Evaluating Legal Information Literacy of Students at Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law (RGNUL), Punjab: A Study

Rajnish Kumar[*] and Khushpreet Singh Brar

Department of Library & Information Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh - 160 014, India
[*]E-mail: rajnishk@pu.ac.in

ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the perceived level of Legal Information Literacy (LIL) among students at Rajiv Gandhi National Law University, Punjab (RGNLU), focusing on their proficiency across five dimensions: legal information seeking and retrieval, information evaluation, information use and application, information analysis, and information management and organisation. Employing a quantitative research design and survey method, a structured questionnaire based on BIALL standards was used. Data analysis of 178 participants shows that 68 % exhibit moderate LIL, 16.3 % demonstrate high proficiency, and 15.7 % have low LIL scores. Differences in proficiency across programs and gender highlight the need for specialised interventions and instructional approaches. The study advocates for targeted strategies, including the integration of technology and practical applications, to enhance LIL skills. Emphasising the positive impact of prolonged academic engagement, the findings offer insights for curriculum development and institutional support mechanisms, contributing to the discourse on legal education and information literacy.

Keywords: Legal information literacy; Information management; Information retrieval; Digital resources; Legal research skills

1. INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, the unprecedented volume of available information has made effective data management essential for academic and professional success. Undergraduate students, constrained by limited study durations, cannot acquire all the required knowledge. Information Literacy (I.L.) equips individuals with the essential skills for independent, lifelong learning. According to the American Library Association (ALA)[1], information-literate individuals are those who have "learned how to learn," enabling them to identify their information needs, efficiently acquire and evaluate information, and use it ethically. Teaching I.L. is a multifaceted process that requires expertise in problem identification, research methodologies, and information assessment. It is also critical for effectively applying scientific methods in various fields.

Research underscores the necessity of enhancing information literacy among students. Schiffl[2] highlighted that while students excel in basic search techniques, they struggle with advanced searches and evaluating the credibility of digital resources. The study advocates for targeted training to help students navigate vast online databases and discern reliable information. Siddiqui[3] et al. report similar challenges, noting that students often find it difficult to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources. These studies emphasise the importance of I.L. in fostering informed decision-making and addressing the challenges posed by the digital information overload.

Integrating Legal Information Literacy (LIL) modules into the academic curriculum offers significant practical benefits. These modules equip students with the skills to identify, evaluate, and apply legal resources effectively, thereby enhancing academic performance and fostering professional growth. A structured LIL curriculum bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, enabling students to navigate complex legal databases, assess the credibility of legal sources, and apply the information ethically. Moreover, these modules prepare students to adapt to evolving legal technologies, ensuring their competitiveness in the legal field. Institutions incorporating LIL modules foster a culture of ethical and informed research, enhancing their reputation as centers of excellence in legal education.

This study evaluates the Legal Information Literacy (LIL) of students at Rajiv Gandhi National Law University (RGNUL), Patiala. It examines their proficiency across key dimensions of LIL, identifies areas for improvement, and explores the role of libraries in enhancing these skills. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on information literacy and provide actionable insights for developing targeted interventions in legal education.

2. INFORMATION LITERACY

Information literacy, introduced to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS)[4] emphasises training individuals to use information resources effectively. Those proficient in this area, known as "information literates," can solve problems using various information tools and primary sources. The American Library Association (ALA) defines information literacy as recognising when information is needed and locating, evaluating, and using it effectively.

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)[5] Framework describes information literacy as a set of skills, including the ethical use of information to create new knowledge and understand its value. The Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL)[6] concurs, highlighting the importance of recognising when information is needed and efficiently finding, assessing, and applying it. Low information literacy can negatively impact self-confidence, essential for learning and achieving goals. Proficiency in information literacy extends to the workplace, where skills in effectively using information resources are crucial. Understanding personal information needs and managing knowledge efficiently is vital for tackling challenges. The 2003 Prague Declaration[7] considers information literacy a fundamental right for active engagement in the information society.

3. LEGAL INFORMATION LITERACY

In the broader context of information literacy, the legal field presents a specialised branch known as Legal Information Literacy (LIL). Over the past two decades, the information revolution has profoundly influenced the legal profession, shifting the primary reliance from traditional books to electronic sources. This transition necessitates assurances of legal information's authenticity and authoritativeness. LIL refers to effectively locating, comprehending, evaluating, and applying legal information. This study aims to evaluate the LIL of National Law University Patiala students, recognising the unique demands of legal studies and the pivotal role LIL plays in shaping proficient legal professionals.

