IMPACT OF LAW STUDENTS' PROFILES ON THE UTILIZATION OF INFORMATION SERVICES AT THE NIGERIAN LAW SCHOOL LIBRARY

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Abstract

This study examined profiles of law student's vis-à-vis their utilization of information services provided at four campuses of the Nigerian Law School. Four research questions with one hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. The correlation survey design was adopted in carrying out the study. A sample size of 450 was drawn from a total population of 4,500 across the four campuses of the Nigerian Law School. Observation checklist and questionnaire were the instruments used for data collection. Frequencies, percentages, Pearson correlation statistics, multiple regressions statistics were used for analysis of the research questions and testing of the hypothesis. Result of the analysis on one hand revealed that there is significant relationship between law students' age and extent of their utilization of information services. The study further revealed there is no significant relationship between the profiles of law students and their utilization of information services. The study recommended among other things that there should be equal provision of information services in all the campuses of the Nigerian Law School. Concerted efforts should be made by the library management to provide proper library guides within the library to facilitate effective and efficient utilization of information services by the law students.

Keywords: Law Students Profiles, Information Service Utilization, Law Libraries, Nigerian Law School.

Introduction

The library is regarded as a storehouse of knowledge where information resources in both print and electronic format are systematically organized. These information resources are carefully selected, acquired and systematically organized to cater for the education, information and recreation needs of the end user. Kayoma and Okotie (2010) describe the academic library as the symbolic heart and nerve centre of the intellectual system of any institution especially academic institutions. Anyaegbu (2016) further explained that all the teaching, learning and research going on in the academic library revolves around the library collection. The contribution of libraries to the intellectual development of individuals in the society cannot be over emphasized. Fadekemi and Adeolu (2009 posits that the main purpose of any academic library is to support the institution in effective learning, teaching and research in ways consistent with, and supportive of the institution's missions and goals.

The law library as a type of special library is peculiar in nature as well as in the services it provides. A greater percentage of its content is made up of quick reference sources such as statutes and law reports. It is a common knowledge that a good lawyer is not the one who memorizes all the law but the one who knows where and how to find the law with relative ease whenever the need arises. Thus speed matched with accuracy is the essence of law library services. Dada (2011) observed that the indispensability of law library to the study and practice of law has been universally acknowledged. Gilbert (1908) had opined that there is no library of whatever kind, which so directly pertains to the interest, which it is designed to serve as the law library. This assertion points to the fact that law students/legal practitioners and law libraries are like Siamese twins that are inseparable.

The law school library which is an integral part of the law school system has as its core function; the

provision of good services in quality and quantity to ensure that users are provided with appropriate and up-to-date information services. The library should provide services that are reasonably up-to-date and of acceptable standard to support the Nigerian law school programme.

The concept of service is defined by Robert (1992) as the supplying or supplier of utilities, commodities, or other facilities that meet a public need. Service is a kind of economic activity that is intangible, not stored and does not result in ownership. Inazu (2009) define library services as duties rendered to patrons or attention given to a patron by the manager of a library. According to her, the service may seem intangible, it is an activity aimed at solving or resolving a library patron's need or request. It involves interaction between two or more persons and that is why it is an activity. Services provided by academic law libraries include traditional ones like loan transactions, reading facilities within the library, ancillary services such as binding and photocopying, current awareness services (such as selective dissemination of information), indexing and abstracting services, maintenance of stock-monographic and serials, newspaper clippings and vertical file maintenance. In the context of this study, information service could be defined as the organized collection, exploitation, dissemination and preservation of legal information for the benefit of law students at the Nigerian law school.

Library use is very crucial and important in any special and academic law library because they are established among other things to provide intellectual support for research, teaching and learning. Library use according to Arua and Chikezie (2006) is defined as perusing the stock (browsing), asking for assistance from library staff, actually finding information of value, taking out a book in the library, studying one's own materials in the library, coming into the library and so on. He is of the view that library use is not restricted to the above listed activities but rather a combination of any or all of these and perhaps several others.

A prerequisite for developing personalized services is to rely on user profile representing user's information needs. In this study, student profiles such as age; gender; marital status; class of degree and educational qualification of law students at the Nigerian law schools were examined as a correlate to their utilization of information services at the Nigerian Law school libraries. The aim is to enable the researcher ascertain whether these factors influence their utilization of information services or not.

The Nigerian Law School was established in 1962 by the Federal Government of Nigeria vide the *Legal Education Act 1962* and the *Legal Practitioners Act 1962,* which later superseded by *Legal Education (Consolidation, etc) (Cap. 206) Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990* and the *Legal Practitioners Act (Cap. 207) Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990* (Jegede, 2003). This provided the legal framework for legal education and professional practice in Nigeria. The Nigerian Law School was established to train graduate lawyers from the universities (both in Nigeria and from overseas), the practical aspect of legal education.

