Full Length Research Paper

How law students utilize information resources: A case study of the University of Benin, Benin City

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This is a case study of how undergraduate law students of University of Benin, Benin City make use of information resources. The objective of the study is to understand how male and female law undergraduate students acquire their information, the resources employed and to what purpose information is sought. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey technique. The sample consisted of 230 undergraduate law students randomly selected from the first to fifth year of study. Their information seeking activities were tested to discover how undergraduate law students utilize information resources. The study found that there is only a slight difference in how male and female undergraduate law students use information resources and that the need to compliment lecture notes rank highest in the information need of the students. The study recommends formal training in the use of information resources will significantly improve the pattern of both information use and search.

Key words: Information resources, law, students, University, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Information resources are developing and increasing at very astronomical speed. This is due to the multiplying number of information resources being used and explored almost on a daily basis. Science information in books for instance have increased as well as online scholarly journals making librarians "middleware" (Jones, 2009). In the same vein, the growth of the internet, libraries budget for scholarly electronic materials has increased almost fourfold from 1990 to 2001 (Association of Research Libraries, 2008). The critical role that the collection, organization and dissemination of information plays in economic, political, social and cultural develop-ment is globally recognized, thus the use of the phrase "the information society". Information is the key to global development, as enunciated at the United Nations World Summits on the Information Society held in Geneva in 2003 and Tunis in 2005 (Obasanjo, 2005). With the growth in information resources, there is corresponding growth and differences in information needs and behaviour of different groups of people. Thus, the several attempts to understand the information seeking patterns of different groups of professionals and students have become inevitable.

Since our world continues to become increasingly information based and information interconnected, the rates of change and exchange of information continue to grow. This is due largely to developments in technology and the importance of information to human and technical development. We live in an information society where more people must manage more information, which in turn requires more technological support, which both demands and creates more information. The general outcome of the growing information volume people have to deal with are tripartite in nature: larger volumes of information to handle or access, new forms of information to deal with and new tools for working with information in the midst of vast resources (Ndukwe, 2004). Students admitted into the faculty of Law are both from urban and rural high schools who have little or no proficiency in use of electronic information resources.

In the midst of this vastly developing information terrain, professionals as well as students find themselves dealing with more information in all aspects of learning and research. Not only are we required to continually seek and acquire information, but there are increasingly more sources and larger volumes available (Kajagbola, 2004). The large volume of information in turn demands more information management access and handling skills. In order to make the most of these large amounts of information, professionals and students are developing personal information needs and seeking behaviour which requires time and effort to build. These information

seeking behaviours entails conscious and unconscious filtering of the data and developing fresh strategies for achieving learning goals.

Information seeking behaviour can be described as an individual's way and manner of gathering and sourcing for information for personal use, knowledge updating and development. This explains the fact that several manners of gathering information and consulting information resources determine the information seeking behaviour of an individual. Faire-Wessels (1990) Kakai et al. (2004) referred to this manner of consulting information resources and gathering information as the way people search for and utilize information. This is what informs the behaviour of an individual which might defer from person to person and discipline to discipline. This is why it is necessary to investigate the factors that inform the information gathering of people within the strata of certain areas of study.

Information resource refers to the procedures, equipment, facilities, software and data that are designed, built, operated and maintained to collect, record, process, and store information. Information is a valuable resource in an academic environment, thus acquiring and using information are critical activities. The process known as information seeking is therefore becoming more fundamental and strategic for both students and professionals. Additionally, the information-seeking process is increasingly dependent on electronic technology. This research examined the information seeking patterns of law students of the University of Benin, Nigeria. While the data presentation and analyses appear comparative, the motivation of the research is to discover and present how law students utilize information resources. The separation of both sexes is therefore not exclusive but inclusive as law students are made up of both male and female students.

Statement of the problem

Most students in particular are not exposed to these skills that have to do with information and communication technology Kakai et al. (2004). In this vein, students are not aware of the resources available and where they are available they are not able to locate the right resources for their research. The problem therefore is that students do not have the skill and knowledge to locate the right information resources thereby wasting valuable time that would have been used in their course of study. Makri et al. (2006) observed that law students have problems discovering appropriate information resources for case law, legislation and journal articles. This is because they are limited in their knowledge of basic print materials. Makri et al. (2006) noted for instance, that for case digests and legislation, most law students experienced difficulties in choosing fitting electronic resources, especially for locating case law and journal articles.

