

Nigeria's Legal Profession in the Twenty-First Century Era: Prospects for Young Lawyers

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Abstract

Initially, law practice was only open to the elite, who could frequently afford to cover their clients' legal costs. Times have changed; this is no longer the case in the twenty-first century. The legal profession is today an all-comers affair, with numerous ordinary people contending for a place in the profession's hallowed halls to make a living. Some believe that there are already too many legal practitioners in Nigeria and that the profession is no longer profitable, while others contend that we don't have enough lawyers and that we need more. The thrust of this article is to examine if the legal profession in Nigeria has reached saturation, and if not, what opportunities exist for young lawyers. Part of the findings of this study is that the Nigerian legal market is still large enough to accommodate aspiring young practitioners with experience in less established areas of law, such as telecom legislation, cybercrime law, alternative dispute resolution, intellectual property, ICT, and online legal market. The article concludes that new entrants and law graduates in the twenty-first century have a brighter or better future than ever before since their strength resides in their understanding of ICT as a practicing tool, which puts them ahead of older lawyers in the global market.

Keywords

Legal Profession, 21st-century Lawyers and Law Students, Prospects, Legal Education, Nigeria

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Introduction

The world has changed dramatically in the twenty-first century, including the legal profession and the role of lawyers in society. As a result, Nigerian lawyers in the twenty-first century must positively adapt to the realities imposed by their environment and modernity. It's also important to remember that the legal profession has become more globalized, and the market has grown as a result. Consequently, a lawyer must be well-prepared for competitiveness and relevance in the global marketplace. Nigeria's legal system is based on the English legal system, which was adopted in the second half of the nineteenth century. (Orojo, O., 1979) Mr Christopher Alexander Sapara Williams, the first Nigerian to qualify and enrol as a lawyer, was sworn in on January 30, 1888. The first indigenous judge in Nigeria was Sir Olumuyiwa Jibowu, who was enrolled on August 9, 1923, and appointed a judge on November 14, 1938. He was also Nigeria's first Acting Chief Justice. As may be seen from the preceding, the legal profession in Nigeria has a very brief history. However, there is a growing perception among both the learned and the unlearned that Nigeria has an excessive number of lawyers. That is to say, there are already too many practitioners in the Nigerian legal market, making the profession unprofitable. They claim that several lawyers are walking the streets and hanging around the courthouse looking for charge and bail clients and that their physical appearances are not particularly inspiring, giving the impression that all is not well with the profession these days, particularly for new wigs. Furthermore, as one legal year ends and another begins, many talks among practitioners have recently focused on young lawyers and their well-being. Many candidates in the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) elections appear to be emphasizing the problem of young legal practitioners' welfare as a key theme of their campaign. As a result of this view, each lawyer or law student should consider if the profession to which he or she aspires still has any possibilities for him or her, which is the focus of this study. To achieve the objective of this study, the paper is divided into eight sections with clearly designated headings. Section one introduces the study and provides justification thereof. Section two discussed the methodology adopted in conducting this research. In the third section, a lawyer's role in society was examined and the prejudice against the profession are analysed in the fourth section. Section five looked back at the Nigerian legal profession in the 1970s and early 1980s. Section six and seven discussed prospects and the way forward for 21st-century lawyers, and section eight presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

Methodology

To achieve the aim of this study, this work adopted the historical, expository and analytical methodology. This involves desk and library research, relying on primary and secondary materials. The primary sources relied upon include relevant laws, case laws, legislation and ethical guidelines. Secondary sources materials are textbooks, the bible, journal articles, commentaries, legal news, conference proceedings/papers and online documents relating to the subject.