Legal information literacy entails the development of skills crucial for efficiently finding, evaluating, and applying legal information. Its significance has grown in tandem with the increasing complexity of the legal system and the digitisation of legal resources. Key components include:

3.1 Understanding Legal Systems and Sources

This involves knowledge of the hierarchy of legal sources and the functioning of legal systems, including statutes, case law, regulations, and secondary sources such as commentaries and legal periodicals by American Bar Association[8].

3.2 Research Skills

According to Legal Education Review[9], effective legal research utilising legal databases, libraries, and online resources is essential.

3.3 Critical Evaluation

This skill assesses legal information's relevance and reliability.

3.4 Application of Legal Information

Applying legal knowledge to real-world scenarios requires solid legal reasoning and analytical abilities.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

It is crucial to understand the ethical implications of using legal information, including confidentiality and privacy issues.

Digital technology has revolutionised access to legal information, making tools such as e-books, Westlaw, LexisNexis, and Google Scholar indispensable for legal professionals. Mastery of these digital resources is vital, along with managing cybersecurity and digital privacy concerns. Legal education institutions have incorporated LIL into their curricula, emphasising digital skills and database proficiency in legal research and writing courses. Furthermore, lifelong learning programs are available to help practicing lawyers stay updated with technological advancements. Public legal education and Information service[10] initiatives by government agencies and libraries also aim to enhance LIL, aiding individuals in navigating legal services and documents.

4. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Investigating the relationship between the extent and dimensions of Legal Information Literacy (LIL), the influence of ICT use, and the frequency of visits to the library website is essential in legal education. Understanding how these factors interrelate is essential for developing a comprehensive perspective on students' adeptness in navigating legal information. This cross-sectional survey at RGNLU, a leading law university in India, aims to investigate the intricate relationships between the level of legal information literacy and its various dimensions. Additionally, the study delves into the influence of ICT utilisation and the frequency of visits to the library website on students' prowess in legal information literacy. The research findings will clarify the role of technology and library resources in promoting legal information literacy among law students at Indian institutions and improving information literacy instruction courses.

5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
• To analyse how RGNLU students assess their level of LIL.
• To explore the relationship between LIL and academic course instruction in the academic course.

• To investigate the difference in perceived level LIL concerning student demographics.

6. HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses are enumerated as per the objectives of the study:

H1 There is no significant difference in the perceived level of LIL between male and female students.

H2 There is no significant difference in the perceived level of LIL between BALLB and LLM students.

H3 There is no significant association between the perceived level of LIL and the distribution of the students' course years.

H4 There is no significant relationship between the perceived LIL level and academics.

7. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have explored Legal Information Literacy (LIL) among students and legal professionals, addressing its challenges and opportunities. Andretta[11] highlighted the critical role of information literacy in improving academic performance, particularly in navigating online resources effectively. Bhat[12] stressed the importance of strategic planning to address content gaps in legal websites, emphasising the need for robust legal information systems. Danner and Winterton[13] advocated for enhancing legal research skills among new U.S. lawyers to better equip them for the profession. Bhardwaj and Margam[14] identified significant difficulties faced by students and professionals in using online legal resources, while Alam and Mugade[15] underscored the role of academic law librarians in improving LIL among Indian law students.

Recent studies have expanded this discourse. Kim Prieto[16] examined the impact of information literacy on U.K. law students, identifying gaps in their ability to evaluate and utilise legal resources effectively. Jamshed[17], *et al.* investigated challenges law students face in accessing and navigating law libraries. Xing and Su[18] proposed a framework for teaching LIL in higher education institutions, highlighting the importance of tailored educational strategies. Bhardwaj[19] revealed critical issues in the understanding and use of legal information among Indian academics and practicing solicitors. Kumar and Brar[20] analysed awareness and perceptions of LIL among students in National Law Universities, identifying significant gaps in familiarity with legal research tools and advocating for institutional interventions to enhance competencies. Garingan and Pickard[21] emphasised the growing importance of algorithmic literacy in legal practice, advocating for the integration of AI-related competencies into legal education to prepare professionals for technology-driven environments.

These studies collectively highlight the importance of addressing gaps in LIL through structured educational interventions, targeted training programs, and curriculum integration. By building on these findings, this research aims to assess LIL levels among students at Rajiv Gandhi National Law University, focusing on their ability to access, evaluate, and utilise legal information effectively, while also identifying areas for improvement.

8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Researchers divided the questionnaire into five dimensions based on the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) to understand students' perceived levels of legal information literacy:

1. Legal Information Seeking and Retrieval
2. Information Evaluation
3. Information Use and Application
4. Information Analysis
5. Information Management and Organisation

The BIALL[22] standards are recognised for their systematic approach to assessing legal information literacy, integrating essential skills such as effective search strategies, critical evaluation, ethical use of information, and efficient management of legal data.

