



ACCESS AND UTILISATION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR
EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE BY LEGAL PRACTITIONERS
IN NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE AND FEDERAL HIGH COURT, ABUJA

BY

Evelyn Iroabuchi ENWEREM, CLN¹

LIBRARY AND DOCUMENTATION DEPARTMENT NATIONAL JUDICIAL
INSTITUTE, ABUJA¹.

Email: Lynpleasanty1@gmail.com¹

Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology 18 (2) 2025

<https://doi.org/10.70118/jaist.202501802.5>

Abstract:

Purpose: *This study investigates the level of access to, and pattern of utilization of information resources by legal practitioners at the National Judicial Institute (NJI) and the Federal High Court in Abuja. It aims to identify the types of resources frequently used, perceived barriers to access, and the impact of these factors on the effectiveness of judicial administration.*

Design/Methodology/Approach: *The research method adopted was descriptive survey research design. The information collected through questionnaire was analysed, organized and presented in descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation.*

Findings: *The findings indicate that while traditional resources like law reports and textbooks remain highly valued, there is a strong and growing dependence on digital legal databases (such as Law Pavilion and Legal Pedia). Significant barriers to effective utilisation were identified, including: insufficient funding for resource acquisition, intermittent power supply, inadequate internet connectivity, and a need for continuous training on advanced database searching technique.*

Implication: *The study concludes that robust and uninterrupted access to both print and electronic information resources is indispensable for the effective administration of justice in Nigeria, and recommends increased institutional investment in digital infrastructure, mandatory ongoing training on information for legal practitioners and the development of integrated digital libraries within the Nigerian Judiciary.*

Originality/Value: *The research provides original empirical evidence from a critical yet under-researched segment of the Nigerian justice system by establishing exact challenges faced by legal professionals, offers a strategic roadmap for investing in information infrastructure and training, and ultimately contributing to enhanced judicial efficiency, and the quality of legal decisions.*

Keywords: *Access, Utilization, Information Resources, Administration of Justice, and Legal Practitioners, Judicial Efficiency.*

Introduction

The administration of justice is a cornerstone of any democratic society,

serving as the primary mechanism for upholding the rule of law, protecting rights, and resolving disputes. The efficacy of this process is profoundly dependent on the quality of judicial decisions, which in turn, rests upon a foundation of comprehensive legal research, meticulous analysis, and a thorough understanding of precedent and contemporary jurisprudence. Central to this intellectual endeavour is the legal practitioner's unfettered access to, and proficient utilisation of a wide array of information resources. From authoritative law reports and statutes to scholarly journals and cutting-edge digital databases, these resources constitute the essential toolkit for judges, and legal researchers tasked with the weighty responsibility of dispensing justice.

In Nigeria, the world's most populous black nation and Africa's largest economy, the judiciary bears a particular significant burden. It operates within a complex legal system blending English common law, traditional customs, and statutory laws, while simultaneously grappling with a rapidly expanding and evolving body of case laws. Within this context, institutions like the National Judicial Institute (NJI), with the mandate for continuous training of judicial officers, judicial staff, and the Federal High Court, one of the Country's busiest and most jurisdictionally diverse courts are at the forefront of this challenge. The ability of legal practitioners within these institutions to perform their duties effectively is a critical determinant of public trust in the judicial system and the overall socio-economic development of the nation.

However, the ideal of seamless access to information often confronts the reality of resource constraints. Despite the global shift towards digitization and online legal research platforms, many judicial systems in developing countries, including Nigeria, face significant hurdles. These include, but

are not limited to inadequate funding for library resources, unreliable power supply, poor internet connectivity, and a lack of continuous training on modern research technologies. A gap exists between the recognised importance of information resources and the empirical understanding of the actual patterns of access, utilisation and the specific barriers faced by legal practitioners in key Nigerian institutions. Without a clear diagnosis of these challenges, any intervention aimed at straightening the judicial system risks being misdirected.

It is against this backdrop that this study is situated. This research seeks to critically investigate the nexus between information resources and the effective administration of justice by focusing on the legal practitioners at the National Judicial Institute and the Federal High Court in Abuja, Nigeria's capital. The study is driven by the need to move beyond anecdotal evidence and provide a data-driven analysis of how these professionals access and use information in their daily work.

The Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this research are:

1. To identify methods of accessing information resources by legal practitioners in National Judicial Institute and the Federal High Court, Abuja for effective justice administration.
2. To assess the purposes of utilizing information resources for effective justice administration by legal practitioners in National Judicial Institute and the Federal High Court, Abuja.
3. To examine the challenges militating against access and utilization of information resources for effective administration of justice by the legal practitioners.

Statement of the Study

Inadequate utilisation of information resources by legal practitioners hampers effective administration of justice, one of the pillars on which development and advancement of nations hinge. Justice administration entails the processes by which the legal system of a government is executed. One of the benefits of effective justice administration in any given geographical authority is the creation of a fair, just and level-playing field for people to thrive in their chosen field of endeavour.

Nigeria's justice administration is encumbered by several problems, ranging from inadequate access and utilisation of information to infrastructural issues. This leads to unnecessary delays in the adjudication of cases; the inability of making copies of judgements available to litigants by courts after the seven-day' statutory requirements for clients to get copies of judgment delivered. Poor access and utilisation of information by legal practitioners also lead to poor handling of cases by counsels, and unnecessary adjournment of cases.

Going by the dynamic nature of human society, and the attended desire for every individual to exploit his environment maximally, there is no doubt that an effective justice administration is central to the smooth-running of any society in order to improve rule of law and also reduce the negative influence of right-is-might to the barest minimum.

The above scenario ensures that effectiveness and efficiency of information services offered to legal practitioners are paramount to the effective administration of justice, thus the study is set to look into the access and utilisation of information resources by legal practitioners in order to meet the justice need of the society.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the methods of accessing information resources for effective administration of justice by the legal practitioners in National Judicial Institute and the Federal High Court, Abuja?
2. What are the purposes of utilizing information resources for effective administration of justice by the legal practitioners in National Judicial Institute and the Federal High Court, Abuja?
3. What are the challenges militating against access and utilization of information resources for effective administration of justice by the legal practitioners in National Judicial Institute and the Federal High Court, Abuja?

Review of Literature

Related and relevant literatures have been reviewed under different sub-headings:

Access and Utilization of Information:

Access and utilization of relevant information, libraries and indeed information centres of whichever type such as institutional, private, royal/palace, monastery, special and public libraries are established to house, manage and provide varieties of information resources and services regardless of their format and packaging for easy location, identification, retrieval and access, to satisfy varied of information needs. ICT can generally be conceived as automated and virtual products and services that facilitate information generation, identification, location, security, storage, retrieval, dissemination, access and utilization, Alshamari, & Althobaiti, (2024). Most importantly however, physical location is no longer a necessary pre-requisite for access and use. Thus, the digital age library is now defined not by the number of books held in the collection, but by how electronic resources can be accessed across platforms and from remote locations.

Access and Utilisation of Information Resources for Effective Administration of Justice by Legal Practitioners in National Judicial Institute and Federal High Court, Abuja

Accessibility of library and information resources is locating and retrieving a piece of information from the storage medium by the user. If information is accessible to the legal practitioners in law libraries, it could be used for their cases.

Tshabalaba, (2020) observes that the application of computer and other ICT facilities in libraries and information centres ensures speed in information processing, management, access and utilization, provision of enhanced information storage space, security, accuracy and reliability of information database. Mohammed, (2016), has it that, since time immemorial, information access and transfer for utilization has been taking place in different perspectives depending on its importance, relevance, type of need, and the intended audience. Attempts to facilitate access and transfer of information for use can be traced back to the historical oral settings of ancient times when strategic information were passed orally from one person, a generation of people, culture, family, community and clan to the other.

It would be difficult to overemphasize the pride of place that information is to the legal profession and the administration of justice in Nigeria. Therefore, making access very easy and handy must be a priority of practitioners of both law and librarianship.

Moruf, & Olajojo, (2017), emphasizes the importance and the indispensability of law information sources to legal scholarship by terming the law library as the laboratory for legal profession.

Such as law books, law reports, legislation and statutes, legal periodicals, government publications, reference materials and other inter-related non-legal books, e-resources, unpublished works of law, for example reference papers, theses on law, and so on.

Methods of accessing library resources according to Nwobu, & George, (2024) includes online public access catalogue (OPAC) users services, bibliography services, current awareness services, document delivery, inter-library loans, audio visual services, photocopying services, e-mail, telephone, scanning. Lawyers also access legal information from court libraries, private law libraries, national and governmental libraries, book stores, newspapers, journals, press, among others, as stated by Olorunfemi, (2015)

It would be difficult to overemphasize the pride of place that information is to the legal profession and the administration justice in Nigeria. Therefore, making access very easy and handy must be a priority of practitioners of both law and librarianship.

