



Information literacy competencies of legal personnel in Nigerian federal universities: An empirical analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study centered on investigating the information literacy (IL) competencies of legal personnel at Nigerian federal universities (NFUs). The study was guided by six specific objectives. A descriptive survey design was employed, targeting a population of 168 legal personnel at 43 NFUs. The total enumeration technique was used as a sample for the study. Questionnaires and observation checklists were used as data collection instruments. The researcher administered 168 questionnaires through research assistants, receiving a retrieval rate of 97.00% (163 completed questionnaires). Findings revealed that respondents displayed high competencies in locating, searching, evaluating, selecting, and communicating information resources (IRs). However, their competency in using IRs was found to be low. The study recommends that IL training should be considered a priority by both legal personnel and librarians to ensure smooth cooperation that would facilitate legal services delivery and IL training should be made more regular, consistent, holistic, and widely embraced. That is, any form of IL training should be implemented in both conventional and digital forms so that no individual would be left out.

Keywords: legal information, professionals, information, information literacy, university, libraries

INTRODUCTION

In the legal field, where information is highly valued, the need for well-organized and accessible information is vital for successful legal practices. Timely access to reliable information is essential for legal personnel to stay up to date with developments in their profession. It enables legal personnel to make informed decisions and enhances their knowledge and expertise. A lack of information literacy (IL) skills can hinder individuals' capability to have and utilize info effectively (Oladejo et al., 2020). Thus, IL becomes a critical element in the triumph of legal personnel in fulfilling their responsibilities and managing their affairs.

IL encompasses a variety of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes required for effective and efficient information use. These competencies include the ability to find, access, assess, and make use of info as well as critical thinking and communication skills. Developing IL abilities enables individuals to assess and synthesize information effectively, leading to wise decision-making. Therefore, IL is essential for legal personnel to enhance their competence in utilizing info resources (Makinde et al., 2023). Given the foregoing, Tella et al. (2021) note that IL competencies refer to the skills,

knowledge, and attitudes necessary to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use information in various contexts. These competencies are essential in today's information-rich society, where individuals are constantly bombarded with vast amounts of information from multiple sources. IL goes beyond simply knowing how to use search engines or access databases; it involves the ability to critically assess information for its relevance, accuracy, authority, currency, and objectivity (Abdullahi, 2020). According to Adeeko (2021), the core competencies of IL typically include:

- ✓ **Identifying information needs:** This involves recognizing when information is needed and determining the scope of the information required to address a specific question or problem.
- ✓ **Accessing information:** IL entails knowing where and how to access information effectively. This includes proficiency in using libraries, online databases, search engines, and other information resources (IRs).
- ✓ **Evaluating information:** Critical evaluation of information is a crucial competency in IL. Individuals should be able to assess the credibility, accuracy, and reliability of sources, as well as recognize potential biases or limitations.

- ✓ **Using information ethically:** IL involves understanding ethical considerations related to information use, including issues such as plagiarism, copyright infringement, and intellectual property rights.
- ✓ **Synthesizing & integrating information:** This competency involves synthesizing information from multiple sources to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue. It also includes integrating information into one's own work effectively.
- ✓ **Communicating information:** IL encompasses the ability to communicate information effectively through various mediums, including writing, speaking, and multimedia presentations.

In the context of legal personnel, IL competencies are particularly important. Legal professionals need to be able to conduct thorough legal research, analyze case law and statutes, and stay updated with changes in legislation and judicial opinions. Moreover, they must be able to critically evaluate legal information for its relevance and reliability, as well as ethically use it in legal practice. These values emphasize the importance of IL in the legal profession, emphasizing the need for legal personnel to have adequate IL competency to excellently use IRs. The accessibility and types of IR play a crucial role in enabling legal personnel to make greatest usage of information. Therefore, library institutions must ensure the attainment, organization, spreading, and conservation of diverse IRs specifically tailored to the needs of legal personnel. By providing comprehensive and accessible IRs, library institutions support legal personnel in their work-related tasks and enhance their productivity.

