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ARTICLE

Developments in Legal Education and Access to Law Library in the 21st Century: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

The advancement in technology has made library activities seamless for both law librarians and law library users. This advancement has increased the active participation of law students in the use of the law library on the ground that some of the legal materials that are needed for legal research are available online and offline. In furtherance of this, this paper discusses the essence of the law library to the development of legal education and its access to meeting the information needs of law students and law teachers. This paper examines the importance of law libraries to legal education, challenges of law libraries such as lack of funds, lack of non-professionals manning law libraries and librarians that are not technologically inclined. It also examines the good side of technology to the library and the threat that comes with technology.



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Keywords: Law library, Legal education, Law Students, Technology

1.0 Introduction

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Library serves as a household for collections of information materials including books and media resources for intellectual development that can be easily accessed without any interference. The information materials are primarily for every individual and they could be used for both researches, educational or recreational need. The services rendered in the library and library collections provide an opportunity for everybody from all walks of life without any interference and this can be linked to the third law of library science as propounded by Ranganathan, "every book its reader," which shows that all the books in the library has its target audience and by this, one can say part of the aims of library is to focus on the intersection of discoverability, equitable access and the variety of information formats to any individual that visits the library. Books in the library are made for all sectors of life and these collections of information materials are readily available for all folks to access and read.³ On the other hand, it is important to note that every society has an important role to play in terms of her development and to abide strictly by the rule of law. It will not be out of place to address the different problems each society is facing such as global conflict, cybercrimes, insecurity, kidnapping, violation of human rights, ecological problems, bad governance and the rest going on and one of the ways to address the problems is the need for a proper legal education. Legal education and access to legal research helps in shaping one's knowledge on the rule of law and this can only be carried out in the law library which is a special library designed for law collections. These collections are used in training and equipping law students in order to have a broad general knowledge of law and expose them to other fields of study. A law library is exceptionally designed to meet the information needs of its users and to provide legal materials for its users such as law students, lawyers, judicial officers, law teachers and other users that are interested in having a proper understanding and knowledge of law.

Legal education commences with the academic phase which starts at the university and at the end of the program, an award of Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) will be awarded to the successful candidate while the second phase which can be termed as the vocational/professional phase is undertaken at the Nigerian Law School with the award of Barrister at Law (BL).

However, for any university to commence the study of law and produce law graduates, the National Universities Commission as well as the Council of Legal Education made it a pre-requisite to full accreditation that all universities that offer law as a degree course must have functional and well stocked law libraries.⁴ The importance of a law library cannot be over emphasized as it is a profession that keeps growing on a regular basis and the information needs of law library users are so demanding that the law librarian has to be on top of his game to know the current trends in the field. In order to be

³Talea Anderson *et al*, "The Five Laws of OER: Observations from Ranganathan" *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* (2019), p. 7

⁴Ejimofo, P.N. & Anaeme, F.O, "History and Development of Law Libraries in Nigeria. Coal City Libraries: *Journal of the Nigerian Library Association, Enugu State*"(2005) Chapter, 2 (1 & 2)

updated and to meet the information needs of law library users, a law librarian must keep himself abreast on the legal growth and dynamism of the profession. For a law student to be well grounded in his academics, such student must make himself a friend of the law library as it will be very difficult for him to grow without the use of the law library. Dada, was of the opinion that law is a profession which is literally unable to exercise its work without the use of books. He further stated that it is important to conclude that as an operating theatre is important to a Surgeon, a workshop to an Engineer and a laboratory to a Scientist, so is a law library central to the work of a lawyer or a legal researcher.⁵

2.0 Definition of Legal Education

Legal education is the education of individuals who intend to become legal professionals or those who simply intend to use their law degree to some end, either related to law or business⁶. It can also be described as the education of individuals in the principles, practices, and theory of law. It may be undertaken for several reasons, including to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for admission to legal practice in a particular jurisdiction, to provide a greater breadth of knowledge to those working in other professions such as politics or business, to provide current lawyers with advanced training or greater specialization, or to update lawyers on recent developments in law⁷. Olubiyi, Olaniyan and Odiaka defined Legal Education as "...the process which equips the future lawyer, judge administrator, counsellor and legal scientists to know how legislative, executive, judicial organs of the government are designed and how they operate"⁸ Legal Services India⁹ defined Legal education as a human science which furnishes beyond techniques, skills and competences, the basic philosophies, ideologies, critiques and instrumentalities all addressed to the creation and maintenance of a just society. It provides occasions for articulation of theories of a just so and teaches us that articulation must be grounded in historical realities so that the truth of the working of the legal order is brought to the forefront. It further explains that legal education is a broad concept. It includes the profession which is practiced in Courts, lawteaching, lawresearch, administration in different branches where law plays

⁵ Dada, T.O, "Acquisition of Law Libraries: emerging issues. Paper presented at the course on Technical Services in Law Libraries organized by the NIALS Abuja/Lagos", June 26 – 28.