Students identified that they dissipated energy thereby losing precious time when seeking information because of these inadequacies. Furthermore, academic sources, in printed and electronic formats, were not easy to find, as students testified ignoring some resources in favour of others items on a reading catalog.

Law students in the University of Benin are expected to maximally utilize the University Library as one of their major resources of information in addition to several other information resources. However, noting from observation and from the studies conducted on information needs and seeking of students particularly law students it was established that students do not use most of the information resources. It was assumed that students could be experiencing technical or literacy problems in accessing information resources; coupled with lack of knowledge and awareness of the resources. The students' poor information seeking behaviour might be singled out as the biggest cause that needs investigation. Therefore, the background for this study informed the purpose(s) for the research.

Purpose of the study

There are several factors that can determine the Information Seeking Behaviour of an individual or a group of individuals. It is therefore desirable to understand the goal for which information is needed, the environment in which the information seeker operates his/her skills in sourcing the needed information, preferred media for acquiring information and hindrances to accessing information resources. These were factors investigated by the researcher in a research carried out with law students of University of Benin, Benin City which led to the formation of the purpose(s) of this study and the formulated hypothesis. (1) Find out the purpose(s) for which law students seek information. (2) Explore the information resources/channels/services consulted by law students. (1) Determine how law students acquire their information search skills. (2) To suggest ways of improving the information services for law students.

Hypotheses

(1) There is no difference in the purpose for which male and female law students use information. (2) There is no difference in the information resources consulted by male and female law students. (3) There is no difference in the acquisition of information search skills of male and female law students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Information needs is understood in information science

Table 1. Sample of respondents.

| Year | Total number of students | | Grand total | Sample (20%) |
	Male	Female		
One	129	115	244	49
Two	184	164	348	70
Three	126	98	224	45
Four	132	128	260	52
Five	37	32	69	14
Total	608	537	1,145	230

as stemming from a vague awareness of something missing and as culminating in locating information that contributes to understanding and meaning (Kuhlthau, 1994). According to Wilson (1999) information behaviour needs to include at least the following three elements: "an information need and its drivers, that is, the factors that give rise to an individual's perception of need; the factors that affect the individual's response to the perception of need and the processes or actions involved in that response." Information seeking behaviour refers to the way people search for and utilize information (Fairer–Wessels, 1990).

Most times student's information seeking behaviour involves active or purposeful information seeking as a result of the need to complete course assignments, prepare for class discussions, seminars, workshops, conferences, or write final year research papers. Limberg (1998b) states that the nature of one's task referred to as "content" is crucial to how people seek and use information. This is contrary to the understanding that information-seeking is a general process which occurs independently of the content in the information.

Information Seeking Behaviour can be described as an individual's way and manner of gathering and sourcing for information for personal use, knowledge updating and development. This explains the fact that several manners of gathering information and consulting information resources determine the information seeking behaviour of an individual. Faire-Wessels (1990) and Kakai et al., (2004) referred to this manner of consulting information resources and gathering information as the way people search for and utilize information. This is what informs the behaviour of an individual which might differ from person to person and discipline to discipline. This is why it is necessary to investigate the factors that inform the information gathering of people within the strata of certain areas of study.

Most law students claim to use the resources of the library heavily over the course of their academic pro-grammes. In spite of this claim, most law students have difficulty in locating resources and identifying suitable information sources for case law, legislation and journal articles, as well as being limited in their knowledge of basic print materials (Kerins et al., 2004). Makri et al.

(2006) in "Studying Law Students' Information Seeking Behaviour to Inform the Design of Digital Law Libraries", observed that law students used diverse electronic information sources to conduct their legal information seeking only as a complimentary method. Law students noted that their information seeking during their undergraduate programmes and to a lesser extent during their postgraduate programmes, centered on items such as reading lists, textbooks and course packs. Students reported that their legal training was largely teacher-centered and content-oriented (McInnis and Symes, 1991; Bruce, 1997a). Students tended to display poor judgement in their choice of electronic resources when attempting to match information needs (Herman, 2001; Genoni and Partridge, 2000). Pedagogical approaches to legal education in Ireland seem not to encourage the development of information skills among law students (Kerins et al., 2004).