At Rajiv Gandhi National Law University in Patiala, 178 undergraduate and graduate students participated in a cross-sectional survey. Data collection used a structured self-administered questionnaire distributed during library visits, refined through expert consultation. The questionnaire covered demographic profiles, library usage, legal information literacy dimensions, and LIL's relationship with various variables. Responses were scored using a five-point Likert scale (S.A. to S.D.), and demographic information was recorded in a preliminary section. IBM SPSS Statistics software was used for analysis, employing descriptive statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to explore differences between undergraduate and postgraduate students. Ethical considerations included informed consent and confidentiality. The research aimed to provide insights into legal information literacy levels among students, enhancing legal education and library services.

9. SAMPLING

The study's population consists of 984 students at Rajiv Gandhi National Law University (RGNLU), 940 undergraduates (UG), and 44 postgraduates (P.G.). Initially, proportionate stratified random sampling was employed to select respondents from both U.G. and P.G. categories. With a 95 % confidence level and a 5 % margin of error, the procedure described by Krejcie and Morgan[23] was used to compute the sample size, which came to 187.

9.1 Data Collection

Primary data was gathered using a structured questionnaire featuring multiple-choice and Likert scale items to assess respondents perceived legal information literacy.

9.2 Response Rate

of 187 selected individuals, 178 provided complete responses, resulting in a 95.18 % response rate.

10. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR INFORMATION LITERACY

The questionnaire used the BIALL standards for Legal Information Literacy (LIL) to enhance our study and ensure accurate responses. Recognising the importance of more profound principles for information literacy, the BIALL standards integrate information literacy into academic programs, addressing the dynamic nature of the information ecosystem. This approach highlights students' roles in creating knowledge, understanding the evolving information world, and using data ethically.

11. SCOPE OF STUDY

This study assesses Legal Information Literacy among 178 undergraduate (B.A.LL.B.) and postgraduate (LL.M.) at Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Patiala, Punjab. The survey spans five crucial dimensions, providing a holistic view of participants' LIL skills. The research explores the relationship between LIL and demographic variables, highlighting gender-based differences and distinctions between academic programs and years. Additionally, the study delves into students' perceptions of incorporating LIL in their academic courses, shedding light on relevance, technology integration, clarity of research ethics, practical application, and assignment alignment. The scope encompasses a thorough analysis of LIL levels, gender-based disparities, academic program differences, and the integration of LIL into the curriculum.

12. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results of this study were only applied to one academic institution; hence, they might only be generalised to some academic institutions. Students from Rajiv Gandhi National Law University, Patiala (Punjab), are the only participants in the current study.

## 13. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, a comprehensive analytical approach was applied to the survey's quantitative data. Descriptive statistics summarised the survey data with percentages, means, and standard deviations. Inferential statistics revealed deeper patterns and correlations, including the F-test and Chi-square analysis with corresponding P-values. The statistical program SPSS facilitated a thorough analysis, ensuring significant findings. At a 95 % confidence level, a p-value of less than 0.05 indicated a statistically significant link.

The survey reveals a gender distribution of 57.3% males and 42.7% females among students. Fourth-year students constitute the largest group at 29.8%, followed by Second Year (23.6%), LLM students (16.3%), Third Year (19.7%), and Fifth Year (10.7 %). Of the 178 students, 83.7 % are enrolled in the BALLB program and 16.3 % in the LLM program. Library engagement shows 59 students have undergone orientation, with visitation

Table 1. Demographic distribution of RGNUL

Categories		N	%
Gender	Males	102	57.3
	Females	76	42.7
Course year	Second year	42	23.6
	Third year	35	19.7
	Fourth year	53	29.8
	Fifth year	19	10.7
	LLM	29	16.3
	Total	178	100.0
Course	BALLB	149	83.7
	LLM	29	16.3
	Total	178	100.0
Library orientation	No	73	41
	Yes	105	89
	Total	178	100.0
Frequency of library visits	Daily	33	18.5
	Weekly	51	28.7
	23 Times a month	61	34.3
	Monthly	25	14.0
	Rarely	8	4.5
	Total	178	100
Frequency of library website visit	Daily	30	16.9
	Weekly	73	41
	23 Times a month	57	32
	Monthly	13	7.3
	Rarely	5	2.8
	Total	178	100
	Level of ICT skills	N	%
ICT Skills	Low	41	23
	Moderate	71	39.9
	High	66	37.1
	Total	178	100
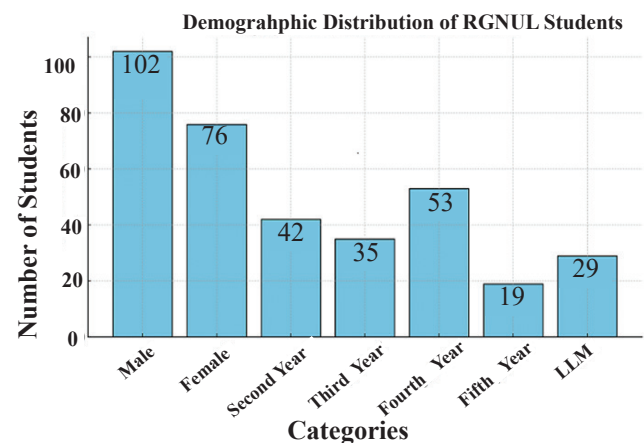
Figure 1. Demographic distribution.

