

**ASSESSMENT OF AREAS OF COVERAGE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH  
IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AT FEDERAL UNIVERSITY  
OF TECHNOLOGY (FUT), MINNA, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The Department of Library and Information Technology like other Departments in Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria requires final year undergraduate students to write and submit research report as part of the requirements for the award of the Bachelor of Technology (Library and Information Technology). This empirical paper focuses on the undergraduate research output (productivity) in line with the content of the research methods and projects write-up as six credit unit course in library school. The variables for this study were those of: subject areas, organizations studied and geographical coverage by the research output. Data was analysed by simple tabulation, frequency counts and percentages. Variables on tables were arranged by rank order from highest to lowest frequency using numeric filing system and to some extent used letter-by-letter alphabetical system of filing in case of having group of variables with equal frequencies. Results showed that a total of 572 completed research outputs were physically examined and analysed for this study. The undergraduate research report/output covered different subject areas within and outside the field of librarianship with majority concentrating on Application of ICT in libraries and user studies. Research reports also covered different states/organisations and majority of researches were on universities followed by academic and public libraries. The study further revealed that organisations studied were covered by different geographical zones and majority were conducted in Niger State. The study recommended that for sustainable library information technology curriculum particularly in the areas of research methods and projects, the library school should endeavour to inject the essential ingredients into these two aspects of curriculum to adequately include subject areas of research, organizations to be studied and wider coverage of geographical areas of the study as well as statistical element.*

**Keywords:** Curriculum, FUT Minna, Nigeria, Library and Information Technology, Undergraduate Research output.



## Introduction

The concept of curriculum can be described as an outline course of instruction or study for a given period of time. The kind of training programme to be offered to trainee will largely depend on the curriculum being designed; the degree of implementation and facilities to be used in implementing the curriculum.

There is no doubt that Bachelors' degree in Librarianship has been a recognisable qualification and as the least professional qualification in Librarianship in Nigeria. This idea can be traced back to 1960s when the second library school was established at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria to offer Bachelors' degree in Library Science. This is as opposed to the first library school that was established at the then University College, Ibadan in 1959/1960 to run a postgraduate programme in Librarianship. All other Library Schools established in universities in Nigeria commenced with undergraduate programme.

Between 1960s to 2015, Saka (2015) maintained that the number of library schools in universities in Nigeria was almost 30 out of which 25 were approved by the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) based on National Universities Commission (NUC) Accreditation status. The library schools domicile under various faculties/schools (Education, Social Science, Science, Information and Communication Technology, etc).

The Department of Library and Information Technology, Federal University of Technology, was established on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2001 in FUT Minna in the North-Central, Nigeria. It is the only university-based library school that was established in Nigeria to run a Bachelors' degree of Technology (B. Tech) in Library and Information Technology. The library school was initially under the School of Science and Science Education and with the splitting of the school into three other schools, the library school was later relocated to the School of Science and Technology Education. For the library school to properly fit into the modern world, it was re-located to the School of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) with other departments like Computer Science, Information and Media Technology and Cyber Security Science.

As at now, LIT Department is domiciled in School of Information and Communication Technology, FUT Minna. As at November 2018, the Department reviewed its curriculum so as to fit into the new School and propose programme called Library and Information Technology. Part of the reviewed curriculum include redesigning of **Research Methods to Research and Statistics** methods in Library and Information Technology, which encompasses the basic statistical concepts which was based on existing Bench Mark Academic Standards (BMAS).

The concept of research is concerned with the investigation, making enquiry, finding out, and discovery of phenomenon. It is the systematic method of enquiry into a given phenomenon so as to discover facts, thereby developing plan of action (Ibrahim, 2013). This is to say that a problem must exist which warrant investigation so as to provide possible solution. Thus Haruna (2010) maintains that research project at any level of LIS programme in particular should consist of five chapters, namely:

Chapter One- Introduction,

Chapter Two- Review of Related Literature

Chapter Three -Research Methodology

Chapter Four - Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

Chapter Five -Conclusion, Summary and Recommendations

Research Methods in Library and Information Technology is a 3-unit course (3 credit hours) which is offered in the first semester of the fourth year of the five-year programme. It is



compulsory course for all undergraduate students. The course synopsis covers the following areas:

*Concept of research methods, Designing and investigation; Research questions; Hypothesis, Significance of research; Scope and Operational definition of terms. Literature search and Review, Citation styles and references, Research Design, Population, Sampling Techniques and Sample size, Research Instruments (Questionnaire, Interview, Observation), Validation and Reliability of Instruments, Method of Data collection, Data Analysis (using variations, statistical tools like frequency counts and simple percentages; mean, mode, standard deviation, chi-square, t-test, correlation coefficient and Regression Analysis) and Writing Research Proposal/Report (FUT Minna, Academic Brief, 2014-2019).*

Undergraduate students in their final year are expected to write and submit to the Department research projects based on an approved topics and shall be under the supervision of lecturers in the Department and to some cases few librarians in the university library also supervises undergraduate research projects. The course code and title is "LIT 529: Project", a 6-unit course which is carried out in the fifth year of the B. Tech LIT programme. Conducting and writing research projects is part of the requirements for the award of B. Tech Library and Information Technology. As a tradition of the library school, final year undergraduate students must present themselves before departmental lecturers and their supervisors for internal defence and external examiner for oral defence/examination for assessment, scoring and moderation of the research works respectively.

Regardless of any level of programme of the study, the essence of any research is to come out with findings and the research findings are expected to be used for national development. Contrary to this ideal situation, the pieces of research reports are usually submitted for the award of certificate and to win an award of scholarship. The role of research in national development is not far from those of economic, social, health status, e.t.c of a nation (Saka, Bida and Majinson, 2015).

A reasonable number of undergraduate researches have been conducted yet subject areas of the research, organisations studied and geographical coverage of undergraduate research output are not well known to researchers and information users, although Ochogwu (2017) maintain that with the paradigm shift from bibliographic, user and to wealth creation, the information profession have been besets with a lot obstacles which include poor researches in the area of entrepreneurial librarianship. This could be attributed to the position maintained by Haruna (2010) that majority of students at all levels encountered difficulties in writing projects, dissertations and theses in a standard format.

This study was set to find out the subject areas of coverage, organisations studied and geographical coverage in the undergraduate research output; thereby proffering possible recommendations in line with the major findings relating to the research questions.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is expected that the outcome of every investigation conducted be properly reported and documented for researchers', users and public consumption. There are essential aspects of the research output which users of these vital documents used to lack. These aspects of research works include: subject areas covered, organizations studied and geographical coverage. This study therefore seeks to ascertain the existence of these aspects in undergraduate research outputs in the above library school.



## Objectives of the Study

The study was designed to achieve the following specific objectives:-

1. To determine subject areas covered by the undergraduate research output.
2. To identify the type of organisations covered/studied by the research output.
3. To determine the geographical areas covered by the research output.

## Review of Related Literature

Nwokocha and Uhegbu (2001) studied the undergraduate research projects of BLS programme of Abia State University, Uturu library school. It was discovered that a total of 266 research projects were submitted to the Library school within a decade and that "Library services with 401(50.04%) top the list of the projects covered by subject areas. The study discovered public library and Imo State as the highest projects covered by the types of libraries studied and geographical coverage respectively. The data on each of the three tables were arranged in rank order.

Goji (2007) compiled an annotated bibliography of undergraduate projects submitted to the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Maiduguri covering the period of 2000 and 2006. From the study, a total of 310 BLS projects were discovered to have been submitted to the Department, though statistical/data analysis could not be ascertained for the study. Still on the same library school, and in order to solve the problem of non-statistical analysis, Saka and Alhassan (2008) conducted a documentary research by consulting the Accession Register in the Department of Library Science, University of Maiduguri. A page-by-page counting of project list was carried out by taking note of the year of submission, geographical distribution, key titles and types of researches conducted. The result showed that out of 355 BLS projects submitted to the Department, 196 (52.2%) was covered by North-east while case study covered 176 (49.58%) of the BLS projects. From the 355 projects, 46(12.96%) were covered by the title "problems, development and prospects of libraries. It was discovered that there was no single BLS project submitted to the Department in the year 2001 due to ASUU strike.

