

## Evaluation Of Ict Skills Among the Law Students: A Study of Karnataka State Law University Affiliated Colleges

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### ABSTRACT

The study intends to evaluate the ICT skills among the law students of the Karnataka State Law University-affiliated colleges. The study investigated law students' ability and proficiency in making use of digital devices and software, Responses of law students on improvements in academic learning with the use of ICT. The study highlights the awareness of search strategies and the level of ICT skills of Law students, most importantly study focused on the impact of ICT skills on the utilization of online resources, adequacy in the utilization of ICT tools and ICT-based library services, and problems affecting the accessing and using electronic information resources by the law students. The study thus recommended that law colleges should receive adequate funding to promote the acquisition of suitable ICT resources for effective use by law students in their educational pursuits. This will enhance the student's proficiency in utilizing these facilities and, in turn, equip them with the necessary skills to operate them. The study concludes that law students still have to make maximum utilization of electronic information resources for their academic excellence in the legal profession.

### KEYWORDS

ICT use, Law students, ICT tools, electronic information resources, ICT skills, library use, library services.

### INTRODUCTION

Information Communication Technology (ICT) is a key concept in today's educational landscape. It has transformed society into an information-driven community and influenced professional learning through education. Law students must engage with library information services and other accessible information sources to fulfill their informational needs. They should have the skills to utilize ICT in order to access and utilize legal information. ICT is incorporated into all aspects of law students. These technologies are essential for spreading knowledge and enhancing the educational environment. The Library serves as a primary information hub, equipped with the necessary ICT infrastructure to enable users to access the information they need. Law libraries are presently shifting from traditional manual methods of providing services to the adoption of electronic systems, supported by computers

and Internet networks. The integration of electronic information resources in law libraries has positively impacted service delivery by improving the storage, retrieval, and distribution of information sources. This transition has introduced various tools and methods that allow law students to access information both online and offline. The electronic information resources identified by . Lokapur, S., & Krishnamurthy, C. (2025) that are available for service delivery law college libraries include e-books, the Internet, computer systems, and law databases. The aim of ensuring the availability, accessibility, and utilization of these resources in law libraries is to enhance the academic learning experience of law students.

### Review of Literature

Naik, D., & Nikam, K. (2014). A Study was conducted to

provide an overview of two law university libraries in the state of Karnataka, southern India and their web-based online public access catalogue (web OPAC). The Study adopted a descriptive survey method, and a questionnaire was distributed to 300 respondents, including undergraduate law students and post-graduate law students, research scholars and teaching staff. 256 completed questionnaires received for data analysis. Finding of the study reveals that 92.1 per cent of respondents were using the web OPAC. Most of the web OPAC users strongly agreed that they learned to use the web OPAC from a library orientation programme. It was found that there are positive attitudes towards the web OPAC search facility. The survey also found that the web OPAC search page has not given satisfactory guidance to web OPAC users.

Madu, A. U., Vandi, I., & Chagwa, S. M. (2018). Study determined availability and utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) for information retrieval in Ramat Library, University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. The survey method was adopted. The population of the study was 10,600 respondents. The sample size was 400. A questionnaire tool was used to collect the data. 356 valid questionnaires were considered acceptable. Findings revealed a low level of computer utilization for information retrieval in the library under study, utilization of CD-ROM was very low, low level of Internet utilization. Also, the majority of the respondents do not use e-mail for information retrieval in the Library. The study made recommendations for adequate power supply for effective computer utilization, information literacy training and awareness on the availability of CD-ROMs and how to use them for effective information retrieval. Also, free access to the Internet, as against fee payment, poses a great hindrance to the utilization of ICT by the library users.

Ezema, I. J. & Chizoba, A. C. (2018). This study investigated electronic support services and resources for law students in Nigerian university libraries. A descriptive research design was adopted. The questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The overall population of law students in the five selected universities was three thousand five hundred and sixty-four (3564). One hundred (100) students were randomly sampled from each of the five universities. In all, 475 (95%) responses were retrieved as the sample size for the study. The findings revealed that law students were aware of and could access e-resources such as CD-ROM, Law Pavilion, Open access journals, e-magazines, DOAJ, JSTOR, LexisNexis electronic journals. Though results showed a remarkable accessibility of electronic information resources in the law libraries, the core legal e-resources appear to be inaccessible to users. However, among the core legal e-resources, Law Pavilion and LexisNexis recorded the highest accessibility, and Law Pavilion was frequently used by law students. The majority of the respondents acquired information literacy

skills through assistance from the library staff. The study identified some challenges experienced in accessing electronic legal resources. The study recommends that there should be regular subscription to important law databases that will be highly beneficial to law students to enhance legal education and research.