Table 2. Perception of library servces of RGNUL students

Library services	N	%
Borrowing and lending materials	178	100.0
Access to digital resources	161	90.4
Computer and internet access	134	75.3
Reference and research assistance	119	66.9
Access to online databases	178	100.0
Community events and meeting space	178	100.0
Educational programs and classes	178	100.0
Interlibrary loan facility	178	100.0
Special collections and archives	178	100.0
Career related information	178	100.0
Email/ Email alerts	178	100.0
Opac/ Web-Opac	178	100.0
Ask a librarian service	178	100.0
Feedback facility	178	100.0

patterns indicating a majority visit Weekly (28.7 %) or 2-3 Times a Month (34.3 %). Library website use varies, with 41 % accessing it weekly. ICT proficiency is divided, with 39.9 % having moderate skills and 37.1 % demonstrating high ICT abilities.

Table 2 and Fig. 2 reveals that 100 % of respondents (178 students) use various library services, including borrowing/lending, online databases, community events, educational programs, interlibrary loans, special collections, career information, email alerts, OPAC/Web-OPAC, Ask a Librarian, and feedback facilities. This reflects high engagement with the library's offerings. Specifically, 90.4 % (161 students) use digital resources, emphasising the role of digital literacy in legal education. Additionally, 75.3 % (134 students) utilise library computers and internet access, showing dependency on the library for technology. 66.9 % (119 students) seek references and research assistance, indicating a strong need for research

Figure 2. Perception of library services.

support. The high usage across services suggests the library effectively meets law students' diverse needs. Positive perceptions of these services suggest they enhance legal information literacy, contributing to students' proficiency in legal research and overall academic development.

The analysis of Table 3 reveals that students at RGNLU exhibit moderate proficiency across the five dimensions of Legal Information Literacy (LIL): legal information seeking and retrieval, information evaluation, information use and application, information synthesis and analysis, and information management and organisation. Among these, the highest competency was observed in information synthesis and analysis (Mean = 3.14), where students demonstrated the ability to summarise and create cohesive arguments effectively. Similarly, moderate proficiency was noted in the application of information for decision-making and adapting it to various contexts (Mean = 3.05), though challenges were identified in integrating multiple sources and ensuring proper citation practices. In the dimension of information evaluation (Mean = 2.98), students showed a reasonable capacity to assess the credibility and relevance of information but require improvement in identifying bias and evaluating the authority of sources. The findings in legal information seeking and retrieval (Mean = 2.90) indicate that while students are confident in using search engines and databases, there is limited use of advanced search techniques. Information management and organisation (Mean = 2.93) showed moderate skills in organising resources, with less frequent adoption of tools like citation managers or updating management strategies. These results highlight the need for targeted interventions, including workshops and practical training, to address gaps in advanced search techniques, critical evaluation, and consistent use of management tools, ultimately aiming to enhance the overall LIL of RGNLU students.

The study on Legal Information Literacy (LIL) at National Law University, Patiala, provides a comprehensive analysis of varying proficiency levels among students, with 68 % identified as Moderate LILs, 16.3 % as High LILs, and 15.7 % as Low LIL. These findings highlight the necessity for targeted interventions, particularly for Low LIL students, and suggest enhancements for those with Moderate and High LILs. The research also indicates slight gender differences, with males showing slightly higher proficiency, and emphasises the need for tailored educational strategies between B.A.LL.B. and LL.M. students. The study recommends integrating LIL modules into the curriculum, organising workshops, encouraging practical learning, hosting competitions, and developing mentorship programs alongside regular curriculum updates and a more user-friendly library with dedicated support staff. These recommendations aim to strengthen LIL at RGNLU, ultimately fostering academic and professional success and contributing valuable insights to the broader discourse on information literacy in legal education.