Saka (2008) conducted a documentary research to determine the higher degree theses/dissertations output between 1992 and 2006 as submitted to the Department of Library and Information Science, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria. Paper slips measuring 7cm x 5cm were used to re-arrange the theses/dissertations according to the year of completion, fields of specialization, geographical coverage and types of research adopted in the research reports. The study found that 62 theses/dissertations were produced between 1992 and 2006 out of which 61(98%) were MLS while 1(2%) was PhD Library Science respectively. Between 1992 and 2006, the highest number of theses/dissertations were discovered in 2004 with 13(21%) research output and lowest in 1992 and 1993 with each having 1(2%) respectively. On the field of specialisation, 31(50%) being the highest was discovered from the Information Science and lowest from Communication Science with 4 (6%) research output. Productivity of research output by geographical areas in rank order showed that research works on Nigeria in general was the highest with 30 (48%) output and lowest from Abuja (FCT) Adamawa, Bauchi, Kano, Kebbi, Kogi, Niger, Ogun, Rivers. South West Nigeria and Sudan with each having 1(1.6%) research output. Survey research accounted for 56(90%) while case study accounted for 6(10%) research output.

An investigation was conducted by Saka, Abbas and Salman (2017) to determine the management of undergraduate and postgraduate research output in university libraries in Nairobi (Kenya) and Abuja (Nigeria). The study focused on the coverage of the research work by programmes; format of submission of research work and methods of processing and preservation. Challenges to effective management of research output in the university libraries were also investigated. The result showed that Bachelors' and Masters



Degrees theses were mostly submitted to and acquired by the university libraries. Processing and preservation of these documents were through shelving. Format of submission was in hard and softcopies. Space was the major constraint to the management of research output in the university libraries in Kenya and Nigeria.

The essence of any research is to begin where the previous research (es) end hence the present study covers completed research projects submitted to the Department of Library and Information Technology, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria between 2008 and 2017.

### Research Methodology

Documentary sources mainly the physical projects submitted to the Department were gathered and consulted by taking cognisance of the variables of the study. The instruments used for data collection were the physical projects and list submitted to the Department between 2008 and 2017 respectively. Titles of the projects were the sources of information. Data were analysed by tabulation into frequency counts and percentages based on the research questions. Obviously, data on each table were arranged by rank order. In situation where two or more variables have equal frequency (ies), alphabetization or alphabetical order was used. In this case, letter –by-letter arrangement was adopted as used by Uhegbu (2007) who maintained that records can be filed using alphabetical, subject and geographical filing system respectively.

### Findings and Discussion

A total of 572 copies of the research projects submitted to FUT, Minna Library School were physically seen and analysed; thus complimenting them with the list of the submitted copies. In Tables 1 and 2, 572 projects and different organisations were discovered from the study, while in Table 3, there was an increase of one (1) frequency resulting from adopting two states or merging one geo-political zone with a state in a study. This account for a total of 573 frequencies as against 572 copies of projects submitted to the Department between 2008 and 2017 respectively.

**Table 1: Subject areas covered**

Rank Order	Subject Coverage	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Application of ICT in Libraries	106	18.53
2.	User Studies	64	11.18
3.	Information Resources	26	4.54
4.	Use of Information Resources	28	4.89
5.	Library and Information Services	25	4.37
6.	Preservation and Conservation	20	3.49
7.	Collection Development	20	3.49
8.	Personnel Development/Training	18	3.49
9.	Application of ICT in Institutions of Higher Learning	17	3.97
10.	Information Retrieval Tools	16	2.79
11.	Information Literacy	13	2.27
12.	Archives	12	2.09
13.	Application of ICT in Business	11	2.09
14.	Application of ICT in Manufacturing Industries	10	1.74