Furthermore, Oyesiku (2005) pointed out that the information needs of law lecturers cut across educational, psychological and social needs like every other profession. While this might be the case, however the information needs of law lecturers specifically deal with: research and teaching in matters of law and legal practices; information on new laws and recent enactments, research findings arising from conferences, seminars, workshops and academic journals. Also, information that has to do with current affairs, public administration, governance and general knowledge constitute information needs of lawyers.

METHODOLOGY

This was a descriptive survey research; therefore, the researcher employed a descriptive design. The population of this study consisted of undergraduate law students of the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria in the 2008/2009 academic session. The population was 1,145 students in the five levels of study. A breakdown of this population is shown as follows in Table 1: From this number there is a grand total of 1,145 students. The sample for this study was drawn through systematic random sampling. Law students in each level were randomly presented a questionnaire.

The researcher administered a copy of the questionnaire to every twentieth (20th) person that sat in the lecture room during the

Table 2. Sex and level of respondents.

Level	Male		Female		Total
	No	%	No	%	
Year 1	21	9.13	28	12.17	49
Year 2	37	16.09	33	4.35	70
Year 3	23	10.00	22	9.57	45
Year 4	24	10.43	28	12.17	52
Year 5	8	3.48	6	6.21	14
Total	113	49.13	117	50.87	230

Table 3. Purpose(s) of seeking information by both sexes.

Purpose(s)	Sex	Agree		Disagree		Undecided	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
To supplement lecture notes given by lecturers	M	92	81.42	9	7.96	12	10.6
	F	90	76.92	15	12.82	12	10.3
To complete projects/thesis	M	76	67.26	7	6.91	30	26.5
	F	80	68.38	5	4.27	32	27.4
To keep up with current development /update knowledge	M	102	90.27	2	1.77	9	7.9
	F	99	84.62	4	3.42	14	11.9
To complete class assignments	M	101	89.38	5	4.42	7	6.2
	F	100	85.47	1	0.85	6	5.1
For entertainment	M	41	36.28	38	33.63	34	30.0
	F	47	40.17	39	33.33	31	26.5

course of a lecture period. This was done in order to obtain 230 students that constitute 20% of the sample of the study as recommended by Nwana (1981). As shown in Table 2.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was administered to 230 students that constituted the sample population. Data gathered from retrieved copies of questionnaires were analyzed using simple percentage (to answer the research questions) and Z- test statistics (to test the formulated hypotheses). The data generated were collated, organized, tabulated and analyzed around the research questions and null hypothesis formulated for the study. The formula for the Z- test statistics is given below

$$x_{cal}^2 = \sum_{i=1}\sum_{j=1}\frac{(o_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}}$$

Or

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum(fo - fe)^2}{fe}$$

Where fo, frequency observed; fe, frequency expected.

$$fe = \frac{RT \times CT}{GT}$$

Where RT, row total; CT, colum total; GT, grand total df = (R - 1) (C - 1) where R = No. of rows; C = No. of columns.

Purpose(s) of undergraduate law student's information needs

Table 3 reveals the purpose(s) of seeking information by both sexes of law student's. Majority of the males 102(90.27%) and females 99(84.62%) seek information in order to keep up with current development and update their knowledge. This is important as update of information is extremely important in the law studies. Since laws are always changing, the inability of law students to access and acquire fresh information not only makes them backward but create serious handicap in legal education needed later for the profession. This behaviour would also inform and influence a law student to develop a penchant for research and studies for which the law profession is known.

Information use

Table 4 shows that to male law students (94.69%) and

Table 4. Academic benefits of information use by both sexes.

Academic performance	Sex	Agree No.	%	Disagree No.	%	Undecided No.	%
Promote completion of class assignment	M	103	91.15	3	2.65	7	6.19
	F	115	98.29	0	0	2	1.71
Facilitates easy comprehension of course work	M	107	94.69	2	1.77	4	2.83
	F	114	97.44	1	0.85	2	1.71
Enrichment of lecture notes	M	97	85.84	8	7.08	8	7.08
	F	108	92.31	2	1.71	8	6.84
Being current in the course/profession	M	103	91.15	5	4.42	5	4.42
	F	107	91.45	3	2.56	7	5.89

Table 5. Frequency of information resources used by both sexes.

