

UDC 378.018.4:027.7:004.77(599)

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Getting Ready to Hyflex: An Assessment of the DLSU Law Students' Use of Online Library Resources and Resources

Objective. The onset of the pandemic in 2020 forced the education sector to shift to the online learning modality. This paper aims to determine the law students' actual utilization rate and patterns of online resources and services. **Methods.** This paper used a quantitative method to arrive at its primary purpose. It collected use statistics on all online legal databases and online services offered by the Law Library. This paper analyzed the collected statistics by applying the different statistical measures such as the extraction of mean, averages, and percentages. **Results.** This study found that law students used online resources to a great extent. Academic activities, databases' contents, and titles' availability are the factors affecting the frequency of use of online resources. The results of this study will become the bases for planning for the continuous improvement of the law library's resources and services in preparation for the permanent offering of the hyflex learning modality in the Tanada-Diokno College of Law of the De La Salle University. **Conclusions.** The low extent of use of the online reference services and the great degree of use of the different online databases prove that law students can access online information independently, strengthening the proof that they are now ready for the hyflex modality of library service.

Keywords: law students; library collection assessment; library service assessment; hyflex learning modality; use analysis; comparative analysis

Introduction

De La Salle University College of Law was renamed Tañada-Diokno College of Law on February 26, 2022, after former senators Lorenzo M. Tañada, Sr., and Jose W. Diokno (DLSU Names College of Law after Patriots Tañada and Diokno, 2022). The College hoped to dynamically implant the virtues of the two dignified human rights lawyers into its students. Aside from loving God and country, the newly named college also endeavors to produce graduates who excel academically like the two outstanding lawyers.

The DLSU Law Library feels responsible for supporting law students' quest for academic excellence. Brown and Malenfant (2017) say that providing a conducive learning environment creates a positive impact on students' academic success. Added to it, teaching students to be information literate, and instilling into them life-long independent learning are the library tasks that help students achieve academic excellence (Brown & Malenfant, 2017; Gaha, Hinnefeld, & Pellegrino, 2018). Incidentally, those tasks are the hardest to fulfill in the library. Said tasks became even harder to perform when the pandemic broke, and most of the Academic Community members were not allowed entry to all DLSU campuses. Because the DLSU administration closed the whole campus, the Law Library could not function normally. Like the standard academic law libraries, the DLSU Law Library's most used collection is the print book collection. Frias (2017) said that the Law Library's 7,208 titles (equivalent to 14,141 volumes) of print books were used 60,945 times by around 400 students per year for a period of 7 years (2010-2017). These figures present an annual average use of 22 print books per student per year. This data means that print books are heavily used in the said library. But when the law library closed, it could not lend its most-used collection. In opting to gear students to using online resources, several limitations also surfaced, such as: (1) the Law Library only subscribes to three (3) legal databases; (2) the Law Library only have a limited number of e-books before the pandemic; and (3) because there was only one general library orientation per batch which happens every beginning of an academic year,

the currently enrolled law students then were not given much information about the different online databases that they can use, much more taught them how to access these databases.

Moreover, the pandemic that started in 2020 paved the way to open opportunities for legal education to broaden its horizon. While the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) declared that the education system would not return to the complete face-to-face modality anymore (ABS-CBN News, 2021), the Legal Education Board (LEB) confirmed it when the revised model curriculum of the basic law program became law in 2021 (Legal Education Board, 2021). Section 20 of the said law pertained to the following: d) Learning time/contact vs. non-contact hours, which mandated Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to provide their students with own time to learn by themselves by using all the resources they need, which includes the library resources; e) Flexible learning, which directed HEIs to provide other modes of learning in consideration with the student's learning needs and styles; and, f) Leveraging technology, pushes the HEIs to provide high-end technology that would help elevate "application of a holistic view of the law" (Legal Education Board, 2021, p. 22). In consonance with LEB's move for flexible learning modalities, DLSU also pushes for hyflex classes, a modernized blended learning (Koskinen, 2018), and a coined word for hybrid and flexible modes of teaching and learning that utilizes online and face-to-face modality (Graffy, 2021).

Receiving online education over the past two years may have prepared law students for this modality of learning. But accepting this as a permanent fixture in the legal education system may present a difference. They may have been employing band-aid solutions in completing assignments and other tasks during the 2-year online modality. But those solutions will not make them achieve academic excellence. They must be ready for the permanent hyflex modality in learning. Educating the law students in using the online collection and in availing of its online services must be the primary solution. It is then imperative for the Law Library to know the strategies it must undertake to provide the best services and collections to its students in either modality.