Legal Information Resources:

Legal information generally is information about the law that does not apply to an individual's specific situation. In the opinion to Asalika, (2022). Legal Information can be defined as the requirement or right establishment by law which resides in all electronic and written records.

Legal information consists of laws and rules, case laws and legal Literatures. Legal information is equally important to ordinary people in the society because law is supposed to be understood and used by everybody including non-legal scholars. Legal Information is of three types of identity data. It includes information about the legal relationship between the enterprise and the principal; social security number, compensation, contract start date, termination date, etc.

Different epistemologies have different views regarding the importance of different kinds of information sources. Akinyemi, (2017), there are information sources that have not been diluted,

manipulated or rearranged. They are original in nature. These materials includes, constitutions of nations, statutes, Acts, rules, ordinances, federal and state government bodies, parliament debates/proceedings - both upper and lower chambers, gazettes – both federal and state governments, court judgements/reports – of the supreme court, state high courts, tribunals, special courts commissions, legal periodicals, government publications and other similar documents. A number of publications are brought out from time to time by the federal as well as state governments. Most of them consist of reports of various committees and commissions.

The reports of such bodies are of great help in any legal research and are valuable resources for the Judicial-library. However, in the opinion of Anaeme, (2015), secondary sources are the information resources extracted from the primary sources after they have been manipulated, diluted and rearranged. These are Textbooks, periodicals, Journals. Popular examples include:

Encyclopedia of forms and precedents, Command Law Series, Atkins Court Forms, Archibolds Pleading Evidence and Practice in Criminal Cases, Aguda - Practice and procedure of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal and High Courts of Nigeria etc (by local and foreign publishers)

Legal information as the requirement or right establishment by law, which resides in all electronics and written records, Tuhumuwire, & Okill – Obura, (2010). Legal information consists of laws and rules, case law and legal literature. Lawyers on the other hand can be defined as knowledge workers as well as professionals, who have gained knowledge through formal education and through learning on the Job.

In a research conducted in Kenya, Khan and Bhatti, (2011), discovered that legal practitioners need and seek

information for the purpose of case preparation, research, preparation for presentation at a seminar and workshop, improving personal knowledge, administrative activities, professional needs, leisure and for writing books.

Modiba, & Boloka, (2018), posits that a lawyers' work is determined by the legal needs of the clients which in turn influences the information needs of the lawyer. The law library is for users to gain access to its abundant wealth of information resources and library services which are expected to enhance access to library resources through selective dissemination of information (SDI) in relevant research areas, effective reference service, current awareness services, library orientation, document delivery, email alerts, inter library loans.

Legal Practitioners:

In the opinion of Joan, (2004) states that a Lawyer, in the traditional English system is, a member of one of the recognised branches of practice. Graner goes further to say that legal practitioners may be either barristers, special pleaders not at the bar, certified conveyancers or solicitors. The Encyclopaedic Australian Legal Dictionary defines lawyer as a barrister or solicitor, a person qualified to practice law. The term is used in everyday parlance to describe members of the legal profession, while the term “legal practitioner,” being more precise, is most commonly found in legislation.

In the opinion of Malami, (2021), Right To Practice As Legal Practitioners Is As Follows: A person entitled in accordance with the provisions of the Decree to practice as a barrister or as a barrister and solicitor, either generally or for the purposes of any particular office or proceedings. The Decree provides the following three ways in which a person may become entitled to particular office or proceedings. The emphasis on

Malami, (2021) also states that the duty of the legal practitioner in the court may be divided broadly into (a) his duty as an officer of the court to assist the court in the administration of Justice (b) his duty to observe courtroom decorum and etiquette. Abdulmumini, (2023). says that legal practice is not a vocation, it is a business. But it is not merely a business, it is a professional business and practitioners must abide by the rules of professional conduct in carrying out the business. Lawyers need to acquire vocational skills during legal education to enable them engage in effective legal practice.

