

## **The Information Needs of Postgraduate Law Students and Availability of Legal Information Resources in University Law Libraries.**

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### **Abstract**

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The paper explored the information needs of postgraduate law students and availability of legal information resources in Federal university law libraries in the South-East Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The total of 252 postgraduate law students of 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 sets in the two federal universities in South-East formed the population. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire and observation checklist. The findings of the study revealed that the postgraduate law students have significant information needs on current affairs, academic journals, new laws and recent enactment, research grants and scholarships, among others. The law libraries under study have more of electronic legal information resources than print legal information resources. The major electronic legal information resources available include: professional law website, online legal textbooks, E-legal journal, LexisNexis professionals and Quick law. Nnamdi Azikiwe University has high availability of print legal information resources on Laws and statutes (Local), Insurance (Local and Foreign), Taxation (Local and Foreign) and Local law reports while UNEC's print legal resources is significantly high on international/public law (local/foreign), Local journal and Land law/property law (local and foreign). Both libraries need to upgrade on the availability of their print legal information resources in line with the Council of Legal Education standard to be able to meet the information needs of the Postgraduate law students.

**Keywords:** Availability of Resources, Information Needs, Information Resources, Legal Information, Law Libraries.

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## **Introduction**

Information plays a pivotal role for humanity, for individuals at all levels of career trajectory in all professions. Society depends on information for all their activities and everyone needs relevant information to achieve their desired goals and aspirations. It is an essential tool for daily routines and in decision making. The meaning of information to people differs. Different professions apply different meanings to information. While the Librarians associate information with recorded knowledge, the Telecommunications Engineers associate information with bits and data. Information is a knowledge communicated concerning a particular fact or circumstance, it is gained through study, communication, research and instruction (Nwabueze & Obuezie, 2016).

Information needs differ from one user to the other and are influenced by the purposes for use and choices of the users. For example, while a medical student is interested in information on facts and news generated from various sources necessary for positive physical and mental condition of human beings, a law student may be interested in information on facts and news generated from various sources necessary for enhanced legal practices. Information needs that show close relationship to the solution of the issue at hand are considered relevant. Since libraries have keen interest in the information needs of its user communities, it becomes top priority to understand the law library users' information need to be able to make available the relevant information resources and services to satisfy those needs.

Information is a valuable source in an academic environment, it is a powerful tool in addressing legal research needs and when used appropriately, can rapidly change a nation's legal system. The information needs of postgraduate law students may not be met without a systematic provision of adequate and relevant legal information resources and services to achieve the goals of the legal education. These include: impacting the students with the understanding of fundamental principles and concepts of law, developing problem solving skills for legal issues, 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 comparative analyses of other legal systems, especially civil law systems and relevant international law (Akindipe, 2020). They are taught subjective law courses like contract law, constitutional law, criminal law, Equity and trust, Evidence, Land law, Jurisprudence and Torts among others (Isebe, Ejedafiru & Emo-Okpidi, 2017).

Understanding the users and their information needs, is a critical step towards making available the relevant information and offering the right services. The Law profession is one which requires the use of well processed legal information resources in a variety of formats. Postgraduate Law students, require information in different formats to effectively cope with the work load of their academic activities. To be able to succeed, they need to embrace the information resources and services available in the library in order to satisfy their information needs.

Additionally, serving a highly volatile profession such as law requires proactive measures to remain up to date and top notch for effective service delivery. The Law librarian must have adequate knowledge of the postgraduate law library users and their information needs. There should be an insightful knowledge of who among the potential users make use of the library and information resources and services, what information resources and services they use, their preferred information resources and services based on the frequency of consultation, what purpose these resources and services are being used to achieve, how far their library fits into the total system of information communication because this will aid in planning library and information services to be provided. For the improvement and for maximizing the impact of these information resources and services offered, it is necessary to seek out the users and their information needs. Identifying the information needs of different categories of users especially that of postgraduate law students who use the Law libraries, will expose the level of availability of the legal information resources and services and ascertain their adequacy to cater for the information needs of the postgraduate law students in order to promote significant and proper adjustments. The indispensable information resources and services are processed and made available for law students to use by law libraries.