This study, therefore, aims to assess the frequency, patterns, and extent of use of the different online resources and services that reflect students' readiness to hyflex modality of learning. This assessment will provide factual information in improving the collection of online resources and drawing better online services that will help law students achieve academic excellence. This study aims to answer the following problems:

1. Are TDCOL students ready for hyflex modality in terms of access to online resources and services?
2. What are the patterns of use of the Law Library's online resources and services?
3. Do patterns of use of online resources and services differ before and during the pandemic?
4. What is the students' extent of use of the different online resources and services of the Law Library?

Purpose of the study

This paper aims to determine if law students are ready for the hyflex learning modality as far as library use is concerned. Through their actual utilization rate and patterns of use of the law library's online resources and services, this paper will be able to come up with a set of bases for building and improving electronic resources and developing online services that would make the Law Library's support for the hyflex learning modality more vital, deeper and more significant. The recommendations of this study will be instrumental in honing law students to be confidently ready for the hyflex learning modality, which can help them achieve academic excellence.

Review of related literature

The COVID-19 pandemic, which is so far the most serious and the deadliest calamity of all time (Chakraborty & Maity, 2020), affected all types of societies all over the world. For a moment, the world stopped operating due to lockdowns and isolation. But when it was deemed necessary to move forward, people looked for ways to work along with the deadly virus. Thus online modality in working, represented by a work-from-home arrangement which was minimally observed before the pandemic, became the main practice all over the world (The Economist, 2021). As the pandemic moved forward, vaccines were developed and administered. This time, people learned to move along with the pandemic. The education sector re-opened its doors via the hyflex teaching and learning modality. Hyflex modality, which is a combination of online and face-to-face modalities (Vilhauer, 2021), is a more convenient and safer modality to adopt while vaccinated people deal with COVID-19. Through the hyflex modality, most of the concerns brought about by the pandemic were addressed, such as the need for social distancing, learners' variety of needs, and mental health concerns (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2021). Hyflex modality became very beneficial both to students and teachers because of its flexibility. Students get to choose which modality to adopt to learn better, while teachers were able to teach courses wherever they are (Rutledge, Casucci, Mowdood, & Ziegenfuss, 2021).

Libraries adopted the hyflex modality to continuously perform their main objective, which is to provide information, no matter what the situation is at hand. Libraries turn to hyflex modality to keep astride with what education institutions are offering. The Teaching and Learning Team of Oklahoma State University Library first used the hyflex modality in providing library instructions during the onset of the pandemic (Colquhoun, Essmiller, Baeza, Reiter, & Stroud, 2021). Mariott Library of the University of Utah first provided a hyflex modality by developing open online courses that contributed to the One-stop resource for the stakeholders of their university (Rutledge et al., 2021). The Libraries of De La Salle University, on the other hand, developed its online Library Research course for its information literacy program. The said course is now integrated into the University's Learning Management System (Canvas). Further, the University of Alabama Libraries utilized the hyflex modality in enhancing their online reference service through their LibChat, which became a hit with their students (Decker, 2021). Generally, libraries use the hyflex modality to make their resources accessible to their stakeholders in both online and face-to-face modalities and provide reference services, also in both modalities (Garner & Logue, 2020; Rutledge et al., 2021).

While more libraries all over the world are now geared toward hyflex modality in providing access and services, two main questions arise: (1) are libraries prepared to offer hyflex modality for good?, and (2) are the stakeholders ready for this type of modality? Romero-Hall and Ripine (2021) raised the issue of teachers' preparedness in providing hyflex modality in teaching. This issue can also be equated to the library's preparedness in providing hyflex modality in providing access and services. Are the resources ready to be used online? Are the staff trained to provide hyflex services? The concern about students' readiness, on the other hand, lies in their ability to do independent learning (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2021). Equating it to using library resources, are they ready to do independent searching for appropriate information? Can they locate the best information for their class assignments? Or do they know all the library privileges they are entitled to as bonafide students?

Concerns such as preparedness and readiness need answers for a system to operate smoothly. In the library world, where hyflex modality is a relatively new offering, it is necessary to answer such concerns to know how to steer the library's operations shortly as it goes astride its greatest challenge, which is the pandemic.

