



## The Use of Law Information Sources in Legal Research by Nigerian Universities Law Students

Doreen Yemisi Olorunfemi

*Law Faculty Library, Adekunle Ajasin University, Nigeria.*  
*Tel.: +234-705-7890597; e-mail: doreenolorunfemi1@gmail.com*

### Research Article

#### ARTICLE INFORMATION

##### Article history:

Received 17 November 2014

Received in revised form 7 December 2014

Accepted 15 January 2015

Available online 27 May 2015

*Journal of Balkan Libraries Union*

*Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 15-23, 2015.*

*Digital Object Identifier: 10.16918/bluj.94335*

#### ABSTRACT

The paper investigated the law information sources used in legal research among undergraduate law students in Nigeria universities. Twelve faculty of law libraries were purposively selected from among the thirty four universities that offer law in the country. In all, 1534 law students were randomly selected from the total population of 7219 registered law students at the time of this study. A descriptive survey method was used to obtain open and close ended data from law students, 82% responses were retrieved as sample size for the study. The finding revealed that primary and secondary law sources in both print and electronic formats were available in in Nigerian university law libraries. It was also found that the print law sources were mostly available in the law libraries, which the law students frequently used in legal research to access law related information. The respondents indicated that they do legal research to further their knowledge on legal issues. The study identified the some challenges experienced in legal research while sourcing information in the law libraries. The study recommends that the university managements should provide relevant information sources in especially electronic resources to enable legal research in the law libraries.

**Keywords:** Law information sources, Legal research, Legal professionals, Law students, Nigerian universities.

Copyright © 2015 Balkan Libraries Union - All rights reserved.

### I. Introduction

Law information sources are the lifeline upon which legal practice and scholarship rest. Dada (2011) and Ogunfolu (2006) emphasized the importance and indispensability of law information sources to legal practice by terming the law library as the laboratory for the legal profession. With the stiff competitiveness which characterizes the legal practice of the 21st century, legal practitioners in Nigeria and their contemporaries in every other jurisdiction are professionally impelled to source for relevant information sources for chamber services and advocacy. Up-to-date law information sources is not only needed by legal professionals (lawyers) for effective client counselling but also required for timely response to file briefs and to be equipped with appropriate statutory and judicial authorities in order to achieve overall success while representing their client's interest within and outside the law courts.

The legal professionals into litigation that want to make their argument persuasive before the court would have to search through law information sources (texts,

index to law reports, case laws and files) of past or similar cases to organize their cases (Akpoghome and Idiegbeyan-Ose, 2010). This would enable the court to adopt the new positions or reverse its previous decisions (Ogunfolu, 2006:264). Similarly, the law students and academic lawyers' search for law information is traceable to the dynamic nature of legal discipline, which principally demand their keeping abreast of the new enacted legislations and judicial pronouncements in academic journals, law texts and other legal materials in different aspects of law.

The library services is required to achieve the aim of tendering persuasive argument before the law court and up-to-date with new legislations. Law library provide an avenue through which law sources (legal texts, indexes of law reports, case law and old files of similar cases in the past precedent) are accessed to validate the case presented and for adoption of the new legal position or to reverse the previous court decisions (Akpoghome and Idiegbeyan-Ose, 2010; Ogunfolu, 2006). This paper explores the law information sources used in legal research by law students in Nigerian universities.

## **II. Literature Review**

Research is the ability to investigate problems to establish the information required and effectively communicate results obtained (Lawal, 2007:3). As early as 1942, legal research was described by Frederick Hick, as the necessary investigation that legal professionals and law students have to make in the course of their jobs and studies. Legal research has to do with how law library and the legal materials therein are sourced (Ali et al., 2010). Legal research consists of the steps or the progress of action that begins with analysis of the facts of a problem and concludes with the application and communication of the results of the investigation (Jacobstein and Mersky, 2002:1). This explanation tends to describe legal research as the totality of every effort invested in finding the law and its application for a defined and expected outcome. The art of access and use of law sources are the example of legal research, which according to King George III statement as cited by Akhihiero (2009), posits that lawyers do not know the law than the ordinary people but they know better where law sources can be found. This demonstrates that in whichever way legal research done, either through print or electronic records, According to Lawal (2007), legal research is a problem solving process that involves cautious consideration of facts to understand and be acquitted with the nature of the case to know the law sources required to carry out effective legal research, which lawyers and law students need to competently provide adequate information for learning abilities or to represent clients in law courts.