Sex		Very often No.	%	Often No.	%	Some-times No.	%	Seldom No.	%	Never No.	%	Undecided No.	%
Government publication	M	15	13.27	22	19.47	44	38.94	22	19.47	5	4.42	5	4.42
	F	8	6.84	18	15.38	53	45.30	19	16.24	2	1.71	7	5.98
Law reports	M	63	55.75	24	21.24	10	8.85	8	7.18	1	0.85	0	0
	F	63	63.85	19	16.24	22	18.80	6	5.13	1	0.85	1	0.85
Lecture handouts	M	38	33.62	19	16.81	18	15.93	11	9.73	13	11.50	14	12.38
	F	76	64.96	33	28.21	13	11.11	6	5.13	6	5.13	7	5.98
Websites	M	4	3.54	20	23.60	52	46.02	23	20.35	5	4.42	9	7.93
	F	14	11.97	18	15.38	46	39.32	27	23.08	5	4.27	7	5.98
Dissertations	M	3	2.65	6	5.31	24	21.24	29	25.66	10	8.85	41	36.28
	F	1	0.85	3	2.56	27	23.08	24	20.51	12	10.26	50	42.74
Thesis	M	5	4.42	9	7.96	33	29.20	33	29.20	7	6.19	26	23.00
	F	5	4.27	8	6.84	25	21.37	28	25.93	22	18.80	29	24.78
Encyclopedia	M	9	7.96	9	7.96	43	38.05	36	31.86	6	5.31	10	8.85
	F	7	5.18	17	14.53	32	27.35	30	25.64	18	15.38	13	11.11
Legal/ law digest	M	27	23.89	27	23.89	23	20.35	33	29.20	0	0	3	2.65
	F	25	21.37	26	22.22	33	28.21	20	17.07	5	4.27	8	6.84
Bibliographies	M	11	9.73	13	11.50	39	34.51	30	26.55	6	5.31	14	12.34
	F	7	5.98	14	11.97	38	32.48	27	23.08	13	11.11	18	15.38
Newspapers	M	46	40.71	38	33.63	24	21.24	3	2.65	0	0	2	1.79
	F	38	32.48	33	28.21	33	28.21	6	5.13	2	1.71	5	4.27
Decrees	M	21	18.58	27	23.89	31	27.43	15	13.27	7	6.19	12	10.62
	F	27	23.08	21	17.93	31	26.50	17	14.53	7	5.98	14	11.97

Table 5. Cont.

Textbooks	M	99	87.61	13	11.50	1	0.88	0	0	0	0	0	0
	F	102	87.18	14	11.97	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.85
Video/films	M	11	9.73	10	8.85	36	31.36	29	25.66	18	15.93	9	7.93
	F	21	17.95	12	10.26	27	23.08	20	17.09	26	22.22	11	9.40
Review publications	M	9	7.96	29	25.66	47	41.59	14	12.39	4	3.54	10	8.85
	F	19	16.24	23	19.66	41	35.04	13	11.11	7	5.89	14	11.97
Dictionaries	M	64	56.84	37	32.74	10	8.85	1	0.88	0	0	1	0.88
	F	70	59.83	31	26.50	12	10.26	0	0	2	1.70	2	1.70
Maps/Atlases	M	3	2.65	6	5.31	33	29.20	43	38.05	17	15.04	11	9.73
	F	3	2.56	7	5.98	19	16.24	37	31.62	38	32.48	13	11.11
Access databases	M	3	2.65	5	4.42	35	30.97	37	32.74	17	15.04	16	14.15
	F	3	2.56	7	5.98	15	12.82	34	29.06	33	28.21	25	21.37
Indices/guides	M	8	7.08	12	10.62	36	31.86	28	24.48	15	13.27	14	12.38
	F	12	10.26	23	19.66	20	17.09	16	13.68	27	23.08	19	16.24
Conference/workshop/ seminar	M	7	6.19	11	9.73	53	46.93	25	22.12	10	8.85	7	6.19
	F	8	6.84	20	17.9	31	26.50	27	23.08	16	13.68	15	12.82
Communication with peers/ colleagues	M	52	46.02	30	26.51	26	33.01	4	3.54	0	0	1	0.88
	F	62	52.99	29	24.79	16	13.68	3	2.56	3	2.56	4	3.42
Electronic mail	M	10	8.85	29	25.66	35	30.97	21	18.58	11	9.73	7	6.19
	F	19	16.24	17	14.53	24	20.51	16	13.68	24	20.51	17	14.53
Journals	M	35	30.97	37	32.74	25	22.12	9	7.96	5	4.42	2	1.77
	F	33	28.21	83	70.9	29	24.79	11	9.40	3	2.5	7	5.98
Abstracts/ indexes	M	8	7.08	16	14.16	38	33.63	27	23.89	10	8.85	14	12.39
	F	18	15.38	16	13.68	24	20.59	22	18.80	17	14.53	20	17.07