IRs are essential for legal personnel in their work, providing the necessary materials for consultation and research. These resources come in various formats, including print and electronic, and encompass diverse types of info, such as primary, secondary, and tertiary sources. In the legal field, IL emphasizes on the examination and use of specific IRs, such as law books and court case proceedings, that lawyers rely on for their work. Secondary IRs commonly used by legal personnel comprise law texts, law dictionaries, law encyclopedias, journal articles, and indexes to journal articles (Obuezie & Echedom, 2023). These sources provide comprehensive analyses and interpretations of legal concepts and principles. Going further, Abdulsalam and Odigie (2023) state that primary IRs for legal professionals consist of the actual texts of laws and legal decisions generated by parliaments and courts. This includes legislation and case law, which serve as authoritative sources of legal rules and precedents. Legal personnel need to access and engage with these primary sources to ensure the accuracy and validity of their legal services. The proficient and effective usage of IRs is crucial for legal personnel to provide prompt and high-quality legal services. Accessing IRs quickly and utilizing them appropriately are essential skills for legal professionals to perform their duties efficiently and meet clients' needs.

Statement of Problem

IL competency plays a vital role in today's information-rich environment, enabling individuals to excel by enhancing problem-solving skills, promoting effective thinking,

facilitating the search for dependable and appropriate information, and supporting decision-making processes. Legal personnel, like professionals in other fields, heavily rely on information for decision-making purposes.

However, the researchers observed that some legal personnel may lack certain IL competencies, which can hinder their effective and efficient use of IRs to perform their legal duties. This competency includes identifying information needs, locating relevant resources, evaluating their quality and relevance, selecting appropriate sources, effectively using the information obtained, and communicating findings. Consequently, their ability to articulate cases may be affected because of a lack of necessary IL abilities in sourcing relevant legal information.

The researchers also noted that not much work has been carried out on IL competencies among legal personnel in Nigeria, with limited studies addressing this topic (Baharun & Akinbowale, 2021; Omekwu, 2019). Therefore, the researchers find it worthy to add to the existing body of literature by examining IL competencies among legal personnel on the use of IRs at Nigerian federal universities (NFUs). It shed light on the significance of IL in the context of legal work provision and fill the gap in knowledge.

Research Objectives

The general objectives of the study sought to investigate the IL competencies of legal personnel at NFUs. Specifically, the study was to:

1. identify the need for IRs for legal services at NFUs,
2. search, locate and access IRs for legal services at NFUs,
3. evaluate IRs for legal services at NFUs,
4. select IRs for legal services at NFUs,
5. determine the use IRs for legal services at NFUs, and
6. communicate IRs for legal services at NFUs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ability to Identify Need for Information Resources

Information is so essential in human's life and every endeavor. Ríos-Ortega (2013) asserts that the idea of information has grown in importance when it comes to library science and other closely linked fields. Kundu (2017) defines information as "what should be available for his employment, research, education, leisure, etc." Technically speaking, a collection of symbols that can be read as a message can be used to represent information. More so, Udayangani de Silva and Chandrawamsa (2016) agree that every person requires information to update their knowledge to achieve any purpose. Presently, people cannot live without information, reason been that information has become inevitable need of people. In addition, Otike and Matthew (2000) maintain that Legal professionals work in an atmosphere that is information intensive. As a result, information is necessary for everything they perform, including giving legal counsel, standing in for a client in court, and creating legal documents. The need to seek information has become so important, and every individual wants to know more about happenings in their different fields

of endeavors. Oketunji and Oketunji (2016) see information need as a knowledge gap, and when an individual determines the existence of such a gap, it may be represented as an inquiry or a search request that prompts a demand for information to close the gap. Similar to this, Miranda and Tarapanoff (2008) described info requirement as a condition or a process that begins when a person notices a mismatch between the readily available info and know-how to resolve a problem and the actual solution to the problem. Additionally, Otiike and Matthew (2000) underline that “to fulfil their information needs, legal professionals need a lot of information, and the nature of that information is reflected in the types of legal work that those professionals do.” Shafique and Mahmood (2013) believe, however, that knowledge today plays a significant role in every part of life. For people to function effectively in their particular fields, information is necessary.

Ability to Search, Locate, & Access Information Resources

Locating information for the task at hand is very important in the quest for using quality IRs. Lee et al. (2012) stress, state, agree that locating IRs is among the most essential stages thru the procedure of an information-seeking task. Location of appropriate topic to match with the identified need is crucial at this stage, information seekers should be able to also as necessity employ strategies that will be used to retrieve this located IR.