A Lawyer's Role in the Society

A *Legal Practitioner* is defined under the Legal Practitioners Act as a person who is entitled to practice as a barrister or solicitor under the requirements of the Act, either generally or for a specific office or proceedings (Section 24, LPA, 2007). Accordingly, in Nigeria, a legal practitioner is someone qualified to practice as a barrister or solicitor. It's worthy of note that the term "lawyer" is not included in the definition of a legal practitioner in section 24 of the LPA, 2007. Who is a lawyer? is a question that screams to be answered. A lawyer, in simple terms, is a person who has completed some type of training or gained specialized skills and is qualified to provide legal advice to individuals in legal problems and to represent them in courts of law and other forms of conflict resolution. A distinction is established between a lawyer and an attorney (Akintola, A., 2006) in the United States of America's jurisprudence; when the two titles are employed in terms of their legal expertise, they are synonymous. The authors of *Black Law Dictionary* define a lawyer as one qualified to act as a counsel in any court of law, tribunal or court-martial. The same *Black Law Dictionary* defines a Solicitor as a legal adviser who consults with clients and prepares legal documents but is not generally heard in Court unless specially licensed as is the case in the United Kingdom. A law student fresh from his school and not a licensed officer of the court may well be termed a solicitor but not a lawyer. A barrister and a solicitor are two different types of lawyers in

England. As a result, a lawyer in England can only practice as a barrister or a solicitor. As previously stated, the *Legal Practitioners Act* (L.P.A, 2007), in Nigeria makes no distinction between a barrister and a solicitor. Lawyers can practice as both barristers and solicitors, and therefore can provide legal services in both capacities. Consequently, lawyers can work as judges, magistrates, solicitors, teachers, company directors or secretaries, public employees, institutional advisers, consultants, publishers, researchers, and so on. Oral arguments in court, research and drafting court papers, practice before administrative courts, client intake and counselling (about pending litigation), legal advice on all legal matters, protecting intellectual property, negotiating and drafting contracts, conveyancing, carrying out the intent of the deceased, pro bono or legal aid services, prosecution of criminal suspects are some of the other roles of lawyers in Nigeria and other jurisdictions (Akintola, A., 2006). Section 1 of the Rule of Professional Conduct (RPC) emphasizes a lawyer's general societal responsibility, stating that "a lawyer shall uphold and observe the rule of law, promote and foster the cause of justice, maintain a high standard of the professional manner and do not indulge in any conduct unworthy of a lawyer."

Dr Kwame Nkrumah, former Ghanaian President, an eminent political figure addressed these issues in these terms at the beginning of the Accra Conference on Legal Education at the Ghana Law School on January 4, 1962:

In a poor nation, lawyers trained to litigate amongst wealthy individuals are not the top priority...The legal practitioners required in a developing country are first and foremost those educated to assist ordinary men and women with their everyday legal difficulties, as well as the new challenges that will inevitably arise as a result of industrialization... Second, and probably most importantly, we require law officers of the state to deal with treaties and commercial agreements, as well as private and public international law issues... (Awomolo, A. S., 2013)

Similarly, while explaining the responsibilities of a lawyer in society, President Kaunda said:

In a growing society, a lawyer must be more than just a practicing professional; he must also be a defender of the individual's fundamental rights and liberties. He must be a complete participant in the society in which he lives, and he must comprehend that society contributes to its growth and the improvement of its members' economic and social well-being. Because... while the law is the vehicle through which society is preserved, it is also the mirror of society in its structure and character, the lawyer must go beyond the restrictive confines of the law, it is a representation of society.

Again, His Lordship Hon. Justice Orojo, the former Chief Judge of Oyo State, described the functions of a lawyer in the following words (J. O. Orojo, 1969):

The legal practitioner in Nigeria (like in other developing nations) carries a far greater social duty than his contemporaries in developed nations... Nigerian lawyers must be able to do more than merely fulfil their traditional roles of catering to clients' professional requirements, administering justice, and serving the different legal institutions. They must, however, be active in social change: they must be dedicated to law reform to guarantee that the law is in line with the people's culture, and they must try to ensure strict obedience to the rule of law.

In the case of (*Free Enterprise Nigeria Limited vs. Global Transport Ocean & Ors.* 1998), the Court of Appeal, per Onalaja, J.C.A. (as he was at the time), following the (*Rondel v. Worsely*, 1967) concept enunciated in the English case stated as follows:

As an advocate, he shares equal status with the judge as a minister of justice. In the upper courts, he has a monopoly on an audience. No one, save him, can approach the Judge unless it is a litigant in person... he has a greater purpose to which he is dedicated. It is the cause of justice and truth. He must not purposefully misrepresent the facts. He must not conceal the truth deliberately. He must not make a false accusation of fraud without proof to back it up. He is required to present all necessary authorities, even those that are hostile against his client. He must ensure that, if required, his client reveals all relevant papers, including those that are fatal to his case. If his client's most precise instructions contradict his responsibility to the court, he must dismiss them. The code requiring a barrister to perform all of this is not legal. It is a code of honour.