The law library plays an important role in meeting the legal information needs of postgraduate law students. This is affirmed by Padma, Ramasamy and Ranjitham (2018) they remarked that the law library is a library designed to assist law students, lawyers, judges, their law clerks, and anyone else who wishes to determine the state of the law. Law libraries are classified as a special library because of their focus on providing specialized resources on the law, as well as their specialized and limited user base. Law libraries are found in universities that offer law as one of their disciplines. It can also be found in courts, government departments, private law firms, and barristers' chambers. In the university system, the law library is an important intellectual resource centre for postgraduate law students as it supports the fulfilling of the curriculum requirements as well as teaching, learning and research. According to Ajidahum (2010) a law library is to a lawyer what the laboratory is to a scientist. Law is a special and highly practical course and a discipline that is dynamic in nature and grows ubiquitously. Its reliance on information is unbridled while its postgraduate students require relevant, timely as well as current legal information resources in both print and electronic formats to effectively operate in line with the tenets of the discipline with respect to teaching, learning, research, publishing, arbitration and legal services to members of the society, consultancy among others. Information pertaining to a case is of high relevance to legal practitioners. This makes it imperative that these information resources must be made available, adequate and freely accessible at all times. As a result of this, the services of law libraries is critical in the practice of the law profession. Postgraduate curriculum provides the framework for their academic lectures and exposes the areas of research. These provokes the paramount interest of law library towards galvanizing information resources to meet the information needs of postgraduate law students as their quest for increasing information is inevitable. Law libraries aim to procure, process and provide in the most comprehensive manner, legal information resources and services by qualified personnel for the stakeholders

(Okeji & Agbanu, 2019). They exist to cater for the legal information needs of law students and law educators as well as aid in achieving their academic goals through the provision of adequate information resources and effective library services.

The availability of legal information resources and services in law libraries is concerned with information being readily reachable and ready for use, when it is needed, where it is needed and to solve the problem it is needed for. Availability of all the relevant legal information resources would enable adequate provision of information services geared towards meeting the information needs of the postgraduate law students, who in most cases use these resources for learning, research, writing assignments and presentations, moot court practice, leisure and entertainment. Therefore, it becomes imperative that these students should be provided with adequate and constant availability of the needed legal information resources and services to enable them prepare and practice for maximum academic productivity and improved performance in the judiciary or legal education system. It is paramount for law librarians to devise means necessary to make available these resources and services. In Umar and Sokari (2020) it was deduced that undergraduate law students mostly use information resources available in the university law library but their information seeking behavior tends to change as they start their practice which often times extends to their postgraduate programme academic activities, where they prefer to use personal textbooks, friends and colleagues as sources of information. Olorunfemi, Mostert and Ochalla (2013) corroborated that law students mostly rely on readily available resources and inferring from these two assertions by different scholars, the change in the information seeking behavior of postgraduate law students from using information resources readily available in the law library to using information resources from friends and colleagues may be linked to non-availability and inadequacy of the needed information resources among the collections of the law libraries.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Every legal information is a treasure and any gap in access to information constitutes a problem. Law libraries play a vital role in the provision of the legal information resources and services to support teaching, learning, practices, research and adequately meet the information needs of its user community which the postgraduate law students forms a significant part of. Despite information being a vital factor in effective legal academic activities, practices and dispensation of Law as well as the indispensable role of law libraries towards the achievement of the above. The information need of postgraduate law students and availability of legal information resources in federal university law libraries are yet to be understood as it seems no literature existed on this particular subject confirmed by scanty literature on the information needs of postgraduate law students in particular.

Unavailability of the needed legal information resources among others, are perceived to breed lack of interest and can create a strong impression that law library never has current legal information resources to furnish the information needs of its users,

thereby undermining the information seeking and library patronage of postgraduate law students. This will result in poor academic performance, non-existence of best practices and research output by this group of users. Information is a life wire in the practice of the legal profession as it facilitates teaching, learning, research and practice in the profession. It therefore become imperative to carry out this study to identify the information needs of postgraduate law students and ascertain the electronic and print legal information resources available to them, as it is impossible to decide if the legal information resources are adequately available in federal university law libraries to fulfil the legal information needs of the postgraduate law students without empirical evidence.

## **The Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the information needs of postgraduate law students and availability of electronic legal information resources in federal university law libraries in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, It:

1. Identified the information needs of postgraduate law students in federal university law libraries in South-East, Nigeria.
2. Ascertained the availability of electronic legal information resources for postgraduate law students in federal university law libraries in South-East, Nigeria.
3. Determine the availability of print legal information resources to postgraduate law students in federal university law libraries in south-east, Nigeria.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the information needs of postgraduate law students in federal university law libraries in south-east, Nigeria?
2. What are the electronic legal information resources available to postgraduate law students in federal university law libraries in south-east, Nigeria?
3. What are the print legal information resources available to postgraduate law students in federal university law libraries in south-east, Nigeria?