⁶<https://www.definitions.net/definition/legal+education> accessed on 14 July, 2021

⁷https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_education accessed on 29 Jul, 2021

⁸Ifeoluwa Olubiyi, Ayobami Olaniyan and Ngozi Odiaka, "The Role of Technology in the Advancement of Legal Education and Practice in Nigeria' Conference: Nigerian Association of Law Teachers [NALT] (June 2015) p. 1-20

⁹Legal Services India definition of Legal Education available on <https://www.legalserviceindia.com/article/126/Legal-Education-&-Its-Aims.html> accessed on 4 August, 2021

a role and commercial and industrial employments and all other activities which postulate and require the use of legal knowledge and skill.

Legal education is the education of individuals in the principles, practices and theory of the law which enables them to enter and make progress in the legal profession. In India, the stages of legal education may be bifurcated as: Academic legal education and Continuing legal education. Academic legal education may be studied at law colleges and universities through various undergraduate and post-graduate programs while continuing legal education does not lead to any qualifications but provides practicing lawyers with updates in recent legal developments¹⁰. Legal education means training obtained by lawyers already admitted to practice that maintains or enhances their competence as lawyers.¹¹

3.0 Importance of Library to the Development of Legal Education

Law libraries are libraries established in faculties of law in higher institutions and the Nigerian Law School with the major aim of providing legal information resources to law students, law teachers and other library users in the law profession. The law librarian helps with the selection, acquisition, cataloguing and classification of all law textbooks and other information resources required by the Council of Legal Education. These legal information materials are carefully selected to aid the teaching of law courses in universities and law schools. Law libraries equip law students and practicing lawyers for legal duties through the consultation of its vast collection of legal information products and services (Urhibo, 2017)¹². Law library in Nigeria is as old as the legal profession but certainly older than public library or any other brand of library. The oldest libraries are those of Lagos High Court and Federal Ministry of Justice law libraries which were dated as far back as 1909 (Ogbeide, 1976)¹³. However, law libraries being the heart of any legal research have remained a force to reckon with in the development of legal education, research and access to legal information. When it comes to legal research and access to legal information. Onwudinjo et al described law library as a collection of legal materials which consist of law information organized for use for lawyers in training

¹⁰ Legal Services definition of Legal Education available on <https://www.legalservicesindia.com/article/126/Legal-Education-&-Its-Aims.html> accessed on 20 July, 2021

¹¹<https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/legal-education> accessed on 26 July, 2021a; Komal Harsh, "Technology and Legal Education: Inextricable Entities" (2020) <https://www.legalbites.in/technology-and-legal-education> accessed on 4 August, 2021

¹²Emo Okpidi Urhibo, "Impact of The Legal Personnel as A Law Librarian: The Effective Managerial Perspective Redefined" Information and Knowledge Management www.iiste.org ISSN 2224-888896X (Online)Vol, No.7, 2017

¹³Ogbeide, N.A. "Law Librarianship in Nigeria, History, Development and Problem" 4 IJLL 19 (1976)

or already qualified lawyers saddled with the responsibilities of enacting or administering law.¹⁴

Law libraries serve as a gateway in the acquisition of knowledge with resources that are carefully selected to support research and learning for law library users. Anyaegbu and Dike¹⁵ examined that, the law library is not only essential but crucial to the study and practice of law, it is a place where legal research can be successfully carried out. A law library is a collection of legal materials consisting of law information organized for use of those seeking to qualify as, or who have qualified as lawyers and those enacting or administering law.¹⁶ Law library in general is structured for the purpose of facilitating learning and practice of law. The primary aim of the law school library is to meet the information needs of its users. Not only that, the law library serves as a place where primary, secondary and tertiary sources of information such as Statute, Case Law, Treaties, Constitution, law textbooks, law journal, periodicals, newspapers and magazines, dictionaries, encyclopedias *etc.* can be accessed for knowledge growth and for scholarly publications both in law and other law related disciplines. Beyond support for the core functions of legal education and research, the specific missions of law school libraries vary, depending on the size and missions of law schools of different types. Differences among law schools result in differences among their libraries in collection size and composition, staffing and services offered, and additional clientele served¹⁷. Standard 601 of the American Bar Association 2020-2021 Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools emphasized on the importance of library to the development of legal education. The standards are:

(a) A law school shall maintain a law library that:

(1) provides support through expertise, resources, and services adequate to enable the law school to carry out its program of legal education, accomplish its mission, and support scholarship and research;

(2) develops and maintains a direct, informed, and responsive relationship with the faculty, students, and administration of the law school;

¹⁴Onwudinjo, O.T., Nwosu, C.O. and Ugwu, C.I., "Accreditation issues in Faculty of Law of Nigerian Universities: Imperative for law libraries, laws and statutes". Library Philosophy and Practice *e-journal) (2014) Paper 1172 <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1172.html>

Anyaegbu, M.I. & Dike, V. "Citation analysis of undergraduate in faculties of law libraries in Anambra and Enugu states of Nigeria" Education Research Journal.6(7) (2016) p.85

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¹⁶Ukpanah, M.E. & Afolabi, M. (2011). Availability of cited law resources by law students in the Universities of Uyo and Calabar law libraries, Nigeria: Nigerian Libraries, 44 (2), 40 – 57.

¹⁷ Richard A. Danner, 'Law School Libraries 2007'

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/37809596_Law_School_Libraries_2007> accessed 31 July, 2021

(3) working with the dean and faculty, engages in a regular planning and assessment process, including assessment of the effectiveness of the library in achieving its mission and realizing its established goals; and

(4) remains informed on and implements, as appropriate, technological and other developments affecting the library's support for the law school's program of legal education.

(b) A law school shall provide on a consistent basis sufficient financial resources to the law library to enable it to fulfill its responsibilities of support to the law school and realize its established goals.¹⁸

Winston, et al¹⁹ made emphasis on the importance of law library of Congress for global resources which has since inception been referred to as the cornerstone of the Library of Congress. They stated further that the Law Library is responsible for developing, maintaining, preserving, and managing a vast trove of legal materials assiduously built and organized over more than two centuries. The law collection supports the services that the Law Library and the Congressional Research Service provide to the Congress, and that the Law Library provides to the Supreme Court, other Courts and agencies, and the nation. To facilitate comprehensive research, analysis, and reference services, it has built a collection of authoritative legal sources in original languages including more than 2.9 million volumes and 3 million micro-format items.²⁰ In Nigeria however, the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies law library serves as a centre for legal research and supervision for postgraduate research work with collections of about 51,297 volumes.²¹ Okomanyi²² summarized the functions of academic libraries to fulfill both the needs of the instructional programme of the parent institution and the research needs of the students, faculty staff members and people outside the academic community through the collection and acquisition of knowledge in all formats; to organize knowledge for easy storage and retrieval, the technical processes, which include ordering, receiving, accessioning, cataloguing, classification and preparing

¹⁸ 2020-21-aba-standards-and-rules-chapter6, Standard 601<

https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/standards/2020-2021/2020-21-aba-standards-and-rules-chapter6.pdf> accessed 1 August, 2021

¹⁹ Andrew Winston, Peter Roudik, Barbara Bavis, and Donna Sokol 'The Law Library of Congress: A Global Resource for Legal Education' Journal of Legal Education, Summer 2018, Vol. 67, No. 4 (Summer 2018), pp. 962-983

²⁰ The Congressional Research Service is a legislative branch agency within the Library of Congress that works exclusively for Congress. For more information about the work of the Congressional Research Service, see About CRS, Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/about/> (last updated Apr. 19, 2018)

²¹ Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies available on <https://nials.edu.ng/index.php/library> accessed on 10 August, 2021

²² Ramatu O. Okomanyi, "The Prospect of Academic Libraries in the 21st Century: Challenges for Information and Communication Technology in Distance Education" International Journal of Academia, Volume 1 No.1, May, 2016 pp.128-138

materials for their students and faculty, the academic libraries provide maximum access to collections. At this juncture, it is important to note that a legal education is incomplete without numerous collections of law books, Law library on the other hand, serves as an indispensable factor when it comes to legal education as it is very crucial to accreditation of law programme.

Law school libraries though a unique institution among libraries can learn a great deal from the ways in which public and academic libraries have evolved in the past few years to remain relevant as education institutions in their communities²³. Shera²⁴ emphasized that “the objectives of the public library are directly dependent on the objectives of society itself.” Hence law library is dependent on objectives of legal education. While legal education is aimed at inculcating students with the operative legal rules, both substantive and procedural and also provides students with adequate experience to applying these rules, the law library must serve as a place to equip the students with sufficient knowledge of historical and sociological background of the country’s legal system and knowledge of other legal system of the world and without this, students will find themselves at a complete loss when it comes to adopting a comparative approach of other legal system²⁵. Another foremost importance of law library to the development of legal education is the promotion of digital literacy and digital inclusion. Digital inclusion is the ability of individuals and groups to access and use information and communications technologies²⁶. ITU²⁷ clearly stated it as “different strategies designed to ensure that all people have equal access, opportunities and skills to benefit from digital technologies and systems” and the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create and communicate information, requiring both