female law students (97.44%) agree that one benefit of information use is to facilitate easy comprehension of course work, though female law students appear to agree more in this regard. Similarly, another benefit for information use is promotion of class assignments completion in which females 115(98.29%) agree more in relation to male 103(91.15%). It is given that certain subject matter taught within a course of study will only make more meaning when other information resources are consulted which shed light on it. Other information resources add fresh insight, sources and data as these cannot be totally unpacked in a lecture time of approximately one hour. This also broadens the student's perspectives to see the issues from the thought of other academics not limiting themselves to the views and opinions of their legal instructors.

Information resources

Table 5 reveals how often both sexes of students use information resources. In the use of information resources females 102(87.18%) agree more to the use of textbooks than males 99(87.61%). Females 63(53.85%) agree to use less of law reports than males 63(55.75%). Law education is purely pedagogical, thus, law students would definitely use textbooks since some of these are written by the lecturers handling a course of study. Also, since lecturers are attuned to following scholars who share their views, law students would be referred to the

$$x_{cal}^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{3} \sum_{j=1}^{2} \frac{(o_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}}$$

Table 6. How often, materials are located through various means by both sexes.

	Sex	Very often		Often		Sometimes		Seldom		Undecided	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Card catalogue	M	15	13.27	16	14.16	29	25.66	30	26.55	23	20.35
	F	22	18.8	14	11.97	18	15.38	43	36.75	20	17.09
Online public access catalogue (OPAC)	M	7	6.19	10	8.85	22	19.47	47	41.59	27	23.89
	F	5	4.27	7	5.98	22	18.80	48	41.03	35	29.91
Reference librarian	M	18	15.93	19	16.81	37	32.74	24	21.24	15	13.27
	F	18	15.38	22	18.80	29	24.79	26	22.22	22	18.80
Subject librarian	M	15	13.22	12	10.62	35	30.97	23	20.35	28	24.78
	F	12	10.26	16	13.68	20	17.09	30	25.64	39	33.33
Lecturers	M	16	14.16	12	10.62	31	37.43	24	21.24	30	26.55
	F	16	13.68	16	13.68	18	15.38	32	27.55	35	29.91
Browsing shelves for books	M	19	16.81	17	15.04	65	57.52	4	3.54	8	7.08
	F	60	51.28	22	18.80	13	11.11	4	3.42	18	15.38
Scanning journal titles in the library	M	33	29.20	17	15.04	30	26.55	18	15.93	15	13.27
	F	36	30.77	30	25.64	17	14.53	17	14.53	17	14.53
Abstract and indexes on CD-ROM	M	3	2.65	2	1.77	21	18.58	45	39.82	62	54.87
	F	5	4.27	8	6.84	13	11.11	57	48.72	34	29.06
Abstract and indexes in print	M	7	6.19	10	8.85	22	19.47	36	31.86	38	33.63
	F	9	7.69	13	11.11	19	16.24	37	13.63	39	33.33
Friends	M	35	30.97	24	21.24	24	21.24	10	8.85	20	17.70
	F	42	35.89	31	26.50	18	15.38	11	9.40	15	13.27

texts as recommended by the lecturer so that they can be successful in their education.

Undergraduate law students' information utilization pattern

Table 6 presents how often materials are located through various means by both male and female law students. Browsing shelves is the most used by both sexes to locate materials with 19(16.81%) males and 60(51.28%) followed by friends with 35(30.97%) males and 42(35.89%) females. Browsing shelves rank highest because is an unacquired behaviour. Sometimes students explain that they do so because they feel it saves time which in reality it does not.

Table 7 shows that more females 96(82.05%) agree that they acquire search skills from friends/colleagues than males 87(76.99%). In legal education as well as in the profession networking is particularly beneficial for

information getting and sharing. Acquired search skills from friends include tips in using the browser which saves time unlike going for formal training. Also, when students use the café sometimes, it is with friends, therefore students learn search skills in the process.

