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**COLLECTION MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND USE  
OF LAW LIBRARIES BY UNDERGRADUATE  
STUDENTS OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA**

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## Abstract

*This paper examines the collection management practices and use of law libraries by undergraduate students of selected universities in Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. A systematic sampling technique was adopted to facilitate the selection of every 10th members of the total population in each of the universities studied; questionnaire was used to collect data for the study while the data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Research questions were answered using percentage and mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to test the hypothesis. The result of the study shows that law lectures have input in selection of library materials and that the law librarian usually conduct frequent evaluation of law collections to ensure their currency. It revealed that undergraduate law students visit law libraries to consult, read and utilize information materials available in law libraries. The result further revealed that there is significant relationship between collection management practices and use of law library information resources by law students in Nigerian universities. The study recommends that law librarians should carry out thorough analysis of user needs and also carry students and others members of law faculties along in collection building to guarantee effective utilization of law libraries.*

**Key words:** Collection management practices, use of law library, law students

## INTRODUCTION

Universities are established to impart knowledge requisite to achieving academic degrees in all disciplines. Students enrolled in universities for both undergraduate and postgraduate studies for courses of their choices which among others include Education, Engineering, Dentistry, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, Medical Sciences, and Law. It is trite that universities everywhere and anywhere in all ages regardless of their nomenclatures have contributed and still contribute in no small measure to the growth of the nation in all ramifications. Knowledge acquired in higher institutions of learning also has the power to bring about economic and political transformation needed to improve standard of living Asiyai (2014). Libraries, which are often referred to as the hearts of universities, are integral part of any higher institution of learning. In approving the establishment of any higher institution of learning in Nigeria by any statutory body such as the National University Commission (NUC), library is one of the cardinal criteria and sine qua non to establishing any university. Ajibero (1995) opined that libraries must be established along with newly established universities.

Libraries usually key into the vision and mission of their institutions as all academic scholarly activities are often done in libraries. In libraries, books in different formats are acquired, organized, processed, stored and made available to satisfy the information needs of patrons. One of the major courses offered by universities in Nigeria and in the globe is law program. In Nigeria, all regulations for starting faculties of law at the federal, states and individual levels are being controlled and monitored strictly by Council of Legal Education, which is the statutory body responsible for legal education in Nigeria. Consequently for any law program to commence in any higher institution of learning in Nigeria the approval of the Council of Legal Education must be sought and obtained. This is to ensure that there are competent lecturers, well furnished with modern technology lecture rooms, good office accommodation as well as a good law library with a robust collection in all subjects of law in print and non-print formats materials in a good and conducive environment. All these are major criteria to secure approval for commencement and accreditation of any faculty of law in Nigeria by both the Council of Legal Education and National Universities Commission.

For law students to obtain good grades during their undergraduate days and to be successful in their future career as lawyers, they must possess good knowledge of the law in all courses or subjects of law on both substantive and procedural laws. In order to be well groomed in their chosen profession, law students who are being trained to become lawyers must be married to their libraries. It is a usual expression amongst lawyers that a lawyer is as good as his library. Needless to say then that the quality of teaching of law courses in our universities coupled with the availability of a well standardized library equipped with current and relevant information resources of both primary and secondary sources in both print and electronic formats in a conducive environment are indispensable tools to building and grooming well-seasoned future legal practitioners.

The significance of the above submission is that the availability of a well- rounded library collections results in effective services in law libraries. It would be difficult if not practically impossible for any library including law library to have a well-rounded library

collection without a good collection management practices in place. Collection management practices include all activities carried on in libraries; it includes among others collection development, community analysis, collection development policy, evaluation, selection, acquisition and weeding.

Information is valuable because it can affect an individual's behaviour, his decisions, or an outcome. Information plays a significant role in training law students who aspire to become legal practitioners. New Encyclopedia Britannica Vol. 21 15<sup>th</sup> ed. P.615 defines information as facts and opinion provided and received during the course of daily life. The information could be from people, mass media, and electronic data banks. New International Dictionary of the English Language (1997) defined information as knowledge acquired or derived. Legal information is a very germane and indispensable tool in legal education.