Methodology

This study used the quantitative method to analyze data and answer the problems raised earlier. It covers the students' annual utilization of online resources, namely: (1) CDAsia Online, (2) HeinOnline, (3) LexisNexis, and (4) e-books on law, and online services, namely: (1) email, (2) Chat and Libanswers and (3) Libguides. The culling of the utilization statistics was through IP addresses; hence, there is no way to check if usage came solely from students of TDCOL. But since most of the students who use the three legal databases are students of TDCOL, this study assumes that the said college students posted all utilization statistics. The covered dates of the extracted data are from March 01, 2019, to February 28, 2022, one year (March 01, 2019, to February 28, 2020) of pre-pandemic use and two years (March 01, 2020, to February 28, 2022) of use during the pandemic.

The researcher recorded the monthly usage statistics for CD Asia Online and Nexis Uni that the database provider regularly sends. The statistics of use are tallied according to prepared topics for future analysis. Statistics of use for HeinOnline and e-books on law, on the other hand, were extracted by the DLSU Libraries' System Assistant using the Libraries' Alma Analytics tool. The researcher also classified the extracted statistics according to prepared topics.

Chat, Libanswers, and Libguides were extracted from the Springshare facility. Springshare is a database subscribed by the Libraries to facilitate the online delivery of reference services. This facility produces reports based on the data saved in its system. For Chat and Libanswers statistics, the researcher extracted and coded all transcripts about law, legal resources, and COL students. The transcripts were coded according to prepared Springshare topics for future analysis.

Moreover, the researcher reviewed and classified all email messages from law students from March 01, 2019, to February 28, 2020, according to topics given in Springshare.

This study applied simple mathematical measures such as summation and extracting percentages and averages to help analyze results. Summation was used to get the total frequencies of use of the different online services and resources. This study extracted percentages specifically in analyzing the trends of use per topic and the ratio of monthly and annual use to the 3-year extracted data. On the other hand, averages were calculated to forecast utilization rates and future use scenarios. To answer this paper's problems, the researcher employed (1) Use Analysis which concentrated on the frequencies of use and percentages of use, and the extent of use of online resources and services; and (2) Trend Analysis to set the patterns of use of the different online services and resources.

Results and discussion

Online Resources

A. Frequency and Patterns of Use

The Law Library presently subscribes to four (4) legal databases, namely, (1) CD Asia Online, (2) e-SCRA, (3) HeinOnline, and (4) NexisUni. CD Asia and e-SCRA are local online databases, while HeinOnline and NexisUni are foreign resources. Of the four, only e-SCRA is not available for off-campus use because the database access mode is per license. This paper concentrates on the databases that are accessible off-campus that will be in full support to hyflex modality.

Aside from online legal databases, the Law Library provides access to e-books. To date, there are 805 titles of e-books on law and its related fields. All e-books are accessible off-campus

and therefore support the hyflex modality of learning.

Online Databases

CD Asia Online is the most comprehensive local legal database in the country. Aside from being the most used Jurisprudence library, it contains laws and other legal information. Use statistics for CD Asia during normal circumstances were not high. A year before the pandemic broke, use statistics for CD Asia was only 27,012, equivalent to 4,155.69 per month. Use statistics for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 increased to 32,046 (4,930.15/month) and 39,893 (6137.38/month), respectively. Academic years 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 display the same monthly patterns of use, presenting peak use in the months of August and February, while the lowest usages were posted in December. The abnormality of the use pattern in AY 2020-2021 may be due to the adjustments in the academic calendar brought about by the pandemic. The 1st and 2nd semesters in TDCOL begin in July and January, respectively. The patterns formed an observation that the immediate months after the beginning of the semesters are the months when CD Asia Online is most used. This observation agreed with the findings of Tenopir and Read (2000) when they said that usage of online databases is in synch with the rhythm of academic life (p. 238). The onset of the pandemic in March 2020 temporarily disrupted the monthly use pattern because the schedule of classes then was also temporarily disrupted. Figure no.1 presents the trends in the use of CD Asia for the past three years.

HeinOnline is one of the two foreign legal databases of the Law Library. Aside from case laws in the United States of America, Canada, and selected countries in Europe and Asia, it contains a wide array of authoritative law journals, including the country's very own Philippine Law Journal. The law students did not very well use HeinOnline before the pandemic. There were months when students did not use this database. It only posted 6,180 usages with an average of 515 usages per month in 2019-2020. The use of HeinOnline increased 76.96% in 2020-2021 and further increased 32.02% in 2021-2022.

