

# **IMPACT OF INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS ON THE JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG LEGAL PRACTITIONERS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

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## ABSTRACT

*This research investigated the information literacy skills and job performance among legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria. The study was guided by two research objectives and two research questions. The study adopted survey research design. The population comprises of 2,150 legal practitioners across 20 Northern States of Nigeria including Abuja. A multi-stage sampling technique was applied, resulting in a sample size of 362 participants. Structured questionnaire served as the data collection instrument. 362 copies of questionnaire were distributed and 346 copies were completed, returned, and found usable. Analysis of the collected data involved descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. The findings revealed a commendable level of information literacy skills possessed by legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria. Additionally, the results underscored several levels of factors exerting a substantial impact on the job performance of legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria. Conclusion was drawn, and recommendations were provided.*

**Key: Information literacy skill; Job performance; Legal practitioner; Northern Nigeria**

## INTRODUCTION

Despite spending a large portion of their lives in the office, most people are contented to have a job, but many no longer view it as a second home. Therefore, Job performance refers to task performance or in-role job performance as defined by Luna-Arocas and Danvila-del-Valle (2020) as the organization's total expected value on task related proficiency of an employee, or fulfillment of tasks that are required by the formal job description. In other words, job performance is the behaviors related specifically to performing job-related matters. In human resource management studies, job performance has been measured using a range of criterion measures, including supervisory ratings, productivity indexes, promotability ratings, sales total, and turnover rate. According to Bari *et al.* (2020), the crucial element of the legal profession that gave their organizations a competitive edge and increased productivity was the legal practitioners' job performance.

Literacy means the ability to read and write and there seems to be various types of information literacy skills, such as audiovisual literacy skills, print literacy skills, computer literacy skills, media literacy skills, web literacy skills, technical literacy skills, functional literacy skills, library literacy skills and information literacy skills etc. Nominal and active literacy skills to focus on making people aware of reading and write in their day-to-day activities. Information literacy skills are combination of all these concepts but goes beyond them. According to the American Library Association (ALA) (2016) information literacy skills is the ability to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. Arave and Stonebraker, (2023) defined information literacy as the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information. The two definitions above, described information literacy as the skills possessed to allow users make maximum utilization of available information resources. In the view of this study information literacy

is the ability of legal practitioners to determine when, where to locate information, evaluate and use it for their job performance. Information literacy is a wide term that includes problem-solving and cognitive skills, information and library skills, attitudes and values, and problem-solving and cognitive abilities that help learners navigate the information world.

### **STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Print materials have been available since the invention of written languages but advances in information and communication technology (ICT) and electronic publishing have transformed information that was available only in print materials (books, journals, theses/dissertations) to electronic format. Legal practitioners are like other profession in the community who always require information to perform their job better. For effective job performance of legal practitioners' information resources most especially electronic information resources are of great importance. This assertion coincided with that of Umar and Sokari (2020), who stated that due to some constrained on the utilization of electronic information resources, legal practitioners preferred to use printed materials to defend cases before them. This is a matter of concern in this modern period where there is abundance of electronic information resources and that most information resources are no longer published in printed format but electronically. It is also observed that the preference of the legal practitioners to use printed information resources for their job performance could be attributed to poor or low level of information literacy skills for adequate and effective utilization of electronic information resources for job performance in Nigeria (Yaliz-Solmaz and Aydin, 2016; Umar and Sokari, 2020). It is against this backdrop that the researcher attempted to examine information literacy skills possessed as correlates of job performance among legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to examine information literacy skills possessed as correlate of job performance of legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the level of information literacy skills possessed by legal practitioner for effective job performance in Northern Nigeria.
2. Find out the factors influencing job performance of legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What is the level of information literacy skills possessed by legal practitioner for effective job performance in Northern Nigeria?
2. What are the level of factors influencing job performance of legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria?

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The findings of this study are expected to benefit legal practitioners by raising their consciousness on the usefulness of electronic information resources to their job performance. It will also provide them with positive perception, in-depth knowledge and practical skills about electronic information resources that will assist them towards their job performance. The findings are expected to notify legal practitioners on the need for and importance of acquiring information literacy skills, which will enable them to explore the benefit of electronic information resources as well as maximise utilisation of the resources for their job performance.