Problem Statement

The Nigerian Law School has experienced continuous increase in enrolment of students on yearly basis since its inception in 1963. This necessitated the decentralization of the school into six campuses with the attendant challenges of providing the necessary infrastructural facilities including the library, to cater for the information and research needs of the students, academic, administrative and technical staff in all the campuses. Effective utilization of information services in any library is a function of availability and organization. It is therefore expected that information services in the libraries of the Nigerian Law Schools are well organized to facilitate effective utilization in meeting

the academic requirements of the students who are of various educational and cultural backgrounds. However, constant complaints received at the reference desk and observation at the library headquarters, of difficulties encountered by both the students and lecturers in utilizing information services in the library points to the fact that there may be problems in the utilization of these services based probably on their different profile. It is against this background that the researcher sought to investigate the impact of law student's profiles on utilization of information services in the Nigerian Law School libraries.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between law students' profiles and their utilization of information services. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the profiles of students of the Nigerian Law School;
2. ascertain the extent of availability of information services to law students at the Nigerian Law School libraries;
3. determine the extent of utilization of information services in Nigerian Law School libraries;
4. establish the relationship between law students' profiles and utilization of information services.
5. recommend strategies for effective and efficient utilization of information services in the Nigerian Law School libraries.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. what are the profiles of students in the Nigerian Law Schools?
2. what information services are available to students at the Nigerian Law School libraries?
3. what is the extent of utilization of available information services at the Nigerian Law School libraries?
4. what is the relationship between the law students' profiles and level of utilization of information services at Nigerian Law School libraries?
5. What strategies could be adopted to enhance effective and efficient utilization of information services by students at the Nigerian Law School libraries?

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the mean responses of law students based on their profiles and extent of utilization of information services in Nigerian Law School libraries.

Literature Review

A number of studies have been carried out by researchers on the utilization of information services in libraries aimed at understanding why users utilize them. Whitmire's (2002) examined the relation between library resources and services and students' educational performance through multiple regression analysis. In this study, data was collected using the College Student Experience Questionnaire (CSEQ) and the National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES). Three sets of independent variables examined in this study were background characteristic variable, such as gender; race and age. The second was college experience variables- grade-point average; class year; enrollment status; student-faculty interactions; active learning activities; hours spent studying per week. The third variable was academic library variables which include resources and services. The analysis showed that library resources and services had almost no influence over undergraduates' use of library or their self-reported gains in critical thinking skills.

Another study was conducted by Eguavoen (2011) on the 'Use of Reference Sources in Adeola Odutola Law Library, University of Ibadan' by law students. This study sought to determine the extent to which each

category of library user makes use of reference services. A questionnaire titled *Scale on the Use of Reference Sources (SURS)* was used to elicit information from the respondents. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Two of the hypotheses were rejected while one was accepted. Hypotheses one which stated that there is no significant difference in the level of usage of reference sources between male and female library users in Adeola Odutola Law Library was accepted. The study revealed that male and female library users make use of reference services in the same manner while the post graduate students make use of more reference sources than the undergraduate students. The study recommends that regular orientations should be organized for undergraduate student users of the library. It further recommends that improvement should be made on the Internet connectivity of the library.

Popoola (2008) in a study on the use of information resources and its effect on the research output of social scientists in the Nigerian universities, established that use of information services have effect on the research output of social scientists in the first and second generation universities in Nigeria. In this study, the sample from the population was made up of 315 respondents. Questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. Data collected was analyzed with the use of mean statistics. The study recommended among other things that the use of electronic information services should be encouraged for social scientists in support of their research activities. In another study, Portman and Roush (2004) studied the effects of library instruction on students' library skill development in New Zealand. This study was aimed at measuring the influence of library training and orientation session on college students' information usage and skill development. The research design was a survey. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data analysis from the 300 respondents in New Zealand revealed a statistically significant increase in students' library use. The study established that statistically, there is no significant increase in the information skill development of the students.

From the literature review, some authors suggest that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) will enhance the capacity and service delivery in law libraries. The application of the new technology into law library services will to a large extent improve law library services in Nigeria. Services offered in academic law library according to the review include inter library loan, reference, circulation, Current Awareness Services (CAS), user education and help from library staff in the searching of online data bases,.