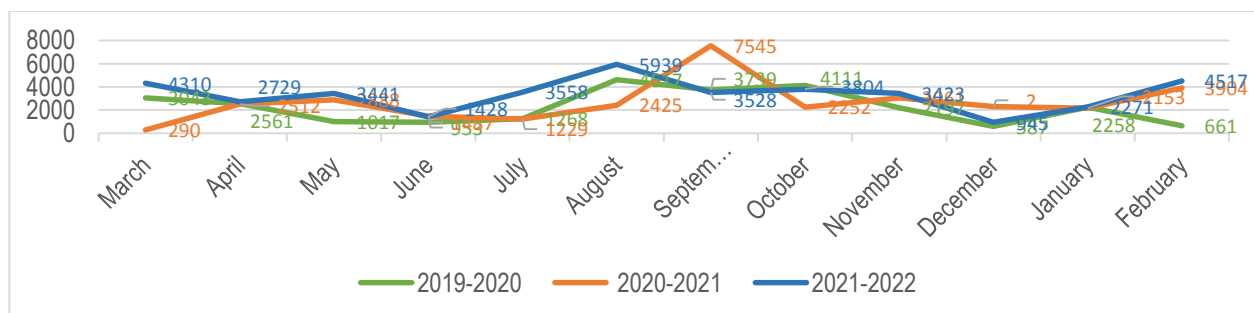


Fig. 1. Use Statistics of CD Asia Online Before and During the Pandemic

Although total usage of HeinOnline presented an uptrend, it is not easy to establish patterns of monthly use. Figure 2 shows that there were months when the usage of HeinOnline was heavier before the pandemic broke (i.e., July 2019). There were months when use was at its peak during the onslaught of the pandemic (i.e., April 2020). In contrast, the highest-ever usage was posted when everybody thought the pandemic was reaching its plateau (i.e., December 2021). Eliminating the least and highest usage, however, presents a different outlook. June and September are months where usage is relatively heavy before and one year after the pandemic broke. Like in CD Asia, similarities in use patterns between 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 are detected. The similarities in monthly patterns of use stabilize the findings earlier about the relationship between the academic

calendar and the use of library resources.

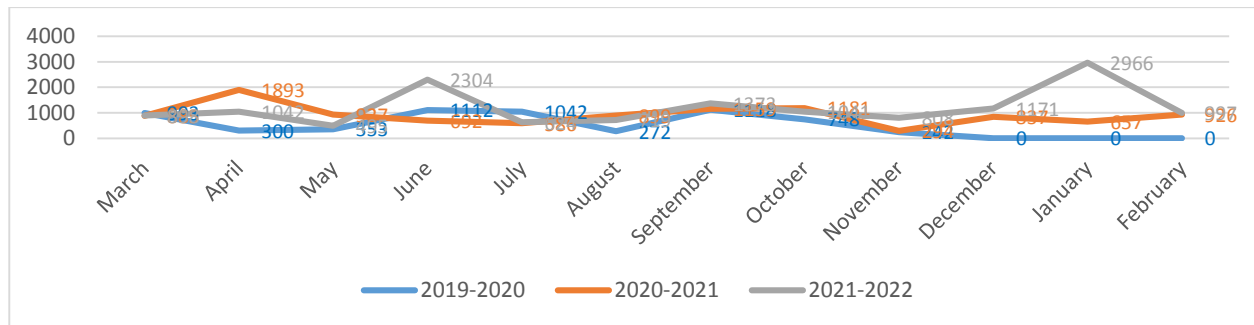


Fig. 2. Usage of HeinOnline from 2019-2020 to 2021-2022

The third online database that the Law Library is subscribing to is the Nexis Uni, a foreign database that features both legal and business resources. It also has a collection of authoritative journals published by different academic legal institutions. Usage statistics for Nexis Uni are unpredictable. First, the total usage statistics in 2019-2020 is 2,534. This figure is 32.32% higher than the usage statistics for the next year (1,715) when the pandemic broke, and classes shifted to online modality. When the online learning modality was in full blast in 2021-2022, the use of Nexis Uni (2,566) only increased by 1.26% from 2019-2020. The monthly usage pattern is also challenging to establish. When frequencies of use were graphed, the graph shows that every year has a set of different curves with no similarity with any other year. The graph means that students use this database according to their needs and preferences, not because of its relation to the academic calendar or scheduled assignment submissions. Figure 3 presents the graphed frequencies of use of Nexis Uni.