15.	Application of ICT in Mass Media	10	1.74
16.	Information Accessibility and Retrieval	10	1.74
17.	Application of ICT in Health Sector	09	1.57
18.	Application of ICT in Banks	08	1.39
19.	Staff Attitude	08	1.39
20.	Application of ICT in Job Performance	06	1.04
21.	Application of ICT in Public Services	06	1.04
22.	Copyright	06	1.04
23.	Digital/Virtual Libraries	06	1.04
24.	Public Relations in Libraries	06	1.04
25.	Resources Sharing	06	1.04
26.	Theft and Mutilation	06	1.04
27.	Database Management system	05	0.87
28.	Resources Management	05	0.87
29.	Personnel Management in Libraries	05	0.87
30.	Records Management and Use	05	0.87
31.	School Libraries	05	0.87
32.	ICT on Course Registration/Result Compilation	04	0.69
33.	ICT in Information Management	04	0.69
34.	Job Satisfaction /Performance	04	0.69
35.	Personnel Management/ Information Management	04	0.69
36.	Awareness and Use of Information Resources	03	0.52
37.	Budgeting/Funding Libraries	03	0.52
38.	Ethics of Research	03	0.52
39.	Information Resource Centre	03	0.52
40.	Leadership and Job Performance	03	0.52
41.	Public Libraries	03	0.52
42.	Reading Habits	03	0.52
43.	Access and Security	02	0.34
44.	Availability and Services	02	0.34
45.	Library and Education Development	02	0.34
46.	Library Automation	02	0.34
47.	Public Library in Adult Education	02	0.34
48.	Academic Libraries	01	0.17
49.	Application of ICT in Record Management	01	0.17
50.	Automated Bibliography	01	0.17
51.	Book Trade	01	0.17



52.	Duty Roster in Libraries	01	0.17
53.	Education Resource Centre	01	0.17
54.	Environment and Staff Attitude	01	0.17
55.	ICT in Archives	01	0.17
56.	ICT in Democracy	01	0.17
57.	ICT in Insurance Corporation	01	0.17
58.	ICT in Road Safety	01	0.17
59.	ICT in Security Matters	01	0.17
60.	Library Automation Software	01	0.17
61.	Library Building and Location	01	0.17
62.	Personnel Development and Job Performance	01	0.17
63.	Problems and Prospects of Libraries	01	0.17
64.	Security Management in Libraries	01	0.17
65.	Special Libraries	01	0.17
66.	Staff Attitude and Academic Profile	01	0.17
67.	Traditional/E-banking	01	0.17
68.	Traditional/Virtual Libraries	01	0.19
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 showed that application of ICT in various libraries and user studies were investigated more than other 66 subject areas covered. A total of 106 (18.53%) and 64 (11.18%) of the total research areas investigated were from application of ICT in various libraries and user studies respectively. There was a gap between the first-two highest studied areas and the next two studied subject areas and they were those of information resources and use of information resources having 28(4.89%) of the total project output. It was evident that with the availability and organisation of information resources, there is the room for their utilization by patrons and services provision for patrons respectively. The least areas of subject coverage among the research output were from S/No 48-68 and were 21 in number arranged in alphabetical order using letter-to-letter filing.

Academic libraries are those libraries established in institutions of higher learning such as colleges of education, agriculture, polytechnics, monotechnics as well as universities. ICTs are now used in the management of records and bibliographies are equally automated, books published are usually on sale through trade bibliography. For effective and quality performance, staff are allocated duties on daily or weekly basis. There are centres where educational information, learning and training takes place. The output or productivity level of library staff depend on the nature of environment. Archival materials are now managed through the application of ICT. ICTs are used in democracy (election results); checking vehicles; and used in securing the library collection and properties.

Library software are now developed in the retrospective conversion exercise. The location of library is usually a function of users' patronage. Library staff undergo trainings to enable them contribute to the library development through efficient job performance. Modern security devices such as CCTV & RFID are used to manage library collection.

Libraries have a lot of problems, though, there are prospects with the 21<sup>st</sup> century innovations in libraries and information centres. Special libraries exist within ministries, parastatals,



research institutes and are usually small in nature with specialised information services. Attitude of library staff could be positive or negative and their academic profile may include: academic qualifications, publications, etc. electronic banking services are offered side-by-side with the traditional forms and this applies to the library services provision.