## **Literature Review**

### **Information Needs of Postgraduate Law Students**

Information is essential in the legal profession. People in legal discipline such as lawyers, judges and law students need a myriad of up-to-date information. They need legal information for standard practice, for decision making and for variety of paramount reasons in their academic endeavours especially for postgraduate law students. According to Umar and Sokari (2020) Law students mostly need information

for study to pass examination, write assignments, carryout research and search for new information based on the existing information resources and services available to them in electronic and printed formats in their law libraries. They are taught different subjective law courses such as constitutional law, criminal law, Jurisprudence and Torts among others as stated by Olorunfemi, Mostert, & Ocholla, (2012) which highlight the need to embrace law library information resources to cater for the information needs that will emanate from these courses.

Olorunfemi, Mostert, & Ocholla, (2012) in their study, opined that specific information needs of law students arise from teaching and research in law education. These aspects include: the need for current information on research findings emanating from law conferences, seminars, workshops among others and also information on current affairs and general knowledge. Information needs of postgraduate law students can exist from their daily existence in campus, health information, information on consumer goods, family, food, shelter, information on business and economic matters, association, regulatory body, students' unionism, research grants, scholarship, bursary and even job opportunities among others.

Moreover, Iwara (2015) also remarked that academic information is mostly paramount to this group of users (postgraduate students) which perhaps, motivates their use of the library. Similarly, their need for information on employment, personal development, health and political information among others were noted. Postgraduate law students' information needs according to the studies reviewed above ranges from information on services and professional requirements, case preparation, personal competencies, general knowledge, current awareness, information on current decision of superior courts, legal reports, information on employment, information for research and academic activities, Moot Court, teaching and learning, writing assignments and presentations, Projects/Dissertation or thesis. In research information on legal and non-legal researches, administration and policy making, supplementing regular classes among others.

Such information is found in information resources in the law library, which can be in print or electronic formats to the preferred interest of the user. Current, adequate, and factual legal information is the backbone in case preparation and contributes to winning legal battles. According to Kehinde, Obi, Akinade and Anyim (2016) information need is an amount of information people need to get their jobs done as well as achieve information satisfaction. The need for information cannot be satisfied without the availability of the commensurate information resources and services which are the carriers of information and the instrument that facilitates access to knowledge. These resources are required to be adequately available as well as up-to-date to effectively serve the purpose they were intended for.

## **Availability of Electronic Legal Information Resources to Postgraduate Law Students**

Legal information resources as posited by Hussaini et al (2018) are both print and electronic information resources essential for legal professionals in the advancement of their profession. Legal information are categorised into three, these categorization include public, private and international legal information resources. Public legal information includes laws that govern relationship between the citizens and the state of those within the state such criminal and constitutional information; Private legal information are those information on relationships between citizens, such as family, inheritance, business among others while International legal information, pertains to relations among nations with the legal framework as provided by United Nations. Resources in these three categories are produced in print and electronic format to facilitate availability and adequacy of the informational materials to meet the information needs of its users.

Electronic information resources are any informational resources which requires computer before it can be accessed. It is a broad term according to Tan (2016) which includes Online Public Access Catalogues (OPAC), CD-ROMs, Online databases, e-journals, e-books, internet resources, e-mail publishing, wireless publishing, electronic link and web publishing among others. It is an electronic product that delivers a collection of information which is obtained in full text bases, electronic journals, image collections and other multimedia products which can be delivered via CD Rom, tape, via the internet among others (Nwachukwu, Abdulsalami & Salami, 2014). E-resources enable a better provision of information resources and services to library patrons by librarians. For this benefit, it is paramount for electronic information resources to be made available in every library.

Law libraries in federal universities make available the electronic information resources by subscribing to varieties of law databases used by postgraduate students for legal research. Tuhumwire and Okello-Obera (2010); Umar and Yahaya (2021) and Umar and Sokari (2020) listed some of the available databases in their study to include but not limited to: CD-ROM databases, Online legal textbooks, Internet connectivity, E-legal Journal, Criminal Justice Abstract, Butterworth Lexis-Nexis, Nexus database, Kluwer Arbitration, I-law, World legal Information, Lexis-Nexis Academics, Lexis-Nexis professional, Lexis Analytics, Acts Online, Sabinet Online, Quick law, Jutastat, Audio visual Materials, Biblio Online, Proquest, Westlaw, Legalpedia, Compulaw and Ebscohost. These databases provide access to electronic law journals, law reports and the text resources. Academic and research work has been made more interesting as its now easier to access information resources for research, lecture preparation and additional reading by postgraduate law students following the availability of databases in law libraries.