²³ Ursula Gorham and Paul T. Jaeger, “The Law School Library or the Library at the Law School? How Lessons from Other Types of Libraries Can Inform the Evolution of the Academic Law Library in the Digital Age” *Law Library Journal* Vol.109:1 (2017-2) 53 available on <https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/llj109&div=6&id=page> accessed 29 July, 2021

²⁴ Jesse H. Shera, *Foundations of the Public Library: The Origins of the Public Library Movement in New England 1629-1855*, at 248 (1949) available on <https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/llj109&div=6&id=page> accessed 29 July, 2021

²⁵ Dr Mohammad Farogh, “Legal Education: Contemporary Trends and Challenges”, *AIR*, 1998(6) available on <https://www.legalservicesindia.com/article/126/Legal-Education-&-Its-Aims.html> accessed on 3 August, 2021

²⁶ <https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/digital-inclusion.html> accessed on 4 August, 2021

²⁷ ITU. (2019). ITU-D Digital Inclusion available on <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/DigitalInclusion/Pages/default.aspx> accessed on 4 August, 2021

cognitive and technical skills is called digital literacy²⁸. Here, law librarians teach law students on how to use online law reports, how to locate and access legal materials. Not only that, law library serves as a stakeholder in legal education being a place where law students learn beyond the law and classroom. It is a place where students find legal texts and legal database that boost their academic performance and enhance further research.

4.0 Contemporary Developments in Legal Education and the use of libraries in the 21st Century

Law library has progressively become infused with new digital tools, evidenced by librarians leading strategies in competitive intelligence, knowledge management, artificial intelligence, and legal analytics. It has become clear that skills in research, collections, data-driven world²⁹. However, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is impacting the way information is processed and searched for and information professionals will be able to use these exciting new technologies to enhance their services and help users find and access specific information more easily and quickly.³⁰ A study conducted by Cadmus³¹ showed that Artificial intelligence tools play an increasingly significant role as well and are being deployed by law librarians in various settings. He further stated that in 2017, the Law Library of Congress released a chatbot with a clickable interface, employing the template of a reference interview and connecting users to the vast array of primary sources of law, research guides, and foreign law reports. To nurture, develop, and showcase such advances, the American Association of Law Libraries- the only national association of its kind- now hosts an innovation tournament at its annual conference.

Disruptive innovation is another modern development in the world and the legal industry is one area that is on the frontline when it comes to digital disruption. This is understandable, because the focus of the legal industry has been documents, signatures and paper, all areas that are rapidly being transformed by new digital tools.³² Arnett explained disruptive innovation as the catalyst for bringing about more equitable access to high-quality education and the mechanism for bringing about a personalized education system and this allows personalized education system to be taken to the root

²⁸ The American Library Association (ALA) "What is Digital Literacy and Why Does It Matter?" available on <https://literacy.ala.org/digital-literacy/accessed> on 4 August, 2021

²⁹ Femi Cadmus, "Why law librarians are so important in a data driven world" Oxford University Press 2021 (<https://blog.oup.com/authors/femi-cadmus/>)

³⁰ The impact of Artificial Intelligence on librarian services accessed on www.springernature.com/gp/librarians/news-events/all-news-articles/ebooks/the-impact-of-artificial-intelligence-on-librarian-services/16874432

³¹ *ibid*

³² Dick Weisinger, "Digital Disruption: Transformation in the Legal Industry" available on <https://formtek.com/blog/digital-disruption-transformation-in-the-legal-industry/accessed> 30 July, 2021

outside of the traditional system and then improve over time until their value is universally acknowledged and widely adopted. He further said that, if personalized learning is the goal, online learning is the technology that makes the goal possible, and disruptive innovation is the economic process that allows the technology to fulfill its promise. Pistone and Hornd³³ proposed that a law school that is interested in moving in this(disruptive innovation) direction would start from the scratch, with a view towards developing an educational model through which graduates prove mastery of myriad lawyering competencies that will be most relevant to the 21st-century lawyer. They further stated that online modules would teach and access mastery of basic laws, processes and procedures. In-class sessions would focus on reinforcing learning and providing opportunities to apply one's knowledge through role-play, simulation and small group work. Clinics would supplement the online and simulated training with exposure to real-time application of material learned in online and simulated setting through work with real legal issues. Additional, disruptive innovation circumvents the political battles that have historically been at the centre stage of education reform³⁴. Christensen & Armstrong defined disruptive innovation as "...simple, convenient-to-use innovations that initially are used only by unsophisticated customers at the low end of markets..." Disruptive innovation is also defined as something that changes social practices, the way we live, work and learns.³⁵

