



AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR EFFECTIVE LEGAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN JUDICIAL LIBRARIES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated the availability of information resources for effective legal service delivery in judicial libraries in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 157 Lawyers in judicial libraries in Anambra State. The 157 Lawyer was utilized in the study, employing a census sampling technique, as the entire population is relatively small and manageable. The instruments used for data collection were an observation checklist. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Departments of Library and Information Science, Science Education, and Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation unit) at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The KR-20 formula (Kuder-Richardson) was used to determine the reliability of the observation checklist, yielding coefficients above 0.75 for various clusters. The researcher, along with five research assistants, collected data for the study using the direct approach method, and a 96% return rate was recorded. Frequencies and percentages were used to answer the research questions. The study's findings revealed, among other things, that 81.4% of print resources are available in judicial libraries for effective legal service delivery in Anambra State. It was also found that the majority, which is 65.7% of e-resources, are unavailable in judicial libraries for effective legal service delivery in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among other things, that more funds in the budgets of the judicial system should be allocated for the acquisition of electronic information resources to facilitate effective legal service delivery in Anambra State.

Keywords: Availability, Information Resources, Legal, Service Delivery, Judicial Libraries

1.1 Introduction

A library is a collection of books, magazines, newspapers, and other materials made available for people to borrow or use for reference. Ogbonnaya (2020) described a library as a place where information sources (including print and non-print materials) are acquired, organized, processed, stored, and made available (or disseminated) to meet the information needs of patrons. Libraries have been around for thousands of years and are an essential part of society, providing everyone access to information and knowledge regardless of their background or financial means. The library serves as a hub for education, research, and leisure, allowing people to expand their horizons, explore new ideas, and connect with others who share their interests. Libraries offer services beyond just lending books; their services include computer access, community events, educational programs, and more. They are crucial in promoting literacy,

intellectual freedom, and cultural diversity and these are vital resources for individuals, communities and society and they are of different types.

Libraries can be divided into different types based on various factors, including their physical existence, collection and services. Dapo-Asaju, Ekeh, Makinde, and Ogungbo (2021) noted that there are different types of libraries in relation to the users they serve, the resources they house, and these include Academic Libraries, Public Libraries, Special Libraries, and National Libraries. An academic library is located within a college or university and serves the research and educational needs of students and faculty. Adebayo, Kehinde, Momoh and Fagbami (2024) noted that academic libraries play a crucial role in supporting the teaching, learning, and research activities of their parent institutions. Additionally, a public library is a type of library that is open to the general public and offers free access to a diverse range of resources, including books, magazines, newspapers, DVDs, CDs, and other materials. Ekeng, Etok and Abua (2023) asserted that a national Library is an institution that serves as the principal repository of a country's published works and cultural heritage. Furthermore, Ekeng et al noted that a National library is an information agency saddled with the responsibility of creating access to existing information resources and services for the user community. The basic objective of any National library is to satisfy users' information needs. A special library it is designed to serve the information needs of a specific organization, group, or industry. Onwubiko (2021) maintained that special libraries are designed and structured to provide precise information for specialized needs. These libraries are often found in corporations, law firms, government agencies, hospitals, museums, and other specialized institutions. The collections of special libraries are tailored to meet the specific information needs of their users. For example, a law firm's library may contain legal reference materials, such as case law, statutes, and legal treatises. In contrast, a hospital library may have medical journals, books on healthcare policy, and medical texts. Special libraries often have specialized librarians trained in the subject areas relevant to their users. They provide a range of services, including research assistance, current awareness services, and training on accessing and using specialized databases and other information resources. One of the specialized libraries is the law library.

The law library is the building where information resources related to decrees, rules, edicts, and acts are housed. Obuezie and Echedom (2023) noted that a law library is a facility specially created for people in the law profession and those needing specialized legal information resources to search, access, and use the legal information resources that have been acquired, processed, and organized. They are established to serve the judicial arm of government. They serve the Judges, Magistrates and Counsel in the preparation of cases and dispensation of justice. Akinyemi (2017) described judicial (law) libraries as the libraries usually found within the court premises. In other words, they are often referred to as court libraries. In Nigeria, these libraries include the Supreme Court Library, Court of Appeal Libraries, Sharia Court of Appeal, Federal and State High Court Law Libraries, National Industrial Court libraries and Magistrate Court libraries across the country. The primary function of any law library is to provide the most needed and up-to-date legal information materials and services. Before a law library can offer effective and efficient services, it must be stocked with the necessary information resources.

Information resources comprise the print and non-print materials, as well as audiovisual materials, in the library that meet the needs of staff and students in learning institutions.