The availability of electronic resources has improved the information seeking environment of postgraduate law student library users, thereby allowing them to overcome many information barriers, such as feasibility, accessibility, efficiency in

time, space among others. Information communication technology (ICT) application in the library setting, according to Yakub and Adeniran (2018) (ICT) is an electronic tool used for gathering and storing information for easy access by user, has brought about different ICT facilities such as: electronic journals, electronic databases, electronic books, digital libraries, computers, internet, wireless networks among others.

### **Availability of Print Legal Information Resources to Postgraduate Law Students**

The justification for the existence of any university programme is making the information resources for the programme adequately available. This should be paramount for the continuity of the programme offered in the institution. This is supported by the study of Mohammed (2011) who noted that Information is the record of human knowledge presented in varying formats needed for the effective running of the library and all academic activities of an institution. The formats noted here, refers to versions of the information carrier also known as information resources. These resources are the raw materials that libraries acquire, catalogue, stock, and make available for use by their patrons.

Availability of print legal information resources according to Ali, Tuyo and Mohammed (2018) implies that the information resources will be easily accessed, obtained and used. Akpe, Gabriel and Gbashinma (2018) defined availability of information resources as the means of ensuring the presence of the information materials for immediate use in the library. Information should be available for accessibility to take place and for information needs to be met. Ukpanah and Afolabi (2011) stated that the ability of a library to meet the diverse information needs of its users depends on among other things, the availability of different legal information resources, equipment and the utilization of the information therein, that are relevant for the student's academic pursuit.

Ali, et al (2018) added that the adequacy of the available legal information resources must also be ensured for the law library to remain relevant. The chain of information retrieval begins with availability, accessibility and use. Information resources may be available in the library and identified bibliographically as relevant to the users subject of interest but still not be able to meet the information needs of the users they were provided for. In such a scenario, Rafiu and Sodiq (2015) advised that Law libraries were to contribute to the advancement of knowledge through making the information resources available as well as ensuring easy access to them to enable meeting information needs and satisfaction of users. Availability of legal information resources encourage learning and increased library patronage. It helps in facilitating legal research, increased research output and visibility of the housing library (Uluocha & Mabawonku, 2014).

Print legal information resources are physical library materials that have the potentials of providing current and retrospective information to the library users. This type of information resource is time-tested format that continues to fill the gap in the



knowledge that technology is able to deliver. Everything is said to be on the internet but this is a fallacy because, despite the strides in electronic publishing and digitization, a good number of globally published works remain in physical formats only. Physical or printed information resources have not become out of fashion because of electronic resources. Notably, majority of legal treaties are not obtainable in electronic format and this highlights the need and relevance of printed information resources to legal profession. According to Owushi and Emasealu (2016), print legal information resources are those information resources in printed format which is physically available and does not require the use of computer to facilitate access or use. Law information resources are made up of books on different aspects of law and include a variety of journals, reference materials, government publications and a host of law reports. They also include books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets and ephemerals, projects, theses, conference papers, workshop papers and seminar papers among others.

According to Okorie and Okere (2018), print information resources include such materials as books and periodicals that are provided for use by the people as well as materials which enable libraries to carry out their services effectively. These resources are considered adequate if they meet the information needs of their parent body. To achieve the information needs target, librarians select, acquire, organize, maintain and provide access to this wide variety of information resources (both print and non-print and electronic resources) which help to fulfil the professional, educational, social, cultural, community information, and recreational needs of all its users. The need for varying library information resources and the importance of the information contained in the resources cannot be underplayed hence, Okorie and Okere (2018) in their opinion rightly noted that the abundance of information resources makes the library a potential learning environment and good measure of an institution's excellence and quality. However, their quality is justified more when their collection is put to use and guarantee users' information need satisfaction.