Moreover, in the case of (*Adewunmi v. Plastex Ltd*, 1986). the Supreme Court of Nigeria, in the words of His Lordship Hon. Justice Eso, J.S.C (as he was then), explained who a lawyer is thus:

A lawyer is not a trader nor a businessperson. He's not like a cobbler who works with awls and can be fired by a customer if the awl fails to deliver. A lawyer is a professional who should be used at his discretion when dealing with a client. After all, he's hired to deal with taught men in studied environments, and he's learned himself, whereas the client, even if he's a lawyer, isn't for the purposes of the case.

In his view, Jane Bryant, a United State journalist says Lawyers are operators of the toll bridge

through which anybody seeking justice must pass. Anarchy will reign without law, and the law will be unable to function or operate without legal practitioners.

The Eighth Congress also established a key concept about the responsibility of barristers in society in September 1990 in Havana, Cuba, and was ratified by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/166 of December 18, 1990, it, among other things, says:

Lawyers must uphold the honour and dignity of their profession as vital elements in the administration of justice at all times. That lawyers, in protecting their clients' rights and advancing the cause of justice, will strive to uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms recognized by national and international law, and will always act freely and diligently under the law and recognized legal standards and ethics.

If legal practitioners are agents of justice administration and champions of the cause of justice, it follows that they exist for the benefit of the rule of law and society. Indeed, legislation must underpin civilisation, and if there is law, there must be lawyers.

The rule of might, anarchy and jungle justice is enthroned when there is no law. In such a situation, there would be no peace or order. Where law exists, such a society will be similar to (Thomas Hobbes, 1962)' conception of man in his natural state, where "life of man was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." One outstanding thinker, (Dean Rusk, 1990, Akinyemi, A. A. 2005) is a well-known author in his book *As I Saw It*, he writes:

Every civilised nation has had five important intellectual vocations pertaining to the daily requirements of existence. The soldier's job is to protect it. It is the Pastor's responsibility to teach it. It is kept healthy by the doctors. It is the responsibility of the lawyer to ensure that justice is served and enforced. It is the merchant's responsibility to provide for it.

In admiration of the legal profession, His Lordship Hon. Justice G. B. A. Coker, JSC, 2019 (as he was then) stated:

I will always be a lawyer, even if I return to the world ten times. ([Http: nmonlinjennigeria.com](http://nmonlinjennigeria.com))

The author concurs with His Lordship's viewpoints and adds that, as lawyers, we must continually try to create and promote the common good and benefit of society in our everyday practice to raise the legal profession to the enviable standard for which it is recognized.

After trying out several trades, including carpentry, he decided to follow in his father's footsteps by studying medicine and treating thousands of people, as well as cleaning the temple and preaching in renowned sermons such as the Sermon on the Mount, and building and architecture (destroying the temple and rebuilding it in three days, though not physically but spiritually), our Lord Jesus Christ became and is still a lawyer! Yes, you heard correctly. Jesus is a barrister! That's a Senior Advocate, to add! After His time on earth, Jesus returned to heaven to pursue a career as a lawyer. The Bible states in 1 John 2:1-2:

I write to you so that you do not sin. And if any of us sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous, who is the propitiator for our sins, as well as the sins of the entire world. As an advocate, Jesus presents a case before God, the Supreme Court, on behalf of all humanity! That's something only a lawyer could accomplish! What do you name someone who is in the business of advocating for others? Jesus is not a lawyer-hater, but rather a lawyer-lover.

It should also be noted that lawyers in Nigeria played significant roles in both pre-and post-independence political regimes, with some being more recognized as politicians than lawyers. Lawyers have continued to play a significant part in politics in the first Republic and successive Republics, including the current one. All of our Constitutions since 1960 have enshrined and reserved the position of Attorney-General for lawyers as a signal of acknowledgement of the profession's importance. That is a luxury that no other profession has. Professor Yemi Osinbajo, the current Vice President of Nigeria, is a lawyer.