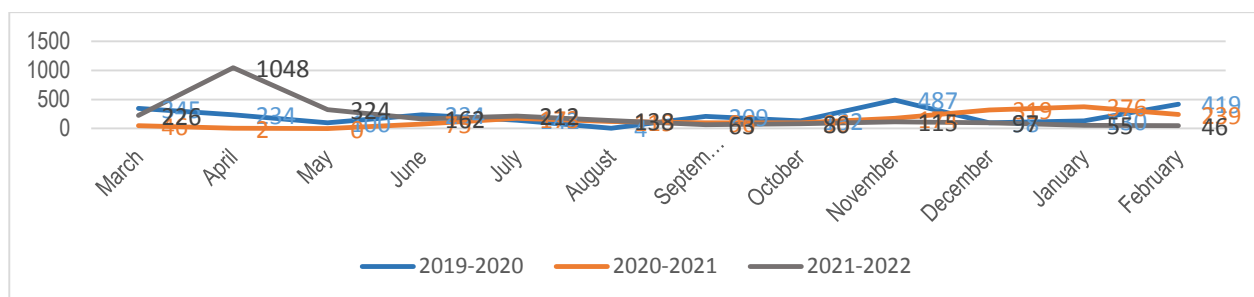


Fig. 3. Frequencies of Use of Nexis Uni from 2019-2020 to 2021-2022

E-Books

The Law Library only aggressively purchased and subscribed to e-books on law during the last three years. Thus, the usage of law e-books was only captured starting in 2020. As mentioned earlier, there are 805 circulated titles of e-books on law. Law students used 223 titles, equivalent to 27.70% of the total e-book acquisition. Of the total usage, 178 titles were used 536 times in 2020-2021, while only 61 were used 190 times in 2021-2022. Law e-books were used 726 times in 2 years during the pandemic. The higher utilization rate of e-books during the pandemic may be attributed to the length of times when professors gave students more asynchronous sessions from their classes. Students tend to look for more online resources, including e-books, during asynchronous sessions (De', R., Pandey, N., & Pal, A.). This instance did not happen in 2021-2022,

when classes became more stable, and law professors became more apt to provide synchronous sessions in their classes. As a result, the utilization rate of e-books in 2020-2021 is higher at 79.82% than in 2021-2022, with only a 27.35% utilization rate. Table 1 presents the frequency of use of e-books for the past two years.

Table 1

Monthly Use of Law E-Books, 2020-2021 to 2021-2022

Month	2020-2021	2021-2022	Total
March	33	12	45
April	43	14	57
May	88	11	99
June	61	40	101
July	72	11	83
August	93	39	132
September	34	4	38
October	21	8	29
November	19	27	46
December	52	8	60
January	15	9	24
February	5	7	12
Total	536	190	726
No. of Titles Used	178	61	

Moreover, studying the clients' use patterns would greatly help improve the library resources and services. Patterns help librarians understand the holistic characteristics of a population. It also provides information on the essential elements that the librarians must take note of (Flood, 2019). Gyau, Jing, and Akowuah (2021) were able to know the needs of their students and what attracted them by studying the usage patterns in their library. Studying the law students' patterns of use of online resources and services is a must as the library enters a new modality in learning.

Due to the nature of reporting per database, this paper has minimal data to analyze patterns of use according to subject preferences and types of information. While all of CDAsia Online information is on laws and jurisprudence, information in HeinOnline and Nexis Uni varies from case laws to journal articles. Unfortunately, only Nexis Uni provides a more comprehensive reporting that allows this study to extract patterns of students' preferred type of information.

Generally, newspapers and magazines have been the most used information sources in Nexis Uni for the past three (3) years. It ranked number 1 in 2019-2020 and, 2020-2021, and 2 in 2021-2022. Information from blogs and websites was the least used information source. Journal articles topped the choice of information type in 2021-2022, while case laws were the consistent 2nd topmost used information type for the past three years.

Cases were the 2nd most used information because TDCOL offers Political and International Law as one of its core courses. The said course concentrates on foreign international law and jurisprudence. Another reason is the nature of our legal system, which is a mixture of civil law, common law, and Islamic law. These legal systems are discussed in the case laws in foreign countries. Law students, therefore, can get more information on how juries decide in different types of legal set-ups. Meanwhile, CDAsia Online's types of information were solely on jurisprudence and laws. When added to the data from Nexis Uni, Cases tops the most used type of legal information for law students to patronize.

Surprisingly, although relatively few, law students also used information from blogs and websites. Blogs also contain authoritative information, though informally written. In some cases, more readers prefer to read blogs because they are written literarily, easier to understand, and are more up-to-date, even if researchers treat them as less academic because they are not peer-reviewed (PeterT, 2019). Figure 4 presents the itemized use of legal information for three years.