The Council for Legal Education (CLE) in Nigeria mandated that university law libraries should be well stocked with both print and electronic information resources to meet NUC and CLE requirements (NUC, 2011). Lawal et al., (2012) explained that the Council of Legal Education (CLE) and the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) have established standards in terms of the types, quantity and quality of legal materials, facilities, human and electronic resources that can be found in university law libraries. The printed information materials as listed in the standard checklist by CLE (2002) were listed based on their major headings as follows: Law and Statutes (Local), Laws and Statutes (Foreign), Foreign Law Reports, Local Law Reports, Local Journals, Foreign Journals, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law (Local and Foreign), Company Law and Practice (Local and Foreign), Legal System (Local and Foreign), Law of Contracts (Local and Foreign), Land Law/Property Law (Local and Foreign), Family Law (Local and Foreign), Evidence (Local and Foreign), Equity and Torts (Local and Foreign), Conflicts (Local and Foreign), Taxation (Local and Foreign), Insurance (Local and Foreign), Business and Banking Law (Local and Foreign), Jurisprudence (Local and Foreign), Copyrights Law (Local and Foreign),

International/Public Law (Local and Foreign) and Labour Law (Local and Foreign). According to NUC (2015), these informational materials must be in a minimum of 2 sets of Nigerian Publications, Reports and Journals, initially and 5 sets of such publications ultimately, must have at least one set of English Reports; American Reports; Commonwealth Reports; Journals, among others initially and 3 sets of such publications ultimately for each law faculty. The required standards include: backlog and current law materials; spacious reading areas; and a separate electronic or digital library. University law libraries are therefore designed according to the National University Commission's guidelines for establishing libraries in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria (Sections 19a and 19b). At its core, the aim of the university law library is to make available, legal information required by law students to complete their studies and impart in them the necessary skills to conduct library information searches. The law library thus nurtures quality legal education through the provision of legal material that covers the university law curriculum.

## **Methods**

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 252 postgraduate law students of 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 sets in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nsukka, Enugu Campus and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. There was no sampling technique as the study population was small and manageable, the population was used in its entirety. The instrument used for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire and an observation checklist. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha and Kuder Richardson (K-R) checklist methods. The result of the coefficient was .93, .89 and .91 respectively. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics. Arithmetic mean was used to analyse data obtained from research question 1 with scale value of 2.50 while percentages was used to analyse data obtained from research questions 2 and 3 with scale value of 50%.

## Results

The information needed by postgraduate law students in federal university law libraries in South-East, Nigeria.

**Table 1: Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) Ratings of Information Needed by Postgraduate Law Students in Federal University Law Libraries**

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Information on new laws and recent enactment	241	3.49	0.22	Agree
2	Learning and research in matters of law	241	3.41	0.43	Agree
3	Information on academic journals	241	3.56	0.47	Agree
4	Information about crimes	241	3.05	0.56	Agree
5	Information for continuous development (i.e. conferences, seminars and workshops)	241	3.31	0.64	Agree
6	Information on current affairs	241	4.05	0.40	Agree
7	Information on international laws	241	3.09	0.79	Agree
8	Association and Regulatory body	241	3.36	.69	Agree
9	Information on public administration (i.e. politics) and governance	241	3.34	.69	Agree
10	Information on recreation and leisure	241	2.25	.69	Disagree
11	Information for personal development	241	2.89	.93	Agree
12	Job Opportunities	241	3.16	1.17	Agree
13	Academic Information	241	3.37	.59	Agree
14	Research grants and Scholarships	241	3.48	.81	Agree
15	Health Information	241	2.69	.70	Agree
16	Economic Matters	241	2.71	.98	Agree
17	Student Unionism	241	2.24	1.17	Disagree
18	General knowledge	241	2.94	.62	Agree

Table 1 shows that postgraduate law students critically need information on 16 out of the 18 types of information required for their academic engagements. The types of legal information they need include information on current affairs (Mean = 4.05), academic journals (Mean = 3.56), Learning and research in matters of law (Mean = 3.49), Research grants and Scholarships (Mean = 3.48), new laws and recent enactment (Mean = 3.41), Academic Information (Mean = 3.37), Association and Regulatory body (Mean = 3.36), public administration (i.e. politics) and governance (Mean = 3.34), information for continuous development (i.e. conferences, seminars and workshops) (Mean = 3.31), Job Opportunities (Mean = 3.16), international laws (Mean = 3.09), Information about crimes (Mean = 3.05), General knowledge (Mean = 2.94), Information for personal development (Mean = 2.89), Economic Matters (Mean = 2.71) and Health Information (Mean = 2.69). Although information on recreation/leisure and Student Unionism are also relevant in the school system, but postgraduate law students thought otherwise as they disagreed to these two types of

information being an important need to them with the mean score of 2.25 for Information on recreation/leisure and (Mean = 2.24) for Student Unionism.