**Table 2: Types of Organisations Studied**

Rank Order	Organisation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Universities	110	19.23
2.	Academic Libraries	46	8.04
3.	Public Libraries	40	6.99
4.	Post-Primary Institutions	33	5.76
5.	Colleges of Education	30	5.24
6.	Tertiary Institutions/Higher Learning	24	4.20
7.	Banks	21	3.50
8.	Boards/Parastatals	19	3.32
9.	Media Houses	16	2.80
10.	Hospitals	14	2.45
11.	Local Government Areas	16	2.55
12.	Polytechnics	11	1.92
13.	Banks	11	1.92
14.	Oil Companies	09	1.57
15.	Stores/Enterprises	09	1.57
16.	National Archives	07	1.27
17.	Special Libraries	08	1.27
18.	National Library of Nigeria	06	1.04
19.	Federal Information Resources Centre	04	0.69
20.	State/National Assembly	04	0.69
21.	AfriHub	03	0.52
22.	Bookshops	03	0.52
23.	National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA)	03	0.52
24.	National Institute for Policy and Strategy Studies (NIPSS)	03	0.52
25.	Public/Corporate Organisations	03	0.52
26.	British Council	02	0.34
27.	Emirate Council	02	0.34
28.	Federal Road Safety Commission	02	0.34
29.	Insurance Companies	02	0.34
30.	Manufacturing/Industries Service Sector	02	0.34
31.	Ministries	02	0.34
32.	National Virtual Library of Nigeria	02	0.34
33.	NICOMSAT	02	0.34
34.	Federal Institute of Industrial Research Oshodi (FIIRO)	01	0.17



35.	News Agency of Nigeria	01	0.17
36.	Nigerian Institute for Freshwater Fisheries Research	01	0.17
37.	Presidency	01	0.17
38.	Reading Rooms	01	0.17
39.	Quranic Schools	01	0.17
40.	Security Organisations	01	0.17
41.	Training and Doctrine Commands	01	0.17
42.	WAEC	01	0.17
43.	Import Export	01	0.17
44.	Court	01	0.17
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>100</b>

#### NICOMSAT – Nigeria Communication Satellite

Table 2 showed the data analysis by various organisations covered by the B. Tech LIT projects. From the analysis, 110 (19.23%) of the projects studied university libraries, computer centres, departments, management information systems, records management, etc. It is not surprising as the Library School is located within a university system. This was by far followed by academic and public libraries with 46(8.04%) and 35(6.66%) respectively. The lowest number of projects was eleven (11) in number and covered: security organisations, reading rooms, Institute for Freshwater Fishery Research, News Agency of Nigeria, Training and Doctrine Command, Quranic Schools, Federal Institute Industrial Research, Oshodi; Presidency and West Africa Examinations Council respectively. Each of these organisations was represented by 1(0.17%) respectively.

**Table 3: Geographical Coverage of the Research Output**

Rank Order	State/Geographical Zone	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Niger State	409	71.38
2.	Kaduna State	52	9.08
3.	Abuja FCT	51	8.90
4.	Nigeria	34	5.93
5.	Kogi State	10	1.75
6.	Kwara State	06	1.05
7.	North-Central, Nigeria	06	1.05
8.	Benue State	05	0.87
9.	Kano State	05	0.87
10.	Delta State	04	0.69
11.	Enugu State	04	0.69
12.	Plateau State	04	0.69
13.	River State	04	0.69
14.	Imo State	03	0.52
15.	Ondo State	03	0.52
16.	Borno State	02	0.34
17.	Edo State	02	0.34
18.	Gombe State	02	0.34
19.	Lagos State	02	0.34
20.	Oyo State	02	0.34
21.	Adamawa State	01	0.17



22.	Ebonyi State	01	0.17
23.	Enugu/Benue	01	0.17
24.	Niger/Abia State	01	0.17
25.	Niger, Plateau/Lagos	01	0.17
26.	Northern Nigeria	01	0.17
27.	Osun State	01	0.17
28.	Sokoto State	01	0.17
29.	South South Nigeria	01	0.17
30.	South West/South Eastern Nigeria	01	0.17
31.	Zamfara State	01	0.17
32.	Nassarawa State	01	0.17
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 above has shown the frequency of 573 as against the 572 research project/output. The increase of 1 frequency could emanate from either Enugu/Benue, Niger/Abia State, Niger/Plateau/Lagos, Northern Nigeria, South -South Nigeria and South Eastern Nigeria with each having 1(0.17%) respectively. Out of the 573 frequency, 409(71.38%) were research projects conducted in Niger State either within local government areas, ministries, academic libraries, universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics, computer centre etc. The highest frequency from Niger State can be attributed to the fact that the library school is located in FUT Minna in Niger State and that it is easy to conduct research within the state where library school is situated.