Information resources in the library include books, reference materials such as dictionaries, Encyclopedias, Almanacs, Atlases, Yearbooks, Magazines, Newspapers, fiction, Visual materials, recordings of all types, Slides, computers, and study kits. Owushi and Anyalebechi (2025) maintained that the law library information resources consist of the print, non-print resources and personnel in libraries who provide effective and efficient services to the law library patrons. They added that the print resources cover various aspects of law ranging from law textbooks, journals, reference materials, statute, precedent books, law reports, government publications among others, non-print consists of information resources that requires the use of computer to access these include electronic journals, online databases and electronic books, while the personnel include the law librarians, library officer, library assistants to mention few. Similarly, Umar (2020) noted that Law information resources include: law books, law reports, legislation and statutes, legal periodicals, government publications, reference materials and other interrelated non-legal books, e-resources, unpublished works of law, among others.

The availability of information resources refers to the presence of intellectual materials in the library. As noted by Inyang and Ekeng (2023), the availability of information resources means that the state in which materials can be easily accessed, obtained, and used in the library. The availability of information resources is the condition of having a large volume of intellectual outputs in a library. The availability of information resources is the extent to which the provider has the requisite resources, such as personnel, technology, and printed and non-printed materials, to meet the needs of clients. The availability of information resources in the library collection is one way of demonstrating to special library users that there are materials for consultation to support their study, learning, and research. Operationally, the availability of information resources refers to the state in which intellectual materials are stored in judicial libraries and can be easily obtained for use in service delivery.

Service delivery is the act of meeting the specific needs of people. Service delivery typically aims to provide clients with increased value by establishing standards, policies, and principles to guide all aspects of their business and customer interactions. Ikhenoba and Atakpa (2023) described service delivery as the process of rendering quality services by public institutions to consumers of their products and services. Service delivery is the formalized provision of library resources in various forms by a librarian who serves as an intermediary between users and available information materials. Obuezie and Echedom (2023) pointed out that services delivered in the law library as mentioned by the authors include: general reference service, loaning of books and other materials for photocopying services, selective dissemination of information and indexing services, assisting users to locate information items, orientation, services, one-to-one library instruction services, abstracting services, translation services, referral services, document delivery services and bibliographic services among others. The delivery of service by judicial workers could be influenced by their gender and years of job experience.

Gender refers to the social and cultural attributes and expectations that distinguish males and females. Research findings have been inconsistent regarding the use of available information resources by male and female participants. Fomsi and Orduah (2017) found no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female participants in the use of information resources. On the contrary, Boma and Akameze (2022) found a gender difference in the use of information resources. Reports from various studies have shown a gross contradiction in the

findings for males and females regarding the use of information resources, highlighting the need to consider gender in this study, in addition to years of job experience.

Years of job experience represent the number of years that one has undertaken professional roles and responsibilities in a specific career path. Okafor, Nnebedum, and Oshia (2025) defined years of job experience as the accumulated specialized knowledge and skills acquired by individuals through performing official duties over a period. Furthermore, Okafor et al. averred that the wealth of experience gained by individuals on the job could help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to effectively discharge their duties. Regarding years of experience, there is a tendency for well-experienced judicial workers who have long-standing legal experience (above 10 years) to utilize information resources in their legal profession more than their novice counterparts who have short legal experience (0-10 years).

There appears to be a shortage of current law books, which has contributed to low patronage of judicial libraries in Anambra State. To buttress this, Eze-Onwuzuruike and Uwaechina (2021) noted that Anambra State judicial libraries often have low patronage among lawyers and judges due to poor collections, an uninviting environment, and insufficient ICT and internet facilities, which have made information service delivery slow and ineffective. Some lawyers who rely on legal information to prepare and present their cases in courts may be adversely affected by poor collection in judicial libraries in Anambra State. Given this background, the researchers investigated the availability and utilization of information resources and services for effective service delivery in judicial libraries in Anambra State.

Statement of Problem

The adequate provision of judicial information resources and services has become a major channel for library users, especially those in special libraries such as judicial libraries, to seek and source information. This is because adequate information resources in judicial libraries provide lawyers, judges, and members of staff with easy access to the information they need for research, consultation, and case processing, thereby enhancing effective service delivery. However, the economic fortunes in Nigeria reduced organizational funding for library resources. This may be making it difficult for judicial librarians to make library resources and library services available to their users.