Methodology

Correlation survey research design was adopted for this study. The population comprised 4,500 students from the four campuses of the Nigerian law school located in the four geo-political zones of Nigeria. Out of this number, 450 were selected as sample. Observation checklist and questionnaire were the instruments used for data collection. Frequencies, percentages, Pearson correlation statistics and multiple Regressions statistics were used for analysis of the research questions and testing of the hypothesis. The questionnaires were personally administered to the respondents in an interval of one month until the desired number was achieved.

Results and Discussion of Findings

The results of the study presented below gave the researcher an insight into the profiles of the law students and the extent of information service availability, utilization and the relationship between their profiles and these services.

Research Question 1: What are the profiles of students in the Nigerian Law Schools?

Table 1: Mean ratings of respondents based on Profiles of law students at the Nigerian Law School. N=409

S/N	Profiles	Frequency	Percentage
	Age		
	20-25 years	107	26.2
	26-30 years	131	32.0
	31-35 years	74	18.1
	36-40 years	48	11.7
	41 and above	49	12.0
	Total	**409**	**100.0**
	Sex		
	Male	218	53.3
	Female	191	46.7
	Total	**409**	**100.0**
	Marital Status		
	Single	242	59.2
	Married	149	36.4
	Widow	15	3.7
	Divorce	3	.7
	Total	**409**	**100.0**
	Educational Qualifications		
	LL.B	332	81.2
	B.Sc	40	9.8
	LL.M	23	5.6
	M.A/M.SC/Mphil	2	.5
	PhD	12	2.9
	Total	**409**	**100.0**
	Class of Degree		
	1st class	38	9.3
	2nd class (upper)	133	32.5
	2nd class (lower)	166	40.6
	3rd class	50	12.2
	Pass	22	5.4
	Total	**409**	**100.0**

Results presented in Table 1 indicate the various attributes that constitute the profiles of law students in Nigerian Law School. These were identified as age, sex, marital status, educational qualifications and class of degrees. With regards to their ages, those within the age of 26-30 brackets form the bulk of respondents. This was followed closely by those in the age range of 20-25years. On their gender (sex), the male dominate the number of total respondents while the unmarried constitute the greater percentage of the respondents. Further analysis of the result shows that their educational qualification comprised more of those with LL.B degree. Even within this group, those with second class (lower) division are more in number. Going by this result, law students within the age bracket of 20-30 years may likely utilize the library services more than any other age group. Similarly, the male folk may likely utilize the available information services more than their female counterpart. The import of this is that age and gender profiles are factors that have significant relationship with academic attainment in Nigerian Law School.

Research Question 2: What information services are available to Nigerian Law School students?

Table 2: Observation Checklist of Information Services available in Nigerian Law School Libraries.

S/N	Services	School Location								TOTAL		
		Abuja		Enugu		Lagos		Kano				
		A	**NA**	**A**	**NA**	**A**	**NA**	**A**	**NA**	**A**	**NA**	
1	Current Awareness Services	**v**			**v**	**v**		**v**		**75%**	**25%**	A
2	Selective Dissemination of Information	**v**		**v**			**v**	**v**		**75%**	**25%**	A
3	Reference & Information Service	**v**		**v**		**v**		**v**		**100%**	**0%**	A
4	Internet services	**v**		**v**		**v**			**v**	**75%**	**25%**	A
5	Circulation/Lending	**v**		**v**		**v**		**v**		**100%**	**0%**	A
6	Inter-library cooperation		**v**	**v**		**v**		**v**		**100%**	**0%**	A
7	Fax and e-mail service	**v**		**v**			**v**		**v**	**25%**	**75%**	NA
8	Library orientation	**v**		**v**		**v**		**v**		**`100%**	**0%**	A
9	Indexing & Abstracting Services	**v**		**v**		**v**		**v**		**100%**	**0%**	A
10	Library Guide	**v**		**v**		**v**			**v**	**75%**	**25%**	A
	Total%	**90%**	**10%**	**90%**	**10%**	**80%**	**20%**	**70%**	**30%**			
	Decision	A		A		A		A				

NOTE: NA= NOT AVAILABLE: A=AVAILABLESE: R= REMARK

The result presented in table 2 shows that out of ten information services listed in the table, a total of 9 (90%) were available at Abuja campus while 1(10%), inter-library cooperation was not available. At the Enugu campus library, 9(90%) of information services were available while, 1(10%), Current Awareness Service was not available.

At the Lagos campus library, 8(80%) of the information services were available while, 2(20%), Selective Dissemination of Information, Fax & e-mail services were not available. In Kano campus library, 7(70%) of information services were available while, 3(30%) Internet, Fax and e-mail as well as library guide information services were not available.