## **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The content scope of this study focuses on the information literacy skills and utilisation of electronic information resources in relation to job performance among legal practitioners. The scope contained the availability of electronic information resources for legal practitioners on their job performance, level of information literacy skills obtained by the legal practitioners for the utilization of electronic information resources, extent to which legal practitioners access electronic information resources for their job performance, extent of utilization of electric information resources for their job performance, legal practitioners purpose of using electronic information resources for their job performance and challenges faced by legal practitioners in access and utilization of electronic information resources for their job performance. The scope is to cover all the ministries of justice in 20 Northern states of Nigeria including Federal Capital Territory Abuja.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Belay and Bramo (2017) investigated information literacy skills possessed among academic staff using a cross-sectional survey method at Addis Ababa and Jimma universities in Ethiopia. The researchers employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research designs. The total population under consideration in this study consisted of 3,671 individuals, with 2,330 affiliated with Addis Ababa University and 1,341 academic staff members from Jimma University. The sample size was determined using the single population proportion formula, resulting in the selection of 349 academic staff members for participation. The study employed self-administered questionnaires, interviews, and observations as data collection instruments.

The study's findings revealed that respondents exhibited varying levels of proficiency in information literacy skills. Notably, respondents displayed the highest mean score 2.438 in their ability to distinguish potential information resources. This was followed closely by the ability to synthesize and build on existing information, with a mean score of 2.4123. Meanwhile, respondents' capacity to compare and evaluate information obtained from different sources yielded a mean score of 2.3438. However, the ability to construct strategies for locating information had a lower mean score of 2.2344. It is important to note that the mean scores for each of the seven components tested within the framework

of information literacy skills fell below the midpoint score of 2.5 on a five-point scale.

The finding of the Belay and Bramo (2017) is in contrast with the Obaro and Umusor (2021) who explored the relationship between information literacy skills possess and the utilization of library resources among polytechnic students in Delta State, Nigeria where research findings indicated that the level of information literacy skills possessed among polytechnic students in Delta State, Nigeria, was notably low. At the same time, the study of Chyne *et al.* (2023) findings underscored the limited competencies of polytechnic students in the realm of information literacy. This outcome corresponds with the findings of Quadri and Abiodun (2022), who also highlighted the limited application of information literacy skills by undergraduate students in utilizing information resources.

Birhane (2016) conducted an empirical study focused on assessing the factors influencing employee job performance within the ABC Group of companies. A measurement scale was employed, where mean scores below 3.39 were categorized as ‘low,’ those ranging from 3.40 to 3.79 were labeled as ‘moderate,’ and scores exceeding 3.80 were classified as ‘high.’

The study’s findings revealed that approximately 32% of respondents reported high job performance levels, while approximately 26% indicated a moderate level of effectiveness in their roles. On the other hand, 8% of respondents expressed neutral sentiments regarding their job performance, encompassing aspects such as resource utilization, punctuality, absenteeism, and leadership style, among others. Notably, 34.7% of respondents reported low job performance.

Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) conducted a comprehensive study titled *The Impact of Work Environment on Job Performance: A Case Study of an Engineering Company in Jordan*. The findings revealed that a substantial 80.0% of employers expressed dissatisfaction with their employees’ job performance. Notably, the highest percentage, reaching 60.0%, indicated a level of “dissatisfaction.” This dissatisfaction primarily stemmed from employees’ subpar task achievements and the disruptive impact of interpersonal conversations among the workforces.

The most pronounced factors contributing to this negative impact were identified as follows: noise generated by office workers’ conversations, discomfort stemming from the use of outdated office furniture, poor ventilation resulting from insufficient oxygen levels in the office environment and inadequate natural lighting.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Survey research design was adopted for this study because of its relevance in terms of efficiency and usefulness in gathering related data. The population of this study consists of 2,150 legal practitioners in 20 Northern States including Federal capital territory (FCT) Abuja. These states are Abuja (FCT), Adamawa, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Nassarawa, Niger, Plateau, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe and Zamfara. The study adopted multi-stage

sampling procedure and the sample size obtained is 362 respondents. In the first instance, stratified sampling technique was used in the study. Stratified random sampling is applied to a study in a situation where the population is divided into mutually exclusive groups called strata. Secondly, simple random sampling technique through balloting was used to select or choose three (3) states in each of the three (3) geo-political zones in Northern Nigeria. Thirdly, proportionate sampling technique was used to select the sample size from each choosing state of the study which arrived at 362. The study used structured questionnaire with four Likert-point rating scale and observation checklist as data collection instruments. Descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages as well as mean and standard deviation) were used for the analysis of data collected. weighted mean of 2.5 was used and make decisions regarding the variables studied. A variable was classified as having a high level if the weighted mean of the respondents exceeded 2.5. If the weighted mean is equaled to 2.5, the variable was categorized as moderate. Lastly, a variable was low if the weighted mean fell below 2.5. Similarly, a variable was regarded as agreed upon if the weighted mean of the respondents was greater than or equal to 2.5, and it was classified as disagreed upon if the weighted mean was less than 2.5.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Research Question One:** What are the levels of information literacy skills possessed by legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria.