Without the availability of judicial library resources and services, judicial libraries may not be able to deliver effective and efficient services that enhance consultation, learning, studies, and research processes, which judicial Libraries are established for. The government has been making efforts to train and retrain judicial workers in acquiring computer skills and competencies for the effective use of information resources in delivering services. It is worrisome that, despite efforts, the availability and use of information resources for effective service delivery in judicial libraries remain uncertain. In light of this problem, this study aims to investigate the availability of information resources for effective legal service delivery in judicial libraries in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine the availability of information resources for effective legal service delivery in judicial libraries in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

1. availability of print resources in judicial libraries for effective legal service delivery in Anambra State.
2. availability of e-resources in judicial libraries for effective legal service delivery in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the available print resources in judicial libraries for effective legal service delivery in Anambra State?
2. What are available e-resources in judicial libraries for effective legal service delivery in Anambra State?

Methods

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 157 Lawyers in judicial libraries in Anambra State. The 157 Lawyer was utilized for the study without sampling. A census sampling technique was used since the entire population is relatively small and manageable.

The instrument used for data collection was an observation checklist. The first observation checklist, which is titled “Availability of Information Resources for Effective Legal Service Delivery Checklist (AIRELSDC)” contained 19 items. The face validity of the instrument was determined by three experts, two from the Department of Library and Information Science and one from the Department of Educational Foundations, all within the Faculty of Education at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of AIRELSDC was ascertained with the KR-20 formula (Kuder-Richardson) and the coefficient indices obtained for clusters one and two of AIRELSDC were 0.80 and 0.81, respectively.

The researcher and research assistant employed the direct delivery approach, in which copies of the instruments were administered and collected on the spot. A total of 157 copies of the questionnaires were distributed, and 151 were properly filled out and successfully retrieved, yielding a 96% return rate. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze data arising from research questions 1-3. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions 4-6, while the t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The cut-off point for accepting a percentage score was 50% and above, which was considered Available (A), while percentage scores below 50% were considered Not Available (NA).

Result

Research Question 1: What print resources are available in judicial libraries for effective legal service delivery in Anambra State?

Table 1: Frequency and Percentages on Availability of Print Resources in Judicial Libraries for Effective Legal Service Delivery

S/N	ITEMS	Lawyers (n =151)				
		Available		Unavailable		Remark
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
1	Constitution of nation	146	96.7	5	3.3	Available

2	Parliament debate	97	64.2	54	35.8	Available
3	Proceedings	126	83.4	25	16.5	Available
4	Gazettes	135	89.4	16	10.6	Available
5	Court judgments / reports	124	82.1	27	17.9	Available
6	Government publications	104	68.9	47	31.1	Available
7	Case law journals	111	73.5	40	26.5	Available
8	Supplements	102	67.5	49	32.5	Available
9	Digest	139	92.1	12	7.9	Available
10	Legislations	143	94.7	8	5.3	Available
11	Practice books	137	90.7	14	9.3	Available
12	Loose leaf publication	41	27.2	110	72.8	Unavailable
13	Textbooks	143	94.7	8	5.3	Available
14	Periodicals	113	74.8	38	25.2	Available
15	Journals	140	92.7	11	7.3	Available
16	Encyclopedias	133	88.1	18	11.9	Available
17	Biographies	122	80.8	29	19.2	Available
18	Handbooks	110	72.8	41	27.2	Available
19	Manuals	105	69.5	46	30.5	Available
20	Directories	143	94.7	8	5.3	Available
21	Yearbook	138	91.4	13	8.6	Available
22	Newspaper and magazine	134	88.7	17	11.3	Available
23	Official gazette	141	93.4	10	6.6	Available
Cluster Percentage		123	81.4	28	18.6	Available

Table 1 reveals that out of the 23 print resources listed, 22 items which are above 50% are available, while 1 item which is 27.2% indicating unavailability. This indicated that items 1-11 and 13-23 are available indicated by 81.4%. Therefore, majority which is 81.4% of print resources are available in judicial libraries for effective legal service delivery in Anambra State

Research Question 2: What e-resources are available in judicial libraries for effective legal service delivery in Anambra State?

