

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION IN LAW LIBRARIANSHIP IN IMO STATE UNIVERSITY OWERRI

By

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Abstract

The study was conducted to examine the interrelationship between law librarianship and information technology application in law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri, South-East, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and used multiple regression analysis for data analyses. Findings show that a significant increase in information technology application, digital library access tools, and digital information access significantly influenced law librarianship in Imo State University. The study recommends that Law librarianship should ensure efficient provision and installation of information and communication technology applications/tools in law libraries for effective supply of library information. The study concludes that Law librarianship is a legal-related specialized profession that combines the practice of the legal profession, providing specialized library services to legal clientele, thus a significant positive increase in information technology application resulted to a significant positive effect in law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri, South-East, Nigeria.

Keywords: Law, Librarianship, Information, Technology, Library.

Introduction

A law library according to Amusa & Iyoro (2011) is an organized collection and information sources to meet the needs of the legal public. Law librarianship is a legal-related specialized profession that combines the practice of the legal profession, providing specialized library services to legal clientele. Law librarianship is a lucrative and vibrant profession that has evolved from the progression of law and librarianship. The profession of law of librarianship is changing, thus, changes in technology have fundamentally altered how law librarians perform

their jobs. Consequently, these changes provide both challenges and opportunities for librarians (Harande & Umah 2021).

Dada (2011) opined that the law library was designed to provide information for patrons in the legal profession. The legal profession which the law librarianship is designed to complement is dynamic and keeps changing with changing times. Apart from the dynamic nature of law, the emergence of information and communication technology has revolutionized both the way information resources are created, packaged and accessed. Information Technology (IT) refers to the computer based system of information recording, processing, storage, retrieval and distribution. Information technology facilitates access to legal materials all over the world and also enhance the delivery of library services to the entire library users. Information technology also facilitate communication between the teacher and learner in distant learning and thus, enhance networking of various legal training institutions for the purpose of cross fertilization of knowledge. Based on the above, the focus of this paper is to examine the interrelationship between law librarianship and information technology application in law librarianship in Imo State University, Owerri.

Statement of the Problem

Law library is important to all lawyers whether at the Bench or Bar because their level of accomplishment, may be directly linked to the quality of access and use of right legal information resources in their administration of justice. However, the basic function of the law librarian is to acquire and provide basic law material in print and non-print formats for research to enhance quick and efficient administration of justice. Traditionally, library users were forced

to visit the physical library but an information technology enabled law librarianship has assorted options of accessing information electronically.

In spite of the need to embrace information technology as a positive agent of change and corresponding need to follow up with its phenomenal speed, the profession of law librarianship is changing. Thus, changes in technology have fundamentally altered how law librarians perform their jobs. These changes however, provide both challenges and opportunities for the profession of librarianship. Therefore, the problem of this study is to examine the interrelationship between law librarianship and information technology application in law library in Imo State University Owerri, South-East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of information technology application on law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri?
2. To what extent have digital library access tools influenced law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri?
3. What is the impact of digital information access on law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri?

Hypotheses

- i. Information technology application has no significant effect on law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri.

- ii. Digital library access tools have no significant influence on law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri.
- iii. Digital information access has no significant impact on law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri.

Review of Related Literature

Concepts of Law Librarianship

The profession of law librarianship which is dedicated to the egalitarian service of providing information to all classes of library users, has existed for decades of years, beginning in ancient periods when documented records were inscribed in stone and other materials (Hessel, 1955). As the volume of information required increased and the formats for documenting information correspondingly increase, the profession of librarianship evolved to cater for its users, preservation, retrieval, dissemination and management of information also significantly requires attention. (Verma, 2015).

Law librarianship is a dynamic and specialized form of the profession of librarianship dedicated to the service of the legal profession. As a service oriented profession, law librarianship is concerned with serving the needs of law students, law faculty, the legal community users, and the general public (Anyaegbu, 2013). Haddison, (2017) opine that law librarianship is the most dynamic and complex field due to the constant growth of information and the change in legal decision arising from the activities of judges and law makers.

Consequently, law librarianship is required to capture, maintain, update and provide information and decisions that ultimately grow and changes at rapid rates. Relying on the premises of this relationship, it is obvious that without the application of information technology, law libraries may not effectively and efficiently provide access to required information and other relevant materials for benefit of its clients such as the judges, attorneys, arbitrators, lawyers, law students and members of the legal community (Verma, 2015).

Information Technology and Librarianship

Information technology is referred as a method or device for collecting, organizing, storing, analyzing, retrieving and communicating knowledge. Eyitayo, (2008) posit that telecommunication facilities exchange of information between computers. The internet according to Eyitayo (2008) is made up of millions of computers linked together around the world in a way that information can be sent from any computer to another within 24 hours.

Law librarians through the application of information technology renders assistance by carrying out the tasks of editing, indexing, access points and abstracting services. Law librarians especially in reference libraries are expected to compile useful bibliographies, directories, manual guides list of holdings and accessions (Dada cited in Haddison 2017). More so, law librarians through information technology facilities access to legal materials all over the world and also enhance the delivery of library services electronically to its users. Web based and

mobile technologies such as Wikis, Blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Ipad, Ipod, YouTube and 2go are social media tools that can be used to turn communication into interactive dialogue.

Information Technology (IT) enhances efficiency of libraries by ordering acquisition, cataloging and indexing; better production and distribution of decisions and judgement by Judges and general administration of personnel, finance and materials; and facilitating access to library resources by users. The objectives of information technology according to Dada (2011) include to serve as a link among legal institutions and hence facilitate intellectual resource governing and sharing, support learning and teaching in specialized area of video conferencing, teleconferencing, group discussions, questions and answers sessions and most court trials, and enable large number of students have access to case law and other legal materials with ease than queue up for access to a limited number of books in the shelf, among other.