According to Oluwatoyin, (1998). legal education in Nigeria involves two stages: academic and vocational. The academic stage is undertaken mainly at Nigerian universities, while the vocational stage is undertaken at the law school. The entry requirements for Nigerian universities and the law school were considered, as were the conditions that must be satisfied between being called to the Nigerian Bar. At both stages of legal education, black letter substantive and procedural law subjects are being taught, unlike in advanced common law jurisdictions. Vocational skills are not taught at either the academic or vocational stage of legal education. It is contended that vocational skills and management principles and technique should be taught as a single subject at the vocational stage of legal education, and that the subject should be called legal practice and management.

According to Madiba, (201), those studying for legal profession can be counted on how to have a solid knowledge of state and federal constitution, statutes, court rules and access to relevant legal information. Beyond that, the scope of each practice determines the specific legal information for ready reference and research.

Administration of Justice:

According to Garner (2014), Judiciary is the branch of government responsible for interpreting the laws and administering Justice. This is to say that judiciary stands as the bedrock of any economy; justice must be administered in every aspect of the society. Malemi (2021), indeed for normal life to go on and for commerce and every legitimate activities of life to be possible and thrive, there has to be in place: i. Laws, ii. Courts, iii. Personnel of law, and iv. An administration of Justice, that is a law enforcement system, including the courts, personnel of law, including sanctions and a penal or correction system and facilities in place. The aftermath of this intervention is that without laws, courts, law personnel and the administrators of justice, who do their best to restrain the powerful and protect the powerless; societies will be nasty, short and brutish. States maintain law and order and establish peace and social security. Administration of justice is one of the primary functions of state; the main function of the administration of justice is protection of individual's rights, enforcement of laws and punishment of wrongdoer.

In Oluwakayode, (2018), a properly administrated Justice system must also be able to guarantee the individual rights and freedom, which are provided for under the constitution. It must be able to guarantee the personal security of individuals, nationals and foreigners within Nigeria. It must be in a position to resolve disputes involving the state representatives and individuals, and to protect the latter against arbitrary exercise of the power of the enforcer, most importantly, a properly administered Justice system must be able to play its rightful role in the combat against corruption. Garner, (2014), states that administration of justice is maintenance of right within a political community by means of the physical force of the sanction of force to the rule right.

Iyalaye, (2021). states that Judiciary is constituted as the ultimate interpreter of the constitution and it is assigned the delicate task of determining the extent and scope of the power conferred by the constitution on each branch of the government, which are the limits on the exercise of such power and whether any action of any branch transgresses such limits. It is also a basic principle of the rule of law which permeates every provision of the constitution and which forms its very core and essence that the exercise of power by the executive or any other authority must not only be conditioned by the constitution but also be in accordance with the law, and it is the Judiciary which has to ensure that the law is observed that, there is compliance with the requirement of law on the part of the government. In simple words, administration of justice generally means the equality of being just, for example the awarding of what is due, consists of impartiality, integrity or rightness etc.

In the view of Iyalaye, (2021), the Judiciary discharges this functions by the exercise of the power of Judicial review, which is a most potent weapon in the hands of the Judiciary for the maintenance of the rule of law and according to the international commission of jurist, the rule of law is a dynamic concept which should be employed not only to safeguard and advance . This is to say that in Yusuf, (2006), states that recognition of the need to do justice in the Nigerian society, the constitution of the land loudly proclaims that the independence, impartiality and integrity of courts of law and easy accessibility thereto shall be secured and maintained. It is therefore the expectation of every member of the Nigerian society to look up to the country of Justice. The doing of Justice is therefore a demand which every person living in a society feels are his by right, namely that the courts are established to

defend him by upholding the rule of law against tyranny, arbitrariness of the executive and administrative power of government contrary to the constitution and other laws of the land and to protect the civil right and liberty.

In Malemi (2021), that states the term or phrase legal system means, the laws, courts, personnel of the law and administration of justice system in a given state, country or geographical entity. Essentially a legal system is the laws, courts, personnel of the law and the administration of justice system existing in a given state, country or geographical entity. Therefore, Nigerian legal system is the laws, courts, personnel of the law and the administration of justice in Nigeria. Nigeria legal system is the study of these four components.

Types of administration of justice from SRD Law Notes: (a) Criminal Administration of Justice: Administration of criminal justice deals with the public wrongs. The administration criminal justice is to punish the offender. Punishment may be described as the infliction by state Authority, of consequence normally regarded as an evil (For example imprisonment or death) on an individual found to be legally guilty of a crime.