Students' purpose for seeking information

$$x_{cal}^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{3} \sum_{j=1}^{2} \frac{(o_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}}$$

Calculated X^2 = 0.1814, Df = 2, Table X^2 = 5.90, Level of confidence = 0.05.Decision: Accept null hypothesis. Remark: Not significant.

From Table 8 the Chi-square (X^2) analysis reveals that the calculated value of (X^2) 0.1840 is less than X^2 critical (5.90). The null hypothesis of no significant difference tested is accepted. This implies that there is no difference

Table 7. Acquisition of search skills by both male and female law students.

	Sex	Agree No.	Agree %	Disagree No.	Disagree %	Undecided No.	Undecided %
Trial and error	M	59	52.21	39	34.51	15	13.27
	F	49	41.88	39	33.33	29	24.79
Reading IT books/materials from Library staff	M	29	23.66	49	43.36	35	30.97
	F	32	27.35	43	36.75	42	35.89
Cyber café staff	M	28	24.78	47	41.59	38	33.63
	F	27	23.08	46	39.32	44	37.61
ICT training programme	M	16	14.16	57	50.44	40	35.39
	F	20	17.09	49	41.88	48	41.02
Friends/colleagues	M	87	76.99	6	5.30	20	17.70
	F	96	82.05	3	2.56	18	15.38

Table 8. Chi-square (X^2) analysis of the difference between sexes with respect to purpose of using information.

Purpose for seeking information	Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
Agree	505	522	1027
Disagree	66	66	132
Undecided	107	104	211
Total	678	692	1370

in the purpose for which male and female law students use information.

Testing the students' information resources

$$x_{cal}^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{6} \sum_{j=1}^{2} \frac{(o_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}}$$

x_{cal}^2 = 66.6153, Df = 5, Table X^2 = 11.07, Level of confidence = 0.05, Decision: Since x_{cal}^2 is greater than X^2 critical, the null hypothesis is rejected. Remark: Significant.

From the result presented above, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected. This is because the calculated X^2 (66.6153) is greater than X^2critical (11.07). This implies that there is difference in the information resources consulted by male and female law students as shown in Table 9.

Testing the students information resources utilization pattern

$$x_{cal}^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{3} \sum_{j=1}^{2} \frac{(o_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}}$$

Calculated X^2= 3.8755, Df = 2, Table X^2 = 5.99, Level of confidence = 0.05, Decision: Since x_{cal}^2 is less than X^2 critical, the null hypothesis is accepted. Remark: Not significant.

From the presented result above, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted. This is because, the calculated value of (X^2) 3.8755 is less than X^2 critical (5.99). This implies that there is no difference in the acquisition of information search skills of male and female law students as shown in Table 10.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher wishes to recommend the following based on the conclusions drawn in this study: (1) Since both male and female male and female law students seek information for the purpose of current development, update their knowledge, current awareness, and to complete class assignments given by their lecturers, efforts should be made by university authority to consistently stock the library with relevant, current and up-to-date information resources/materials which would keep the students abreast with the current trends in their training/profession. (2) Since male law students consult law reports more and female law students consult textbooks more, the reason for this disparity should be investigated and attended to. (3) Both male and female

Table 9. Chi-square (X^2) analysis of mean difference between both sexes with respect to information resources used.

Information resources	Sex		Total
	Male	**Female**	
Very Often	551	487	1030
Often	449	409	858
Sometimes	716	587	1303
Seldom	481	409	890
Never	167	289	456
Undecided	228	307	535
Total	2592	2488	5080

Table 10. Acquisition of search skills by both sexes.

Acquisition of search skills	Sex		Total
	Male	**Female**	
Agree	219	224	443
Disagree	198	180	378
Undecided	148	181	329
Total	565	585	1150

law students develop their information search skills more from friends and colleagues, therefore, university authority should endeavour to make formal information search skill training a formal part of legal training especially because information search is time consuming. This would enable both male and female law students to use their time more usefully each time they visit the library.