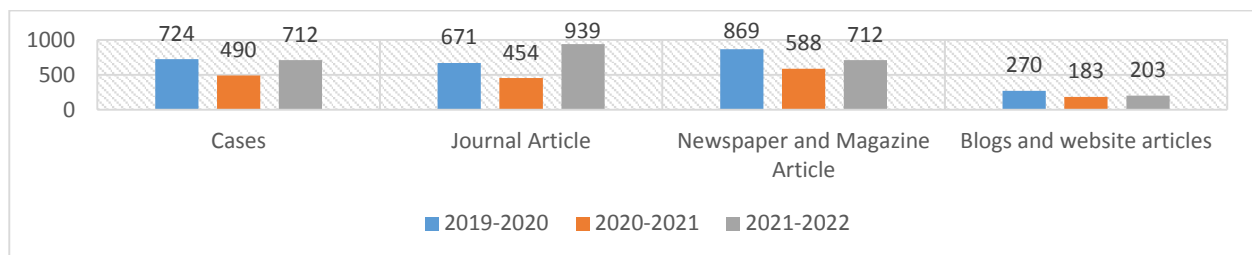


Fig. 4. Law Students' Preferred Types of Legal Information from 2019-2020 to 2021-2022

Usage patterns of e-books, on the other hand, are more comprehensive. Coding of titles according to the Library of Congress Subject Headings using the Libraries' subscription to classweb.org, this paper came out with 24 main topics on the law. As presented earlier, students used 223 titles of e-books on law 726 times in two years (2020-2021). Table 2 shows the itemized usage of e-books from 2020-2021 to 2021-2022.

Human Rights was the subject that contained the highest number of used titles with 28 titles, followed by International Law with 27 titles, and Criminal Law with 26 titles. The subject with the list number of titles used was Canon Law with only 1 title, Legal System and Medical Law with two titles apiece, and Election Law with 3 used titles. Out of the 223 used titles, Criminal Law and Human Rights Law topped the frequency of use at 98 times apiece, followed by International Law with 76 usages and Law in General, which was used 55 times. Criminal Law, Human Rights Law, and International Law are the top three subjects with the highest number of used titles. It follows, therefore, that the number of titles per subject is a factor that determines the potential usage of e-books: more titles, more use. However, the number of titles per subject is not the only factor determining potential usage. Courts, Legal System and Jurisprudence are all important subjects for law students, but students use those subjects very minimally. Whereas Canon Law, Legal Research, Law and Economics, and Law and Society have a minimal number of books, they were able to attract more users.

Therefore, E-book usage depends on the number of available titles and the nature of the subject; basic subjects, such as the legal system, are elementary to find anywhere on the internet, same with information about courts. Every jurisprudence is valuable to every law student, but apparently, books about it are not very attractive to them. E-books that are socially relevant are more patronized by law students.

Table 2

Usage of E-books per Subject, 2020-2021 to 2021-2022

Subject	2020-2021		2021-2022		Total Title Used	Total Frequency of Use	%age of Use
	Title	Frequency of Use	Title	Frequency of use			
AdministrativeLaw	9	14	2	5	11	19	0.03
Canon Law	1	12	0	0	1	12	0.02
Civil Law	13	36	2	2	16	38	0.05
Constitutional Law	9	17	0	0	10	17	0.02
Courts	5	7	1	1	6	8	0.01
Criminal Law	20	41	8	55	26	96	0.13
Election Law	3	6	1	1	3	7	0.01
Environmental Law	11	36	2	5	11	41	0.06
Human Rights Law	16	78	11	20	28	98	0.13
Intellectual Property Law	4	18	5	8	9	26	0.04
International Law	19	45	6	31	27	76	0.10
Jurisprudence	2	2	2	3	4	5	0.01
LaborLaw	6	12	0	0	6	12	0.02
Law and Economics	4	43	1	1	4	44	0.06
Law and society	4	15	1	2	5	17	0.02
Law and technology	4	11	2	26	5	37	0.05
Law in general	7	51	3	4	9	55	0.08
Legal education	4	14	4	9	6	23	0.03
Legal profession	9	18	2	5	12	23	0.03
Legal research	11	25	2	5	2	30	0.04
Legal System	2	2	2	2	4	4	0.01
Medical law	1	1	1	1	2	2	0.00
MercantileL aw	9	26	2	3	11	29	0.04
Philosophy of Law	5	6	1	1	5	7	0.01
	178	536	61	190	223	726	1.00

Moreover, recently published e-books are more preferred by law students. Of 223 used e-books, 136 (60.99%) titles were published in the last decade (2010-2019). These 136 titles were used 438 times, equivalent to 60.33% of the total usage. This result also confirms the claim earlier that more titles attract more users. However, it is interesting that law students still patronize e-books published before the 1980s. Some e-books were published even before they were born. This is because law subject is not sensitive to the year of publication. As long as the law is not repealed or obsolete, information from any legal source still stands firm. Table 3 confirms this claim.

