EVALUATION OF INFORMATION NEEDS OF LAW LECTURERS: A CASE STUDY OF CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU UNIVERSITY, IGBARIAM, ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study evaluated the information needs of law lecturers in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was employed. The population of the study comprised twenty-five law lecturers. No sampling technique was adopted as the entire population was studied. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Data collected was analyzed, using tables and percentages. The findings showed that the law lecturers ranked law reports, law textbooks and law journals as the most needed legal information sources. Furthermore, the law libraries have many outdated law textbooks and law journals, and un-updated law reports. The e-library was also not functional. Based on the findings, recommendations were made, which included that the law library should update and expand its stock, and make its e-library functional, subscribe to more legal databases, among others.

Keywords*: Information Needs, Information Sources, Law Libraries, Law Lecturers, Law Faculties.*

Introduction

Information play a significant role in individual professional and personal lives. It is needed for work and everyday decision and tasks. Information is defined as news or intelligence communicated by word or writing; facts or data; knowledge derived from reading or instruction gathered in any way (Webster, 2003). According to Saracevic and Kantor (1997), information is related not only to cognitive structures but also in addition to motivation and internationality, and therefore connected to the social context or horizon such as culture, work or problem at hand. Losee (2007) argues that a definition of information should capture the essential nature of the information phenomena in a precise description. He contends that while making explicit the similarities between information phenomenal and other related concepts such as meaning, certainty or knowledge, at the same time, it should bring forward the differences between these concepts. In other words, how is information similar to knowledge and where do they differ? He then attempts a discipline independent definition thus: "Information is produced by all processes and it is the value of characteristics in the processes; output being the information".

Information need of users of the library have been the focus of inquiry within the Library and Information Science community for decades. Understanding the information needs of law libraries users has as a great significance not only to law libraries, which spend considerable funds purchasing and finding tools for literature search, but also to publishers, who invest in publishing books and journals (Ajidahum, 2010). According to Rajendran and Rathinasabapathy (2005), the study and practice of law is library-based. This is because a law library is to a lawyer what the laboratory is to a scientist. They further contend that in faculty

of law library, students and law teachers spend a great deal of time in the law library because the library is an important intellectual resource centre for the faculty, and helps them to fulfill the curriculum requirements and promote learning and research. Tahir *et al* (2008) identify seventeen possible problems teachers face in acquiring information for teaching and research. Some of them are: that required materials are not available, information is scattered in too many sources, information sources are very expensive, lack of information literacy skills, lack of knowledge in using the library, language barrier, and incompetent or not well-trained library staff.

There is no doubt that faculties in any university contribute to the attainment of the broad objective of the institution, which is teaching, research and community service. Faculties provide academic guidance to the university lecturers and extend the frontiers of knowledge through research and publication. This makes faculty members' need for information inevitable. Information needs of Law lecturers is paramount to Faculty Law libraries and the latter have a role to play in helping the former to meet their information needs (Aforo and Lamptey, 2012). The objective of all categories of law libraries is to procure, process and provide in the most comprehensive manner, legal information resources and services by qualified personnel to the stakeholders (Enem, 2011). In furtherance of this, Olajide and Fabunmi (2011), clearly stated that to determine whether the objective of the library are met, the views, opinions and perceptions of the library users should be sought. The result of such evaluation, according to Onifade and Sowole (2009), will aid the library management in their planning. It is in the light of all these that this study sought to evaluate the information needs of law lecturers in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Nigeria.

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University began in the Year 2000, as Anambra State University. It started with five faculties including Faculty of Law, which had three lecturers at the time of the commencement of the faculty. During the period of this research study from April to June 2019; the Faculty already has twenty-five lecturers, including the Dean of the Faculty.

Statement of the Problem

Law lecturers need legal information sources such as law textbooks, law reports, law journals, and so on, for research and preparation of lecture notes. These sources, on the other hand, should be current and purchased regularly. If current sources are not adequately provided in the law library, the lecturers will not have updated materials for preparation of lecture notes and research for publications. Record of statistics of users of the law library in the past one year shows that only few law lecturers consulted/borrowed some law materials in the library. From the researcher's observation, it seems the lecturers are not interested in the use of law library. The quest to find out the reasons behind this necessitated the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to find out the information needs of law lecturers in Faculty of Law, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine whether the major legal information sources provided in the law library meet the needs of the law lecturers.
2. Determine the extent of usage of the major legal information sources in the law library by the law lecturers.
3. Ascertain whether additional legal information sources should be provided.
4. Find out difficulties that confronts the law lecturers in the use of the law library.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. Do the legal information sources provided in the law library meet the information needs of the law lecturers?
2. What is the extent of use of legal information sources in the law library by the law lecturers?
3. Should the law library provide additional legal information sources?
4. What are the difficulties that confront the law lecturers in the use of the law library?