Law source has being differently interpreted. Asein (2005) and Obilade (1979) views law sources as: formal source, historical source, literary or material source and the Legal source. Formal source according to Obilade (1979:55) is the ultimate origin of the whole body of a legal system which in the abstract sense is the source from which a political, social or economic authority derives their power. In the civil setting, a formal source of law is ultimately the people because it is through peoples' consent and authority that representatives are elected to make laws, rules and regulations that is binding and enforceable on the generality of the people within the legal system. Historical source of law consists of chains of circumstances and events that brought about or lead to the evolution of legal rules over a specific period of time. The literary or material source of law are the physical law books (constitution, law reports and law textbooks), where written laws can be accessed. The development of digital technology has brought storage expansion in law information sources and ease of access to the literary source of laws in form of electronic storage format. Asein (2005) takes literary source of law to mean the primary law sources that were changed to laws. This paper focus mainly on the use of law sources in legal research among undergraduate law students in Nigerian university law libraries.

In Nigerian universities, primary law source consist of the record of Nigerian case laws, judgments and law reports used for legal research in law libraries. Olowu and Lasebikan (2006) explained that primary law sources are the initial law source that is, the undiluted, unabridged

and un-magnified law; the basic corpus of law that provide a specific position on any question of law. Olowu and Lasebikan (2006) identified the primary law sources are: Nigerian legislation, English laws and Subsidiary instruments, Nigerian judicial precedents or case law and customary rules, which include the Islamic law. Nigerian Legislation is the product of official legislative process that produces valid and enforceable laws prepared by conferred authorities. The English laws and the local enactments from the British changed the socio-political and economic terrain of the country due the instrumentality of Statutes of General Application (SOGA), which incorporated the English laws into Nigerian laws through section 14 of the Supreme Court Ordinance in 1914.

Deakin University explained that law sources are in two different types: primary and secondary. The primary sources are the actual text of the law, that is, legislation and case law, as created by the parliaments and the courts (Deakin University Australia, 2014). In view of Dina et al. (2013), the constitution, statute and case law are the primary law sources that are referred to as the Law, while, other law sources are seen as secondary law sources (Dina et al. 2013) in Nigeria. However, the primary law sources are the laws made by government or public organizations, court, the legislature and administrative entities (Library of Congress, 2014).

The secondary sources, according to Deakin University, are the tools that assist users in locating and understanding the relevant primary sources, they include: law textbooks, library catalogues, legal dictionaries, legal encyclopaedias, journal articles and index to journal articles (Deakin University, 2014). The secondary law sources consist of both print and electronic sources on law that are used for legal research in the law libraries. The law sources are grouped into: primary law sources and secondary sources (Law Library of Congress, 2014). The secondary law sources offers analysis, commentaries or restatement on the primary laws, and shed light on the multi-dimensional perspective of the principles adopted in the primary law sources.

The secondary sources are the primary sources transformed into electronic format to locate and explain primary sources of law and it may influence legal decisions but do not have the controlling or binding authority, which the primary law sources has (Library of Congress, 2014; Singh, 2011). However, Library of Congress (2014) explained that the secondary law sources interpret the primary law sources to bring out the meaning of laws. The secondary law sources consist of: Legal Dictionaries, Words and Phrases, Legal Encyclopedias, Annotated Law Reports, Legal Periodicals, Legal Treatises, Hornbooks and Nutshells, Restatements, Loose Leaf Services, Legal Directories, and Legal Textbooks used for legal research by legal practitioners and law students (Library of Congress, 2014). The law library housed these law sources and the summary and commentary on law in both print and electronic formats. Dina et al. (2013) explained that secondary source of law in Nigeria is same as legal resources, legal literature, case law, official documents, legislation, treaties, law reports and electronic law resources. The electronic law resources are the print law information stored in computerized

format and can be accessed via computer connected to the Internet when subscription is made to the Internet. The law libraries subscribe to electronic law sources (Internet, databases, e-law books and e-law journals) for the benefit of the legal researchers (Dina et al. 2013). Although, these sources are not the law, but they are both valuable resources used for legal research in the law libraries (Dina et al. 2013).