The finding revealed that the level of information literacy skills possessed by legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria is high, as indicated by the respondents considering the items were above the benchmark mean of 2.5. their responses are represented in mean and standard deviation in Table 1. This could be as a result of the fact that legal practitioners have the ability to identify, explore, access and select electronic information resources for their job performance. This finding contradicts the finding of Belay and Bramo (2017) as the researchers reported respondents exhibited varying levels of proficiency in information literacy skills.

**Research Question Two:** What are the level of factors that influence job performance of legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria?

The finding revealed that the level of factors influence job performance of legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria is high, considering the grand mean of organizational commitment, work engagement, work environment and job characteristics is above the benchmark of 2.50. This could be because there is reducing absenteeism and turnover, motivation and rewards, Commitment and proactive behaviors that enable employees to have greater job performance. This finding disagrees with the finding of Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) hence reported majority of employers' dissatisfaction with their employees' job performance.

**Research Objective One:** What is the level of information literacy skills possessed by legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria?

**Table 1: Level of Information Literacy Skills Possessed by Legal Practitioners in Northern Nigeria**

S/N	Variables	VH 4		H 3		L 2		VL 1		N	X	SD	Decision
	Responses	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%				
1	I have ability to identify electronic information resources for my job performance	162	46.8	154	44.5	17	4.9	13	3.8	346	3.34	0.742	High
2	I have ability to explore electronic information resources for my job performance	106	30.6	160	46.2	42	12.1	38	11.0	346	2.97	0.932	High
3	I have ability to select electronic information resources for my job performance	60	17.3	121	35.0	128	37.0	37	10.7	346	2.59	0.897	High
4	I have ability to organize electronic information resources for my job performance	49	14.2	122	35.3	128	37.0	47	13.6	346	2.50	0.898	High
5	I have ability to create electronic information resources for my job performance	60	17.3	105	30.3	131	37.9	50	14.5	346	2.51	0.943	High
6	I have ability to present electronic information resources for my job performance	29	8.4	72	20.8	162	46.8	83	24.0	346	2.14	0.876	Low
7	I have ability to access electronic information resources for my job performance	151	43.6	80	23.1	54	15.6	61	17.6	346	2.93	1.139	High
	<b>Grand Mean</b>										<b>2.71</b>		High

**Key:** VH = Very High, H= High, L =Low, VL = Very Low, N= number of retrieved questionnaires, X= Mean, SD= standard deviation and Weighted mean (2.50)

Table 1 shows that Northern Nigerian legal practitioners have much higher information literacy skills than the benchmark of 2.50. This may be seen from the statement, “I have the ability to identify electronic information resources for effective job performance,” which has the highest mean value of 3.34 and a standard deviation of 0.742. The next statement, which has a mean value of 2.97 and a standard deviation of 0.932, is “I have the ability to explore electronic information resources for my job performance.”

The regrettable statement, “I have the ability to present electronic information resources for my job performance,” had the lowest mean value, 2.14 with S.D. 0.876. Overall, only item six—which is below the weighted mean—has the lowest mean value among the seven (7) items in the table. Therefore, given that the grant-weighted mean of 2.71 is higher than the criterion of 2.50, this indicates that legal

practitioners have a high level of information literacy. Thus, Northern Nigerian legal practitioners possessed high degree of information literacy. This can be the outcome of legal professionals' abilities to locate, investigate, use, and choose electronic information sources for their job performance.

**Research Question Two:** What are the level of factors that influence the level job performance of legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria?