The data presents various dimensions of Legal Information Literacy (LIL) with differing mean scores. Legal Information Seeking and Retrieval (LISR) scores a mean of 2.90 (SD=0.739), Information Evaluation at 2.98 (SD=0.652), Information Use and Application at 3.05 (SD=0.558), Information Synthesis and
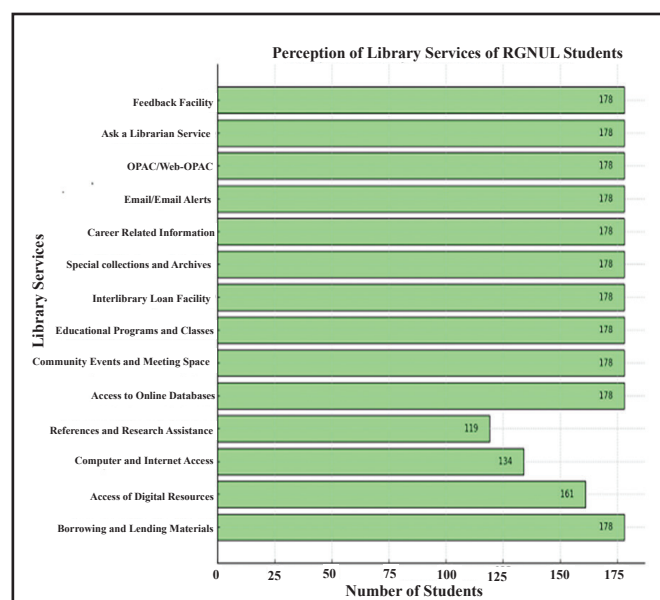
Table 3. Descriptive statistics of perceived level of LIL

Dimensions of LIL	Likert scale					Mean	SD
Legal Information Seeking and Retrieval (LISR)	S.D.	D	N	A	SA	2.90	0.739
1 I am confident I can effectively use search engines to find information online.	9.6%	27.5%	31.5%	24.2%	7.3%	2.92	1.092
2 I am skilled at using advanced search techniques to refine my search results.	6.2%	25.8%	36.5%	20.8%	10.7%	3.04	1.070
3 I know how to utilize library resources (both physical and online) to find relevant information.	9.6%	25.3%	32.0%	21.9%	11.2%	3.00	1.145
4 I can effectively navigate databases to access scholarly articles and research papers.	14.0%	27.0%	34.3%	19.7%	5.1%	2.75	1.083
5 I regularly use keywords and Boolean operators to optimize my search queries.	6.2%	33.7%	38.2%	16.9%	5.1%	2.81	0961
Information Evaluation	SD	D	N	A	SA	2.98	0.652
6 I am confident in my ability to assess the credibility of online information.	14.0%	27.0%	34.3%	19.7%	5.1%	2.87	1.044
7 I can identify biased or misleading information when evaluating sources.	1.7%	33.1%	40.4%	18.0%	6.7%	2.95	0.922
8 I consider the author's authority and expertise when determining a source's reliability.	9.0%	27.5%	37.1%	20.8%	5.6%	2.87	1.027
9 I critically analyze information for relevance to my research or informational needs.	5.6%	24.2%	28.1%	37.1%	5.1%	3.12	1.015
10 I consider the date of publication when evaluating the usefulness of a source.	5.6%	25.8%	34.3%	19.7%	14.6%	3.12	1.121
Information Use and Application	SD	D	N	A	SA	3.05	0.558
11 I can effectively apply the information I find to solve problems or make decisions.	5.1%	20.8%	35.4%	26.4%	12.4%	3.20	1.065
12 I integrate information from multiple sources to support the arguments or viewpoints.	3.9%	36.5%	39.9%	16.9%	2.8%	2.78	0.872
13 I can adapt the information to suit different contexts or audiences.	1.7%	26.4%	38.2%	22.5%	11.2%	3.15	0.994
14 I understand how to cite sources to avoid plagiarism properly.	5.6%	32.0%	33.1%	20.2%	9.0%	2.95	1.054
15 I am confident in my ability to apply information ethically and responsibly.	4.5%	21.9%	41.0%	19.7%	12.9%	3.15	1.047
Dimension 4: Information Synthesis and Analysis	SD	D	N	A	SA	3.14	0.570
16 I can synthesize information from various sources to create a cohesive argument or narrative.	6.7%	28.7%	30.9%	25.3%	8.4%	3.05	0.558
17 I analyse and interpret data effectively to draw meaningful conclusions.	4.5%	24.7%	37.6%	17.4%	15.7%	3.00	1.074
18 I recognise patterns and trends within sets of information.	3.4%	23.0%	30.3%	27.0%	16.3%	3.15	1.102
19 I am skilled at summarizing complex information clearly and concisely.	2.2%	25.8%	44.9%	20.8%	6.2%	3.30	1.098
20 I can identify gaps or inconsistencies in information and address them appropriately.	4.5%	23.0%	34.3%	21.3%	16.9%	3.03	0.898
Information Management and Organization	SD	D	N	A	SA	2.93	0.647
21 I effectively organize and manage information for easy retrieval and reference.	5.1%	33.7%	33.7%	19.7%	7.9%	2.92	1.024
22 I use tools or software to assist in organizing and managing my information (e.g., citation managers and note-taking apps).	6.2%	30.3%	30.9%	25.3%	7.3%	2.97	1.049
23 I maintain awareness of new information management technologies and techniques.	5.6%	31.5%	32.0%	24.2%	6.7%	2.95	1.027
24 I regularly review and update my information management strategies to ensure effectiveness.	8.4%	32.0%	32.6%	20.8%	6.2%	2.84	1.046
25 I can efficiently retrieve specific information from my personal or professional databases.	6.2%	29.8%	30.9%	24.7%	8.4%	2.99	1.066