Prejudice Against the Profession

If lawyers exist for the greater good of society, as stated above, why are lawyers regarded as a source of ridicule by many people? Many people regard lawyers' lifestyle, conduct, and character with scorn or cynicism. The origins of these scorns can be traced back to antiquity. They are both contemporary and ancient, and they are not unique to Nigerian society. The following remarks are apt: In his speech to the Nigerian Bar Association's Annual Conference in Benin City on August 1969, late Godwin Bayo of blessed memory cites Frederick the Great of Prussia as characterizing lawyers as parasites and destructive reptiles. Indeed, he threatened to sting any lawyer who brought his client's petition to him, as well as to hang a dog alongside him in case the public needed more proof of his attitude toward the profession (Godwin B., 1969).

In a similar sense, it is said that Napoleon Bonaparte threatened to chop the tongue of any lawyer who spoke out against his administration (Godwin B., *Ibid*). The story of the Christian gentleman who was asked to contribute one pound towards the funeral expenses of his neighbour, a lawyer, demonstrates and exemplifies this contempt for the profession. He not only gladly gave the requested amount, but he also cheerfully donated two hundred pounds to cover the burial costs of 200 more lawyers, dead or alive (Godwin B., *Ibid*). Lawyers are described by Jonathan Swift (Peter Dixton et al, 1967), in his book as "a society of men... trained up from their childhood in the art of demonstrating by words multiplied for the purpose, that white is black, and black is white, according to how they are paid." Sir John Simon joined a slew of other critics in describing a lawyer as "an unprincipled scoundrel" who "is continually engaged in the cynical manipulation of the facts by methods completely discredited and for grotesquely inflated rewards." Shakespeare's King Henry the Sixth quotes Dick: Let's start by assassinating all of the lawyers. " According to legend, a man named Herbert remarked in 1640 that "lawyer's" homes are constructed on the heads of idiots. The Goodfather by Mario Puzo is a novel written by (Mario Puzo, 1970) Don Vito Corleone, the Mafia's boss believes that a lawyer with a briefcase can steal more than a hundred men with weapons. According to an English adage, a good lawyer must be a great liar. This indicates, according to Donald Bond, an English professor, that "they are slippery animals, living on the deception of half-truths." (Donald F. Bond, 1963) On the lighter side, there's the adage that "a lawyer's greatest asset is his lie-ability; when he dies, he lies still."

In his book, *Modern Bar Advocacy*, (Opota, C., 2014) writes:

The life and role of a lawyer appear to be contradictory. Throughout history, in various climes and locations, the lawyer advocate has always been a mystery to the majority of people. The lawyer claims to be honourable, yet his clients include murders and cutthroats, highway robbers and burglars, and criminals of all kinds and descriptions. The issue has long been raised: how can a lawyer - or an advocate for that matter - defend a guilty guy in good conscience?

Mark, McCormack writes about lawyers in his book *The Terrible Truth*:

In the popular imagination, lawyers are a cliquish bunch who, armed with an obscure body of knowledge and shielded by an intricate system of professional courtesies and rituals, protect their own — at the expense of the rest of us. Most individuals do not have the power that successful lawyers do. They earn more money than the majority of individuals. They're usually called in after common sense has failed and people are already upset, disillusioned, and ready to fight. Lawyers are the subject of a great deal of resentment for all of these and other reasons. Much of the enmity is well-founded. The unfortunate reality is that barristers, to put it bluntly, are a big pain in the neck. Lawyers are experts at delaying in a world where time is money. Lawyers hide behind jargon that no one else understands in commercial situations where straightforward communication is critical. Lawyers are continually seeking technical and often questionable methods to bend the law to their benefit in a culture where fairness is held up as the ultimate ideal, at least in principle. (McCormack, M. H, 1987)

In his commentary concerning Lawyers (John Gay, 1975) opined thus:

Sir, your wife could take your rest. Sir, a robber might steal your stuff and plate. Sir, a fox may take your chickens. However, Sir, if a lawyer's hand is fee'd, he snatches your entire estate.