Table 3

E-Book Usage by Year of Publication, 2020-2021 to 2021-2022

Year of Publication	Number of Titles	Frequency of Use	Percentage of Use
Pre 1980	8	9	0.01
1980-1989	10	51	0.07

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1990-1999	8	26	0.04
2000-2009	47	157	0.22
2010-2019	136	438	0.60
2020 onwards	14	45	0.06
Total	223	726	1.00

B. Extent of Use

The extent of use of a library's resources and services signifies the effectiveness and efficiency of the library's collection and services development. Several studies focused on the extent of use to assess different resources and services. Ogunmodede, Adio, and Odunola (2011) evaluated the information literacy program of a Nigerian university by correlating the extent of use of its student. Abdullahi, Isyaku Ahmad, and Ahmed (2019) studied their library's extent of utilization to support their university's teaching, learning, and research mission. In this paper, examining the extent of use determines the appropriateness of the online resources and services.

The extent of use of the different online resources was measured by relating the frequency of use and the enrollment statistics of TDCOL. The College's 3-year enrollment statistics ranged from 436 (2nd Semester, AY 2020-2021) to 530 (1st Semester, AY 2020-2021). In getting the extent of use in this study, the researcher considered the higher enrollment in every academic year instead of the average enrollment statistics. Table 4 presents the 3-year enrollment statistics for TDCOL.

Table 4

3-Year Enrollment Statistics for Tanada-Diokno College of Law

Semester	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
1 st	506	530	476
2 nd	511	436	457

The extent of use of the Law Library's online resources was great even before the pandemic broke. CD Asia Online tops the extent of use rate, having been used 5,286.11% before the pandemic and 6,046.42% and 8,380.88% during the pandemic years. Students used E-books to the least extent, but the extent of use rate in 2020-2021 was still significant at 101.13%. The only instance when the students used an online resource to a lesser extent was in 2021-2022, when only 39.92% of the e-book collection was used. The lesser extent of use of e-books may be attributed to the ease of use and functionalities that students would want to see from e-book databases (Marks, 2020) but are only present in e-journals. Students also spent a longer time reading an e-book than reading an article.

An upward trend in the extent of use pattern is evident for CDAsia Online and HeinOnline, which means that students' patronage of these online databases is growing. Nexis Uni's drop in extent of use in 2020-2021 may be due to the unstable academic calendar in AY 2020-2021, as

explained earlier, while the extent of use of e-books is a combination of factors, (1) unstable academic calendar, and (2) type of material, (3) ease of use, and (4) functionalities in accessing the resource type. Table 5 presents the individual extent of use of the different online resources for the past three years.

Table 5

Extent of Use of Law Library's Online Resources, 2019-2020 to 2021-2022

Online Resource	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
	(%)		
CD Asia Online	5286.11	6046.42	8380.88
HeinOnline	1209.39	2063.40	3033.19
Nexis Uni	495.89	323.58	539.08
Law E-books	NA	101.13	39.92

Online Services

The Law Library is currently offering two online services, namely (1) online reference assistance through the official email account and Springshare's Chat and Libanswers facilities, and (2) Libguides. Through Springshare, a commercial online reference tool, the Law Library can offer real-time reference assistance through chat and Libanswers. Also, through Springshare, the Law Library synthesizes information by putting together different pathfinders and webliographies and creating different Libguides.

A. Frequency and Patters of Use

The Law Library's online services were not popular before the pandemic broke. During normal circumstances, law students would instead go to the library and ask questions personally rather than online. It was only during the pandemic that law students started patronizing these services.

Online Reference Service

A. E-mail Service

Email is students' first line of communication with anyone in an academic setting whenever they need information. Way back early 2000's email had been one of the most preferred choices of students when it came to the mode of communication in seeking assistance. The main reason is the projected timely feedback (Kitsantas & Chow, 2007). Millennials prefer email as a means of communication because they can write long questions and can open their account on their own time (Alton, 2017). Naturally, this preference increased as online learning became the norm due to the pandemic (Broadbent & Lodge, 2021). This phenomenon is also true with the Law Library's experience.