Search strategy, as acknowledged by Okon et al. (2014), is a plan for locating pertinent information and a necessary stage in any information-problem solving activity. According to Okon et al. (2014), the capacity to acquire relevant information from a database that covers the subject or topic being searched is key to the creation of effective search strategies. The researchers go on to say that organizing a search strategy can ultimately save time when it comes to information problem-solving and/or research. According to Okon et al. (2014), a search approach enables an information seeker to get information in a range of locations. As a result, information seekers are better able to focus their search, choose the most helpful indexes or databases with which to begin, and uncover a greater volume of pertinent information. Okon et al. (2014) conducted research on students’ usage of information in two south university libraries in Nigeria. Examining the link between students’ capability to create search methods and the data used in the libraries at the Universities of Uyo and Port Harcourt is one of the study’s goals. The results show a connection between students’ aptitude for creating search methods and the knowledge they utilize in libraries.

Ability to Evaluate Information Resources

Simply said, evaluation is the capacity to evaluate critically the worth of information. The act of evaluating information invites readers to consider the authority, applicability, timeliness, point of view, and bias of various ISs. Since not every info is correct or dependable or appropriate for use, evaluating info is a vital phase in the information usage process. Print and non-print information sources differ greatly in terms of their reliability, objectivity, timeliness, and coverage. Therefore, before depending on the information, information users must critically evaluate the suitability of all

forms of ISs. The capacity to assess satisfaction with the usage of IRs for any given jobs is another aspect of evaluation.

According to Swapna and Biradar (2017), an individual should evaluate the recognized ISs and IRs (both print and electronic) to discover the most trustworthy information on a subject. The valuation of IL abilities among scientific postgraduate scholars in universities in the Karnataka State is the subject of Swapna and Biradar’s (2017) study. According to certain survey findings, 76.70% of students use specific criteria to examine or evaluate any written content that has been cited, including authority, validity, correctness, publisher, currency, coverage, information organization, bibliography, and views (bias, fact, and opinion). Despite this, 50.70% of them can use URL. They also consider FAQs and other website links when evaluating an electronic resource.

Ability to Select Information Resources

Information is vital in everyday activities of individuals. And legal profession has been an information-intensive field, where information is sort day in and day out to articulate cases and discussions. Tuhumwire and Okello-Obura (2010) observed that legal knowledge is crucial if any society is to have effective justice. Professionals become skilled and informed in their respective fields without a doubt through information. One could even argue that legal staff members cannot practice law effectively without information due to the significance of info to the legal profession in particular. To stay current with events in their field, legal professionals must have the ability to choose current legal material. Tuhumwire and Okello-Obura (2010) investigates the selection of legal information by lawyers in Uganda. The study identifies information that lawyers can select easily and those that are difficult to select depending on their respective skills. Findings indicate that 12.00% easily select constitutional information while 88.00% find it challenging to select, on Law reports, 44.00% find it easy to select while 56.00% find it challenging to select. Anyaogu (2014) concur that choosing the appropriate type of legal IS is seen as the cornerstone of successful legal research. According to Du Plessis (2007), legal staff currently choose from a variety of primary and secondary legal research periodicals, both domestically and internationally, that are accessible in print and/or digital format(s).

Ability to Use Information Resources

Utilizing information entails interacting with it via reading, watching, and touching it to extract the details that are pertinent to the task at hand. Howard et al. (2003) revealed that the purpose of using information is to persuade a judge, jury or opposing parties that one position is stronger than the other. Anyaogu and Mabawonku (2014) submits that information usage refers to the mental and physical processes that people utilize to incorporate new information into their prevailing knowledge or knowledge structures. Additionally, Amusa et al. (2016) argue that using information is a crucial component of overcoming the difficulties that staff members confront. These communicative and cognitive tasks include finding, avoiding, providing, appraising, and understanding information. The research by Odunewu and Aluko-Arowolo (2018) found a strong correlation between using electronic resources and IL. It concludes that IL is basic, useful and

necessary skills needed to maximally exploit electronic IRs, which will in turn increase the productivity of the users, especially in their research endeavor. Ekong and Ekong (2018) investigate how IL abilities affect students at higher institutions in Akwa Ibom State's utilization of e-library resources. The results show that students' knowledge of how to utilize e-library resources has an impact on their academic accomplishments. The usage of electronic resources in university libraries by undergraduate scholars is significantly correlated with all independent factors in this study.

Adeleke and Emeahara (2016) conducted a study akin to this one on postgraduate scholars at the University of Ibadan and the link between IL and usage of electronic IRs. The results show that there is a significant connection between IL skills and the usage of electronic IRs at 0.05 ($p=0.034$). Additionally, the research by Adeniran and Onuoha (2018) shows a substantial positive association ($r[480]=0.28$, $p=0.050$) between the deployment of e-resources and IL abilities. Based on the research, they also claim that postgraduate students who are information literate use electronic resources more frequently. In other words, there is a substantial correlation between the usage of e-resources by postgraduate scholars and IL abilities.