(b) Civil Administration of Justice: The main objective of the administration of justice is to provide relief by way of compensation or other relief to the injured party. The rights enforced by civil proceedings are of two kinds, primary rights and sanctioning rights, primary rights are those rights which come into being after the violation of a primary right. A primary right, is right arising out of conduct or as a jus in rem. A sanctioning the right is one which arises out of the violation of another right, for example, if x enters into a valid contract, his right to have the contract performed is a primary right. If the contract is broken, his right to damages for the loss caused to him

for the breach of contract is sanctioning right. A primary right may be enforced by specific enforcement. A sanctioning right is enforced by sanctioning enforcement.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. According to Nworgu, (2015), the descriptive survey is a study that aims at collecting data on, and describing it in a systematic manner, the characteristic feature, or facts about a given population. The design was considered appropriate for the study because it was designed to describe the status of access and utilization of information resources for effective administrative, functions among legal practitioners in National Judicial Institute and the Federal High Court, Abuja.

The study adopted descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to analyze data derived from the questionnaire that addressed research questions 1- 3. To determine decision for each item, the response modes, real limit of numbers, and rating scale were used,

The population of this study comprises of 427 legal practitioners that consist of Lawyers and Judges in the National Judicial Institute and the Federal High Court, Abuja.

The instruments used for data collection for the study was questionnaire,

which was titled Questionnaire on Access and Utilization of Information Resources (QAUIR). The questionnaire is structured on 4-point rating scale and it has 3 clusters. **Cluster A** is on the methods of accessing information resources for effective administration justice by legal practitioners. The response option is SA – Strongly Agree; A - Agree; D - Disagree; SD – Strongly Disagree. It has 18 items. **Cluster B** dealt on purposes of utilizing information resources in the administration of justice. The response option is SA – Strongly Agree; A - Agree; D - Disagree; SD – Strongly Disagree. It has 12 items. **Cluster C** is on the challenges militating against access and utilization of information resources for effective administration of justice. The response option is SA - Strongly Agree; A - Agree; D - Disagree; SD - Strongly Disagree.

Results

This presents in tables the results that were derived from the data analysis, and the summary of major findings in line with the research questions that guided the study.

Research Question 1: What are the methods of accessing information resources for effective administration of justice by legal practitioners.

Table 1
Mean Rating of Legal Practitioners on the Methods of Accessing Information Resources for Effective Administration of Justice

SN	Items	NJI	STD	FHC	STD	Mean Sum	STD	Rank	Dec
1	Use of Online Public Access Catalogue	3.48	.67	3.59	.57	3.56	.61	1 st	SA
2	Use of indexes	3.50	.66	3.58	.49	3.55	.55	2 nd	SA
3	Use of card catalogues	3.48	.67	3.55	.60	3.53	.62	3 rd	SA
4	Borrowing from the library	3.51	.56	3.53	.60	3.52	.59	4 th	SA
5	File transfer	3.32	.70	3.55	.55	3.48	.61	5 th	A
6	Scanning of files	3.37	.71	3.45	.62	3.43	.65	6 th	A

7	Borrowing from colleagues	3.30	.70	3.45	.58	3.41	.62	7 th	A
8	Consultation of Current Awareness Services of the library	3.45	.50	3.40	.59	3.41	.56	7 th	A
9	Copying of files	3.39	.70	3.40	.61	3.40	.64	8 th	A
10	Use of abstracts	3.26	.75	3.37	.58	3.33	.63	9 th	A
11	Use of publishers catalogue	3.15	.80	3.18	.62	3.17	.68	10 th	A
12	Use of bibliographic sources	3.01	.70	3.23	.59	3.16	.63	11 th	A
13	Subscription to fee-based journals	3.14	.68	3.04	.55	3.07	.60	12 th	A
14	Use of Directory of Open Access Books	2.81	.82	3.00	.81	2.94	.81	13 th	A
15	Use of book reviews	2.86	1.01	2.91	.83	2.90	.89	14 th	A
16	Use of institutional databases' account	2.76	1.01	2.74	1.03	2.75	1.02	15 th	A
17	Consultation of document delivery services	2.84	.94	2.51	.93	2.61	.94	16 th	A
Cluster Mean						3.24	.68		A

STD = Standard Deviation, Dec = Decision, SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree

Table 1: shows result on the methods of accessing information resources for effective administration of justice. It clearly indicates that Online Public Access Catalogue, use of indexes, use of card catalogues, and borrowing from the library are the strongly agreed rated methods of accessing information resources. Whereas, file transfer, scanning of files, borrowing from colleagues, consulting Current Awareness Services, copying of files, etc are the methods rated agreed. The cluster mean

3.24 ±.68 indicates that the legal practitioners agree that the identified methods are used in accessing information resources for effective administration of justice. The standard deviation that range from .55 – 1.02 shows high variations in the legal practitioners responses.