The changes facing law schools suggest that the time is now to articulate how libraries can best contribute to the endeavor. How can best practices for law libraries be reconstructed to allocate resources and expertise to support the education mission?³⁶ The pace with which technology is moving and innovation keeps coming every day, legal education and law library should also move at the same pace. Law librarians also must keep pace with the breakneck speed of emerging technologies and adjust to the new research needs and information use behaviours of students, faculty, judges and lawyers. Ifeyinwa *et.al* (2013)³⁷

³³Michele R. Pistone and Michael B. Hornd, "Disrupting Law School: How disruptive innovation will revolutionize the legal world" Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation p.21 available on <https://www.christeninstitute.org/publications/disrupting-law-school/> accessed 5 August, 2021

³⁴ Thomas Arnett, "Why disruptive innovation matters to education" available on <https://www.christenseninstitute.org/blog/why-disruptive-innovation-matters-to-education/> accessed on 5 August, 2021

³⁵Mohad Faiz Hilmi, Disruptive Innovation in Education: Open Learning, Online Learning, MOOCs and What NeXT?" International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention ISSN(Online):2319-7722, ISSN (Print):2319-7714 www.ijhssi.org || Volume 5 issue 10 || October .p. 49-53 accessed on 21 July, 2021

³⁶ Jonathan A. Franklin, "Law Libraries and Legal Education" Building on Best Practices: Transforming Legal Education in a Changing World (Deborah Maranville, Lisa Radtke Bliss, Carolyn Wilkes Kaas & Antoinette Sedillo Lopez eds., 2015) accessed on 5 August, 2021

³⁷Anyaeibu Mercy Ifeyinwa, Obiozor-Ekeze Roseline Nkechi, Achufusi Uju Nwamaka and Aduaka Charles E. Aduaka, "Law Libraries in Information Age: The Role of Academic Law Librarians" Information

Legal education must on this note embrace change in order to meet these new demands. It is no doubt about the roles that academic libraries have played in the past century; it is tremendously difficult to imagine a college or university without a library.³⁸ The emergence of disruptive innovation has helped in the performance of other sectors without losing value, if same is widely accepted in law library, the same value will be achieved in legal education without losing its main objectives and this will improve learning and control costs by using online learning as a sustaining innovation. With this innovation, law schools would use online learning to shift their doctrinal pedagogy from the near-exclusive use of the Socratic method or lectures to hybrid learning approaches and activities where hybrid learning marries in-class activities with online learning assessments.³⁹ Disruptive innovation in legal education and a reasonable assessment on law libraries will enhance excellent professional practice in legal profession.

5.0 Challenges of Access to the Law Library in the Development of Legal Education

Challenges with law libraries are not in any way different from that of the academic libraries. A law library, being a special library with special collections has made the challenges of accessing law library come in a different twist. Law books and other law information resources for law library are to be properly acquired and organized in a way that users will access them without going through stress. Hence, the technical section of the law library must be thoroughly managed by a trained Law librarian. Tuyo, stated that the technical services contributions go a long way in ensuring that the faculty of law library meets with the criteria needed to scale through the accreditation of the law faculty by the Council of Legal Education.⁴⁰ Urhibo⁴¹ carefully re-emphasizes the need for law librarians to have legal background as this will enhance law librarianship and management of law libraries for provision of legal information and support for teaching and learning of law in tertiary institutions. The Council of Legal Education made it

and Knowledge Management www.iiste.org ISSN 2224-5758 (Paper) ISSN 2224-896X (Online)
Vol.3, No.12, 2013 p. 115

³⁸ Jerry D. Campbell, "Changing a Cultural Icon: The Academic Library as a Virtual Destination," EDUCAUSE Review, vol. 41, no. 1 (January/February 2006): 16–31 available on <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/557/Disruptive%2bInnovation%2band%2bAcad%2bLibs.pdf?sequence=10&isAllowed=y>

³⁹ *ibid*

⁴⁰ Olayinka Tuyo, "The Library as a Factor in the Accreditation of Law Programmes in Nigerian Universities: The Contribution of Technical Service"-NIALS, Lagos, 2007 available at <jaistonline.org> accessed on 2 August, 2021