**Electronic legal information resources available to postgraduate law students in federal university law libraries in South-East, Nigeria**

**Table 2: Percentages of Electronic Legal Information Resources Available to Postgraduate Law Students**

S/N	Items	N	NAU	UNEC	AV	N/AV	%(AV)	Remark
1	Professional law website	2	√	√	2	0	100%	Available
2	CD-ROM databases	2	√	√	2	0	100%	Available
3	Audio-visual materials	2	√	-	1	1	50%	Available
4	Online legal textbooks	2	√	√	2	0	100%	Available
5	E-legal journal	2	√	√	2	0	100%	Available
6	Lexis-Nexis Academic	2	√	√	2	0	100%	Available
7	Criminal Justice Abstract	2	-	√	1	1	50%	Available
8	West Law	2	√	√	2	0	100%	Available
9	Butterworth Lexis-Nexis	2	-	√	1	1	50%	Available
10	Nexus Database	2	-	-	0	2	0%	Not available
11	Kluwer Arbitration	2	√	-	1	1	50%	Available
12	I-Law	2	-	-	0	2	0%	Not Available
13	Biblio Online	2	-	-	0	2	0%	Not Available
14	World Legal Information	2	√	-	1	1	50%	Available
15	Lexis-Nexis Professionals	2	√	√	2	0	100%	Available
16	Acts Online	2	√	-	1	1	50%	Available
17	Lexis Analytics	2	√	-	1	1	50%	Available
18	Sabinet Online	2	-	-	0	2	0%	Not Available
19	Quick Law	2	√	√	2	0	100%	Available
20	Jutastat	2	-	-	0	2	0%	Not Available
21	ProQuest	2	√	-	1	1	50%	Available
	<b>Total</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>				

(AV) (√) = Available (N/AV) (-) = Not available

Table 2 shows the electronic legal information resources available in federal university law libraries in South-East, Nigeria. NAU has 14 which is 68% of the entire electronic resources out of the 22 listed electronic legal information resources expected to be made available to the postgraduate law students while UNEC has 10 which is approximately 50% of the entire electronic resources available, out of the 22 listed electronic legal information resources expected to be made available to the postgraduate law students. They include: Professional law website (100%), CD-ROM databases (100%), Online legal textbooks (100%), E-legal journal (100%), West Law (100%), Lexis-Nexis Professionals (100%) and Quick Law (100%). Only one of the federal university law libraries has electronic legal information resources available for Audio-visual materials NAU (50%), Criminal Justice Abstract UNEC (50%), Butterworth LexisNexis UNEC (50%), Kluwer Arbitration NAU (50%), World Legal Information NAU (50%), Acts Online NAU (50%), Lexis Analytics NAU (50%) and

ProQuest NAU (50%). Nexus Database (0%), I-Law (0%), Biblio Online (0%), Sabinet Online (0%) and Jutastat (0%) are completely not available in the federal university law libraries in South-East, Nigeria.

**Print Legal Information Resources Available to Postgraduate Law Students**

**Table 3: Percentages of Print Legal Information Resources Available to Postgraduate Law Students**

S/N	Fed. Uni. libraries in:	Law	Expected Number items	(AV) of Number	(AV) (%)	(N/AV) Number	(N/AV) %	Decision
1	NAU	17	17	<b>Laws and statutes (local)</b>				
	UNEC	17	9	100%	0	0%	Available	
2	NAU	17	14	<b>Laws and statutes (foreign)</b>				
	UNEC	17	9	53%	8	47%	Available	
3	NAU	23	15	<b>Foreign law reports</b>				
	UNEC	23	13	65%	8	35%	Available	
4	NAU	27	25	<b>Local law reports</b>				
	UNEC	27	23	57%	10	43%	Available	
5	NAU	56	29	<b>Local journals</b>				
	UNEC	56	36	93%	2	7%	Available	
6	NAU	64	4	<b>Foreign journals</b>				
	UNEC	64	35	85%	4	15%	Available	
7	NAU	36	25	<b>Constitutional law</b>				
	UNEC	36	24	69%	11	30%	Available	
8	NAU	56	27	<b>Criminal law (local and foreign)</b>				
	UNEC	56	25	67%	12	33%	Available	
9	NAU	17	3	<b>Company law and practice (local and foreign)</b>				
	UNEC	17	6	48%	29	52%	Not available	
10	NAU	18	6	<b>Legal system (local and foreign)</b>				
	UNEC	18	10	35%	11	65%	Not available	
11	NAU	19	8	<b>Law of contracts (local and foreign)</b>				
	UNEC	19	11	33%	12	67%	Not available	
				56%	8	44%	Available	
				42%	11	58%	Not available	
				59%	8	42%	Available	