Alabi, S. O. (2020). The study investigated ICT skills and use of e-resources by undergraduates in selected private university libraries in South-west, Nigeria. Survey research was adopted. The population of the study was 4,913 undergraduates. The stratified Sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 370. Data were collected using a questionnaire. The result of the hypothesis showed that there is a significant relationship between ICT skills and the use of electronic resources. The findings of the study showed that the majority of undergraduates use e-resources for finding relevant information in their studies and assignment writing. The findings also showed that undergraduates possessed high ICT skills, although their formulation of search queries and searching and retrieval skills were low. The study recommended that undergraduates should upgrade their ICT skills.

Agwunobi, J. N., & Umoren, P. T. (2020). Examined the availability of online legal information access and retrieval devices and their utilization in the e-library of the Faculty of Law, University of Calabar. To aid the study, the faculty of law students constituted the population of the study. Of these 433 students formed the sample of the study, being the bona fide law library registered students who completed and returned the questionnaire. The research instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was designed to elicit information on the availability of fifteen online legal information and access devices in the e-library and the extent of their utilization in accessing and retrieving legal information in the library. Findings reveal that although the e-library had several sampled online access and retrieval devices, there were disparities in their usage by the students. The gap in the utilization of these devices stemmed from the fact that some were heavily utilized than others, while some were nonexistent. The study further showed that, but for the manifest problems that affected the usage of the devices, the level of patronage implied that the e-library is the in-thing in contemporary information search and access for possible utilization to meet desired goals.

Makinde, O. B., & Akinola, F. M. (2025). This study investigated ICT skills and information literacy skills as variables predicting OPAC usage among law undergraduates studying in Nigeria. A research adopted a survey method, incorporating a quantitative approach using a sample of 286 law undergraduates derived from a two-stage sampling procedure. A well-structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple linear

regressions were the inferential statistics used in the analysis of the collected data. The results of the study demonstrated that of the independent variables, ICT skills were the best predictor of OPAC usage (independent variable). Furthermore, only two indicators of ICT skills —namely, the ability to process information and collaborate —had a significant individual influence on OPAC usage. The study recommends that higher institutions could enhance the ICT skills training of law undergraduates through intentional programs, while incorporating practical activities that will improve information literacy skills.

### Objectives of the study

1. To identify the level of ICT Skills and awareness of ICT-based library services among the law students.
2. To study the problems faced by law students while

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

#### 1. Gender wise Distribution

| Gender    | Female | Male | Total |
|-----------|--------|------|-------|
| Frequency | 170    | 155  | 325   |
| Percent   | 52.3   | 47.7 | 100   |

Table 1 shows the gender wise distribution of the respondents under the study. Out of the 325 total respondents, 170 (52.3%) are female, and the remaining 155(47.7%) are male.

#### 2. Use of ICT tools

| Response | No. of law students | Percent |
|----------|---------------------|---------|
| Yes      | 207                 | 63.5    |
| No       | 118                 | 36.3    |
| Total    | 325                 | 100.0   |

Table 2 interprets that out of 325 students, a majority, 207(63.5%) use ICT tools for professional learning, while 118 students (36.3%) don't use. This indicates the use of ICT tools by law students in practicing the legal profession.

#### 3. Ability and proficiency in using ICT devices

|                   |                | Excellent      | Good           | Uncertain     | Fair          | Poor           |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Digital Devices   | Laptop/Desktop | 148<br>(45.54) | 129<br>(39.7)  | 11<br>(3.39)  | 6<br>(1.85)   | 31<br>(9.54)   |
|                   | Tablet         | 89<br>(27.39)  | 126<br>(38.77) | 33<br>(10.16) | 26<br>(8)     | 51<br>(15.7)   |
|                   | Smartphone     | 190<br>(58.47) | 91<br>(28)     | 14<br>(4.31)  | 12<br>(3.7)   | 18<br>(5.54)   |
|                   | E-book reader  | 88<br>(27.08)  | 112<br>(34.47) | 30<br>(9.24)  | 43<br>(13.24) | 52<br>(16)     |
| Operating Systems | Windows        | 122<br>(37.54) | 113<br>(34.77) | 18<br>(5.54)  | 26<br>(8)     | 46<br>(14.16)  |
|                   | Linux          | 39<br>(12)     | 80<br>(24.62)  | 62<br>(19.08) | 37<br>(11.39) | 107<br>(32.93) |
|                   | Ubuntu         | 44<br>(13.54)  | 64<br>(19.7)   | 60<br>(18.47) | 49<br>(15.08) | 108<br>(33.24) |
| Software          | MS Word        | 116<br>(35.7)  | 123<br>(37.85) | 25<br>(7.7)   | 29<br>(8.93)  | 32<br>(9.85)   |

accessing and utilizing electronic resources.