The law libraries are shifting from the traditional form of manual service to electronic delivery system through Internet connection to computer workstations networks, for effective and efficient service deliveries. Electronic information resources in law libraries are important factors that have brought changes to ways, legal research with the university environments. For legal research is done in the libraries for the development of legal research confidence, creativity and self-actualisation. This is because electronic information sources have become the channel for legal researchers to search for information that help to develop research oriented solutions to legal problems (Kenny and Qiang, 2004). To this, Mahmood et al. (2011) stated that, access to information sources through electronic resources accelerate efficient use of research products and services. The legal professionals are expected to be competent and knowledgeable users that understand legal information technology and data preservation policies to use the electronically stored information (Kane, 2014). However, the large quantity of legal information available in electronic formats has generated difficulties among people in legal professionals. In which, Kane advised law researchers and students to interaction with law libraries and its staff to access required electronic information from the substantial volume of electronic data.

In the same vein, Nigerian law students are expected to utilise electronic law libraries to access the law sources and resources for legal research. The law databases and Internet are fundamental and relevant to lawyer education. These sources can be used to access judicial decisions electronically stored through ICT facilities. Law databases include LexisNexis, Westlaw, Legalpedia, Law Journal Online, Compulaw, Hein Online, JSTOR, Law Pavilion, and Find Law among others. ICT also provides the platform through law information sources are transmitted in law libraries, among colleagues and other information systems. The electronically stored information sources enable this professional group to concurrently work on several law sources and download useful materials. With the development and application of ICT, the libraries have shifted from the traditional library system to hybrid library, then automated library, digital archives stages, library2.0 and mobile phone services (Parvez, 2011:1). As noted by Parvez, the effect of these changes reflects in the dynamic structure of the libraries as it continuously changes with time. The changes have rapidly transformed the way which people searched and used these law sources in law libraries.

#### *a. The Law Library System*

The law library system housed the human recorded knowledge in the form of law sources in its diverse forms (print and electronic). The law library, as explained by

Deakin University Australia (2014), provides quality legal information sources through relevant law books, journals and periodicals for legal practitioners, scholars, researchers, law teachers and law students. The library provides the operational services, promote information services and implement libraries' mission. In Nigerian universities, law libraries provide access to materials on legal subjects and other law related courses in both print and electronic formats, and draw users' attention to the law information sources available around the globe through library awareness. In recent past, law libraries were seen as rooms where traditional law sources, (print law texts, journals, and newspapers) were housed, and the staff that manually provide working spaces for users who consult the law librarians, and manually locate law texts on shelves with card catalogue and subject index notifies (Windsor and Friedman, 2010).

National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Council for Legal Education eventually stipulate that every law faculty should have law libraries that meet contemporary ICT development to serve the law library users. Thus, law faculty libraries rose to the challenge of providing relevant and current legal information in the law libraries. Lawal (2012) explained that the Council for Legal Education and the Nigerian Universities Commission articulate a standard that law libraries must meet in terms of quantity and quality of the legal materials, electronic information sources and human resources. Legal professionals, law teachers and the law students were mandated to seek for computer appreciation training to be relevant with the new standard. The law faculties, according to Lawal et al. (2012) were able to achieve the new standard through a uniform minimum academic standard, applicable to all universities and Law Schools in Nigeria. The law libraries provide the information law sources for the legal professional users within and outside the university law libraries. The law libraries continue to develop legal information sources through provision of relevant law sources that covers curriculum objective of the law faculties.

Legal research began the shift from traditional search method to electronic search method. The change was occasioned by advancement of information and communication technology into legal research. Legal information researchers require the necessary computer operating and Internet browsing expertise to access legal information using the electronic information resource and online law databases. Developments in the ICT has led to the availability of a range of primary and secondary legal research publications connected through the Internet, rather than on other storing devices like the compact discs and print publication media. ICT has also impacted on the availability of legal information resources, and the effects are equally seen in many law related subjects like, legal practice management, legal education, corporate governance and the law per se (Du Plessis, 2008). However, to search for information using ICT requires good ICT knowledge, which according to Du Plessis, requires legal research skills which would differentiate an average legal researcher from the effective legal researcher.

ICT tool provide a wide-ranging current and timely law sources to lawyers and students. The recognition and

use of ICT in the Nigerian legal system for effective and efficient legal service delivery has contributed to sustainable development and delivery of justice in Nigeria (Echono, 2014). Therefore, the people in legal practice and the students training to be lawyers need to be ICT literate to take advantage of the law sources in electronic format in the law libraries (Akhiehiero, 2009). The era of information technology (IT) has changed how legal research is done in law libraries, thus creating challenges for both users and administration of law libraries (Hanson, 2002). Law libraries as confirmed by Fariss, faced challenges that develop from integration of IT into legal research process, resulting in inadequate space and budget constraints (Fariss, 2012) to provide law sources in both print and electronic formats. Against this backdrop, this study investigated the law sources available in the university law libraries for legal research based on the following research questions.