The primary assignment of any law library is to acquire legal information resources in various forms, organize these resources and makes them available to students and other faculty members. Law Libraries also usually subscribe to relevant electronic databases. Information is vital to law students' development and success. The type information law students have access to have a way of influencing their information behaviour their development and ultimately their success both at studentship level and in their future career as legal practitioners. Consequently, law libraries must ensure at all times that their collections remain adequate, sufficient, relevant and current to satisfy their patrons information needs to guaranty maximum use of law libraries.

### **Statement of the problem**

Law is a specialized and highly technical subject that keeps growing on a daily basis. The non-static nature of law has made its dependence on information resources indispensable. Law lecturers as well as law students operate in information intensive environment because whatever they do; teaching, learning, research etc. require information. Therefore, a well-standardized library equipped with current and

relevant information resources of both primary and secondary sources in print and electronic formats in a conducive environment with a well-trained collection manager(s) are indispensable tools for maximum utilization of law library holdings.

It has been observed that the rate of patronage of libraries is gradually dwindling because students resort to seek information from alternative sources such as internet, friends and their private collections to meet their information needs due to poor collection management practices of law libraries. Academic law libraries in Nigeria seem to be more concerned about the numbers of books and electronic law resources in their collection than the actual use of the resources. Academic law libraries need to critically analyze the needs of their students and select the information materials that would best meet their information needs which will invariably encourage the students and other members of the faculty to make maximum use of the information materials acquired in the libraries. Also, poor budgetary allocation to the law libraries coupled with the cold war between University Librarians and the Deans of the Faculties of law on the control of law libraries which affect their ability to work together to build the collection suitable for teaching, learning is another reasons for the poor collection practices by law librarians.

A best collection management practice is required in the law library to ensure a round and robust collection that will make the library a destination point for reading, legal research, for doing assignment and accessing electronic information.

### **Objectives of the study**

- (i) Identify collection management practices of the law Libraries in Nigerian universities.
- (ii) Find out the library collection mostly used by undergraduate law students in the law libraries.
- (iii) Recommend ways law librarians can improve the use of information resources in Nigerian law libraries.

## **Research question**

The following questions were raised for the study:

- (i) What are the collection management practices in the selected law libraries in Nigerian universities?
- (ii) What are the library collections mostly used by undergraduate law students in the law libraries?
- (iii) What can Law Librarians do to ensure maximum use of law libraries information resources?

## **Hypothesis**

There will be no significant relationship between collection management practices and use of law library by students in Nigerian universities.

## **Literature review**

The literature review will be done under the following headings:

- (i) Collection management practices
- (ii) Use of law library

## **Collection management practices in university**

Kennedy (2006) opines that collection management refers all activities carried out in libraries including selection, acquisition, evaluation, preservation etc. Whilst Ojebode (2009), is of the opinion that collection management practices include selection of resources, acquisition of those materials selected, the development of plans for sharing resources between libraries, the maintenance of resources acquired, weeding and

evaluation. Collection management practices activities amongst other include the following:

**Community analysis:** It usually very germane for libraries to investigate and find out the type of information that will meet the information needs of the members of their host communities. The process of investigating what the information needs of the members of the host community is referred to as community analysis. According to Easterbrook (1987), community analysis is done to know all the factors that are likely to influence the attitude of people in a particular community to the use of information resources available in a library. Various methods such as interview, observation, and questionnaire are used to get information about the type of information that will satisfy a community of library users. It is therefore incumbent on law libraries to carry out thorough investigation about the specific legal information required by students and other members of faculty before selecting materials to acquire in law libraries.

**Collection development policy:** It is a common practice for standard libraries to have drawn out plans, which guide their collection management practices. These plans are usually documented; a document that contains these plans is referred to as collection development policy. Collection Development Policy helps libraries to make objective selection of information materials in line with the goals of their parent institutions bereft of personal interest or driven by course or professional affiliation International Federation of Library Association (2001)). This will ensure that libraries are able to meet the divergent needs of their clientele (Patel, 2015).