**Table 3.1: Continuation of Percentages of Print Legal Information Resources Available to Postgraduate Law Students**

S/N	Fed. Uni. Law libraries in:	Expected Number of items	(AV) Number of	(AV) (%)	(N/AV) Number	(N/AV) %	Decision
12			<b>Land law/property law (local and foreign)</b>				
	NAU	52	20	38%	32	62%	Not available
	UNEC	52	32	62%	20	38%	Available
13			<b>Family law (local and foreign)</b>				
	NAU	10	6	60%	4	40%	Available
	UNEC	10	6	60%	4	40%	Available
14			<b>Evidence (local and foreign)</b>				
	NAU	14	10	71%	4	28%	Available
	UNEC	14	8	57%	6	43%	Available
15			<b>Equity and torts (local and foreign)</b>				
	NAU	18	9	50%	9	50%	Available
	UNEC	18	10	56%	8	44%	Available
16			<b>Conflicts (local and foreign)</b>				
	NAU	12	4	33%	8	67%	Not available
	UNEC	12	8	67%	4	33%	Available
17			<b>Taxation (local and foreign)</b>				
	NAU	7	6	86%	1	14%	Available
	UNEC	7	3	42%	4	57%	Not available
18			<b>Insurance (local and foreign)</b>				
	NAU	6	6	100%	0	0%	Available
	UNEC	6	2	33%	4	67%	Not available
19			<b>Business and banking law (local and foreign)</b>				
	NAU	10	5	50%	5	50%	Available
	UNEC	10	3	30%	7	70%	Not available
20			<b>Jurisprudence (local and foreign)</b>				
	NAU	28	11	39%	17	61%	Not available
	UNEC	28	11	39%	17	61%	Not available
21			<b>Copyrights law (local and foreign)</b>				
	NAU	5	2	40%	3	60%	Not available
	UNEC	5	2	40%	3	60%	Not available
22			<b>International/public law (local and foreign)</b>				
	NAU	12	9	75%	3	25%	Available
	UNEC	12	11	92%	1	8%	Available
23			<b>Labour law (local and foreign)</b>				
	NAU	9	7	78%	2	22%	Available
	UNEC	9	5	56%	4	44%	Available

(AV) = Available (N/AV) = Not available

Table 3 and 3.1 shows that none of the federal university law libraries in South-East, Nigeria have all the legal information resources available in its collection aligning to the Council of Legal Education Standards. The federal university law libraries have collections of Laws and statutes (local) NAU (100%) and UNEC (53%), laws and statutes (foreign) NAU (82%) and UNEC (53%), Foreign law reports NAU (65%) and UNEC (57%), local law reports NAU (93%) and UNEC (85%), local journals NAU (64%) and UNEC (52%), constitutional law NAU (69%) and UNEC (67%), family law (local and foreign) NAU (60%) and UNEC (60%), evidence (Local and foreign) NAU (71%) and UNEC (57%), equity and torts (Local and foreign) NAU (50%) and UNEC (56%), International/public law (local and foreign) NAU (75%) and UNEC (92%) and Labour law (local and foreign) NAU (78%) and UNEC (56%). Only one of the university law libraries have more collection on foreign journals NAU (6%) and

UNEC (54%), legal system (Local and foreign) NAU (33%) and UNEC (56%), Law of contracts (local and foreign) NAU (42%) and UNEC (59%), land law/property law (local and foreign) NAU (38%) and UNEC (62%), conflicts (local and foreign) NAU (33%) and UNEC (67%), taxation (local and foreign) NAU (86%) and UNEC (42%), Insurance (local and foreign) NAU (100%) and UNEC (33%) and Business and baking law (local and foreign) NAU (50%) and UNEC (30%) available while the collections under criminal law (local and foreign) NAU (48%) and UNEC (45%), company law and practice (Local and foreign) NAU (18%) and UNEC (35%), Jurisprudence (local and foreign) NAU (39%) and UNEC (39%), copyrights law (local and foreign) NAU (40%) and UNEC (40%) are not available in any of the federal university law libraries under study as shown in the percentages below average.

## **Discussion of findings**

From the findings of this study, it was discovered that the postgraduate law students have significant information need for information on current affairs (4.05), academic journals (3.56), new laws and recent enactment (3.49), research grants and scholarships (3.48), learning and research in matters of law (3.41) among others. These reveals that the information needs of postgraduate law students are diverse and highly depends on the purpose of the need. It can be deduced that all the types of information they unanimously agreed upon are purely on academic, professional and career purposes which suits their present status as postgraduates. The finding exposed the relevance of currency, research and scholarship to the field of law as their interest in such information resources were significantly high. The university law libraries as a matter of urgency must identify the information needs of their users and make the legal information resources available to commensurate the information needs.