### III. Research Questions

1. What are the available law sources frequently used by law students for legal research in Nigerian university law libraries?
2. What are the purposes for which law students' perform legal research?
3. What are the challenges faced by law students utilising the law library sources for legal research?

### IV. Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research approach to investigate information sources in legal research for law students in Nigerian Universities using a survey research design. The method and the design were chosen to allow the researchers reach out to a considerable number of law students and sample from the entire law students in the Nigeria. Twelve university law faculties were selected from South-South, South West, South East and North Central Zones in Nigeria. Purposive sampling method was used to select 12 law teacher and 12 law librarians (1

librarian and 1 lecturer from each university) for this study. A probability random sampling method was used to select 1,534 undergraduate law students from the total population of 7,219 law students in the 12 law faculties. However, 20% respondents were selected from each faculty based on the population of law students in each faculty. In all, 1,260 responses were retrieved to make an 82% sample size for the study. Questionnaire, interview and observation instruments were used to collect data for the study. The data collected from questionnaires were analyse with Excel Statistical Package using simple frequency account and percentages, while responses from interviews were coded into themes and analyse using content analysis. The undergraduate law student respondents were selected from second year to the fifth year, while first year law students were excluded from the study, because they were at the preliminary stage where they only take courses from other faculties. The twelve universities selected for the study are: Ambrose Alli University, Ekiti State University, Imo State University, Kogi State University, Nasarawa State University, Obafemi Awolowo University, Olabisi Onabanjo University, University of Benin, University of Calabar, University of Ibadan, University of Ilorin, and University of Nigeria.

### V. Data Analysis and Discussion

According to Thanuskodi (2013:3), the analysis of the data collected from the respondents is the final step of the research process, because it is the link between fresh data, which significant lead to the results and conclusion of the study. The analysis of data collected from the universities participation, available law sources, purposes of legal research, preferred approach to legal research, and the law sources favoured for legal research were presented below: Table 1 shows the universities, levels or year, and number of respondents according to their classes and the total number of respondents selected from each universities.

TABLE I  
UNIVERSITIES, LEVEL/YEAR OF STUDY AND NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

NU	200L	%	300L	%	400L	%	500L	%	TOTAL	%
AAU	21	23	47	52	5	5	18	20	91	100
EKTS	0	0	0	0	14	36	25	64	39	100
IMSU	10	11	20	21	32	34	32	34	94	100
KSU	40	28	40	28	35	25	28	19	143	100
NSU	21	26	22	28	22	28	14	18	60	100
OAU	50	29	44	26	28	16	50	20	172	100
OOU	20	57	15	43	0	0	0	0	35	100
UBEN	26	23	39	27	30	27	26	23	112	100
UCAL	26	28	39	43	27	29	0	0	70	100
UNIB	27	27	36	35	31	30	7	7	68	100
UNIL	25	19	30	22	34	25	46	34	135	100
UNEC	49	29	41	25	32	19	45	27	167	100
TOTAL	315	25	364	29	290	23	291	23	1260	100

Note: NU=Name of the Universities sampled.

### a. Population of Study

The above Table 1, showed the list of universities that participated and the number of students in each faculty according to year of study. The table also showed that year one law students were not included in this study, due to the nature of the law curriculum of the universities in Nigeria, where first year law students were not taught any law courses until they get to second year of their study. The participated law students were in second to the fifth year (200L to 500L) of their studies. In all, 25% of undergraduate law student respondents were in second year (200L), 29% were in their third year (300L) of study, 23% were in fourth year (400L), and 23% were in the fifth year (500L). This report showed that all the year levels were well represented, in exception of the year one law students that were purposely not surveyed due to the law university curriculum structure.

### b. Available Law Sources Frequently for Legal Research in Nigerian University Law Libraries

Law students on campus have access to a numerous information sources. Based on the researcher's earlier observation that law students do not optimally utilise available information sources and services, this question aimed to determine whether, this was indeed the case. The question also wanted to establish the frequency of utilisation. Respondents were asked to indicate the information resources that they used when searching for information and to also state how frequently they used these resources for their studies. Three options - "Often", "Seldom" and "Never" - were provided for the respondents to select from.