Okon et al. (2014) piloted an investigation on the IL abilities and information use by students. Examining the impact of scholars' IL abilities on their usage of IRs is one of the research's goals. Results show a robust link between students' utilization of information and their IL abilities. Another study by Singh and Mann (2015) on the information-seeking behavior of lawyers in the High Courts of Punjab and Haryana finds that the majority of lawyers use legal databases and journals/reporters, which represents roughly 81.40% and 77.90% of lawyers, respectively. 73.25% of advocates use books and online resources to satisfy their informational demands.

Ability to Communicate Information Resources

In essence, communication is a learned skill. However, in order to gain meaning from learning, Naik and Padmini (2014) contend that the procedure of IL necessitates not just the acquisition of new abilities but also a novel way of intelligent. Wolff (2018) agree that communication of information represents the end of the information process and shows what an individual does with the information they have put together. In other word, information literate individual can take the information they have searched for, evaluated, and processed, and finally present it in an appropriate manner. Asamu (2014) conducts a survey study to determine the influence of organizational communication on employees' performance in designated organization in Lagos, Nigeria. Additionally, Asamu (2014) draws the conclusion that good communication fosters mutual comprehension between management and employees, which in turn assists to forge deeper connections between them in their workplaces. Efficient information sharing for court proceedings and legal debates will come from the usage of IRs by legal employees. Hemmati (2017) investigates the connection between knowledge management and IL among Shiraz University students and teachers. The results show a strong connection between students' IL, knowledge production, and knowledge storage. Furthermore, a test for faculty members' states that

there is a link between IL with all the four components of knowledge management. Hemmati (2017) concludes the study by suggesting that more studies be conducted, and that applicable research will increase the level of IL and given that IL is introduced as one of the factors facilitating knowledge management programs.

METHODOLOGY

This study's objectives were achieved through the use of quantitative research methods. Therefore, 168 legal staff members at NFUs were the study's population, which is divided into six geopolitical zones, as seen in **Table 1**.

Table 1. NFUs based on geo-political zones

S/N	Federal university	Location	n
North-East Zone Federal Universities			
1	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi	Bauchi State	4
3	Federal University Gashua	Yobe State	3
3	Federal University Kashere	Gombe State	3
4	Federal University Wukari	Taraba State	3
5	Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola	Adamawa State	3
6	University of Maiduguri	Borno State	5
7	Nigerian Army University, Biu	Borno State	2
North-Central Zone Federal Universities			
1	Federal University Lafia	Nasarawa State	2
2	Federal University Lokoja	Kogi State	3
3	Federal University of Tech. Minna	Niger State	3
4	University of Abuja Gwagwalada	FCT Abuja	5
5	University of Agriculture Makurdi	Benue State	4
6	University of Ilorin	Kwara State	5
7	University of Jos	Plateau State	7
South-South Zone Federal Universities			
1	Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun	Delta State	2
2	Federal University Otuoke	Bayelsa State	3
3	University of Benin City	Edo State	5
4	University of Calabar	C/River State	5
5	University of Port-Harcourt	Rivers State	5
6	University of Uyo	Akwa Ibom State	4
7	Nigerian Maritime University, Okerenkeko	Delta State	3
South-East Zone Federal Universities			
1	Federal University Ndufu-Alike	Ebonyi State	4
2	Federal University of Technology, Owerri	Imo State	5
3	Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike	Abia State	4
4	Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka	Anambra State	5
5	University of Nigeria Nsukka	Enugu State	5
South-West Zone Federal Universities			
1	Federal University of Technology, Akure	Ondo State	6
2	Federal University Oye-Ekiti	Ekiti State	4
3	National Open University of Nigeria Lagos	Lagos State	4
4	Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife	Osun State	3
5	University of Agriculture Abeokuta	Ogun State	4
6	University of Ibadan	Oyo State	10
7	University of Lagos	Lagos State	5
North-West Zone Federal Universities			
1	Ahmadu Bello University Zaria	Kaduna State	5
2	Bayero University Kano	Kano State	6
3	Federal University Birnin Kebbi	Kebbi State	2