**Evaluation:** According to one of the rules of libraries by Raga Nathan that books are for use, any book in the library, which is no longer being used by library users, has lost its value and must be withdrawn from the library to create space for materials that are still valuable. Consequently, libraries employ different methods to know the state and the usefulness of their collections. This will enable them to know whether their present collections still satisfy the information needs of their users, whether the collections have become obsolete and outdated and thus, need to be updated in order to meet the present needs of their users. Some of the techniques or methods used by libraries to

evaluate their collection include but not limited to statistical sampling, interviews, survey, and collection turn over, checklists, and catalog.

**Budgeting:** This is the plan for library's income and expenditure for a certain period. Library budget is usually prepared annually. Budgets guide libraries on how to manage their income well in order to achieve their goals and objectives.

**Selection:** Students and other academic members of the faculty are consulted to suggest relevant materials that will meet their information needs to avoid acquiring undesirable resources and books in the library that may be of little or no use to users. According to Oparaku et al. (2005), selection is the process of selecting desirable titles of information materials out of many titles in the market in order to meet target that is, the specific needs of library users. If materials are selected based on user's needs it would doubtless result to higher library patronage and user satisfaction. Criteria for selecting information material in academic library (law library) include among others; authoritativeness, accuracy, impartiality, recency of data, adequate scope, depth of coverage, appropriateness, relevance, organization, style, aesthetic qualities, technical aspects, physical characteristics, special features, library potential, cost and cost-effectiveness.

**Acquisition:** This refers to the technical process of ordering, receiving, and paying for an item, after the Library has reached intellectual decision to select the materials (Aggarwal, 2005). It is the systematic process of acquiring information resources to the library using different methods in order to meet the information needs of library users. Methods of acquisition include subscription, purchase, gift/donation and internal generation. Acquisition procedure usually begins with stock checking and ends when the materials ordered for are received and certified by the acquisition staff.

**Preservation:** Preservation refers to various techniques employed by library in order to prolong the life expectancy of library collection. Library materials are subject to natural causes like long usage, wear and tear, insect and pest invasion, act of God amongst others which can result into early damage and deterioration of library materials. According to Wamuhoya and Mutula (2005), library materials deteriorate over long period of usage. Consequently, it is important to preserve the intellectual content of library materials by librarians in charge of libraries. The fundamental principles of preservation

apply to all formats, from print to digital, but the techniques and costs of the various treatments differ dramatically. Akande (2009) expressed the opinion that conservation and preservation of deteriorating information resources in libraries has become a global phenomenon to which libraries must aggressively respond to if their mission of meeting information needs of their patrons would be met.

**Weeding:** this is the different ways in which library materials which are no longer in used are removed from the library stock in order to create room for more current and recent materials which can better satisfy the information needs of library users. According to Nelson (2007) Weeding is the. In addition to selecting relevant materials to add to a collection, a librarian must also know when to remove materials that are no longer of value to the library's users.

### **Use of law library**

According to New International Dictionary (1997), information is knowledge acquired or derived. According to Bruce (2005), information plays a major role in individuals' lives. People seek and use information in all ramifications of life. Information is a process of getting information that is adequate and timely, specific and organized for a purpose, presented within a context that gives it meaning and relevance and can lead to increase in understanding and decrease in uncertainty. According to Yousefi and Yousefi (2007), information everywhere in the world plays a major role in educational development of students, contributing to their success and future achievements. According to Samuel (2011), for academic libraries including law libraries to offer best services by satisfying their patrons' information needs, there is need to study to investigate and know the type of information channels their students prefer to use to get information. Uwakwe et al. (2016) described library use as the act of perusing the library stock sometimes with or without the help of library staff and borrowing books in the library. It also includes studying one's own material in the library. Thus, anything done in the library-by library users, whether assisted or otherwise, to meet his or her information needs is referred to as library use. Olurunsola (2009) highlighted some of the factors that motivate readers into using the libraries as the size and currency of the collection, accessibility to Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, conducive learning