TABLE II  
AVAILABLE LAW SOURCES FREQUENTLY USED IN LEGAL RESEARCH (N=1,260)

SOURCES	OFTEN	%	SELDOM	%	NEVER	%	NR	%
TEXTBOOKS	1039	82	34	3	13	1	174	14
LAW BOOKS	965	77	122	10	23	2	150	12
INTERNET VIA MOBILE PHONE	886	70	173	14	62	5	139	11
INTERNET	814	65	246	20	67	5	133	11
LAW REPORTS	665	53	407	32	56	4	132	10
LAW LIBRARY	659	52	431	34	85	7	85	7
NEWS PAPERS	639	51	428	34	59	5	134	11
ACTS	610	48	320	25	95	8	185	15
LAW JOURNAL	458	36	530	42	107	8	165	13
GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS	236	19	522	41	260	21	242	19
LAW DATABASES	171	14	399	32	388	31	302	24
DIGITAL LIBRARY	150	11.9	402	32	434	37	274	22
COURT LIBRARY	69	5.4	299	24	594	47	270	21
OTHER	30	2.3	10	0.7	5	0.3	1215	97

The majority of the respondents (1039; 82%) indicated textbooks as their most frequently used law source. Law books (965; 77%), Internet via mobile phones (886; 70%), and the Internet (814; 65%) were the next most frequently used law sources. Digital libraries and court libraries were seldom used; as only 150 (11.9%) and 69 (5.4%) respondents respectively indicated that they used these sources on a regular basis. The no-response rates recorded for each option probably also indicate non-use, which if combined with the 'never' option, amounts to significantly high non-use rates. For example, law databases were not used by 690 (55%) of the respondents, while 708 (59%) did not use digital libraries, or government publications (502; 40%) to access relevant information for their academic work. 'Other' sources of information that were used on a frequent basis were deans of law, hand outs from deans of law, taking part in group or class discussions or asking questions in class, asking practicing lawyers or friends, accessing information through cyber cafes, and using old notes.

Therefore, this finding revealed that print law sources were the most available law sources provided in Nigerian university law libraries, which law students frequently used to sources for information. It also indicated that electronic information sources were not frequently used in the law libraries by a higher number of respondents. For example, 55% of the respondents did not utilise law

databases, and 57% did not use electronic libraries, and 69% did not use the court libraries.

### c. Purposes of Doing Legal Research

TABLE III  
PURPOSE FOR WHICH LAW STUDENTS ACCESS LAW SOURCES IN LEGAL RESEARCH N=1,260

Purpose	No.	%
To broaden my knowledge on legal issues	1093	87
To complete assignments	1038	82
To be informed about latest developments of laws	994	79
To supplement my lecture notes	878	70
To study the outcomes of court cases	844	67
To participate in class discussions	816	65
Other (Specify)	122	10

Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option.

The majority of the respondents indicated that they needed the law sources to further their knowledge on legal issues 87%, closely followed 82% by those respondents that needed law library information resources to complete assignments. A large number of respondents 79% also needed law sources to be informed about latest

developments of laws. Other purposes for which law sources were used in legal research include: to supplement lecture notes 70%, study the outcome of legal cases 67%, and to be able to participate in class discussions 65%. Those who indicated that they used the law library for “other” purposes mentioned that they read in the law libraries to increase their knowledge of the lecture received; extensively study; to be familiar with world happening; versatile on every issue, to be able to do legal research.

**d. Preferred Approach to Legal Research**

The respondents were asked to state the method that they mostly preferred for legal research process. The question provided two options: ‘print’ or ‘electronic’. They could also choose both options if they preferred. The aim of this was to determine whether there was a preference for a specific method.

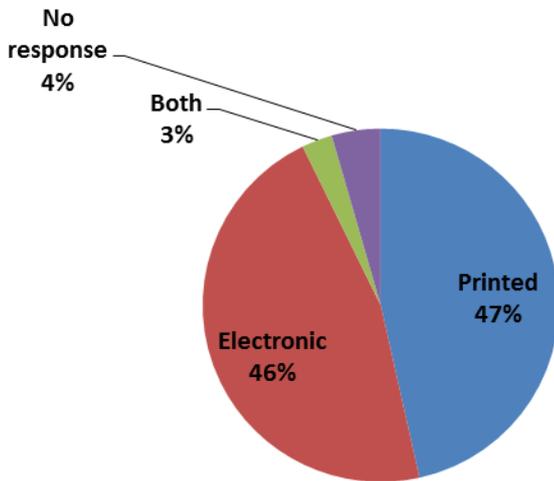


Fig. 1. Medium preference (n=1260).