Lord Justice Brougham, a renowned Scottish judge who was also a lawyer, once remarked, "A lawyer is a gentleman who saves your inheritance from your adversaries and keeps it to himself." Indeed, in the 16th century, Martin Luther, a famous preacher and protestant reformer argued that one could not be a competent lawyer and a good Christian at the same time. Lawyers appear to be subjected to censure and criticism even in the Bible. In the words of Jesus Christ: (K. J. V. Luke Chap. 11 v 52)

Woe unto you lawyers for loading men with packs too heavy to be carried with one finger... woe unto you lawyers for stealing the key to knowledge, which you neither entered yourself nor allowed others to enter when they wanted.

There is no denying that the legal profession in Nigeria has experienced an unprecedented decline in its glamour and prestige over the years. The question is whether it is reasonable and hypocritical to expect the legal profession - Bar and Bench - to remain an island of moral rectitude in the face of collapsing ideals, moral degradation, and the institutionalisation of corruption. Our society, ironically, is said to be one where lawmakers break the law, where many thieves become chiefs, and where many police officers are rogered collectors; where many courts render unjust judgments; and where many lawyers are liars, to name a few.

A Look Back at the Nigerian Legal Profession in the 1970s and early 1980s

The lingering question is whether there are still opportunities for fresh recruits into the legal profession in the twenty-first century, or if the profession has already been saturated. Some feel that the profession peaked in the 1970s and early 1980s and that it has been steadily declining since then. Young practitioners have a grim future, according to some who feel the industry has reached a low point and is tumbling down. Their argument is based on the following premises:

1. Nigeria already has an overwhelming number of lawyers;
2. That too many universities law faculties and colleges annually produce thousands of poorly qualified lawyers, resulting in dwindling standards;
3. As a result of the covid-19 pandemic there is currently an extreme admissions difficulty at law school, with law students having to wait one or two years to enter;
4. That the level of practice has deteriorated and will continue to deteriorate, impacting the image and cost of legal services;
5. That other professional, such as estate valuers, are steadily infiltrating the legal industry, limiting the prospects accessible to legal practitioners.

As a result, some people are calling for a structural reduction in the number of legal practitioners by:

- a. decreasing the number of faculties and colleges providing law programmes;
- b. limiting the number of students admitted to law faculties and colleges;
- c. raising the admission criterion for law programs to a minimum of the first degree in another discipline;
- d. lengthening the time spent at law school (Abiodun, A.A., 2005).

The authors disagree with this class viewpoint for the following reasons:

- a. To date, Nigeria's total number of barristers and solicitors are still less than or around 500,000. (Ibid)
- b. Thousands have died, retired from active practice, or diverged into other human endeavours as a result of this number. Consequently, the number of active lawyers in Nigeria today will be around 300,000. (Ibid)
- c. Despite having a population of over 180-200 million people, Nigeria still has a severe lack of Barristers and Solicitors.
- d. While there are many inept, lazy, and average legal practitioners, there is a severe lack of sound, competent, and exceptional lawyers. As a result, there is still a lot of room and demand in the system for good, competent, and excellent Barristers and Solicitors.
- e. While it is true that standards of legal practice are slipping, this has nothing to do with the fact that there are too many lawyers; rather, it is the result of a variety of other reasons such as university closures, examination malpractices, and so on. Furthermore, this is not confined to the law; it impacts the country's whole educational system. I am convinced that any prospective lawyer who dares to stand out in the sea of mediocrity that now exists in the legal profession will have a good career. Right now, the very best legal practitioners are overworked, while the mediocre lawyers, who are scattered around the country, have little or no work, giving the misleading appearance that there aren't enough jobs to go around. (Ibid)