environment and, well-trained staff. Ossai (2011) in her study on how the law students utilized information resources in the law library submitted that most of the law students claim to have heavily used library resources in the course of their academic programs but most of them have a difficulty in locating and identifying the suitable library information sources for case law, legislation and journal articles. She recommended that law students should be assisted to frequently utilized library facilities. Yemisi and Janneke (2011) in their own study of information behaviour of law students at the Adekunle Ajasin University revealed that law students are well prepared to use the law library. They have an ability to use the available electronic information resources to retrieve information for their studies. However, the challenges faced in accessing information sources in the law libraries prevent their patronage. According to these authors the challenges faced by the law libraries are lack of current materials which hampers students' efforts to find information, unorganized sources, unhelpful staff who are not electronic literate, prohibition to access the electronic library in the law library, and the library closing too early. Akanwa and Aniche (2012) study focused on Imo State University law students' use of law library resources to determine the level of organization of sources, resources and the attendant problems. They found that law students have various information needs that were not sufficiently satisfied, there was an inadequate quality of existing information materials, limited library services (lack ICT and Internet services) and limited use of the law library by the law students. For law students studying law in all our faculties of law in Nigeria to be well groomed for their future career as legal practitioners, law libraries and universities libraries have the onerous duty to imbibe good collection management practices. When there is good collection management practice in place law, libraries will no doubt have balance collection, the law libraries will have a good collection stocked with relevant, current and up-to-date legal information resources in all formats. Then, law students will develop positive behaviour towards the use of information resources in law libraries as they will see law libraries as true repositories of knowledge where they can always resort to meet their information needs.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised 5,896 undergraduate law students of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University, University of Lagos, Lagos State University, Ekiti State University, Afe Babalola University, Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Babcock University and Lead City University all in Southwest, Nigeria and their law librarians. A systematic sampling technique was adopted to facilitate the selection of every 10th members of the total population in each of the universities studied to arrive at 589 as the sampled size. The instrument used to collect data was the questionnaire. There are two types of questionnaire used for this study: one for the law librarians while the other was for the law students of the selected universities. The data collected for this study were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Research questions were answered using percentage and mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to test the hypothesis.

**Table 1: Demographic variables of the respondents**

<b>Demographic Variable</b>	<b>Groupings</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gender	Male	247	46.3
	Female	286	53.7
Age	Under 20	196	36.8
	21-24	244	45.8
	25-29	69	12.9
	30-34	11	2.1
	Others	13	2.4
Marital Status	Single	479	89.9
Educational level	100	43	8.1
	200	215	40.3

	300	57	10.7
	400	86	16.1
	500	132	24.8
Religion	Christianity	410	76.9
	Islam	114	21.4
	Traditional	9	1.7

## RESULTS

The results in Table 1 reflects the demographic profile of the respondents revealed that 247(46.3%) were male while 286 (53.7%) were female. This shows that more female undergraduate law students participated in the study than their male counterparts. Age distribution of the respondents revealed that 196 (36.8%) were under 20 years of age, 244 (45.8%) respondents were between 21- 24 years, 69 (12.9%) undergraduate law students were within age range of 25-29 years, 11(2.1%) were between 30-34 years while 13 (2.4%) undergraduate law students were 35 years and above. The distribution of the respondents by marital status revealed that 479 (89.9%) were single while 54 (10.1%) were married. The distribution of the undergraduate law students by their level revealed that 43 (8.1%) were in 100 level, 215(40.3%) were in 200 level, 57(10.7%) were in 300 level, 86(16.1%) were in 400 level while 132(24.8%) undergraduate law students were in 500 level. Distribution of the respondents by religion revealed that 410 (76.9%) were adherent of Christian faith, 114(21.4%) were adherent of Islamic religion while the remaining 9 (1.7%) respondents were traditionalist.