A slight majority of 586 (47%) mostly preferred to use print information sources, while 583 (46%) mainly preferred to use electronic information sources. 56 (4%) respondents did not respond, while 35 (3%) respondents preferred both print and electronic information sources. Finding here showed that respondents were divided nearly equal on medium preference for both electronic (46%) and print (47%) information sources as medium through which information sources are provided in the law libraries.

**e. Law Source Favoured by Law Students in Legal Research**

The report of was to determine how, and from which law sources respondents mostly favoured to receive information. The objective of this was to probe the respondents on how they liked to receive the information that they required for academic purposes. Table presents respondents’ views and responses.

TABLE IV  
LAW SOURCES FAVOURED FOR LEGAL RESEARCH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES (N=1260)

Formats	N	%
<i>Print and electronic formats in the law library</i>	581	46
<i>Printed format from my personal textbooks</i>	230	18
<i>Printed format outside the law library</i>	208	17
<i>Electronic format Internet/database outside the law library</i>	132	11
<i>Electronic format in the law library</i>	104	8
<i>Other sources</i>	5	0.3

The majority (581; 46%) of the respondents liked to receive information through printed and electronic media in the law library, followed by 230 (18%) who preferred to receive it in printed form through their personal textbooks. 208 (17%) preferred to receive their information from outside the library through either the Internet or by way of a database; 132 (11%) preferred traditional printed information sources from the law library; 104 (8.2%) liked to receive information only in electronic format in the law library; and an insignificant number of the respondents (5; 0.3%) preferred other sources such as mobile phones, CDs or newspapers. The result showed that respondents desired both print and electronic information sources format in the law libraries.

**f. Challenges Faced Utilising University Law Library Law Sources for Legal Research**

TABLE V  
CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED IN LEGAL RESEARCH (N= 596)

Challenges	N	%
<i>Lack of adequate law library materials</i>	110	18
<i>Law materials are not in the right places or not well arranged</i>	106	17.7
<i>Erratic power supply</i>	92	15.4
<i>No current law texts, many are old books</i>	78	13
<i>No accessible electronic library</i>	68	11.4
<i>Where to start and how to locate information in law texts</i>	60	10

The respondents 18% indicated the lack of adequate library material as a problem. Another 17.7% specified that the law library materials were not well arranged on the shelves; 15% said erratic power supply was a hindrance; 13% mentioned that there were no current law texts; 11% said electronic law libraries were not accessible. This report exposed the challenges faced by the respondents in legal research as unavailable ICT sources, and law sources that were not properly arranged, as the major challenges faced by law students in the in legal research.

**VI. Discussion of Findings**

One of the findings of the study revealed that printed law sources (textbook and law report) were the major legal resources available in law libraries and commonly used by most of the respondents in the law libraries. This

could be so, probably because print law sources were the main available sources, which were made accessible to these students. This supported the finding of Greenstein and Thorin,(2002) and Dina et al. (2013) that law students need various sources of information for their training which include law textbooks, law reports, legal literature, case law and official documents in other to make them current and versatile not only in their academic but to make them prepare for future practices. Ajidahun (2010) supported that law student's needs information for quality legal education which they can get through relevant law books, journals and textbooks. Haruna (2000) noted that a good student must be frequent with various law books and it must combine the textbooks with the use of the Internet according to them access to the internet will give them the more opportunity to know the latest in the legal field not only in their country but outside world in general Based on the observation it can be noted that the law students need both print and electronic media for their future practice.

Another, finding revealed that furthering of legal knowledge was the major reason why the law students used the law sources. This might not be far from the common saying that knowledge is power. Oke-Samuel (2008) found that law students seek for legal information purposely to succeed in their examination, write their assignment and for group discussions in the classroom. Contributing to this Olorunfemi and Mostert (2012) also discovered that law students carry out legal research to be well-informed with the latest development around the world, and to be updated about legal profession relevant to their studies, and legal practice.

It was revealed that printed resources were the most available and used resources by law students respondents for legal research in Nigeria university libraries. Library resources in printed format played major roles in the academic and intellectual development of undergraduate law students in Nigeria. Dina et al. (2013) listed various printed resources relevant to law students which include the secondary sources used to interpret primary sources to bring out the laws. The secondary law sources consist of: Legal Dictionaries, Words and Phrases, Legal Encyclopedias, Annotated Law Reports, Legal Periodicals, Legal Treatises, Hornbooks and Nutshells, Restatements, Loose Leaf Services, Legal Directories, and Legal Textbooks used for legal research by legal practitioners and law students. She further stated that law students need to familiar themselves with these resources in order to update and get accurate information legal discipline. The study also revealed that lack of sufficient law sources were the major obstacle facing the law students in harnessing law sources for legal research.