Prospects

As we move deeper into the twenty-first century, the boundaries of legal practice are expanding and will continue to expand. New practice areas have opened up and continue to do so. New opportunities are opening up, and practice styles are shifting as well. Fresh ideas are being introduced by the younger elements. The practice of law is now more like a business, and the landscape of legal practise is changing dramatically. Rather than traditional general practice, the 21st-century lawyer should investigate the following areas: Commercial litigation and practice; banking and finance; telecommunications; admiralty; aviation; insurance; capital market; oil and gas; property; international economic transactions; constitutional and

administrative law; arbitration and alternative dispute resolution; government and its agencies; the bench at both the lower and higher levels; politics; taxation; insolvency; intellectual property; law publication; data privacy laws; data protection laws; cybercrime laws (Abiodun, A.A., 2005). Nigeria has a large population, which is a gift from God. Economic growth and development are inextricably linked to political stability and effective economic policy. As interpersonal and business relationships develop, disputes are certain to arise, necessitating the need for legal practitioners. As the century progresses, more and more corporate investments will be made, necessitating the need for legal practitioners for both pre-and post-conflict situations. Even the smallest company owner is increasingly aware of the need of having a lawyer or legal advisor nearby, much alone legally formed private and public enterprises. Lawyers are now required to advise government ministries, agencies, parastatals, federal, state, municipal and local governments. Many legal practitioners will prosper despite not being located in major cities, as a consequence of "employment produced by local economic activities around them."

The Way Forward for 21st-Century Lawyers

Without a doubt, in the years ahead, the struggle will heat up. Only the most determined and hard-working young lawyers will succeed. Such lawyers need the following skills to excel at the bar in the 21st century:

(a) An Excellent Academic Pedigree

The quality of your degree credential will become increasingly important. Top chambers are unlikely to accept a 3rd class or ordinary pass as just a lawyer in their Law Firms. Top legal companies nowadays demand only the finest, and many of them will not hire you unless you have a good 2nd class lower or an upper 2nd class. Higher legal education is now valued not just by top law firms, but also by clients. Blue-chip corporate customers increasingly want a profile of the legal company they wish to work with, and they prefer to work with companies that have legal practitioners with advanced degrees, at least a Master of Laws. As a result, aiming for not just a good first degree but also a higher degree will be a sensible approach. This is as true in private practice if you want to join the top Chambers as it is in corporate law if you want to work with banks, oil companies, insurance or any other blue-chip company. Also, if you want to gain a competitive advantage, you should consider getting a second degree in a different sector, such as an MBA, ICTS, or ICAN. In addition to your basic Law degree, you should consider obtaining specialized training in the field of law in which you choose to specialize. If you wish to practice Admiralty or Shipping Law, for example, you should have a post-graduate diploma or degree in Maritime Law. If you want to stand out in Commercial Practice, you may consider taking extra courses in commercial law, banking and finance, and so on. If you want to work in insolvency, which is one of the newer sectors that is growing more important, you might consider getting some training, such as a post-graduate diploma in receiverships and liquidation. If you want to be a capital market Solicitor, specialised training in capital market operations, stock-broking, and other areas will give you an advantage.

(b) Diligence

It takes a lot of effort! If you want to succeed in legal practice, there is no alternative to hard work. It was so in the past; it is so now, and it will be even more so as we go further into the 21st century. Lawyers who are unwilling to go the extra mile to achieve will continue to be poor and hungry, while those who are willing to go the extra mile will continue to flourish. What the Bible says about the industrious man standing before kings and not mean men are correct. I am yet to know a hardworking lawyer who is a failure.

(c) Specialisation

New career pathways emerge regularly, and ironically, all of these career possibilities favour the youthful, tech-savvy lawyer of the twenty-first century. An older lawyer would be unable to keep up with the global speed of change, but a 21st-century legal would be able to. Accordingly, there is a lot of space for core competency growth in specific specialised areas: App development; Internet of Things (IoT); Smart Contracts; Data Privacy, Data Protection, and Cyberbreaches

Concerns about privacy Intellectual property, as well as the present complex web of sectors that are intertwined with it); blockchain technology; AI — the list goes on and on. And there isn't going to be a shortage of it. Companies and corporations would seek a knowledgeable 21st-century lawyer that is well-versed in these arcane specialized realms to provide solutions-focused legal consulting services that help safeguard their company from potential liabilities with increased knowledge and specialisation in the areas above. Even while all legal practitioners are welcome to enter the specialised zones, an older lawyer would have a difficult challenge if he attempted to understand everything about modern technology and the many, complicated systems that govern its operation. A lawyer in the twenty-first century, on the other hand, would find it to be a nice walk and far less difficult than his older counterpart he is willing and able to use his knowledge to gain fantastic advisory jobs and seats on boards to deal with challenging legal challenges, this may open up a lot of opportunities for him.