### **Research question 1: What are the collection management practices in the selected law libraries in south-west, Nigerian Universities?**

The results of the collection management practices in selected law libraries in Nigerian universities are as presented in Table 2

**Table 2: Collection management practices in the selected law libraries**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1.	I usually carry out a thorough analysis of information needs of law students	4 (44.4%)	4(44.4%)	1 (11.1%)	-	3.33

2.	There is collection development policy that guides our library	4 (44.4%)	3 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)	-	3.22
3.	The law librarian single handedly does the selection of law materials	-	1 (11.1%)	5 (55.6%)	3 (33.3%)	1.78
4.	Law lectures have input in selection of library materials	4 (44.4%)	5 (55.6%)	-	-	3.44
5.	Law students are involved in the selection of library materials	2 (22.2%)	3 (33.3%)	4 (44.4%)	-	2.78
6.	The law librarian is involved in the acquisition of law collections	2 (22.2%)	5 (55.6%)	2 (22.2%)	-	3.00
7.	The University Librarian is the one acquiring materials for the law library	-	6 (66.7%)	3 (33.3%)	-	2.67
8.	The law librarian usually conduct frequent evaluation of law collections to ensure their currency	5 (55.6%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	-	3.44
9.	The law library usually educate the students on the use of law library	3 (33.3%)	5 (55.6%)	1 (11.1%)	-	3.22
10.	There is adequate budgetary provision for law collections	2 (22.2%)	3 (33.3%)	4 (44.4%)	-	2.78
11.	There is adequate storage facilities for books and other law materials	5 (55.6%)	4 (44.4%)	-	-	3.56
12.	The library has preservation and conservation unit for library collection	2 (22.2%)	6 (66.7%)	1 (11.1%)	-	3.11
13.	There is a budgetary provision for budgetary preservation and conservation of law collection	2 (22.2%)	3 (33.3%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	2.67
14.	Weeding of outdated materials is done on regular basis	2 (22.2%)	6 (66.7%)	1 (11.1%)	-	3.11

The results of collection management practices in selected law libraries in Southwest, Nigeria is as presented in table 4.2. The finding indicate that there is adequate storage facilities for books and other law materials with the highest mean score of 3.56 while the fact that the law librarian single handedly does the selection of law materials has the lowest mean score of 1.78. Collection management practices in law libraries indicates that law lectures have input in selection of library materials and that the law librarian usually conduct frequent evaluation of law collections to ensure their currency.

**Research Question 2: What are the library collections mostly used by undergraduate law students in the law libraries?**

Library collections used by the undergraduate law students is as reflected in Table 3.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
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1.	Law reports	251 (47.1%)	195 (36.6%)	61 (11.4%)	26 (4.9%)	3.26
2.	Law Textbooks	305 (57.2%)	197 (37%)	23 (4.3%)	8 (1.5%)	3.50
3.	Law journals	234 (43.9%)	215 (40.3%)	68 (12.8%)	16 (3%)	3.25
4.	Government publications	164 (30.8%)	213 (40%)	137 (25.7%)	19 (3.5%)	2.98
5.k	Statutes	210 (39.4%)	220 (41.3%)	82 (15.4%)	21(3.9%)	3.16
6.	Reference materials	215 (40.3%)	239 (44.8%)	65 (12.2%)	14 (2.7%)	3.23
7.	Legal databases (Lexis Nexis, west Law, Law pavilion etc)	186 (34.9%)	201 (37.7%)	108 (20.3%)	38 (7.1%)	3.00
8.	Online resources	180 (33.8%)	193 (36.2%)	112 (21%)	48 (9%)	2.95

The results as indicated in table 3 revealed that collection used by law students in the following order of preference: law textbooks, law reports, law journals, reference materials, statutes, legal databases, government publications online resources. The results shows that, using a cut off mean score of 2.50 for the rating scale, all the items had mean scores above the cut off mean. This implies that undergraduate law students visit the law library to use, law textbooks, law reports, law journals, Government publications, Statutes, Reference materials, legal databases and online resources.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between collection management practices and use of law library information resources by law students in Nigerian universities.

**Table 4: Pearson Correlation of Collection Management Practices and use of Law Library Information Resources**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	P
Collection Management Practices	533	12.20	2.898		

Use of Law Library Information Resources	533	58.52	9.920	0.407*	0.00
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\* $p < 0.05$