Research Question 2: What are the purposes of utilizing information resources for effective administration of justice by the legal practitioners?

Table 2

Mean Rating of Legal Practitioners on the Purposes of Utilizing Information Resources for Effective Administration of Justice

SN	Items	NJI	STD	FHC	STD	Mean Sum	STD	Rank	Dec
1	Adjudication of cases	3.72	.58	3.63	.59	3.66	.59	1 st	SA
2	Presenting facts during prosecution of cases	3.61	.53	3.57	.68	3.58	.64	2 nd	SA
3	Presenting facts during defending of cases	3.56	.56	3.40	.68	3.45	.65	3 rd	A
4	Writing legal reports	3.43	.56	3.29	.68	3.33	.64	4 th	A
5	For electoral tribunals	3.30	.77	3.34	.71	3.33	.73	4 th	A
6	Research	3.30	.68	3.25	.76	3.26	.74	5 th	A
7	Getting acquainted with	3.36	.59	3.17	.61	3.23	.61	6 th	A

Access and Utilisation of Information Resources for Effective Administration of Justice by Legal Practitioners in National Judicial Institute and Federal High Court, Abuja

	constitutional law								
8	To get acquainted with previous judgements	3.14	.59	3.17	.73	3.16	.69	7 th	A
9	Filing of cases	3.06	.82	2.82	.88	2.89	.87	8 th	A
10	Getting acquainted with acts of the parliaments	2.82	.69	2.83	.76	2.83	.74	9 th	A
11	Deciding of cases	2.79	.98	2.57	1.04	2.64	1.02	10 th	A
12	Getting acquainted with Bye laws	2.60	.92	2.43	.92	2.48	.93	11 th	D
Cluster Mean						3.15	.73		A

Table 2: shows result on the purposes of utilizing information resources for effective administration by the legal practitioners. It indicates that 2 of the purposes of utilising information resources for adjudication of cases and presenting facts during the persecution of cases were rated strongly agree. Whereas, presenting facts during defending of cases, writing legal reports and for electoral tribunals, human rights information, etc were rated agree. The cluster mean $3.15 \pm .73$ shows

that the legal practitioners agree that the identified purposes of utilising information resources for effective administration. The standard deviation that range from .59 – 1.01 shows high response differences among the legal practitioners.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges militating against access and utilization of information resources for effective administration of justice by the legal practitioners.

Table 3
Mean Rating of Legal Practitioners on the Challenges Militating Against Access and Utilization of Information Resources for Effective Administration of Justice

SN	Items	NJI	STD	FHC	STD	Mean Sum	STD	Rank	Dec
1	Poor library collections	3.68	.53	3.68	.60	3.69	.58	1 st	SA
2	Poor internet connectivity	3.65	.54	3.64	.60	3.64	.58	2 nd	SA
3	Inadequate ICT Skills	3.62	.53	3.64	.62	3.63	.59	3 rd	SA
4	Irregular Power Supply	3.50	.71	3.56	.73	3.54	.72	4 th	SA
5	Poor Conduct of User-Education	3.39	.61	3.31	.67	3.34	.65	5 th	A
6	Low knowledge of information sources	3.32	.63	3.35	.70	3.33	.68	6 th	A
7	Low information literacy skills among legal professionals	3.19	.67	3.35	.74	3.29	.72	7 th	A
8	Failure of legal institutions to subscribe to fee-based information sources	3.30	.66	3.24	.68	3.26	.67	8 th	A
9	Poor data mining skills	3.17	.68	3.06	.68	3.10	.68	9 th	A
10	Lack of Basic Information Search Skills	3.12	.82	3.06	.75	3.08	.77	10 th	A
11	High cost of information sources	3.07	.86	3.03	.73	3.05	.77	11 th	A

Cluster Mean	3.35	.67	A
---------------------	-------------	------------	----------

Table 3: shows the result on the challenges militating against access and utilization of information resources for effective administration of justice. It reveals that 4 of the identified challenges poor library collections, poor internet connectivity, inadequate ICT skills, and irregular power supply were rated strongly agree. The other challenges were rated agree such as poor conduct of user-Education, low knowledge of information sources, low information literacy skills among legal professionals, failure of legal institutions to subscribe to fee-based information resources, etc. the cluster mean $3.35 \pm .67$ indicates that there are challenges that militate against the access and utilization of information resources for effective administration of justice that need to be addressed in the libraries. The standard deviation. 58 -77 shows low variations among the legal practitioners' responses.