⁴¹ *ibid*

mandatory for any institution offering Law courses to have a Law librarian in the Faculty of law library. The Law librarian therefore must be a lawyer with background in librarianship. It is of importance to know at this juncture that law librarian has mastery of legal bibliography and this did not come from general library training alone, it came as a result of formal legal education in law. However, the unfortunate part is that some universities do not have librarians in their law libraries and as a result of this, the librarian in the library who does not have the technical skill of a lawyer will not know the relevant books to acquire for the library and if such librarian manages to acquire some after thorough consultation, such librarian will not know how to catalogue library materials with Moys Classification Scheme which is the scheme specially designed by Elizabeth Moys for Law Libraries. Urhibo observed that the unavailability of legal professional in law libraries has some form of negative though salient impact on the utilization of legal information found in law libraries⁴². Lack of technical knowhow in the law library is a major challenge facing law libraries and this problem of not putting the right peg in the right hole has denied some universities from being accredited by the Council of Legal Education. Onwudinjo in his research conducted in seven faculty libraries in South East Nigeria, found that no law library in the South East met the Council of Legal Education standards in both local and foreign law journals. Many faculty law libraries in Nigeria have either failed or denied accreditation in Nigeria.⁴³

Additionally, lack of technology culture and continuous legal education is another problem facing law library. A law librarian must be well-informed in the areas of information communication technologies (ICT) and must be abreast of the latest technological development in the area of law. A law librarian that is not developed both in his legal studies or not updated with the trends in information and communication technology may find it extremely difficult to keep the library up to date and once the librarian is not updated, the library remains stagnant cause the librarian cannot give what he does not have "*nemodat quod non habet*".

Furthermore, a study conducted by Alabi⁴⁴ has shown that academic law libraries located in Universities law faculties in Nigeria and Nigerian Law schools are faced with lots of challenges. The challenges facing this section of the law faculty include the global economic recession which has worsened the amount of money being budgeted for the law library. We are in the era of Information Communication Technology, there are evolving methods of legal research using online resources, lack of continuing

⁴² ibid

⁴³ Onwudinjo, O.T, "Law journal collections, accreditation issues and imperatives for lawLibraries". Library Philosophy and Practice (e. journal) available on <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3281&context=libphilprac> accessed on 3 August, 2021

⁴⁴ Alabi Raliat, "The Unique Role of Law Library in the Training of Legal Practitioners in Nigeria". The International Journal of Business Management and Technology, Volume 2 Issue 4 July-August, 2018

education development for law librarians has hindered their ability to cope with the current trend and to compete with colleagues across the globe.

Poor funding is another critical challenge facing law library when it comes to the development of legal education and notwithstanding the interference of Council of Legal education on law libraries, law libraries still struggle to meet information needs of users especially those taking courses that seem not to be taken by many students. Public institutions in Nigeria are faced with a serious poor funding and law libraries are not an exception to this. Law programme is quite expensive and same with the law library. Law resources grow on a daily basis and subscription to both hard and electronic law resources are quite expensive. The resources come in different volumes and the law library has to be updated with current resources. It should be noted that the situation in academic libraries in Africa is different, as most of these libraries are not able to evolve at the same pace as their counterparts in developed countries. University libraries in many African countries are facing a difficult time, mainly resulting from rapid erosion of funding for books and journal subscriptions, staffing difficulties and a loss of the recognition as centres of academic scholarship.⁴⁵

Gorham and Jaeger opined that Law school libraries are beginning to realize the significant challenges they face in terms of perceived relevance and in terms of justifying support or perhaps even their existence. Since the turn of the century, some law school faculty and administrators have been asserting that the academic law library is becoming unnecessary due to the growing power and scope of Westlaw and LexisNexis electronic legal databases.⁴⁶ Saxer was of the opinion that as more source materials are included in these databases, the need for traditional library acquisitions and physical library space in both law school and law firm libraries should decrease. This decrease in physical library costs may eventually offset the online systems costs for law firms. Currently, however, law school libraries remain under pressure to retain and acquire physical books for accreditation purposes and school ranking systems⁴⁷. Nevertheless, it should be noted that collections in the library cannot be wiped out permanently because of the advent of technology. Primarily, information and communication technology (ICT) revolution and changing education systems, academic libraries have to continuously evolve as academic institutions change⁴⁸. It is of

⁴⁵Priti Jain and Akakandelwa Akakandelwa, "Challenges of Twenty-First Century Academic Libraries in Africa" *African Journal of Library, Archives & Information Science*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (October 2016) 145-153

⁴⁶ Ursula Gorham and Paul T. Jaeger, "The Law School Library or the Library at the Law School? How Lessons from Other Types of Libraries Can Inform the Evolution of the Academic Law Library in the Digital Age" 2017 available on <https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/lj109&div=6&id=&page> accessed 29 July, 2021