## DISCUSSION

The results of the study found that there are adequate storage facilities for books and other law materials in law libraries in Nigerian Universities. The study revealed that law lectures and law students have input in selection of library materials and that the law librarians usually conduct frequent evaluation of law collections to ensure their currency. Furthermore, the study revealed that collection management practices in law libraries involve thorough analysis of information needs of law students. Each law libraries in Nigerian Universities has collection development policy that guides the library. That law librarians usually educate the students on the use of law materials. Law libraries also have preservation and conservation unit for library collection and that law librarians are involved in the acquisition of law collections. The study found that students always utilize the information resources in Nigerian Universities because of good collection management in law libraries. This study reveals that there is significant relationship between collection management practices and use of law library information resources by students in Nigerian universities. The findings of the study is in line with Adegbite (2011) who opined that collection management refers to all the processes involved in acquiring resources in the library, processing and storing them, conserving and preserving them and making the resources available to users through professional activities called collection management practices. Adewuyi (2005) classifies the identification, selection and procurement of library materials as acquisition process or collection development, and refers to processing, organization, maintenance, stock taking, preservation and ensuring maximum exposure of these materials for the benefit of the public as collection management. The finding is also in line with the findings of Doris and Ndubumna (2013), Kotso (2007), Anyaogu and Agidi (2013), Bradley et al. (2005), Ejiwoye and Ayandare (2011), which are all to the effect that it is expedient and germane for Law libraries being repositories of legal information to adopt the best collection management practices. This will enable the libraries to fulfill their

objectives of providing relevant and current primary and secondary legal materials in print and electronic format to meet their clientele information needs. The study indicated that the information resources mostly used by law students are in the following order of preference: law textbooks, law reports, law journals, reference materials, statutes, legal databases, government publications online resources. This implies that undergraduate law students visit the law library to use law reports, law textbooks, law journals, Government publications, Statutes, Reference materials, legal databases and online resources. The finding corroborates earlier studies of Olorunfemi (2014) who found that law students generally exhibited a positive attitude towards patronage of law libraries, and that printed information sources are the main information sources utilized by respondents in law libraries. This may be attributed to the fact that undergraduate law students usually patronize the library to write their assignments and, compliment their lecture notes.

## **Conclusion**

Law libraries like any other types of library must be used, without effective utilization of all information resources in law libraries, the efforts of librarians and any other information professionals will amount to nothing. Law students will waste their time coming to the library if they are not sure of their information needs being met; hence there is need for effective collection management practice. This study found that there is a significant relationship between collection management practices and use the library of law library by undergraduate student hence, Law librarians should adopt best collection management practices in order to ensure that law libraries are stocked with current, relevant and up-to date legal information resources both in print and electronic format in order to render best services to their patrons.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) To ensure continuous patronage by law students for maximum use of law libraries by law students, law librarians must always law lecturers and law students whenever the libraries want to select information resources to be

acquired. This is because if lecturers and law students who are mainly their patrons are not involved in selection of legal resources to be acquired, the information resources in the libraries will not be utilized effectively and judiciously.

- (2) The law libraries should endeavour to stock the libraries with most current, and relevant law textbooks, law reports, law journals, reference materials, government publications, relevant legal databases and online legal information resources. Student should be assisted and trained on how to make judicious use of the information resources available in the libraries.
- (3) In order to increase the rate at which students utilized information resources available in the law library, there is need to equip the library with ICT facilities, this is because libraries are now going into virtual libraries as most of the information materials are now being digitized. Any library not keeping pace with the 21<sup>st</sup> century ICT trend will eventually go into extinction as it will no longer be able to meet its users' information needs in this age of information explosion.
- (4) In order to increase the rate at which students utilize information resources in law libraries, law librarians must give quality time to study and understand the information needs of law students. The study has revealed that undergraduate law student highly use law textbooks, hence law librarians should also ensure that efforts are made to acquire current law textbooks and provide access to legal databases and other e-resources.
- (5) There is need for law libraries to improve on their collection management practices by ensuring that adequate, relevant and current information materials. To achieve this, there is need for the University librarians, the deans of various faculties of law as well as law librarians in the faculties of law to work in harmony so that there will be adequate funding to equip the law libraries with balance, robust, relevant, current, adequate and accurate information resources both in print and electronic format. (6) There is also the need for law librarians organized regularly users' education programs to give proper training and orientation to their users on how to access information resources so that they can independently navigate through the various information resources in the law

libraries and use them maximally. Until this is done the materials in the law libraries will continue to be underused.

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