Table 4. Relationship between dimensions of LIL with level of LIL

Dimensions of LIL	Mean	SD
Legal Information Seeking and Retrieval (LISR)	2.90	0.739
Information evaluation	2.98	0.652
Information use and application	3.05	0.558
Information synthesis and analysis	3.14	0.570
Information management and organisation	2.93	0.647
Level of LIL	N	%
Low	28	15.7%
Moderate	121	68%
High	29	16.3%
Total	178	100%

Table 5. Course perception on embedded legal information literacy in the instruction

Items								Mean	SD
Relevance to legal education	To what extent do you believe the LIL course content is relevant to your legal education?	19.7% (35)	41.6% (74)	26.4% (47)	10.7% (19)	1.7% (3)		2.33	0.967
Incorporation of technology	To what extent does the course content effectively incorporate technology tools relevant to legal research and information retrieval?	5.6% (10)	36.5% (65)	44.9% (80)	9.6% (17)	3.4% (6)		2.69	0.852
Clarity of legal research ethics	How precise are the legal research methods and techniques explained in the course content?	9.6% (17)	38.2% (68)	35.4% (63)	14.0% (25)	2.8% (5)		2.62	0.938
Practical application	How much emphasis does the course content place on the practical application of legal information literacy skills in real-world legal scenarios?	9.0% (10)	34.3% (61)	36.5% (65)	18.5% (33)	1.7% (3)		2.70	0.932
Assignment alignment	Do the assessments (assignments, projects, etc.) within the course content align well with leg al information literacy learning objectives?	4.5% (8)	29.2% (52)	45.5% (81)	17.4% (31)	3.4% (6)		2.86	0.875

Table 6. ICT skills with (LIL) relationship with legal information literacy

Level of ICT	LevelL of LIL		
	Low	Moderate	High
Low	9 (32.1%)	14 (50 %)	5 (17.9%)
Moderate	29 (24%)	46 (46.3%)	36 (29.8%)
High	3 (10.3 %)	1 (3.4%)	25 (86.2%)
Total	41 (23%)	71 (39.9%)	66 (77.1%)

Chi-square =38.1 p-value (1<0.001)

Analysis at 3.14 (SD=0.570), and Information Management and Organisation at 2.93 (SD=0.647). Overall, 15.7 % of participants are categorised as Low, 68 % Moderate, and 16.3 % High in LIL. This highlights a moderate level of proficiency, suggesting a need for targeted improvements in specific LIL dimensions.

In Table 5, students assessed the alignment of their courses with Legal Information Literacy (LIL) using five statements. The data shows moderate perceptions across the aspects evaluated: Relevance to Legal Education (Mean = 2.33, SD = 0.967), Incorporation of Technology (Mean = 2.69, SD = 0.852), Clarity of Legal Research Methods (Mean = 2.62, SD = 0.938), Practical Application (Mean = 2.70, SD = 0.932), and Assignment Alignment (Mean = 2.86, SD = 0.875). Students view LIL integration positively, though there is some variability, especially regarding relevance and clarity.