(d) **Integrity**

Integrity is something that is really lacking at the bar these days, yet it is sorely needed for success. To flourish in the twenty-first century, you must be honest with yourself. It's a crucial component for success, but it's in short supply. The most important and sensitive briefs will come to you when clients and coworkers can take you at your word and have faith and trust in you. Integrity is what keeps a customer for years. A lack of it leads to a high rate of client turnover. They arrive now and go the next day. A client may be annoyed that you refuse to make concessions in order to help him win a case, but he will respect you for it and return to you when he has a case that demands uncompromising counsel. A client whose interests you compromise, even if you win, will silently despise you and take his briefs somewhere when he has a case that requires aggressive counsel, since he won't be able to guarantee that the opponent won't compromise you! (Abiodun, A.A., 2005)

(e) **No Location Barriers**

The world of today power via the Internet and people are brought closer and closer together as physical barriers become broken with faster Internet speeds, newer gadgets and better services. So, even though the young lawyers of the twenty-first century lacks long experience and physical office space, he is vastly better off than his older counterpart, who relies solely on the people in his immediate vicinity to transact business. Today's young attorneys are transactional lawyers, meaning they handle complicated commercial and contractual transactions for corporations and businesses across countries of the world without ever leaving their homes. They manage Online Dispute Resolutions (ODR) as online mediators; they interact and collaborate with Lawyers across other jurisdictions to pen down business-focused white papers, articles, newsletters and the like while throwing their names out to the broader world and being regarded as authorities in their fields. In other words, they have the world as their playground. All they have to do is to use the keyboard and other forms of communication to tear down boundaries.

(f) **Intellectual Property**

This is tied to the creation of room for more specialisation above. Young lawyers in the twenty-first century can become more competent in intellectual property law and related services than their old counterparts. The explanation is simple: with the move from a traditional system to a flexible cloud-based system for numerous organizations throughout the world, including various corporations and firms in Nigeria, intellectual property concerns have become a growing concern become one of the hottest trending topics of the day. Trademark battles are fought, copyright issues cropping up with dizzying speeds, patents applications coming before the relevant regulatory authorities. . . The list is endless. And not only are these happening; businesses and firms are also aggressively seeking out the services of IP-competent lawyers who can develop legal and protective frameworks for their companies to protect their Intellectual Property against shady employees and competitors.

And, surprisingly, a twenty-first-century lawyer with intellectual property understanding would be better at addressing intellectual property concerns than an older counterpart. The explanation for this isn't far-fetched. Intellectual Property ties to Technology; IP issues crop up mostly and almost exclusively about tech. Consequently, they require lawyers who are Tech Natives to handle them,

such as a twenty-first-century lawyer who has mastered tech systems and the interconnection between IP and tech.

(g) Platforms and Online Marketing

The best-paid attorneys are not always those who know the law, but those who can market themselves to attract the sort of customers they desire for their legal practice, as stated elsewhere in this paper. Many new generation legal practitioners are qualified digital marketers, and one would scoff at why a lawyer would venture into the realm of digital marketing. They do it to get a thorough understanding of the digital environment, master online marketing basics, and receive exposure to the greatest digital platforms that can help them promote their identities and businesses and or law firms to a wider audience in need of their subject matter expertise in different areas of the Law. Because the lawyer of the twenty-first century is a tech native, the transfer to digital marketing and other platforms is straightforward, and all at a low cost in exchange for potentially significant returns over time.

(h) Data Protection Law

Unfortunately, unlike other countries that seek the protection of their citizens' data, Nigeria completely lacks a comprehensive data protection law. So many people in the business/corporate world have noted this down. Many attorneys who draft laws are completely unaware of the full scope and consequences of data protection, particularly as it relates to data collection and usage by (both the original data collectors/websites and third parties affiliates) of individuals' personally identifiable information (which includes names, addresses, IP addresses, browsing preferences & online behaviour patterns), geo-location tagging, and a whole host of other potentially commercially viable information being utilised as Big Data or Small Data by the firms that operate the Sites where all this information is collected.