The result revealed that out of the 10 information services listed, an aggregate of nine (9) were available with one (1) not available. Although, the focus of this study is on utilization, availability of information services is *sine qua non* to utilization because what is not available cannot be utilized. Thus from the findings, it may be right to say that there is high proportion of availability of information services at the

Nigerian law school libraries. Only a few of the listed information services were not available. It can also be seen that availability of information services is not evenly distributed in all the campuses of the Nigerian Law school libraries.

Research Question 3: What is the extent of utilization of available information services at the Nigerian Law school libraries?

Table 3: Mean ratings of responses on the extent of utilization of available Information services at the Nigerian Law schools. N=409

	Information Resources	School Abuja		Enugu		Lagos		Kano		Overall			
		$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	R	D
1	Circulation	3.44	.72	3.48	.63	3.41	.76	3.43	.72	3.44	.71	1ST	SU
2	Current Awareness services	3.33	.86	3.25	.80	3.37	.89	3.33	.77	3.33	.84	2nd	SU
3	Reference service s	3.32	.84	3.36	.73	3.30	.87	3.40	.76	3.33	.82	3rd	SU
4	internet services	3.24	1.00	3.29	1.06	3.19	1.00	3.38	.96	3.26	1.00	4th	SU
5	Selective Dissemination	3.24	.91	3.32	.83	3.23	.94	3.18	.91	3.24	.90	5th	SU
6	Indexing & Abstracting Service	3.10	.81	3.01	.89	3.14	.80	2.98	.81	3.08	.82	6th	SU
7	Library Guide	2.85	1.18	2.82	1.19	2.77	1.16	2.90	1.20	2.83	1.17	7th	SU
8	Inter-library cooperation	2.38	1.25	2.56	1.09	2.55	1.06	2.57	1.10	2.48	1.15	8th	SU
9	library orientation	2.40	1.11	2.53	1.12	2.55	1.01	2.33	1.26	2.45	1.11	9th	RU
10	Fax and e-mail services	1.82	1.04	2.23	1.03	2.48	1.05	2.23	1.08	2.13	1.08	10th	RU
	Grand Total	**2.91**	**.54**	**2.99**	**.43**	**3.00**	**.37**	**2.97**	**.45**				

NOTE: AU-Always Utilized; SU- Sometimes Utilized; RU- Rarely Utilized, NU –Not Utilized, $\bar{x}$=mean SD-Standard Deviation, D- Decision.

Table 3 shows the mean rating of the respondents on the extent of utilization of available information services at the Nigerian Law School libraries. The result reveals that items 1-8 information services in the library that are sometimes utilized. These include Circulation ($\bar{x}$=3.44), Current Awareness Service ($\bar{x}$=3.33), reference services ($\bar{x}$=3.33), Internet services ($\bar{x}$=3.26), Selective Dissemination of information ($\bar{x}$=3.24), indexing & abstracting services ($\bar{x}$=3.08) and Library Guide ($\bar{x}$=2.83); while item 9-10 were rarely utilized. The result also shows that circulation services were not always utilized like other services. The result also revealed that other information services listed in table 3 receive patronage sometimes. However library orientation, Fax and e-mail services were rarely utilized. The non-utilization of these two services is attributed to the fact that library orientation is usually conducted once at the beginning of each academic session. Whereas Fax and e-mail services are not allowed by the library authority because Internet access at the law school library is purely for academic purposes. Library orientation is a service provided by the law school library about the first or second week of a new academic session. Expectedly, the possibility of every student partaking in it is not certain as many of the students may not have either been admitted or registered by then. Admission exercise at the Nigerian Law School usually last for about two months. Invariably this is not good for the system. Library orientation enhances significant increase in usage of the library by students as posited by Portman and Roush (2004) in their assessment of effects of library instructions on students' library skill development. To enhance effective utilization of available information services in these libraries, the researcher is of the view that orientation should be a continuous exercise by the library authority. The reference and information services section of the libraries can be used for this purpose.

Research Question 4: What is the extent of relationship among law student's profiles and their utilization of information services,

Table 4: Pearson Correlation between students' profiles and their utilization of information services

		Level of utilization of information services	Age range	Sex	Class of Degree	Educational qualification	Marital status
Pearson Correlation	level of utilization of information services	1.000	.025	-.033	-.055	-.027	-.044
	age range	.025	1.000	-.023	.301	.020	.389
	Sex	-.033	-.023	1.000	.024	-.014	-.071
	class of Degree	-.055	.301	.024	1.000	-.208	.078
	educational qualification	-.027	.020	-.014	-.208	1.000	.218
	marital status	-.044	.389	-.071	.078	.218	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	level of utilization of information services	.	.306	.251	.136	.295	.188
	age range	.306	.	.324	.000	.343	.000
	Sex	.251	.324	.	.317	.391	.075
	class of Degree	.136	.000	.317	.	.000	.058
	educational qualification	.295	.343	.391	.000	.	.000
	marital status	.188	.000	.075	.058	.000	.
N	level of utilization of information services	409	409	409	409	409	409
	age range	409	409	409	409	409	409
	Sex	409	409	409	409	409	409
	class of Degree	409	409	409	409	409	409
	educational qualification	409	409	409	409	409	409
	marital status	409	409	409	409	409	409