Conclusion

The findings of this study pointed out various facts concerning both male and female male and female law students in their patterns of information search and use. From the research it was clearly shown that male law students obtain higher mean scores in their information utilization pattern than the female law students. The null hypothesis that was rejected is one (hypothesis two), compared with those that had no difference that were on the higher size using the probability level of 0.05 is accepted. It shows that the information utilization patterns of both male and female law students are the same with perhaps slight differences not highly evident.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Department of Library and information Science,
Delta State University, Abraka,
Delta State, Nigeria.
4th March 2008

Dear Sir/Madam,
I am a graduate student of the above named university. I am carrying out a research on "information seeking patterns of law Students of the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. This questionnaire is designed for all levels of law students in the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria to elicit information on their information seeking patterns. Please, kindly and honestly respond to the following questions and be assured of the confidential treatment of your response. You are expected to return the completed questionnaire to the contact person within 24 hours of receipt.

Personal data: Please tick as appropriate

- Sex: Male…………Female……….
- Course of study……………………………
- Level of study……………………………
- Age: Below 20yrs…20 -24yrs…25 – 29yrs…30-40yrs….40yrs… and above...
- Marital status: Single……...Married……...

Information seeking patterns

Table 1. Indicate whether or not you seek information for the following purposes?

Purpose	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
To supplement note given by lecturers			
To support notes given by lecturers			
To complete projects/thesis			
To keep up with current development/update knowledge			
To complete assignments			
For entertainment			

Table 2. How often do you use the following information resources?

	Very often	often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Undecided
Government publication						
Law reports						
Lecture handouts						
Websites						
Dissertations						
Thesis						
Encyclopedia						
Legal/ law digest						
Bibliographies						
Newspapers						
Decrees						
Textbooks						
Video/films						
Review Publications						
Dictionaries						

Table 2. Cont'd.

Maps/Atlases
Access Databases
Indices/guides
Conference/workshop/seminar
Communication with peers/colleagues
Electronic mail
Journals
Abstracts/indexes

Table 3. How often do you use the following channels to access information?

Access point	Very often	often	sometimes	seldom	Undecided
University main library					
Departmental(law) library					
Other libraries in the University campus					
Private law libraries					
Ministry of Justice library					
Public libraries					
Cyber café					
Home access to the internet					
Mass media					
Communication with peers/others					

Table 4. How do you react or feel when you cannot locate the information resource that you need? (Indicate whether or not you agree).

	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
I keep searching for information			
I sometimes feel bad			
I sometimes consult the librarian			

Table 5. Indicate whether or not the information you seek contribute the following to your academic performance?

Academic performance	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
Promote completion of class assignment			
Facilitates easy comprehension of course work			
Enrichment of lecture note			
Being current in the course/profession			

Table 6. How often do you make use of the library?

Daily†
2-3 times a week†
Once a week†
2-3 times a month†
Once a month†
Occasionally†
Rarely†
Undecided†.

Table 7. Indicate whether or not you use the library for the following reasons?

	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
To borrow books			
To return borrowed library materials			
To complete class assignments			
To read for examination			
To consult librarians			
To source for materials			
To socialize			
To photocopy			

Table 8. How often do you use the following to locate materials in the library?

	Very often	often	sometimes	seldom	undecided
Card catalogue					
Online public Access Catalogue (OPAC)					
Reference librarian					
Subject librarian					
Lecturers					
Browsing shelves for Books					
Scanning journal titles in the library					
Abstract and indexes on CD-ROM					
Abstract and indexes in print					
Friends					

Table 9. How often, when using the university library, do you need help?

Very often ☐
Often ☐
Sometimes ☐
Seldom ☐
Undecided ☐

Table 10. What is the length of time you spend in the library per visit?

Less than an hour ☐
1– 2 hours ☐
2– 3 hours ☐
Hours and above ☐

Table 11. How often do you use the following services in/of the library?

	Very often	often	sometimes	seldom	undecided
Bibliographic services					
Current awareness					
Telephone service					
E-mail					
Internet/e-service					
Inter-library loan service					
Photocopying					
Loan service (of the local library)					
Book reservation service					

Table 12. Indicate whether or not you acquired your information search skills through the following means?

	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
Trial and error			
Reading IT books/materials from Library staff			
Cyber café staff			
ICT training programme			
Friends/colleagues			

Table 13. How satisfied are you with library services/resources?

Highly satisfied ⌷
Satisfied ⌷
Unsatisfactory ⌷
Highly unsatisfactory ⌷
Undecided ⌷.

Table 14. Indicate if any of the following act as an impediment to your information search/use?

	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
Inadequate/lack of ICT skills			
Inadequate relevant materials in the library			
High cost of information resources			
Slow internet response			
Uncondusive library environment			
Electricity interruption			
Uncooperative library staff			