### Discussion

Three research questions guided the study. Research questions sought to discover the subject areas covered by the undergraduate research output, organisations studied and geographical coverage.

Results showed that the application of ICT in various libraries were the major area with the highest number of research output. ICT is the current and modern trend that has penetrated all aspects of human life including Librarianship and library services in particular. Libraries are now shifting from their traditional method to the ICT-based services: User studies was the second after ICT in libraries as the behaviour of library users in terms of information need, accessibility use, etc might be connected to the use of ICT. Above all, libraries do not exist in vacuum, they exist to serve users. This finding is contrary to the findings of Saka and Alhassan (2008) and Saka(2008) respectively. The former co-researchers discovered problems, developments and prospects of libraries as the title with the highest number of projects for the seven years. The researcher discovered Information Science as the field of specialisation with the highest number of postgraduate research output in the Department of Library and Information Science, Bayero University Kano.

The research question two was answered by analysing data in respect of the various organisations being studied. The result showed that 197(37.24%) of the research output studied universities in terms of library and non – library units. This is not surprising as the library school is located within the university system and that students might be interested in conducting researches in various fields within the university system. This finding is not in conformity with that of Nwokocho and Uhegbedu (2001), Saka and Alhassan (2008) and Saka (2008) respectively. Nwokocho and Uhegbu (2001) discovered library as the organisation with the highest number of BLS projects in Abia State University Library School. The study conducted by Saka and Alhassan (2008) and Saka (2008) does not cover the aspect of various organisations being studied.



On the geographical coverage of the research output, the study discovered "Niger State" as the State with the highest number of research output. This might be connected with the fact that FUT Minna where the library school is located is in Niger State by which undergraduate students might consider the proximity of conducting their researches. This finding is contrary to those of Nwokocha and Uhegbu (2001), Saka (2008) and Saka and Alhassan (2008) respectively. Nwokocha and Uhegbu (2001) discovered Imo State as the State with the highest number of BLS projects, Saka (2008) found "Nigeria" as the area with the highest number of postgraduate research output, while Saka and Alhassan (2008) found "North Eastern Nigeria" as the region with the highest number of BLS projects in the Department of Library Science, University of Maiduguri respectively

Findings from the three research questions were contrary to the findings of Saka, Abbas and Salman (2017). The present study found that acquisition of the completed research works were mostly on Bachelors' and Masters degrees, while submission of the completed works were both in hard and softcopies. Space was the major constraint associated with the management of undergraduate and postgraduate research works submitted to the university libraries in Nairobi (Kenya) and FCT, Abuja (Nigeria) respectively.

### Conclusion

The three research questions were answered by data analysis and revealed "application of ICT in libraries, universities and Niger State" as the aspects that attracted highest number of undergraduate research output in the Department of Library and Information Technology, Federal University of Technology, Minna. The implication of the research output is that the information needs of users in university library might not be met as users may be confined to ICT application in libraries, universities and Niger State which were the major aspects of the undergraduate research output in the library school between 2008 and 2017.

### Recommendations

Based on the major findings, the study recommends that:-

1. The lecturers teaching research methods in conjunction with the undergraduate project co-ordinators in the library school of FUT Minna should create awareness in the minds of 400level students by giving them orientation and inject different areas of researches which might include but not limited to the field of ICT, knowledge management, indigenous knowledge, social media and other current trends
2. The Department of Library and Information Technology, FUT Minna should also inject various organisations into research methods such as exposing 400level students to various organisations for the conduct of research which might include but not limited to research institutes, interdisciplinary researches e.g climate change and libraries, e.t.c. These areas can be well articulated in most cases during the SIWES programme in the fourth year of undergraduate programme.

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