Discussion on the Findings

The discussion of the findings is presented in line with the specific objectives and research questions that guided the study under the following subheadings:

Methods of Accessing Information resources for Effective Administration of Justice

The study found that the most used methods of accessing information resources for effective administration of justice are the use of Online Public Access Catalogue, use of indexes, use of card catalogues, and borrowing from the library, file transfer, scanning of files, borrowing form colleagues, consulting Current Awareness Services, and copying of files. Similar findings that support this finding is Anyaogu, (2014). who found that the methods of obtaining accessing information resources are browsing on the shelves and subject/author/title catalogue by

Postgraduate law students, Asalika, (2022). who found that the methods used by the lawyers to access legal information include visiting law libraries, telephones and using research assistants. It is notable that these methods are major functions or services of the library; therefore, it is pertinent that law librarians should ensure that they are adequately made available and accessible for the legal practitioners to use.

Purposes of Utilizing Information Resources for Effective Administration of Justice

The study found that the purposes of utilizing information resources by the legal practitioners are for the adjudication of cases, presenting facts during the persecution of cases, presenting facts during defending of cases, writing legal reports and for electoral tribunals, human rights information. Supporting the finding, Bhardwaja and Madhusudhanb, (2013). found that the main purpose of using information resources is for prosecution of cases. The law librarians need to bear in mind these various purposes for which legal professionals utilize information resources when selecting and providing information resources and sources in the law libraries. This will help and guide them to select the relevant and useful resources that will enhance legal practices and effective administration of justice.

Challenges Militating Against Access and Utilization of Information Resources for Effective Administration of Justice

The study found that poor library collections, poor internet connectivity, inadequate ICT skills, irregular power supply, poor conduct of user education, low knowledge of information resources, low information literacy skills among legal

professionals, failure of legal institutions to subscribe to fee-based information sources, etc are the challenges militating against access and utilization of information sources. In support of this finding, Olorunfemi, (2014). found that erratic power supply, Internet connectivity problems; slow downloading speed; non-subscription to law databases; and inadequate funding to provide quality ICT resources in the universities' law libraries. Effective administration of justice could be hampered when there are impediments to access and utilization of legal information sources and resources. Library Internet connectivity issues need to be resolved and improved to facilitate easy and quick access and utilization of information resources in law libraries.

Recommendation

In line with the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance access to, and utilisation of information resource for effective administration of justice::

1. The National Judicial Institute and Federal High Court should prioritise digital infrastructure by allocating specific budgetary provisions for upgrading IT infrastructure including providing stable, high-speed internet connectivity and backup power systems (inverter/solar panels within court premises and the NJI to ensure uninterrupted access to online legal databases.
2. The National Judicial Institute and Federal High Court should also institutionalized continuous training workshop on advanced digital literacy and effective search strategies for legal practitioners.
3. The policymakers (National Judicial Council, Federal Government) should increase funding allocations for the

judiciary, specifically earmarked for the acquisition and updating of both the print and electronic resources across all courts.

4. The policymakers should also facilitate strategic partnerships that encourage public-private collaboration with leading database providers to secure nationwide subscription at discounted rates.
5. The library and information service managers should adopt a hybrid collection development policy that ensures aggressive expanding of digital collection, maintain and selectively update core print collections to cater to all preferences.

Conclusion

This study conclusively establishes that access to comprehensive and contemporary information resources is not merely an ancillary support function but a fundamental pillar for the effective administration of justice. The research undertaken with legal practitioners at the National Judicial Institute and the Federal High Court in Abuja has illuminated a clear nexus between the ease of accessing legal information and the efficacy with which judicial duties are performed.

While a strong appetite for digital resources exists, significant barriers, including infrastructural deficits, financial constraints and a need for specialised training hinder their optimal utilisation. These challenges, if unaddressed, risk creating a justice system hampered by inefficiency and reliant on potentially outdated information, ultimately undermining its integrity and public confidence.