A lawyer who is well-versed in technology in the twenty-first century would be aware of all of the aforementioned aspects and will be able to draft comprehensive data protection rules for Nigerian government parastatals such as the Nigerian Communications Commission. They can also draft laws in this direction, which their older counterparts are unlikely to be able to do due to a lack of specialized technical knowledge in that area. Furthermore, there is a new guideline known as the general data protection regulation (GDPR), which was put in place by the European Union and has been the topic of much discussion in legal circles throughout the world. It is the most significant change in data protection in the EU within the last 20 years, set to impact countless countries around the world when it came into force in May 2018. Unfortunately, only a few lawyers are aware of the GDPR and its full scope of influence, and it is only those who are aware of it who can use it to advance their careers by providing stellar corporate advisory services to the clients whose businesses cut into the EU (Idem, U. J. 2020).

(i) ICT

Knowledge of ICT on the part of a young lawyer can be a potential gold mine for that lawyer in the long run. Firms, organisations, corporations need people who are ICT- complaint to be part of their working team. A young lawyer familiar with the workings of ICT can create thorough working guidelines, rule books, employment contracts, and bring your device (BYOD) policies to safeguard business clients' employees and third-party contractors.

(j) Biotech and Food Technology

Several biotechnology and food technology inventions have been made both inside and outside of Nigeria. These ideas are created through creative methods, and as food technology develops as a high-end export business, intellectual property attorneys are becoming increasingly important. And protecting all these innovations is the first step to take. The skilled 21st-century junior lawyer can take advantage of this sector to the exclusion of his elder counterpart if he is schooled in intellectual property protection, providing patents/trademark applications as needed and enabling licensing of already secured trademarks, monitoring already deployed services, and managing intellectual property portfolios for clients in the agribusiness.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The article addresses and answers the query of what the legal profession in the twenty-first century holds for young lawyers in Nigeria. This paper also evaluates the place, roles and biases against legal practitioners in society. The research concludes that 21st-century attorneys and law graduates in Nigeria have a bright future ahead of them and that their chances are enhanced by their understanding of ICT as a practicing tool, which puts them ahead of their older counterparts. The authors contend that the current argument that Nigeria's legal profession has too many legal practitioners and hence is no longer profitable is only an illusion that has not been properly assessed, given the recent innovation and specialization in international and national law markets for legal services. This study established that one of the greatest methods for a 21st-century lawyer to excel in the legal profession in Nigeria is to engage in different fields of specialized practices. Indeed, there is a growing demand for expertise in the field of training in the global legal services sector, which necessitates interdisciplinary skills such as a good understanding of accounting and finance, taxation, cyberlaw, and telecom to have a basic understanding of corporate government and money market is important. It is part of our conclusion that the significant shift in information exchange has moved legal practice and 21st-century law in Nigeria to a higher level, and that the most effective legal research and practice today is as a consequence of the use of ICT through the use of the internet, e-Law report, e-library, e-journals, e-books, among others.

The authors propose that to remain relevant in the evolving global trend, every 21st-century lawyer must first identify and grow his or her most vigorous field of interest. Even if his adversary claims that there are numerous problems facing 21st-century attorneys in their profession of law, the authors contend that in our modern world, a plethora of options have opened up to him, such that he can easily be engaged in both legal and quasi-legal professions that cut beyond legal technological research and commercial sectors than his traditional counterpart who would be lost if he tries to tackle.

The article also recommends that for Nigerian young legal practitioners to meet the difficulties of the twenty-first century, academic and professional curriculum should be modified. At the academic level, law libraries should have legal materials as well as all ICT technology in the law office, such as fax machines, scanners, computers, and intercoms, and instruction on how to utilize these ICT tools is essential. Newer fields of law, such as ICT, telecom, cyberlaw, ADR, intellectual property, piracy law, and data protection legislation, as well as clinical legal education courses, should be extended and made mandatory for all law students. In addition, the legal clinic should form partnerships with certain notable law firms so that students may gain early practice experience while still in school. Finally, as Nigeria develops, it will require more attorneys who are dedicated, hardworking, and willing to maintain a high standard of legal practice while also being knowledgeable about information communication technology to take our legal profession to the next level in the global market.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper

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Statute

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