Table 1: Frequency and Percentages on Availability of E-resources in Judicial Libraries for Effective Legal Service Delivery

S/N	ITEMS	Lawyers (n =151)				Remark
		Available		Unavailable		
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
1	Microfilms	35	23.2	116	76.8	Unavailable
2	Statistical data	21	13.9	130	86.1	Unavailable
3	Internet base resources	47	31.1	104	68.9	Unavailable
4	Law pavilion	20	13.2	131	86.8	Unavailable
5	Legalpedia	13	8.6	138	91.4	Unavailable
6	Law companion	18	11.9	133	88.1	Unavailable
7	Lexis nexis	27	17.9	124	82.1	Unavailable
8	Westlaw	19	12.6	132	87.4	Unavailable
9	Law journal online	126	83.4	25	16.6	Available
10	Computer law	132	87.4	19	12.6	Available
11	Hein online	12	7.9	139	92.1	Unavailable
12	JSTOR	8	5.3	143	94.7	Unavailable
13	Lexis Academic Universe	14	9.3	137	90.7	Unavailable
14	E- Hart	7	4.6	144	95.4	Unavailable

15	Legal Trace	34	22.5	117	77.5	Unavailable
16	CD-ROM Data base	135	89.4	16	10.6	Available
17	E-Journals	144	95.4	7	4.6	Available
18	Legal Website	28	18.5	123	81.5	Unavailable
19	Open Access Legal Information E- resources	145	96.0	6	4.0	Available
Cluster Percentage		52	34.3	99	65.7	Unavailable

As shown in Table 2, out of 19 listed e-resources, 14 items which shows 65.7% indicated unavailability, while 5 of them with 34.3% indicating they are available. Items 1-8, 11-15 and 18 are unavailable. On the other hand, items 9, 10, 16, 17 and 19 are available. Therefore, majority of e-resources are not available in judicial libraries for effective legal service delivery in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study revealed that the majority, which is 81.4% of print resources are available in judicial libraries for effective legal service delivery in Anambra State. This is in line with the finding of Ukpebor (2020), which indicated that most print resources were available in academic libraries. This also agrees with the finding of Panle, Odanwu, and Mang (2021), which showed that the majority of print information resources are available for use by students of library and information science at university libraries. This agreement with the findings could be attributed to the fact that the studies were conducted in the same country, which has similar policies regarding the provision of print resources in the library.

The available print resources in judicial libraries for effective legal service delivery in Anambra State included the Constitution of the nation, parliamentary debates, proceedings, gazettes, court judgments/reports, government publications, case law journals, and supplements. Others include: digest, legislation, practice books, textbooks, periodicals, journals, encyclopedias, biographies, handbooks, manuals, directories, yearbook, newspaper and magazine and official gazette. The possible explanation for this finding is that the judicial system predominantly operates a traditional conventional library that houses print resources and is therefore provided to meet the information needs of lawyers in Anambra State. Lawyers who rely heavily on printed resources to prepare and present their cases can access them in judicial libraries in Anambra State.

The study's results showed that 65.7% of e-resources are unavailable in judicial libraries, hindering effective legal service delivery in Anambra State. This finding is in agreement with the findings of other researchers who have carried out investigations on e-resources in other locations, such as Quadri, Adetimirin, and Idowu (2014), which revealed that the majority of electronic resources are unavailable for use by undergraduate students in private universities. This also upheld the finding of Uluocha and Mabawonku (2014), which revealed that e-resources and online legal databases were unavailable for use by lecturers in Nigerian universities. However, this refuted the finding of Temboge and Diso (2022), which revealed that most electronic information resources are available in academic libraries. This also disagreed with the finding of Onuoha, Ifeanyi, and Yunisa (2020), which revealed that most e-resources in university libraries were available. The disparity in the findings could be attributed to the different types of libraries in which the studies were conducted and the parent bodies that funded them.

The e-resources that were unavailable in judicial libraries for effective legal service delivery in Anambra State included microfilms, statistical data, internet-based resources, the Law Pavilion, Legalpedia, Law Companion, LexisNexis, Westlaw, HeinOnline, JSTOR, Lexis Academic Universe, e-Hart, Legal Trace, and legal websites. The possible explanations for the unavailability of the e-resources in judicial libraries were inadequate funding to procure electronic information resources. The unavailability of e-resources in judicial libraries can limit lawyers' access to current information at a rapid rate, hindering their ability to deliver legal services effectively in Anambra State. The situation of unavailability of most e-resources tends to have worsened in the present days due to inflation and the high exchange rate of the dollar to naira, which makes it difficult for the management of judicial libraries to procure these materials

Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, it was concluded that most information resources are readily available for effective legal service delivery in judicial libraries in Anambra State. Most available information resources are printed, while e-resources are largely unavailable and rarely utilized for effective legal service delivery in judicial libraries in Anambra State. It is therefore imperative that these valuable resources be made progressively efficient by the inclusion of e-resources.

Recommendations

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

1. The management of judicial libraries should make efforts toward the provision of unavailable print resources (loose-leaf publications) to enable lawyers to get the most up-to-date, reliable legal insights for effective legal service delivery.
2. More funds in the judicial system's budgets should be allocated for the acquisition of electronic information resources to facilitate effective legal service delivery.

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