Table 6 shows the relationship between Legal Information Literacy (LIL) and ICT skills across Low, Moderate, and High proficiency levels. Individuals with Low LIL skills mostly have Moderate ICT skills (50 %), while those with High LIL skills exhibit

Table 7. Relationship with frequency of library website with LIL

	Levels of LIL			
Frequency of library website visits	**Low**	**Moderate**	**High**	**Total**
Daily	0	21 (70%)	9 (30%)	(100%)
Weekly	4 (5.9%)	49 (67.1%)	20 (27.4%)	73 (100%)
2-3 Times	9 (15.8%)	48 (84.%)	0 (0%)	57 (100%)
Monthly	11(84.6%)	2 (15.4%)	0 (0%)	13 (100%)
Rarely	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	0 (0%)	5 (100%)
Total	28 (15.7%)	121(6.8%)	29 (16.3%)	178 (100%)

Chi-square 92.36 P <0.05

High ICT skills (86.2 %). Moderate LIL participants are more evenly distributed across ICT levels. The data suggests a correlation between LIL and ICT skills, highlighting the need for integrated educational interventions.

The chi-square test, with a value of 92.36 and a p-value less than 0.05, shows a significant association between Legal Information Literacy (LIL) levels and the frequency of library website visits. This indicates that the distribution of LIL levels varies with how often students visit the library website. Students who visit daily tend to have a higher proportion of Moderate LIL, while those visiting weekly or bi-weekly show varied LIL levels. This finding suggests a connection between online library engagement and perceived LIL, guiding targeted interventions to enhance Information Literacy programs.

Table 8. Literacy score of LIL overall

Level	N	%
Low	28	15.7
Moderate	121	68
High	29	16.3

Table 8 displays the LIL scores categorised into High, Moderate, and Low. The majority, 68 %, are classified as Moderate LILs, indicating a moderate proficiency in legal information literacy. Additionally, 16.3 % of participants have High LIL, while 15.7 % have Low LIL scores. This distribution highlights that most respondents have moderate skills, with some excelling and others

needing improvement. The variation underscores the need for targeted educational programs to enhance legal information literacy across all competency levels.

The hypotheses testing results highlight key differences in perceived Legal Information Literacy (LIL) across various demographics and academic factors. Male students reported higher LIL levels (Mean = 3.15) than females (Mean = 2.80), suggesting that gender differences may influence LIL perception, potentially due to varying confidence, exposure, or educational experiences. LLM students demonstrated significantly higher LIL levels (Mean = 3.60) compared to BALLB students (Mean = 2.88), reflecting the advanced academic exposure and research intensity in postgraduate programs. LIL levels also increased progressively across course years, with second-year students having the lowest scores (Mean = 2.66) and LLM students the highest (Mean = 3.60), indicating cumulative learning and experience contribute to enhanced LIL proficiency. Furthermore, a strong relationship was observed between LIL and academic performance, with students reporting higher academic engagement also perceiving stronger LIL skills, emphasising the interplay between academic success and information literacy development.

14. CONCLUSION

The study on Legal Information Literacy (LIL) at RGNUL provides a detailed analysis of students' proficiency levels, with 68 % identified as Moderate LILs, 16.3 % as High

Table 9. Hypotheses testing results

Hypothesis	t-v	p-v	Result
H1: No significant difference in perceived LIL between male and female students	5.6	<0.01	Rejected: Significant difference, males reported higher LIL compared to females.
H2: No significant difference in perceived LIL between BALLB and LLM students	-12.56	<0.01	Rejected: Significant difference, LLM students reported higher LIL than BALLB students.
H3: No significant association between perceived LIL and distribution of course years	-5.43	<0.001	Rejected: Significant association, LIL increases with academic progression across course years.
H4: No significant relationship between perceived LIL level and academics	8.3	<0.001	Rejected: Significant relationship, LIL strongly correlates with higher academic performance.

LILs, and 15.7 % as Low LILs. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions, particularly for Low LIL students, while also suggesting enhancements for those with Moderate and High LILs. Gender differences, though slight, reveal males with marginally higher proficiency, highlighting the importance of tailoring educational strategies for diverse learner groups, including distinctions between B.A.LL.B. and LL.M. students.

To address these gaps, the study recommends integrating comprehensive LIL modules into the curriculum, designed to focus on skill development in identifying, evaluating, and applying legal information. Workshops, practical learning opportunities, and mentorship programs should be organised to provide hands-on experiences, while academic competitions can foster engagement and deeper learning. Regular curriculum updates, coupled with a user-friendly library infrastructure supported by dedicated staff, will ensure the sustainability of these initiatives. Moreover, institutions should invest in developing digital competencies, enabling students to adapt to emerging legal technologies effectively. The study acknowledges certain limitations. The cross-sectional design restricts the ability to track changes in LIL over time, and the reliance on self-reported data may introduce response biases. Additionally, the scope was limited to one institution, which may affect the generalisability of the findings to other law schools. Future research could adopt longitudinal approaches, include a larger and more diverse sample, and explore the impact of specific LIL interventions on academic and professional outcomes. Addressing these limitations will further strengthen the discourse on information literacy and its role in enhancing legal education.