Table 4 presents the correlation between relationship of law students' profile and their utilization of information services at the Nigerian Law School libraries. The statistics was tested at 0.05 level of significance. A closer look at the table will reveal that all the variables, age, sex, class of degree, educational qualification and marital status were not significant at ($P<0.05$). This implies statistically that there is no significant correlation between age, sex, class of degree, educational qualification, marital status and utilization of information services of law students at the Nigerian Law Schools.

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between mean responses of law students based on their profile and extent of utilization of information services in Nigerian Law School libraries.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis showing law students' profiles and extent of relationship in their utilization of information services

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.646	.126		13.069	.000
age	-.038	.021	-.099	-1.754	.080
Sex	-.054	.050	-.054	-1.092	.276
class of Degree	.012	.027	.024	.445	.657
educational qualification	-.010	.031	-.017	-.330	.742
marital status	.005	.046	.006	.108	.914

Dependent Variable: level of utilization of information services

Table 5 shows the combined profile of law students and their influence on utilization of information services provided. The result of the data analysis revealed that the five variables: age, sex, class of degree, educational qualification and marital status were not statistically significant: age (B-.099,p>.080), sex (B=--.054, p>.276). Class of Degree (B=-.024, p>.657). Educational qualification (B=--.017, p>.742. Marital status (B=-.006, p>.914).Since the test on these variables were not significant, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between mean responses of law students based on their profiles and extent of utilization of information services in Nigerian Law School libraries was accepted.This can be seen from the multiple regression analysis test carried out to test the hypothesis in Table 5.

Strategies to Enhance Utilization of Information Services in Nigeria Law School Libraries

To enhance effective and efficient utilization of information services of the law school libraries, certain measures should be taken. Omolayole (2011) suggested that the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies library should lead other law libraries, including the Nigerian Law School in this regard. According to her, the application of technology in law library service delivery would enhance their services. She recommends that digitization of rare materials must commence to avoid irreparable damage, and the public catalogue of the library should be converted to electronic format so that its varied clientele could be served better. She observed that application of information and communication technology to law libraries services is imperative as it open a whole new vista of opportunities.

The need for thorough user education programme according to Edem and Lawal (2007) is to ensure effective use of library services because of the exponential growth of published materials in various formats and from different sources. The quantum of information at the disposal of the 21st century information user can only be fully utilized through user education. Library services constitute an important aspect of library and information service profession. One way of stimulating active utilization

of law library services is by teaching library users, especially undergraduates and postgraduate students how to explore and fully utilize the information resources in the library collection. User education in the law library should focus on how to use the card catalogue or OPAC, legal authorities, the computer, the Internet, and legal search engines.

One critical skill which both the undergraduate and postgraduate students in institutions of higher learning must master is the act of information retrieval, particularly electronic information retrieval. Clearly we are in the information age, a period in which knowledge seems to be on the increase exponentially. This revolution allows us to process, store and transmit more information easily and more quickly than ever before. To keep pace with this development, law students need to acquire appropriate search strategy to enable them access these information carriers. More libraries and scholarly legal sources are now using electronic media (Compact Disks, such as CD-ROMS) for information storage. Skills needed to access and utilize these electronic information carriers are new and constantly evolving. They are necessary and also required by both the law students and their lecturers.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, some conclusions were drawn as follows:

The main objective of this study which aimed at establishing the relationship between law students' profile and their utilization of information resources and services has been achieved. The result of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the age profile of law students and their utilization of information resources at the Nigerian Law School libraries. The study further reveals that there is no significant difference between law students' profiles and the extent of their utilization of information services at the Nigerian Law School libraries.

It is also discernible from the findings that the provision of information services by the various campus libraries of the Nigerian Law School was not evenly distributed. Available services in some of the campus libraries were not being utilized partly because law students were not aware of their existence in the law school library. The non-utilization of these services is also impaired lack of constant electricity supply and low level of computer literacy and skills.

To overcome these challenges, this study recommends that a dedicated generating set, high capacity server and robust Internet bandwidth should be provided in all the campuses of the Nigerian Law libraries. This is to enhance proper utilization of services provided.

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