Table 1 (Continued). NFUs based on geo-political zones

S/N	Federal university	Location	n
4	Federal University Dutse	Jigawa State	3
5	Federal University Dutsin-Ma	Katsina State	3
6	Federal University Gusau	Zamfara State	2
7	Nigerian Defence Academy Kaduna	Kaduna State	3
8	Nigerian Police Academy Wudil	Kano State	3
9	Usman Danfodiyo University Sokoto	Sokoto State	2
10	Air force Institute of Technology, Kaduna	Kaduna State	2
Total		43	168

Note. n: Number of legal personnel & Source: Preliminary Study Findings (2017)

The study adopted a total enumeration technique to engage all the legal personnel working in the legal units at all NFUs. The selection of the legal staff was grounded on the fact that they serve as the primary focus of the study and were thought to be in the best position to offer information on the types of legal services provided. The study used a structured questionnaire through which data was elicited from the respondents. All the questionnaire items were developed by the researcher through a review of relevant literature and also with the assistance of some professionals in the areas of IL and measurement and evaluation. The legal personnel at NFUs responded to items majorly on four point rating scales, which ranged from very low, low, high, and very high.

To determine the level of internal consistency of the instrument's components, it was trial tested using 15 copies of the questionnaire administered in five state-owned universities namely; Benue State University, Makurdi, Kaduna State University, Kaduna, Kwara State University, Malete, Plateau State University, Bakkos and Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, formerly Kogi State University, Anyigba. The legal staff's replies were compiled using Cronbach's alpha technique and a reliability coefficient of 0.80 was derived. The high-reliability index suggested that the instrument was dependable and hence suited for the study. These research assistants were instructed on the method of administering and retrieving the instrument. Direct delivery and retrieval method was used to ensure maximum recovery of the instrument; 168 questionnaires were administered through face-to-face method within a month. After the administration of the instrument, the researcher and research assistants collated the instruments on the spot. The response was scored and used for data analysis.

The survey was recovered and checked for accuracy; 168 were distributed to respondents; 163 (97.00%) were duly completed and returned; as a result, they were forwarded for data processing and analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data produced for this study. Descriptive data like frequencies, weighted averages, and standard deviation were tallied to answer four study questions. Hypotheses that were formulated at a significance threshold of 0.05 were tested using Pearson's product moment correlation.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Out of 168 questionnaires administered, 163 (97.00%) copies were returned filled. Only five (3.00%) were not returned. The returned questionnaires were scrutinized and found usable for data, presentation and analysis.

Table 2 shows the results of responses about the level of IL skills in identifying the need for IRs. The study discovered that respondents' competencies in the ability to search IRs were very high. This result was obtained based on the weighted mean (2.90), which was greater than the decision mean (2.50). This implies that the legal personnel could identify their needed IRs. This study is corroborated by the findings of Carroll and Wallace (2002) and Oladejo et al. (2020) who agree that one of the many essential skills of a lawyer is the ability to research the law IRs. By further analysis, it could be understood that information searching abilities are mostly common among lawyers and other legal services practitioners since they are usually involved in information use and application in the course of legal services delivery. Based on the various data and analyses presented and the weighted mean (2.90) therefore, which is higher than the decision mean (2.50), it could be established that legal personnel's competency in searching IRs is considered very high. This conclusion implies that the legal personnel are competent in searching for IRs they need while engaging in their legal services.

Table 3 presents the various views of the participants on their ability to locate IRs. The study discovered that the legal personnel's ability to locate IRs was very high. The finding was based on the various data and analyses presented and the weighted mean (2.83) therefrom, which is greater than the decision mean (2.50). This finding suggests that IR location, which usually occurs after searching, was a major concern even

Table 2. Competency on ability to identify need for information resources by legal personnel

S/N	Competencies	VL=1	L=2	H=3	VH=4	n	M	SD	D
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)				
1	Capability to describe the info resources required	9 (5.5)	49 (30.1)	19 (11.7)	86 (52.8)	163	2.60	.883	H
2	Capability to formulate information requirement utilizing range of questioning abilities (i.e. who, what, where)	8 (4.9)	26 (16.0)	56 (34.4)	73 (44.8)	163	3.19	.879	VH
3	Capability to identify the exact ideas that comprises a research topic	18 (11.0)	31 (19.0)	97 (59.5)	17 (10.4)	163	2.69	.804	H
4	Ability to ascertain key ideas and terms that label the info requirement	16 (9.8)	2 (1.2)	85 (52.1)	60 (36.8)	163	3.16	.867	VH
5	Ability to know prevailing info that can be joined with original thought, investigation, and/or examination to produce fresh info	18 (11.0)	19 (11.7)	74 (45.4)	52 (31.9)	163	2.98	.939	H
6	Ability to searches over-all info sources to increase acquaintance with topic	18 (11.0)	31 (19.0)	97 (59.5)	17 (10.4)	163	2.69	.804	H
7	Capability to defines or modifies info need to attain a manageable focus	18 (11.0)	19 (11.7)	74 (45.4)	52 (31.9)	163	2.98	.939	H
Weighted mean							2.90		VH