This corroborated Fariss' (2012) study, who found out that lack of latest and currents legal sources were the major problem militating against the development of legal research. According to Fariss, the law libraries were facing new challenges that evolve from process of legal research, which include, inadequate space and budget constraints. Owolabi, Bamigboye, Agboola and Lawal (2012)'s study found out that the poor knowledge sharing among law libraries in Nigeria was an obstacle that prevents availability of adequate law sources required for

legal research in the university law libraries. These obstacles appeared to be negatively affecting the quality of legal research among the undergraduate law students. Information is regarded as indispensable resource in all profession and with the massive information sources which is widely available worldwide, the need to acquire relevant law sources and sharing of law sources among faculty law libraries is vital as it will improve the quality of legal research in the university law libraries. The study also indicates that there is need of electronic library resources and online information sources to increase law students' awareness about the sources to support legal research process within the university law libraries in digital setting in Nigeria.

## **VII. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on the research findings, the paper conclude that printed primary law sources (textbooks and law books) were the major law sources available and frequently used by law students for legal research in Nigerian universities. Furthering of knowledge on legal issues was the main reason for doing legal research and print resources were the most used legal resources. Lack of adequate law sources such as electronic resources and print sources were the problem confronting the law students when conducting legal research because there were not allow access to the electronic resources.

The paper offer recommendations that could promote effective conduct of legal research among undergraduate the law students in the Nigerian university law libraries.

- The twelve university managements need to increase budgetary allocation to all university libraries, (under which the law library is a unit) throughout the federation for them to be able to acquire currents law information sources that will promote legal research among the students,
- Council for Legal Education should introduce resource sharing among the law libraries and mandate library cooperation between the university law libraries by networking all the law libraries to promote legal research among law students and academic lawyers in general for effective legal research process.
- Information and Communication Technology facilities should be provided in all the faculties of laws in the country for them to have access to the latest information in the legal profession which will assist the students in conducting effective legal research.
- There is a need to include the use of library as a course to law students; this will enable them to search for information when conducting legal research.

## **Acknowledgments**

This research was made possible by the Federal Government of Nigeria Grant through the Nigerian Tertiary Education Trust Fund.