The advent of electronic legal information technology resources has further facilitated access to legal information and resources more easily to library users. As a special library, information technology enabled law library services revolves around such services like, answering reference question services, one-to-one library instruction services, library tours services, assisting users to locate information items, inter-library loan services, indexing services, clipping services, referral services, abstracting services, translation services, photocopy services, document delivery services, bibliographic verification services, render advisory services, bibliotherapy services, selective dissemination of information services, display of new arrival services, table of contents services, in-services training of staff, production of guide for

publicity and education, contribution to or preparing publication services, production for guide for publicity and education among others (Haddison 2017).

Theoretical Review

Social Cognitive Theory

Albert Bandura (1986) provides a framework that helps to facilitate entrepreneurial knowledge within established organizations. The theory recognizes the impact of the environment on human development while also placing responsibility on the individual to grow from within. It however incorporates the primary critical categories of variables influencing organizational behavior; that is, cognitive, behavioral, and environmental determinants. A social cognitive view suggests that law librarians can transform into an innovative librarianship if given the opportunity and support to develop his or her abilities. In this respect, Judges, Magistrates, lawyers, law students and other law library users are often constrained by lack of technology and communication applications and resources, (in terms of qualified and proficient skilled law librarians, instructors, poor technological environments), bureaucratic rules and regulations, and non- motivating systems. As a result, law librarians, law students, and other law library users may not experience or take advantage of opportunities and resources that would allow them to develop abilities and capabilities to be entrepreneurial and innovative.

Unlike some traditional views of human behavior, social cognitive theory suggests a mediating role for the effects of cognitive processes between the law librarianship and the legal and academic environments. The theory offers a useful framework for understanding the

innovative and entrepreneurial processes and provides technological and communication tools for improving cognitions that affect innovative law librarianship thinking and behavior in legal and academic environments in South-East, Nigeria.

Methodology

The research employed a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study is made up of 60 library staff and law students of Imo State University Owerri, South-East, Nigeria. The study used the Simple random sampling technique to determine a sample size of 52 and multiple regression analysis for testing of the hypotheses.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.824 ^a	.679	.659	.876	.679	33.783	3	49	.000

Source: research Data (2022)

The result in Table 1 shows that 0.659(65.9%) as the value of adjusted R Square showing the extent to which law librarianship profession in Imo State University Owerri is determined by information technology application, digital library access tools, and digital information access

applications. Therefore, the remaining percentage (34.1%) should be studied to determine how other factors affects law librarianship profession in Imo State University Owerri.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	77.818	3	25.939	33.783	.000 ^a
Regression	36.856	49	.768		
Residual	114.673	52			
Total					

Source: Research Data (2022)

The value 0.000^a shows the significance level is less than 0.05 showing a statistical significance of the model on how independent variables studied affects the law librarianship profession in Imo State University Owerri. The results in Table. 2 also show that F calculated value is greater than the value of F tabulated (33.783 > 25.939) at 5% significance level confirming the significance of the model.

Table 3: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.

	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	0.524	1.075		1.790	.000
Information tech. Application	0.643	.268	5.275	2.395	.001
Digital library Access Tools	0.525	.344	1.367	2.981	.002
Digital Information Access	0.855	.087	3.882	9.772	.004

Source: Research Data (2022)

The findings in Table 3 show that holding independent variables constant (information technology application, digital library access tools, and digital information access applications) to a constant zero, the law librarianship profession would be at 0.524 factor, a significant positive increase in information technology application would lead to a significant positive effect in law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri by a factor of 0.643, a significant increase in digital library access tools would lead to a significant positive influence in law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri by a factor of 0.525 and a significant increase in digital information access would lead to a significant positive impact in law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri by a factor of 0.855.

The established regression equation was as follows; $Y = 0.524 + 0.643X_1 + 0.525X_2 + 0.855X_3$;

Where Y = law librarianship, X_1 = Information technology Application, X_2 = Digital library Access Tools, X_3 = Digital Information Access. The result in Table 3 further shows that digital information access had the highest impact on law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri as shown by a factor of 0.855 followed by information technology application with a factor of 0.643 and digital library access tools with a factor of 0.525. The relationships ($p < 0.05$) was all significant with digital information access ($t = 9.772, p < 0.05$). Digital information access has a

greater correlation with the law librarianship profession as it has a direct impact on law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri, South-East, Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Law libraries should ensure efficient provision and installation of information and communication technology applications/tools for effective supply of library information.
2. For global information access, law librarianship as a profession should ensure that law librarians are information and communication technology compliant.

Conclusion

Library is an institution where books and other information resources are collected, processed, stored, retrieved and disseminated. Similarly, a law library is an organized collection and information sources to meet the needs of the legal public. Law librarianship is a legal-related specialized profession that combines the practice of the legal profession, providing specialized library services to legal clientele. Information Technology refers to the computer based system of information recording, processing, storage, retrieval and distribution, that facilitates access to legal materials all over the world and also enhance the delivery of library services to the entire library users.

A significant positive increase in information technology application resulted to a significant positive effect in law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri with a factor of 0.643, a significant increase in digital library access tools lead to a significant positive influence

in law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri with a factor of 0.525 and a significant increase in digital information access shows a significant positive impact in law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri with a factor of 0.855. The relationships ($p < 0.05$) was all significant with digital information access ($t = 9.772, p < 0.05$), thus, digital information access has a greater correlation with the law librarianship profession and has a direct impact on law librarianship in Imo State University Owerri, South-East, Nigeria.

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