⁴⁷ Shelley Ross Saxer, "One Professor's Approach to Increasing Technology Use in Legal Education" 6 *RICH. J.L. & TECH.* 21 (Winter 1999-2000) <http://www.richmond.edu/jolt/v6i4/article4.html> accessed 29 July, 2021

⁴⁸ *ibid*

importance to understand that technology can only complement the physical books in the library but can never replace them. No doubt that internet complements libraries, technology is obviously a great resource when it comes to finding information but there are some information materials that can never be found online and even if some manage to be available online, the subscription will be extremely high and might not be pocket friendly for law students and law library itself. Nonetheless, law libraries house some information materials especially old information materials that are much relevant for research even in this present 21st century over the online based information resources. The issue of globalization which has had a significant impact on international law resulting in rapidly growing regulation of international relations and supranational law owing to accelerated digital transformation, new areas of law and new legal subjects have emerged and Artificial Intelligence (AI) poses multiple challenges in this regard⁴⁹, as AI systems are increasingly being used in administrative decision-making for example, and so AI decisions could be tried in Court. At the same time, librarians may before long have to assume a new role: feeding and supporting AI systems.⁵⁰

Twenty-first century academic libraries worldwide have fundamentally transformed in the past two decades. Most traditional library services have been transformed to e-library services. Some of the notable major developments in the academic libraries include online scholarly communication, mobile technologies, social mediation application, digital curation and preservation⁵¹ but it is quite unfortunate that African is still struggling in having a fully law automated libraries. Echezona and Ugwuanyi investigated African University libraries and internet connectivity: challenges and the way forward and the findings showed that African universities have low speed Internet infrastructures such as VSAT and lease line wire connection. Power supply in Africa is very poor, endangering internet connectivity and the introduction of new optic fiber technology is a great improvement in the speed of the internet. He further stated that current development in digital technology has made mobile telephone and more PCs available to higher education in Africa and government policy encourages monopoly. This indicates that African government contribute to the poor internet connectivity and high cost of bandwidth. He also stated that no government is on a national fibre backbone; rather, they create satellite connectivity which promotes and protects monopolistic markets and impose high cost of telecommunication license, bringing prices up.⁵²

⁴⁹ ibid

⁵⁰ ibid

⁵¹ ibid

⁵² Echezona, R.I. and Ugwuanyi, C.F, "African University Libraries and Internet Connectivity: Challenges and the Way Forward" (2010). Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal). 421 available on <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/421/> <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/421> accessed on 28 July, 2021

6.0 Prospects of Enhanced Access to Libraries in the Development of Legal Education in the 21st Century

The positive impacts of technology are felt in every ramification and legal profession, legal education and law librarianship are not an exception to this. The advent of technology has transformed the way library services are rendered. Acquisition of online library resources such as textbooks and law reports have made access to legal information materials seamless. A law student and other library users does not necessarily have to be trained before they can access online resources. Currently, technology has transformed libraries in terms of collection makeup, services, operations, and functions.⁵³ The emergence of technology in law library has encouraged a lot of research and even improved brief writing among lawyers and other users. This is made possible because cases can be easily accessed on gadgets such as laptops, phones, etc. Digital access to the law is bound to challenge and has dramatically changed the nature of both legal education and the legal profession. In legal education, new technology is becoming difficult to resist because materials are convenient, cheap, ecological and readily updated.⁵⁴ Technology plays vital roles in law libraries with its numerous influences on legal education and legal practice as it has continued to be a major instrument on legal education. Technology as defined by Rotolo, Hicks and Martin was a radically novel and relatively fast-growing technology characterized by a certain degree of coherence persisting over time and with the potential to exert a considerable impact on the socio-economic domain(s).⁵⁵ Blacks Law Dictionary (11th ed.) defined Technology as modern equipment, machines and methods based on contemporary knowledge of science and computers.⁵⁶ Lately, technologies have transformed and disrupted conventional legal education. This has expanded access to law libraries. The importance of technology came to play during 2020 pandemic (Corona virus) and it gave room for continuation of legal education for those in law school then. The pandemic did not interrupt their classes as classes were going on and students continued their studies at their various home. The earlier the better technology is fully integrated into law library, the better it creates wider access for law students as research and learning can continue without physical assemble. It is not a gain say that the advent of technology with its unlimited opportunities in legal education and legal profession also come with its threats. McKinsey estimates that 23% of work done by lawyers can be

⁵³ Rendon, F. "How innovation and technology are shaping libraries of today. Huffpost Books". (2014) Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/frankie-rendon/how-innovation-andtechno_b_5244601.html accessed on 28 July, 2021

⁵⁴ Edward Rubin (ed), "Legal Education in the Digital Age" (Cambridge University Press, New York, 2012), 7-8.