## References

- Akhihiero, P. A. (2009). *Legal Research in a Digital Age. Law Week of the Benin Branch of the Nigerian Bar Association*. Benin City: Bishop Kelly Pastoral Centre.
- Akpoghome, U. T. & Idiegbeyan-Ose, J. O. (2011). The role of digital library in law research. *International Journal of Information Science*, 2(6), 108-113.
- Ali, H., Owoeye, J. E., & Anasi, S. N. I. (2010). Resource sharing among law libraries: an imperative for legal research and the administration of justice in Nigeria. . *Library Philosophy and Practice*. Retrieved March 25, 2013, from <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~mbolin/ali-owoeye-anasi.htm>
- Asein, J. O. (2005). *Introduction to Nigerian Legal System (2nd ed.)*. Lagos, Nigeria: Ababa Press Ltd.
- Dada, T. O. (2011). *Law Librairship and Legal Research in the Digital age*. Lagos: Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies.
- Deakin University Australia. (2014). MLL110 Legal Principles and Skills students. Retrieved November 14, 2014, from Library Resource Guides: <http://deakin.libguides.com/law>
- Dina, Y., Akintayo, J. O., & Ekundayo, F. (2013). Hauser Global Law School Programme: Globalex- update- Guide to Nigerian Legal Information. Retrieved October 29, 2011, from <http://www.nyulawglobal.org/Globalex/Nigeria1.htm>
- Du Plessis, T. (2014). Competitive legal professionals' use of technology in legal practice and legal research. *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal*. Retrieved November 14, 2014, from <http://www.scielo.org.za/revistas/pelj/iaboutj.htm>
- Echono, A. (2014). ICT and the advancement of legal studies and practice in Nigeria. Retrieved November 14, 2014, from <http://thelawyerschronicle.com/ict-and-the-advancement-of-legal-studies-and-practice-in-nigeria/>
- Fariss, L. K. (2012). Issues Facing Academic Law Libraries - New Challenges, New Opportunities. *Indiana Libraries*, 31(1), 37-39. Retrieved November 6, 2014, from <http://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/facpub/550>
- Haruna, I. (2000). *Professional effectiveness attributes of legal practitioners as correlates of information utilization in Lagos metropolis, Nigeria*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan.
- Hanson, A. 2002. From key numbers to keywords: how automation has transformed the law. *Law Library Journal*, 94(4). Retrieved November 14, 2014, from <http://www.aall/net.org/products/2002-36.pdf>
- Ihedioha, E. (2012). The Legislature: Roles, Misconception and Experience in a Democratic Nigeria. Retrieved May 20, 2013, from Vanguard Newspaper: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/07/the-legislature-roles-misconceptions-and-experience-in-democratic-Nigeria-1/>
- Iluoyomade, B. O. & Eka, B. U. (1992). *Cases and Materials on Administrative Law in Nigeria (2nd ed.)*. Ile-Ife, Nigeria: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Limited.
- Jacobstein, J. M. & Mersky, M. R. (2002). *Fundamentals of Legal Research*. 8th. New York: Fountain Press.
- Kane, S. (2014). E-Discovery Explosion: E-Discovery Growth and Challenges. Retrieved November 14, 2014, from <http://legalcareers.about.com/od/careertrends/a/ediscovery.htm>
- Kenny, G. J. & Qiang, C. Z. (2004). *Information and Communication Technologies and Broad-Based Development: A Partial Review of the Evidence*. Washington, D. C: The World: The World Bank.
- Lawal, V. (2007). Legal Research and Legal Education in Africa: the Challenge for Information Literacy. Retrieved August 16, 2011, from [http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=sws\\_papers](http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=sws_papers)
- Lawal, V. L., Stilwell, C., Kuhn, R., & Underwood, P. G. (2012). A contextual study of the information literacy of aspirant barrister in Nigeria. *South African Journal of Library and Information Science*, 78(2).
- Mahmood, I., Hartley, R., & Rowley, J. (2011). Scientific communication in Libya in the digital age. *Journal of Information Science*, 379-391.
- National Universities Commission. (2012). *Standards and rules of procedure for approval of law faculties*. Abuja: Nigeria.
- Obilade, A. O. (1979). *The Nigerian Legal System (2nd ed.)*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Ogunfolu, O. (2006). Legal Research and the Use of Source Materials. In A. Sanni (Ed.), *Introduction to the Nigerian Legal Method* (2nd ed., pp. 264-282). Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Limited.
- Olorunfemi, D.Y. & Mostert, B.J. (2012). Information seeking behaviour of law students in a developing country: A literature review. XX SCECSAL: Information for Sustainable Development in a Digital Environment (pp. 440-446). Nairobi: The Law Publisher.
- Olowu, D. & Lasebikan, F. (2006). Sources of Law in Nigeria. In A. Sanni (Ed.), *Introduction to Nigerian Legal Method* (2nd ed., pp. 245-259). Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Limited.
- Parvez, A. (2011). Development in library services with the advent of ICT- based products and services: A continuous process. *International Journal of Digital Library Services*, 1-9. Retrieved November 14, 2014, from [https://www.academia.edu/1497626/Development\\_in\\_Library\\_Services\\_with\\_the\\_advent\\_of\\_ICT\\_product\\_and\\_services\\_a\\_continuous\\_process](https://www.academia.edu/1497626/Development_in_Library_Services_with_the_advent_of_ICT_product_and_services_a_continuous_process)
- Singh, J. A. (2011). Workshop on Research, ethics, and law. Faculty of Arts, University of Zululand at Protea Hotels, Empangeni.

The Law Library of Congress. (2014). Guide to Secondary Legal Resources. Retrieved November 14, 2014, from <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/secondary-rsrcs.php>

Windsor, E. & Friedmann, R. (2010). Law libraries transformed. Law and Technology Resources for Legal Professionals, Retrieved October 21, 2012, from <http://www.llrx.com/features/lawlibrariestransformed.htm>



**Doreen Yemisi Olorunfemi** is a senior librarian in charge of the Law Faculty Library of Adekunle Ajasin University in Nigeria. Her academic qualifications include: BA (Hons.) (Unilorin, NGN); MLS (Unibadan, NGN). She teaches Library and information centres and Library collection development. Her research interest includes users' information behaviour and library services. She is a member of Nigerian Library Association. She has publications in peer-reviewed journals. She is currently a doctoral student in the department of Information Studies at the University of Zululand in South Africa.