3. To examine the impact of ICT on academic learning.

### Methodology

The study incorporates the survey method and questionnaire tool to collect the data. Sample populations for this survey include law students of Karnataka State Law University-affiliated law colleges. The target populations from the selected law colleges were 5948 law students. Out of which 361 samples were drawn using the Cochran's formula for calculating the sample size. Standardized questionnaires were distributed among the 361samples, out of which 325 responses were received, and hence the response rate of the distributed questionnaires was 90%. The collected data were analyzed using PSPP software.

|  |            |                |                |               |               |               |
|--|------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|  | MS Excel   | 111<br>(34.16) | 99<br>(30.47)  | 33<br>(10.16) | 36<br>(11.08) | 46<br>(14.16) |
|  | PowerPoint | 108<br>(33.24) | 115<br>(35.39) | 31<br>(9.54)  | 32<br>(9.85)  | 39<br>(12)    |

Table 3 presents law students' ability and proficiency in using digital devices and software. Smartphone show the highest proficiency, with 190 students (58.47%) rating themselves as excellent and 91 (28%) as good, followed by Laptop/Desktop 148(45.54%)excellent; 129( 39.7%) good and Windows OS 122(37.54% )excellent; 113( 34.77% )good. Among software applications, students report strong proficiency in MS Word 116 (35.7%) excellent; 123(37.85%) good, PowerPoint 108(33.24%) excellent; 115(35.39%) good, and MS Excel 111(34.16%) excellent; 99(30.47%) good. Moderate proficiency is observed for tablets, e-book readers, Linux, and Ubuntu, with a notable portion uncertain or rating themselves as fair/poor. Overall, the study indicates that students are highly capable with commonly used devices and mainstream software, while proficiency with alternative operating systems and specialized tools is comparatively lower.

#### 4. Awareness of search techniques

| Search techniques               | Responses  |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Basic Search                    | 256(78.77) |
| Advanced Search                 | 181(55.7)  |
| Boolean Search                  | 62(19.08)  |
| Phrase Search                   | 74(22.77)  |
| Filed Search                    | 86(26.47)  |
| Natural Language Search         | 100(30.77) |
| Case Sensitivity                | 108(33.24) |
| Truncation and Wild card Search | 35(10.77)  |
| Any other                       | 23(7.08)   |

Table 4 presents law students' awareness of various search techniques. A majority are aware of Basic Search 256(78.77%) and Advanced Search 181(55.7%), indicating familiarity with general search functions. Awareness of more specialized techniques is lower: Case Sensitivity 108(33.24%), Natural Language Search 100 (30.77%), Field Search 86(26.47%), and Phrase Search 74(22.77%). Very few students are familiar with Boolean Search 62(19.08%), Truncation and Wildcard Search 35(10.77%), or other advanced methods 23(7.08%). Overall, the study suggests that law students need training in search techniques for the use of required information retrieval.

#### 5. ICT utilization in academic learning

| Options | No. of. Law students | Percent |
|---------|----------------------|---------|
| Yes     | 252                  | 77.5    |
| No      | 73                   | 22.5    |
| Total   | 325                  | 100     |

Table 5 indicates that out of 325 students, a majority, and 252 (77.5%), report that ICT has had a positive impact on their study, while 73 students (22.5%) do not perceive such an impact. This suggests that the integration of ICT significantly supports students' learning and academic activities, enhancing access to information and study efficiency.

#### 6. ICT skills impact on information acquisition

| Statements                                                   | Strongly Disagree | Agree          | Undecided     | Disagree     | Strongly Disagree |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|
| I can define a search strategy by using appropriate keywords | 102<br>(31.39)    | 145<br>(44.62) | 31<br>(9.54)  | 12<br>(3.7)  | 35<br>(10.77)     |
| I can adjust and improve the search if                       | 91<br>(28)        | 143<br>(44)    | 46<br>(14.16) | 10<br>(3.08) | 35<br>(10.77)     |