Note. VL: Very low; L: Low; H: High; VH: Very high; M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation; n=Respondents' decision mean (2.50); D: Decision

Table 3. Competency on ability to search, locate, & access information resources by legal personnel

S/N	Competencies	VL=1	L=2	H=3	VH=4	n	M	SD	D
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)				
1	Ability to access different information resources with the use of information retrieval tools or systems gateways such as catalogue, OPAC	6 (3.7)	24 (14.7)	117 (71.8)	16 (9.8)	163	2.88	.616	H
2	Ability to decide where and how to find the information i need	11 (6.7)	56 (34.4)	57 (35.0)	39 (23.9)	163	2.76	.895	H
3	Ability to access diverse varieties of print sources (i.e. books, periodicals, encyclopedias, chronologies, etc.)	34 (20.9)	20 (12.3)	80 (49.1)	29 (17.8)	163	2.82	1.005	H
4	Ability to access different kinds of electronic resources (i.e. e-books, e-periodicals, e-encyclopedias, e-journals, etc.)	20 (12.3)	10 (6.1)	84 (51.5)	49 (30.1)	163	2.99	.926	H
5	Capability to utilize different search systems to access and recover info in a variety of formats	18 (11.0)	31 (19.0)	97 (59.5)	17 (10.4)	163	2.69	.804	H
Weighted mean							2.83		H

Note. VL: Very low; L: Low; H: High; VH: Very high; M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation; n=Respondents' decision mean (2.50); D: Decision

Table 4. Ability to evaluate information resources by legal personnel

S/N	Competencies	VL=1	L=2	H=3	VH=4	n	M	SD	D
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)				
1	Ability to assess information critically and recognize errors in logic	16 (9.8)	2 (1.2)	85 (52.1)	60 (36.8)	163	3.16	.867	VH
2	Ability to ascertain trustworthiness, currentness, & dependability of info	18 (11.0)	19 (11.7)	74 (45.4)	52 (31.9)	163	2.98	.939	H
3	Capability to assess info most suitable to the info require	18 (11.0)	31 (19.0)	97 (59.5)	17 (10.4)	163	2.69	.804	H
4	Ability to assess printed sources and resources	9 (5.5)	49 (30.1)	19 (11.7)	86 (52.8)	163	2.60	.883	H
5	Ability to assess online sources and resources	34 (20.9)	20 (12.3)	80 (49.1)	29 (17.8)	163	2.82	.995	H
6	Ability to consult other sources access to confirm the info collected	18 (11.0)	19 (11.7)	74 (45.4)	52 (31.9)	163	2.98	.939	H
7	Ability to draw conclusions based on the info collected and its usefulness	11 (6.7)	56 (34.4)	57 (35.0)	39 (23.9)	163	2.76	.895	H
Weighted mean							2.86		H

Note. VL: Very low; L: Low; H: High; VH: Very high; M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation; n=Respondents' decision mean (2.50); D: Decision

among legal personnel, and therefore, it has been taken as a skill that is required necessarily. The competency in locating IRs plays a significant role in IRs use.

For example, an information search is fruitless if the user is unable to locate the information item needed. The connection between the information search and location is symmetrical in a manner that, the end of one step begins the starting point of the other. The study's results are in line with those of Kirton and Barham (2005) and Tella et al. (2021), who contend that IL encompasses both enduring scholarship and practice development as well as the capacity to participate in the information society. They argue that IL goes afar merely learning how to utilize info tools and locate IRs. It, therefore, implies that information location competency is a steppingstone among other skills that lead to or can lead to information use. If such skills are very high, it then suggests that the skilled person has an advantage.

Table 4 provides the various responses of legal personnel regarding competency in their capability to evaluate IRs. The study identified that the legal personnel's ability to evaluate IRs was very high. This further reveals that legal personnel are competent in evaluating IRs they need while engaging in their legal services. Therefore, the findings of this study confirm the views and proposition of Lemmer (2013) who suggested that the competencies required of legal personnel, were credited to the "American Association of Law Libraries." They posit five fundamental skills for a legal information-savvy researcher. The five core values were to differentiate between moral and unethical usages of info, collect info employing effective and efficient methods of inquiry, assess info, properly utilize info to tackle a specific issue or requirements and understand the legal issues associated with the discovery, use, or application of info. By extension, Cukadar and Kahvecioglu (2012) suggest

that, with the rapid info explosion and emerging technologies that have transformed IRs from print to electronic as well as making the world a global village, legal personnel must have the capability to find and access, appraise and use both local and international legal IRs.