By addressing these challenges and implementing actionable strategies, the findings aim to bridge the gap in LIL among students, fostering academic success and equipping them with the necessary skills for their professional journeys. These insights contribute valuable knowledge to the evolving field of legal information literacy and its application in shaping informed and competent legal professionals.

15. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

REFERENCES

1. American Library Association (ALA). Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report. ALA, 1989. https://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/whitepapers/presidential

2. Schiffl, I. How information literate are junior and senior class biology students? *Res. Sci. Edu.,* 2020, **50**(2), 773–789.

3. Siddiqui, I.A. & Mugade, V.S. Legal information literacy in India: The role of academic law librarians in support of legal education. *J. Lib. Inf. Sci.,* 2016, **6**(4), 664-673.

4. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS). Toward a national program for library and information services: Goals for action. U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1974. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED100391.pdf

5. Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). Information literacy competency standards for higher education. ACRL, 2000. https://alair.ala.org

6. Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL). Information Literacy Framework. CAUL, 2004. https://caul.edu.au

7. UNESCO. The prague declaration: Towards an information literate society. *UNESCO,* 2003. https://www.ifla.org.

8. American Bar Association. Understanding Legal Research Standards. American Bar Association, 2023. https://www.americanbar.org

9. Legal Education Review. Annual Report on Legal Research Skills Development. Legal Education Review, 2023. https://legaleducationreview.com

10. Public Legal Education and Information Service (PLEIS). Annual Report 2023. *PLEIS,* 2023. https://www.legal-info-legale.nb.ca

11. Andretta, S. Legal information literacy: A pilot study. New Library World, 2001, **102**(7/8), 255–264.

12. Bhatt, A.B. Information needs, perceptions, and quests of law faculty in the digital era. Electronic Library, 2016, **32**(5), 659–669.

13. Danner, R.A. & Winterton, J. Defining international law librarianship in an age of multiplicity, knowledge, and open access. *In* The IALL International Handbook of Legal Information Management, Routledge, 2016, pp. 25-46.

14. Bhardwaj, R.K. & Margam, M. Online legal information system for Indian environment: A user's perspectives. *Lib. Rev.,* 2016, **65**(8/9), 593-624.

15. Alam, M.A. & Mugade, V.S. Role of academic law librarians in enhancing legal information literacy. *J. Lib. & Inf. Sci.,* 2016, **6**(4), 664-673.

16. Kim-Prieto, D. (2021). Wither law student information literacy? Legal Information Management, **21**(2), 104-113.
doi: 10.1017/S1472669621000190

17. Jamshed, J.; Jamshaid, M.K. & Saleemi, I. Law library usage for legal information seeking among the law students in public sector universities: An empirical study. *Lib. Phil. & Practice (e-Journal),* 2021.

18. Xing, H. & Su, L. Framework for teaching legal information literacy in college libraries. *Lib. Trends,* 2019.

19. Bhardwaj, R. Issues in the use of legal information by Indian academics and solicitors. *J. Legal Studies,* 2019.

20. Kumar, R. & Brar, K.S. Awareness and perception of students towards legal information literacy: A

study of National Law Universities of Northern India. Library Progress International, 2024, **44**(3), 16634–16650.

21. Garingan, D. & Pickard, A. Artificial Intelligence in legal practice: Exploring theoretical frameworks for algorithmic literacy in the legal information profession. *Legal Inf. Manage.,* 2021, **21**(2), 97–117. doi: 10.1017/S1472669621000190

22. British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL). Legal information literacy guidelines. *BIALL,* 2023. https://biall.org.uk

23. Krejcie, R.V. & Morgan, D.W. Determining sample size for research activities. *Edu. Psych. Measure.,* 1970, **30**(3), 607-610.
    doi: 10.1177/001316447003000308

CONTRIBUTORS

Mr. Rajnish Kumar is a Library Assistant at the University Institute of Legal Studies (UILS), Panjab University, Chandigarh, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Library and Information Science.

His work includes the design and implementation of assessment tools, data collection, statistical analysis, and the presentation of findings through models, tables, and charts.

Dr. Khushpreet Singh Brar is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Library and Information Science at Panjab University, Chandigarh. He has held notable leadership positions, including serving as General Secretary of the Indian Association of Teachers of Library and Information Science (IATLIS) (2021-2024), Senior Vice President of the Punjab Library Association (PLA) (2021-2023), and Executive Committee Member of the Panjab University Teachers' Association (PUTA) (2022-23).

His contributions have significantly influenced the field of Library and Information Science in India, advancing both academic and professional practices.