Review of Related Literature

The benefit of acquiring relevant materials by academic libraries cannot be over-emphasized. Meeting users' needs is the ultimate reason why libraries are established. Olalokun (2005) opine that library the collection and services must be relevant to that academic programme of the institution. It is for this reason that Lemonde and Ojedokun (2007) posit that there must be constant evaluation of collection and services by libraries. Evaluation is one means through which users' needs and feelings are revealed on one hand, and the only means by which the library appraises its work output to either correct or beef up operations (Ugboma, 2006).

It is believed that the establishment of law libraries in faculties of law is mainly complement the teaching, learning and research of the faculty. Tuyo (2009) summarized the goals of legal education thus:

> imparting to the students an understanding of the fundamentalprinciplesand concepts of law and also develop the skills needed to solve legal problems; providing a rigorous analytical and theoretical education to assist the students in developing constructive and critical approach to the processes of law, assisting the students in seeing law within its social, economic, political, ethical and cultural content and also, doing a comparativeanalyses of other legal systems, especially civil law systems and relevantinternational law.

Faculties of law cannot achieve these objectives if law libraries are bereft of needed legal information sources required by law lecturers and students. Tuyo (2009) further stated that the ability to respond adequately and comprehensively to the information needs of the faculty will depend on the availability and accessibility of resources, services, personnel, finance and facilities in these academic libraries. The overall goal of the collection development initiative of the academic library is to build core and comprehensive collection that adequately address the information demand of its clientele.

Expectedly, the success of a library in meeting the information needs of its users play an important role in their future visit to the library. Lecturers need various kinds of information for teaching and research and for self-development. To achieve this, the right information must be available for the right person at the right time in its appropriate format (Aforo and Lamptey, 2012). Adeoye and Popoola (2011) observe that the most effective way to mobilize people to the library is through the provision of required information. Idowu (2003) identified major legal information sources as law textbooks, law journals, law reports and online resources. Ukpanah and Afolabi (2011) argue that the quality of services offered to law students is related to the utilization of the available textbooks in law libraries. Clinch (2001)

identified five types of law textbooks: textbooks of authority, modern textbooks, casebooks, practice books and precedent books. Expectedly, the quality of academic output is traceable to the quality of available information resources in academic libraries (Ibrahim, 2014). Onwudinjo (2015) reveal that most academic law libraries do not have adequate textbooks in their right numbers and quality needed to pass the accreditation of the National Universities Commission and Council of Legal Education respectively.

Apart from textbooks, Idowu (2003) informed that law journals contain latest development in law and provide comments and criticisms of the law; law reports. They are also central to the lawyers' practice as well as forming a strong base for administration of justice. Law reports continue to enjoy primary position among the sources of information on judicial decision because they are the most current. Law books often become outdated due to dynamic nature of law with its ever changing rules, concepts and doctrines in response to changing circumstances. Online resources such as the Internet remain the most formidable host of ICT research resources and services and has provided access to varied data and information to legal researchers.

In line with the observation of Idowu (2003), the study by Aforo and Lamptey (2012) shows that law lecturers consult law reports because these are series of books that contain judicial opinions from a selection of case laws decided by courts. Law reports form the basis for explaining concepts and theories; hence, their use cut across all law courses. They are extremely important to law lecturers as they enable decisions to be accessed for future courts. The law reports were ranked as the most important source of information for their research and publication. Apart from law reports being the most useful source of information for research and publication to law lecturers, the latter consult law reports effectively for legal information to solve issues or problems at hand as lawyers. The study further shows that that most law lecturers preferred electronic resources to printed materials. This affirms the advantages electronic resources have over manual sources, which they mainly consult for quick easy and multiple links (Bajpai et al, 2009).

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised all the 25 law lecturers in Faculty of Law, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, including the Dean of the Faculty. No sampling technique was carried as the entire population was studied. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. A total of 25 questionnaire were distributed. They were all completed by the respondents and collected back by the researchers. Data collected was analysed by simple percentages and presented in tables.

Results

Data collected were analyzed based on the research questions that guided the study and presented in tables as shown below.

Research Question1: Do the major information sources provided in the law library meet the information needs of the law lecturers?

Table1: Major information sources provided in the law library.

S/N	Major Information Sources	Yes		No	
1.	Foreign Law Textbooks	9	(36%)	16	(64%)
2.	Local Law Textbooks	20	(80%)	5	(20%)
3.	Foreign Law Reports	10	(40%)	15	(60%)
4.	Local Law Reports	21	(84%)	4	(16%)
5.	Foreign Law Journals	5	(20%)	20	(80%)
6.	Local Law Journals	6	(24%)	19	(76%)
7.	E-Library (one legal database)	2	(8%)	23	(23%)

Research Question 2: What is the extent of use of the major information sources in the law library by law lecturers?

Table 2: Extent of use of the major information sources in the law library by law lecturers.