**Table 2: Level of Factors that Influence Job Performance of Legal Practitioners in Northern Nigeria**

S/N	Variables	VH 4		H 3		L 2		VL 1		N	X	SD	Decision
	Responses	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%				
<b>Work Environment Factors</b>													
	Air factors influence my job performance	181	52.3	143	41.3	7	2.0	15	4.3	346	3.42	0.738	High
	Temperature influences my job performance	160	46.2	172	49.7	8	2.3	6	1.7	346	3.40	0.626	High
	Sound influences my job performance	140	40.5	180	52.0	15	4.3	11	3.2	346	3.30	0.699	High
	Space influences my job performance.	163	47.1	139	40.2	22	6.4	22	6.4	346	3.28	0.844	High
											<b>3.35</b>		
<b>Grand Mean</b>													
<b>Work Engagement</b>													
	Engaged employees often experience positive emotions, including happiness, joy, interest, and enthusiasm	202	58.4	133	38.4	10	2.9	1	0.3	346	3.55	0.569	High
	The emotions experienced by highly engaged employees are high in arousal or activation	175	50.6	142	41.0	16	4.6	13	3.8	346	3.38	0.746	High
	Engaged employees are characterized by high in positive affect and to a somewhat lesser degree by low in negative affect influence my job performance.	121	35.0	188	54.3	17	4.9	20	5.8	346	3.18	0.773	High
											<b>3.37</b>		
<b>Grand Mean</b>													
<b>Job Characteristics</b>													
	Skill variety influence my job performance	165	47.7	169	48.8	3	0.9	9	2.6	346	3.42	0.646	High
	Task Identity influence my job performance	97	28.0	235	67.9	8	2.3	6	1.7	346	3.22	0.569	High
	Task Autonomy influence my job performance.	115	33.2	216	62.4	9	2.6	6	1.7	346	3.27	0.596	High
											<b>3.30</b>		
<b>Grand Mean</b>													
<b>Self- Efficacy</b>													



Self-efficacy also enables employees to have greater job performance	197	56.9	143	41.3	3	0.9	3	0.9	346	3.54	0.564	High
Commitment and proactive behaviors influence my job performance.	193	55.8	141	40.8	5	1.4	7	2.0	346	3.50	0.634	High
<b>Grand Mean</b>										<b>3.52</b>		
<b>Organizational Commitment</b>												
Increased effectiveness, reducing absenteeism and turnover influence my job performance	200	57.8	134	38.7	6	1.7	6	1.7	346	3.53	0.624	High
Motivation and rewards influence my job performance	206	59.5	131	37.9	8	2.3	1	0.3	346	3.57	0.557	High
<b>Grand Mean</b>										<b>3.55</b>		

**Key:** VH = Very High, H= High, L =Low, VL = Very Low, N= number of retrieved questionnaires, X= Mean, SD= standard deviation and Weighted mean (2.50).

An investigation of the degree of factors influencing Northern Nigerian legal practitioners' job performance is shown in Table 2. The results show that several factors have a substantial impact on work performance. Organizational commitment is the most significant component, with the highest mean value of 3.55. Followed by self-efficacy with a mean value of 3.52.

Job characteristics, on the other hand, had the lowest mean value (3.30) of all the elements analyzed in connection to legal practitioners' job performance. In conclusion, the findings imply that every element—organizational commitment, self-efficacy, work environment, work engagement, and job characteristics—has a favorable impact on legal practitioners' job performance. This conclusion is derived from the observation that all of the weighted mean values are above the benchmark of weighted mean value of 2.5.

## SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

1. The level of information literacy skills possessed by legal practitioners for job performance in Northern Nigeria is high.
2. The finding revealed that level of factors influences the job performance of legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria is also high.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study on the level of information literacy skills and factors influencing job performance among legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria has provided valuable insights into the opportunities within the legal profession in the region. The findings reveal a multifaceted landscape shaped by a combination of professional, socio-economic, and educational factors., addressing the information literacy skills and job performance of legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria that requires a complex approach involving collaboration among legal professionals, educational institutions,

government bodies, and other stakeholders. The recommendations provided aim to create a supportive ecosystem that empowers legal practitioners to excel in their roles and contribute meaningfully to the legal landscape in Northern Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Information Literacy Skills: The research indicates a diverse range of information literacy skills among legal practitioners in Northern Nigeria. Despite the fact some legal practitioners demonstrate a high proficiency in legal research, others may require additional support and training to navigate digital tools and critically evaluate information sources.
2. On the level of factors influencing job performance, there is need to identify several factors that influenced job performance of legal practitioners, these includes the availability of resources, the quality of the work environment, and economic factors, such as access to legal databases and research materials, because they play a significant role on the job performance.

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