⁵⁵ Rotolo, D., Hicks, D. and Martin, B. R, "What is an emerging technology?" Research Policy, 44(10): 1827-1843 (2015) available <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2564094> accessed on 27 July, 2021

⁵⁶ Bryan A. Garner (ed.), "Blacks Law Dictionary" 11th ed. P.1765

automated by existing technology⁵⁷. “Technology is already disrupting the legal profession, and there will likely be continued changes. “A great deal of the work that first and second-year associates used to do at large law firms, they’re no longer doing. It’s been outsourced in a variety of ways, partly to technology and partly to other forms of labour” (Weisinger, 2020). With this, a law library that is fully equipped with sufficient knowledge of the historical and sociological background of the country’s legal system; operative substantive and procedural laws of the Nation; international laws and other legal systems, once automated will contribute largely to the development of legal education and an access to library will expose students to how technology is changing every sector in life including legal profession. An automated law library will positively enhance active usage by law students as this will improve their research skills, innovative methods, trigger their critical thinking, develop their communication and advocacy skills and thereby make learning continuous.⁵⁸

Law libraries and legal education are like Siamese twins and in order to synergize the two effectively for the development of legal education, there is a need for an improved access to the library without any hindrance. The law library brings law, as legal information, to the law school. No other unit in the law school is charged with, or trained to, perform this essential function; without it, the law school cannot engage in any informed action in furtherance of its mission and so would not survive. Because an academic law library is embedded within the school it serves, the law library obviously cannot continue without its law school⁵⁹. Burchard explained library as a place which arouses a continuing and burning curiosity and therefore suggest the tools which will help to satisfy the curiosity. It also establishes the notion that personal activities are inconsequentially save, as they affect others and develop a sense of morality so that these effects will be aimed in favour of humanity and not against it and thereby creates the beginning of a sense of the first-rate so that what is favourable to humanity may be reasonably clear and thereby provide some particular skill so that the man or woman may in fact hit the target suggested in the above. This last is specialized or professional or vocational education.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Dick Weisinger, "Digital Disruption: Transformation in the Legal Industry" available on <https://formtek.com/blog/digital-disruption-transformation-in-the-legal-industry/> accessed 30 July, 2021

⁵⁸ *ibid*

⁵⁹ Beatrice A. Tice, "The Academic Law Library in the 21st Century: Still the Heart of the Law School" UC Irvine Law Review Volume 1 Issue 1 Training for the Practice of Law at the Highest Levels: Reflections from UC Irvine Article 11 pg. 162 available on <https://scholarship.law.uci.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1168&content=ucilr> accessed on 3 August, 2021

⁶⁰ Burchard, J. E. "The library's function in education, in The Library in the University". University of Tennessee Library Lectures 1949-1966. Hamden: Shoestring Press 1967 available on <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF00194418> accessed on 26 July, 2021

7.0 Conclusion

Legal education is incomplete without a functioning law library. Law library stands as a major factor when it comes to legal education because of its role in complementing the teachings of law. However, the advancement in technology has positively influenced the timely delivery of law library services especially when it comes to using online database. Nevertheless, it should be noted that not all law information is available online, hence the need for physical law library. Law libraries are on this note encouraged to go digital though this digitalization might take a longer time as epileptic power supply is a strong factor that has been limiting full digitalization of law libraries and as a result of this, the library operates both digital and analogue. The issue of non-professionals handling the technical aspect in law libraries have made a complete untidiness in shelving law materials and this might be a reason why some library users don't visit the library and therefore consult online as they believe that online search is far better than libraries. Poor funding in acquisition of both softcopies and hard copies of law information materials too is a challenge.

8.0 Recommendations

This paper highlighted the importance of law libraries and the part libraries play in the development of legal education. It identified the challenges facing law libraries and also discusses the prospects of access to law libraries. On this note, the following recommendations were made.

- Council of Legal Education should formulate a policy that Law librarians should be trained lawyers with additional qualification in Library and Information Studies
- Universities with the aim of offering law courses should ensure that the Law Librarian has the basic academic qualification
- Continuous Legal Education and knowledge in ICT should be paramount to all Law librarians
- Law librarian should ensure that the library collections are updated with relevant law materials
- Students should be encouraged on the use of online database
- Law librarians should ensure that they adhere strictly to the standard rules set up by the Council Legal Education in acquiring law books
- Law libraries should be adequately funded by the institution or sponsors
- Consortia building should be encouraged in law libraries to enrich better service delivery.