S/N	Extent of Use	High	Low
1.	Foreign Law Textbooks	7 (28%)	18 (72%)
2.	Local Law Textbooks	13 (52%)	12 (48%)
3.	Foreign Law Reports	8 (32%)	17 (68%)
4.	Local Law Reports	15 (60%)	10 (40%)
5.	Foreign Law Journals	2 (8%)	23 (92%)
6.	Local Law Journals	8 (32%)	17 (68%)
7.	E- Library (one legal database)	-	25 (100%)

Research Question 3: Should the law library provide additional major information sources?

Table 3: Provision of additional major information sources.

S/N	Additional Major Information Sources	Yes	No
1.	Foreign Law Textbooks	10 (40%)	15 (60%)
2.	Local Law Textbooks	25 (100%)	-
3.	Foreign Law Reports	11 (44%)	14 (56%)
4.	Local Law Reports	25 (100%)	-
5.	Foreign Law Journals	7 (28%)	18 (72%)
6.	Local Law Journals	25 (100%)	-
7.	E- Library (additional legal database(s)	16 (64%)	9 (36%)

Research Question 4: What are the difficulties that confront the law lecturers in the use of the law library?

Table 4: Difficulties that confront law lecturers in the use of law library.

S/N	Difficulties In The Use of Law Library	Yes	No
1.	Operational hours are short	6 (24%)	19 (76%)
2.	Many outdated law textbooks	20 (80%)	5 (20%)
3.	Law reports are not up-to-date	23 (92%)	2 (8%)
4.	Many outdated law journals	21 (84%)	4 (16%)
5.	Required materials are not available	3 (12%)	22 (88%)
6.	Lack of time	18 (72%)	7 (28%)

7. Bad attitude of library staff	7 (28%)	18 (72%)
8. Non-residence in the campus	20 (80%)	5 (20%)

Discussion of Findings:

The findings in Table 1 showed that law lecturers ranked local law reports highest (84%) with regard to major information sources that met their information needs. This was followed by local law textbooks (80%). In other words, the law lecturers prefer law reports and law textbooks to other information sources. The ranking of law reports was in agreement with one of the findings in the study by Aforo and Lamptey (2012), which found law reports as the most important sources of information as they form basis for explaining concepts and theories, hence, their use cut across all law courses. Also, they are important to law lecturers because they consult them for legal information to solve issues or problems at hand as lawyers. On the whole, law lecturers prefer local publications to foreign ones.

In Table 2, data collected indicate that local law reports ranked highest with 60% followed by local textbooks which had 52%. From the analysis e-resources are poorly used. The lease poorly used is the legal databases in the e-library which was not functional. The finding on law reports agrees with the observation of Idowu (2003) that law reports continue to enjoy primary position among the sources of information because they are the most current.

In Table 3, the rating for local law textbooks was 100%, local law reports 100% and local law journals 100%. This showed that the law lecturers agreed that law library should provide additional law textbooks, law reports and law journals. Preference was made for a particular local law report – *Nigeria Weekly Law Report*. The *Nigeria Weekly Law Report* is a weekly report that is multidisciplinary in nature. It covers all aspects of law from Nigerian courts. According to Tuyo (2009), the overall goal of collection development initiative of the academic library is to build a core and comprehensive collection that adequately address the information demands of its clientele. However, the findings of the present study agreed with the finding of Onwudinjo (2015), that most academic libraries do not have adequate textbooks in their right numbers.

The data of the findings in Table 4 showed that law reports in the law library was not up-to-date, (92%); 84% of the journals were outdated while 80% of the textbooks were old. The findings could be one of the reasons why Kotso (2007), observed that information sources in academic law libraries should in most cases be current, accurate and complete.

Another remarkable finding is that 80% of the lecturers live off campus. The university has no staff quarters and lecturers live in far away from the university mainly in Onitsha, Awka and Enugu. The consequential effect is that immediately after lectures, they are in a hurry to leave before it gets dark. So little or no time is left for use of the law library. This accounts for 72% in the findings. The shortness in operational hours of the law library, 8:00am-4:00pm, which has 24%, is insignificant due to non-residential status of the university.

Conclusion

The research concern of this study was to evaluate the information needs of law lecturers in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University. The findings revealed that there are areas of strength which the law library is encouraged to maintain such as provision of law textbooks, law reports law journals and so on. The study found that the law library has mostly outdated law textbooks, outdated law journals, non-updated law reports, non-functional legal database

in the e-library, and that most of the lectures live off campus which grossly affect their use of the law library.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

The law library should update and expand its stock regularly to attract the law lecturers to consult the materials in the library. There should be regular subscriptions of law reports and law journals so as to avoid gap in the collection. Adeoye and Popoola (2011) observe that the most effective way to mobilize people into the library is through provision of required information. The library should weed the outdated law materials from time to time.

The legal database in the e-library should be functional always. This can be achieved through regular subscription. All recommendation should be guided by the requirements of both the Council of Legal Education and the National Universities Commission.

The university should build staff quarters for both teaching and non-teaching staff to enable the library in the university run both morning and evening shift duties to enable both the lecturers, students and other library users ample time to use the law library.

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