Therefore, overcoming these barriers requires a deliberate, multi-stakeholder approach. By implementing the recommended strategies focused on continuous capacity building and policy

reform, the Nigerian judiciary can empower its legal practitioners with the tools necessary for rigorous legal research.

References

- Abdulumuni A.O. (2023). Towards regaining learning and correcting learning's in the Legal profession in Nigeria. Journal: works.bepress.com.
- Akinyemi, N. (2017). Judicial Library Services in Nigeria, issues and challenges. presented at the Biennial National Workshop for Judicial Librarians at National Judicial Institute Abuja. May 8-12, P.3-5
- Alshamari, M.A. & Althobaiti, M.M. (2024) Usability evaluation of wearable smart watches using customised heuristics and system usability scale score. Research gate.
- Anaeme, F.O. (2015). Strengthening the Nigerian Judiciary Libraries, A call for standards. A paper delivered at the *National Workshop for Judicial Libraries* 27-31 July organized by the National Judicial Institute.
- Anyago, U. (2014). Postgraduate law students information needs and seeking behaviour: Implications for improved provision of resources and services in Nigerian Institute of advanced legal studies library in Lagos state. *Library Philosophy and Practice (ejournal)*. Retrieved from: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1128>
- Asalika, E.L (2022). Legal Information Sources. Master of Science in information science report. Unpublished.
- Bhardwaja, R.K. & Madhusudhan, M. (2013). Open access legal information sources and their use by students of National Law University *Annals of Library and Information Studies* 60(4), 19-314
- Garner, A.B (2014), Black's Law Dictionary, 864-977, 1033
- Iyalaye, D.A. (2021) *Modern Nigerian Legal System* 3rd ed. Snaap press Ltd, Enugu 31,32, 202 -204.
- Reiz, J.M. (2014). *Dictionary for Library and Information Science*, 355.
- Khan, S.A. & Bhati, R. (2011). Information seeking Behaviour of Law practitioners, A survey of Behawalpur City, Library philosophy and practice. <http://unllib.unl.edu/lpp>
- Madiba, T.M. & Boloka, M.J. (2018) The usage of government law library in South Africa
Federal High Court of Nigeria Publication, published by Federal High (2019) 1-5
- Malemi, E. (2021). The Nigerian legal system: Text and Cases 3rd ed Lagos Princeton publisher co, 2
- Modiba, T.M. & Boloka, M.J. (2019). Legal information needs and seeking habits of lawyers in Kenya, A case study, *library Management* 21 (5).
- Mohammed, Z. (2016). Reaching the reach and the unreached. guest paper presented at the 10th JireOlanlokun Memorial lecture organized by the Board of Trustees of JireOlanlokun Educational foundation. Held at the Julius Berger Hall, University of Lagos on September 8.p.3
- Moruf, H.A. & Olajojo, P.O (2017). *Can Libraries survive digital age*, paper

Access and Utilisation of Information Resources for Effective Administration of Justice by Legal Practitioners in National Judicial Institute and Federal High Court, Abuja

- presented at the Maiden Valedictory lecture of the Nigerian Institute of advance legal studies (NIALS) in Lagos, the Nation Tuesday, May 24,2011. P10
- Nwobu, B.K & George, E.S (2024). Access to information resources using the online public access catalogue (OPAC) in the 21st century, the catalyst journal of library and information literacy 3 (3),
- Nworgu, B. G. (2015). Educational Research. Basic Issues and Methodology 3rd ed. Nsukka, University Trust Publishers 20-25
- Oluwakayode, O.B. (2018). Administration of justice in Nigeria: Analysing the dominant legal ideology, journal of law and conflict resolution, academic journal.
- Olorunfemi, D.Y. (2015). The use of law information sources in legal research by Nigerian Universities law students. *Journal of Balkan libraries union* 15-23<http://www.blkenlibraries.org>. Journal
- Oluwatoyin, Doherty, (1998). *Legal practice and management in Nigeria*. Cavendish publishing Ltd, London. 15
- Tuhumwire, I.&Okelle-Obura (2010). Assessment of Legal Information needs and access problems of lawyers in Uganda. *Library Philosophy and practice* (-Journal). 382
- Tshabalaba, D. (2020) Challenges & Opportunities of application of ICT in university libraries in Swaziland.
- Yusuf, A. O. (2006). *Nigerian Judiciary: Perspectives & Profile*. FHL Publishers Lagos. 272