Table 5 presents the data about the competency relating to the selection of IRs from the replies of respondents. The study unravels that legal personnel's ability to select IRs was high. As can be observed, the selection process is a cumbersome activity, which requires serious decision-making and can be regarded as the connecting road that passes through all IL competencies. The level of literacy disposed of by the legal personnel under investigation regarding the selection of IRs is a confirmation of the point of view or opinion as of the time of study. This finding suggests that the skill in the selection of IRs was not as high as expected and was not low or very low to cause displeasure in information use. According to Steinberg et al. (2014), the choice of legal information is an important step in comprehending fundamental rights, democratizing legal knowledge, guiding advocacy efforts, and empowering citizens. In a similar development, Tuhumwire and Okello-Obura (2010) investigated the selection of legal information by lawyers in Uganda. The study identifies information that lawyers can select easily and those that are difficult to select depending on their respective skills. The aforementioned authors advise Ugandan lawyers to try and hire the services of research assistants who are knowledgeable about both law and library and info science. The researchers contend that their knowledge in both law and library and info science, will not only make it easier to choose pertinent materials but also make it easier to choose the necessary legal resources at the appropriate time.

Table 5. Competency on ability to select information resources by legal personnel

S/N	Competencies	VL=1	L=2	H=3	VH=4	n	M	SD	D
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)				
1	Capability to select a range and formats of IRs	7 (4.3)	36 (22.1)	100 (61.3)	20 (12.3)	163	2.97	.696	H
2	Ability to select the value and variances of possible resources in a multiplicity of formats (e.g., multimedia, database, website, data set, audio/ visual, book) resource for the task hand	17 (10.4)	17 (10.4)	8 (50.9)	36 (28.2)	163	2.80	.899	H
3	Understanding of how primary and secondary sources are used and valued differently for each legal activity (e.g., law books, law reports, etc.) and a capacity to distinguish between them	6 (3.7)	31 (19.0)	116 (71.2)	10 (6.1)	163	2.91	.600	H
4	Capability to decide whether required info is available and whether to look outside local resources (e.g., utilizing resources in other places; getting images, videos, text, or sound)	14 (8.6)	19 (11.7)	98 (60.1)	32 (19.6)	163	2.64	.807	H
5	The capacity to develop a reasonable overall plan and timeframe for info acquisition	34 (20.9)	20 (12.3)	80 (49.1)	29 (17.8)	163	2.82	1.005	H
6	The capacity to create selection strategies utilizing the necessary info access commands (e.g., Boolean operators, proximity, and truncation for search engines; internal organizers like indexes for books)	8 (4.9)	19 (11.7)	79 (48.5)	57 (35.0)	163	3.13	.805	VH
Weighted mean								2.88	H

Note. VL: Very low; L: Low; H: High; VH: Very high; M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation; n=Respondents' decision mean (2.50); D: Decision

Table 6. Ability to use information resources by legal personnel

S/N	Competencies	VL=1	L=2	H=3	VH=4	n	M	SD	D
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)				
1	Ability to use both print and electronic information resources	3 (1.8)	9 (5.5)	99 (60.7)	52 (31.9)	163	3.23	.631	VH
2	Ability to eloquent knowledge and expertise conveyed from prior experiences on the use of information to rendering legal services	14 (8.6)	19 (11.7)	98 (60.1)	32 (19.6)	163	2.64	.807	H
3	Ability to seamlessly combine old and new info, including quotations and paraphrases, to further the goals of the services to be provided	20 (12.3)	10 (6.1)	84 (51.5)	49 (30.1)	163	2.99	.926	H
4	Ability to use newly gathered information with previous information	5 (3.1)	20 (12.3)	91 (55.8)	47 (28.8)	163	3.10	.725	VH
5	Ability to paraphrase the information	14 (8.6)	19 (11.7)	98 (60.1)	32 (19.6)	163	2.64	.807	H
6	Ability to use information to make strategic legal decisions	6 (3.7)	24 (14.7)	117 (71.8)	16 (9.8)	163	2.88	.616	H
Weighted mean								2.91	VH