This study concurred with the study of Bajpai, Hada and Bajpai, (2016) which stated that the law community finds information relevant to them for different purposes as information is needed to properly carry out one's duty accurately in their fields or careers as lawyers.

The findings of this study also showed that the law libraries under study have more of electronic legal information resources than print legal information resources and the major electronic legal information resources available in both libraries include: Professional law website, online legal textbooks, E-legal journal, LexisNexis Professionals and Quick law among others. NAU have a significant electronic legal information resource available within its collection as well as UNEC which averagely, have made these electronic legal information resources available for their postgraduate law students. However, nonexistence of electronic information resources from Nexus Database, I-Law, Biblio Online, Sabinet Online and Jutastat is a significant concern that must be dealt with by the university law libraries under study to fill the gap and ensure that the information needs of the students are completely met.

This supported the study of Amusa and Atinmo (2016); Umar and Yahaya (2021) that law libraries can no longer depend on only conventional information resources to cope

with the latest development in their respective fields, they need to increase their holdings of electronic information resources and subscribe to varieties of law databases used by postgraduate law students for legal research and automate their operations to ensure high availability.

The findings of this study further showed that the federal university law library in UNEC have developed its print legal information resources under the various aspects of law than NAU as it has legal information resources available in up to 16 aspects of law collections out of the 23 listed in the council of legal education standard, expected to be available in an ideal law library while NAU has available information resources in only 15 aspects of law collections. NAU however, have high availability of print legal information resources on Laws and statutes (Local) (100%), Insurance (Local and Foreign) (100%), Taxation (Local and Foreign) (86%) and Local law reports (93%) while UNEC's print legal resources is significantly high on international/public law (local/foreign) (92%), Local journal (64%) and Land law/property law (local and foreign) (62%). The federal university law libraries still lack availability of some legal information resources that are relevant to the postgraduate law students for their academic pursuit such as in criminal law (local and foreign) NAU (48%) and UNEC (45%), company law and practice (Local and foreign) NAU (18%) and UNEC (35%), Jurisprudence (local and foreign) NAU (39%) and UNEC (39%) and copyrights law (local and foreign) NAU (40%) and UNEC (40%). All these identified aspects of law with high deficiency of print legal information resources in the federal university law libraries are very important as it forms part of the courses the postgraduate law students also need to specialize in as advanced learners. The libraries need to upgrade the availability of their print legal information resources in line with the Council of Legal Education standard to be able to meet the information needs of the Postgraduate law students.

This current finding corroborated Onwudinjo (2015) who found that law libraries in South-East geopolitical zone met the Council of Legal Education standards in local law statutes, foreign law and statutes, foreign law reports, local law reports, local law journals, constitutional law and evidence (local and foreign), although some of the law libraries have more collections in the various collections more than others. Uluocha (2014) findings also supported that law reports are mostly available as in the case of the study carried out in the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (NIALS) Library and as shown in this study, Law reports are available in the federal university law libraries under study. Rafiu and Sodiq (2015) advised that the availability of the legal information resources is paramount as law libraries is aimed at contributing to the advancement of knowledge through making the information resources available and ensuring easy access to them to facilitate increase legal research output and visibility as well as in meeting the information needs and user satisfaction.



## Recommendations

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

1. Identifying the information needs of postgraduate law students should be of paramount interest to the law librarians in federal university law libraries in South-East, Nigeria as it will facilitate effective and relevant services delivery, as well as encourage maximized law library patronage from this particular group of users.
2. Awareness should be created on the available electronic legal information resources by the law librarians through the use of social media, library websites or university newsletters among other mediums to enable visibility, patronage and use.
3. Legal information resources in federal university law libraries should be assessed on timely bases in line with the Council of Legal Education (CLE) Standard to ensure availability of the ideal resources for a successful academic endeavour.

## Conclusion

The findings observed that the information needs of postgraduate law students in federal university law libraries include information on current affairs, academic journals, Learning and research in matters of law, Research grants and Scholarships, new laws and recent enactment, Academic Information, Association and Regulatory body and public administration (i.e., politics) among others. It was observed that postgraduate law students need all the information resources they can lay their hands on except for leisure purposes and student unionism as they showed little to no need for its information resources. A recognizable amount of unavailability of print legal information resources exists in federal university law libraries in South-East, Nigeria and this must be addressed for academic excellence and best law practices.

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