for oneself and others, by being able to take decisions and have control over one’s life circumstances, and by ensuring that the society one lives in creates conditions that allow the attainment of health by all its members (Dooris, Dowding, Thompson & Wynne, 1998). Consequently, for one to take care of oneself, make informed decision and have control over one’s life circumstances, one needs information, hence the need for information literacy skills. Information literacy is a crucial tool in developing health and wellbeing for all people. There are two distinct areas where the use of information in health provision is of importance (Catts & Lau, 2008).
The first is among health professionals where access to current research and best practice is of importance to the delivery of quality health services. The development of the Cochrane Library (Cochrane Collaboration, 2007), which is a global independent source of evidenced-based health information, is an example of this provision for health professionals.

There is also an academic publishing tradition that aims to ensure the quality of information shared among health professionals and researchers.

Evidence from empirical research suggests that there is a relationship between health and well-being and information literacy. This is evident in Cartts and Lau (2008) who reported that UNESCO, OECD, International Labour Organization (ILO) and World health Organization (WHO) conduct household and school based surveys that collect responses from large numbers of people in many countries. These surveys are designed to establish particular aspects of human behaviour and capacities. For instance the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) surveys is conducted in schools. PISA aims to compare scientific, mathematical and reading capacities and also gathers information about access to information. Likewise, WHO (2006) used household surveys to collect information about people’s health behaviours and UNESCO surveys households to collect information about literacy (LAMP). While these surveys are designed to collect valid information about their primary topic, some items within these surveys can provide evidence of aspects of information literacy.

Thus, access to health-care information has become a key international development issue. Equitable and universal access to health-care information is recognized in the draft of WHO’s (2004) World Report on Knowledge for Better Health as an important part of worldwide strategies to reduce global disparities in health and to achieve the health-related Millennium Development Goals. Grant (2002) has defined health information literacy as ‘the capacity of an individual to obtain, interpret, and understand basic health information and services and the competence to use such information and services in ways which are health enhancing’. This capacity includes the ability to distinguish between information from credible sources such as World Health Organization (WHO) and information from those who manufacture and market claims for products and medical supplies. Information literacy skills are part of a bigger constellation of adult skills and underpin some of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2003). For instance, combating diseases (goal 6) and enhancing employment opportunities (target 16) require that people have the ability to apply information into practice (Catts & Lau, 2008). IL skills are skills that are needed throughout life we are always seeking information to help us reach conclusions, make our choices, and communicate more effectively. IL is the crucial set of skills that enable individuals to benefit from the wealth of knowledge available in a variety of formats such as oral, paper and electronic format (Lau, 2006). The essential point is that transforming information into knowledge requires information literacy skills. As stated in the UNESCO’s World Report “Towards Knowledge Societies” (UNESCO, 2005), information without transformation is only raw data. The use of information requires a mastery of cognitive skills, including critical thinking, and this in turn depends upon the capacity to locate, evaluate and then use...
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On a specific term, IL importance in health and well-being has been outlined by Garner (2006) as follows:

1. It is vital that all actors understand any documents, charts, records, dosages, treatments, etc., to ensure proper care and accurate diagnosis, treatment and instructions.
2. Everyone needs to understand the information needed about their own health.
3. Governments have a large responsibility – for both ideological and financial reasons.
4. Health is increasingly international in scope with migration and refugees and air travel diseases spread as fast as or faster than the information about the diseases.
5. Health and human services are a large and growing part of the economy with more and more potential for inter-sectorial collaboration such as between education, care providers, insurance companies, libraries, publishers and pharmaceutical companies.
6. Within health, there is a long tradition of people helping each other. These traditions of self-help on the one hand and mutual support have become even more pronounced since the advent of the internet.
7. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have a particular impact on the provision of health and human services ranging from e-health and telemedicine and integrated patient care records to patient networks.
8. Health information comes in a variety of forms and formats (photos, text, graphs, CDs, websites, etc.) and, thus, illustrates the multi-faceted nature of information literacy. Information technology is, therefore, a good test site for information literacy and
9. Health is so fundamental to the human condition.

Barriers to information literacy

According to the Patient Information Forum (PiF) in its 2013 report, information is an intervention that impacts health and wellbeing and it contributes to all three aspects of quality: clinical effectiveness, safety and patient experience (PiF, 2013). At the same time, concerns have been expressed that patients may lack either internet access or skills necessary to search, understand, evaluate, and utilize health information. Approximately a third up to one half of the people in developed countries has low health literacy. Individuals at high risk for low health literacy include the elderly, disabled, and individuals with a poverty-level income and low literacy levels (Westlake, Sethares & Davidson, 2013).

Unfortunately, even at the level of our institutions of learning where students are expected to develop their IL competencies, not much has been achieved. There was a demonstration of lack of information literacy competency among undergraduate students which Baro and Keboh (2012) identified as the best way of equipping undergraduates for lifelong learning. Anunobi and Ukwoma (2016) examined the characteristics; content and adequacy of the programmes currently offered by Nigerian universities to determine the type of information literacy being taught. Their study discovered that majority of the universities investigated were yet to consolidate the library literacy programme offered in their universities. Hence, the provision of information literacy content is yet to be realised in Nigerian universities. Challenges associated with IL competencies in Nigeria include lack of awareness of the importance of IL to the...
growth and development of the society, lack of IL policy and lack of standard IL literacy courses for intended library and information professionals in library schools (Baro, 2011 as cited in Anunobi & Ukwoma, 2016).

Conclusion
In the light of the current focus on the relationship between health and well-being and sustainable development, IL is seen as an effective way of promoting health and wellbeing through the promotion of health education and consumer health information within and outside hospital settings. IL, in a variety of clinical and creative schemes, can be widely used as a simple, accessible, and cost-effective way of health education and promotion, enabling individuals to increase control over their health and well-being. IL skills are part of a bigger constellation of adult skills that underpin some of the Millennium Development Goals; for instance, combating diseases (goal 6) and enhancing employment opportunities (target 16) which requires that individuals should have the ability to apply information into practice. By way of recommendation:

1. Across all levels, education should become resource based, with IL as an integral part of learning programmes in all public and private institutions;
2. Library schools and professional associations should join the international network of developing training opportunities, and encourage members to attend such training;
3. Members of the information community, both practitioners and academic, should create awareness of the importance of IL to the growth and development of the society;
4. Information literacy conferences should be organized periodically and should involve professionals from a wide range of backgrounds; and

5. More research is needed particularly to document the value of IL to health and wellbeing and its value to economic development.

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