Note. VL: Very low; L: Low; H: High; VH: Very high; M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation; n=Respondents' decision mean (2.50); D: Decision

Table 6 presents data about the respondents' competency in the use of IRs for legal services. The study established that the ability to use IRs by legal personnel was very high. This revelation was produced from the data analyzed on which the weighted mean (2.91) was lesser than the decision mean (2.50). The ability to use information is very central in a wide range of research because it is connected to information-seeking behavior. Individuals exhibit different behavior when using IRs. Categorically, information usage ability can be very low, low, high, and very high, depending on other IL competencies, some of which are searching for ability, IR location ability, IR selection ability, etc.

Amudhavalli (2008) contends that the sheer volume of info will not, by itself, result in a more knowledgeable populace lacking a harmonizing set of skills required to use it wisely. Similarly, the views of Howard et al. (2018) cannot be under-judged when they postulated that the purpose of using information is to persuade a judge, jury or opposing parties that one position is stronger than the other(s). Information use requires a high level of competency to manifest its values and usefulness. The finding in this study can be based on a reiteration by Amusa et al. (2016) who maintain that using information is a crucial component of overcoming challenges faced by personnel. This encompasses verbal and nonverbal behaviors like asking for, avoiding, giving, evaluating, and interpreting info. This implies that the incapability to face

information-dependent services can be linked to the different levels of skills in using information and vice versa.

Table 7 presents the data collected from respondents regarding their ability to communicate IRs among themselves. The study found that the ability to communicate IRs by the respondents (legal personnel) was very high. By the nature of info and IRs, sharing and collaboration is one of the essence in information use. As legal personnel, it is always expected of them that they should deliver very well pertaining exploitation of information and resources embodying information at large. Naik and Padmini (2014) contend that IL demands not just learning novel abilities but also novel ways of thinking to gain significance from learning by applying what is learned as and when necessary. It is right to agree that communication is an active interaction with information, which makes the information process a complete circle by transmitting the outcome of knowledge learned. Wolff (2018) in his study, raises a position that is aligned with the current study, where he agrees that communication of information reflects the conclusion of the info process and demonstrates how a person acts with the data they have gathered.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The demands and uses of information by legal personnel are always very high since they mostly deal with judgments

Table 7. Competency on ability to communicate information resources by legal personnel

S/N	Competencies	VL=1	L=2	H=3	VH=4	n	M	SD	D
		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)				
1	Capability of writing a research report/an instructive presentation report	4(2.5)	44(27.0)	90(55.2)	25(15.3)	163	2.83	.705	H
2	Ability to make an oral presentation	5(3.1)	63(38.7)	80(49.1)	15(9.2)	163	2.64	.691	H
3	Ability to recognize usage of info sources in communicating legal services	6(3.7)	12(7.4)	40(24.5)	105(64.4)	163	3.50	.789	VH
4	Ability to select a suitable level and format (i.e. written, oral, & visual) to communicate with the audience (colleagues & public)	11(6.7)	29(17.8)	81(49.7)	42(25.8)	163	2.94	.841	H
5	Ability to communicate undoubtedly and with a style that aids the purposes of the intended audience	7(4.3)	74(45.4)	64(39.3)	18(11.0)	163	2.57	.745	H
Weighted mean							2.89		H

Note. VL: Very low; L: Low; H: High; VH: Very high; M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation; n=Respondents' decision mean (2.50); D: Decision

that require a lot of evidence. Based on these facts, IRs that are desired and required by legal personnel are of different categories, such as books, journals, law files, judgments, constitutions, and a host of others. However, information cannot just be obtained and used on a platter of gold without being searched and sourced. This is, where IL competency becomes a matter of serious concern. No matter how many collections are developed to serve the info requirements of the legal personnel, if they lack the searching, selecting, evaluating, using, and communicating skills, their productivity and level of performance will be poor. The following suggestions were offered in light of the study's findings:

1. IL training should be considered a priority by both legal personnel and librarians to ensure smooth cooperation that would facilitate legal services delivery.
2. IL training should be made more regular, consistent, holistic and widely embraced. That is, any form of IL training should be implemented in both conventional and digital forms so that no individual would be left out.
3. Constant and recurrent review of IL competency of the legal personnel should be prioritized so that changes in information seeking, searching, selecting, evaluating, using, and communicating behavior of legal personnel can be properly understood by librarians. The implication is that librarians would be able to serve the legal personnel effectively and efficiently.

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