|                                                                                                                          |               |                |               |               |               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>needed</b>                                                                                                            |               |                |               |               |               |
| <b>I can use numerous field codes for more focused and accurate search with a single search query</b>                    | 64<br>(19.7)  | 127<br>(39.08) | 69<br>(21.24) | 20<br>(6.16)  | 45<br>(13.85) |
| <b>I can search for information using less than(&lt;),greater than(&gt;),equal to(=), hyphen(-) and other techniques</b> | 64<br>(19.7)  | 93<br>(28.62)  | 77<br>(23.7)  | 40<br>(12.31) | 51<br>(15.7)  |
| <b>I need training on search techniques to make use of e-resources effectively</b>                                       | 82<br>(25.24) | 115<br>(35.39) | 58<br>(17.85) | 27<br>(8.31)  | 43<br>(13.24) |

Table 6 highlights the impact of ICT skills on students' information-seeking behavior. A majority of students feel confident in defining a search strategy using appropriate keywords 102(31.39%) strongly agree; 145(44.62%) agree, and adjusting or improving searches when needed 91(28%) strongly agree; 143(44%) agree. However, fewer students are proficient in using advanced search techniques, such as numerous field codes for focused searches 64(19.7%) strongly agree; 127(39.08%) agree, or special operators like <, >, =, hyphen (-) 64(19.7%) strongly agree; 93(28.62%) agree. Notably, a significant portion of students express the need for further training on search techniques to effectively utilize e-resources, 82(25.24%) strongly agree; 115(35.39%) agree. Overall, the study indicates that while students possess basic ICT skills for information searching, there is a considerable need for training in advanced search strategies to enhance effective use of digital resources.

#### 7. Problems facing in accessing and utilizing of electronic resources

| Options | No. of Law students | Percent |
|---------|---------------------|---------|
| Yes     | 186                 | 57.2    |
| No      | 139                 | 42.8    |
| Total   | 325                 | 100     |

Table 7 shows that out of 325 students, a majority of 186(57.2%) face problems in accessing and utilizing electronic information resources, while 139 students (42.8%) do not encounter any issues. This indicates that more than half of the students are facing problems in accessing and utilizing e-resources.

#### 8. Actual problems faced in accessing and utilizing of E-resources

| Problems                             | Responses  |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Low internet bandwidth               | 162(49.85) |
| Inadequate Wi-Fi range               | 130(40)    |
| Inadequate journal subscription      | 93(28.62)  |
| Lack of search skills                | 126(38.77) |
| Restricted access by the law college | 75(23.08)  |
| Directing to paid links              | 86(26.47)  |
| Any other                            | (0)        |

Table 8 presents the types of problems faced by students in accessing and utilizing electronic information resources. The most commonly reported issue is low internet bandwidth 162(49.85%), followed by inadequate Wi-Fi range 130(40%) and lack of search skills 126(38.77%). Other challenges include inadequate journal subscriptions 93(28.62%), being directed to commercial sites 86(26.47%), and restricted access by the college/institution 75(23.08%). No students reported any other issues. Overall, the table indicates that insufficient search proficiency is the main obstacle to effectively using electronic information resources.

## **Conclusion**

The present study examined the level of ICT competencies, awareness of search strategies, and utilization of electronic resources among law students of Karnataka State Law University affiliated colleges. The findings indicate that while a considerable proportion of students regularly use ICT tools and digital devices for academic purposes, variations persist in terms of proficiency, strategic search capabilities, and optimal utilization of ICT-based library services.

The analysis of data on the use of ICT tools and devices shows that students possess basic operational skills; however, advanced competencies such as effective search techniques, database navigation, Boolean operators, and evaluation of digital sources remain comparatively moderate. ICT utilization in academic learning has positively influenced information acquisition, research efficiency, and access to online legal resources. Nevertheless, the study also reveals notable constraints, including inadequate infrastructure, limited access to high-speed internet, insufficient training, and lack of awareness regarding specialized legal databases. These issues directly affect the effective access and utilization of electronic information resources. However it is recommended to law colleges should allocate dedicated funding for upgrading ICT infrastructure, including high-speed internet and updated digital resources. Periodic hands on training programmes on advanced search strategies, legal databases, and digital research tools should be institutionalized. Library professionals should conduct user-orientation and information literacy workshops focusing on effective utilization of e-resources. continuous monitoring and assessment mechanisms should be introduced to evaluate students ICT competency development. Strengthening ICT competencies will substantially enhance academic performance and professional preparedness among law students in the evolving digital legal environment.

Overall, the study establishes that ICT skills significantly impact the academic capabilities of law students, yet there remains scope for enhanced and structured capacity-building initiatives.

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