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To assess the library's online reference service using email, the law librarian extracted all emails from law students from March 01, 2019, to February 28, 2022. The researcher coded the emails according to the subjects created in Springshare. There was very little utilization of email facilities for online reference assistance in 2019-2020. This change in the frequency of utilization is expected since students can quickly go to the law library to ask for help before the pandemic. The figures rose massively when the pandemic broke since entry to any campus of DLSU was not allowed. Students then started relying on online assistance from library personnel to obtain the needed information. Thus, online reference assistance rose 1577.78% in 2020-2021 and grew by 10.56% more in 2021-2022.

The month of August, before and during the pandemic, held the most significant number of email queries from law students. Said month was followed by June, while the month that posted the least number of online assistances is December. Table 6 presents the monthly online reference assistance through email.

Table 6

Monthly Online Reference Assistance Using E-mail, 2019-2020 to 2021-2022

Month	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
March	0	9	10
April	0	11	12
May	0	19	21
June	2	20	22
July	0	16	18
August	4	26	29
September	0	7	8
October	0	6	6
November	0	9	10
December	2	12	13
January	0	5	5
February	1	2	3
Total	9	142	157

B. Chat and Libanswers Services

While students in the early 2000s preferred to communicate via e-mail because it could give relatively timely feedback, students these days are expected to choose live chat facilities more because of their capability to provide real-time responses. In their study, Broadbent and Lodge

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(2021) found out that students have positive experiences with live chat activities. Additionally, chat facilities in the library provide a familiar place for students to ask questions and assistance they need in their research (Decker, 2021).

The Law Library started offering online reference assistance in 2013 through LERA, the LEgal Reference Assistance, powered by Springshare. Chat queries not answered in real time go to the Libanswers facilities, where other assigned online reference assistants can answer them. This paper combined Chat and Libanswers statistics usage of Springshare facilities for online reference assistants, which gave an upward curve. Figure 5 shows that the students rarely used the chat facility of the Law Library before the pandemic. Additionally, Libanswers was not used even a single time during the pre-COVID-19 era. Chat and Libanswers services only picked-up months after the pandemic broke in the country, and online classes were in full swing. From 22 total usage in 2019-2020, use increased to 331.82% in 2020-2021 and continued to grow in 2021-2022 with a 141.09% rate increase. It is hard to get the monthly pattern of use of these facilities. Students may be using these facilities as the need arises and not because it is part of their academic work.

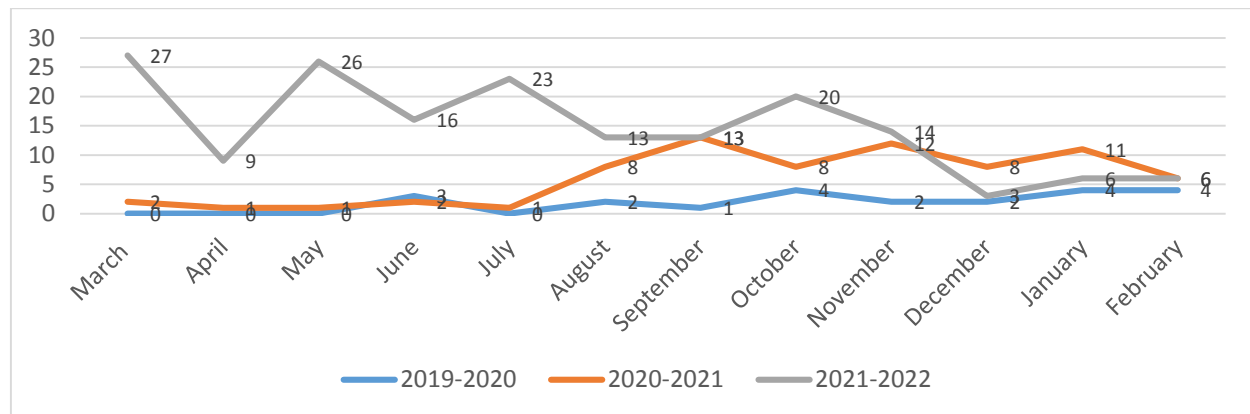


Fig. 5. Monthly Usage of Chat and Libanswers Facilities, 2019-2020 to 2021-2022

Libguides are tools for locating information in libraries. Librarians prepare libguides by synthesizing available information in their libraries, organizing them, usually by subject, and making them available to every library patron.

The Law Library currently maintains 21 libguides. All subjects directly support the curricular offering of the Tanada-Diokno College of Law. The use of this service increased tremendously during the pandemic. Total usage in 2019-2020 was only 636. It went up 555.66% in 2020-2022 and grew to 399.83% in 2022-2022. This enormous increase in usage aligned with the findings of Dotson (2021) when he said that libguides have gone viral during the pandemic, and it is because of the online modality injected into academic work. Table 7 presents the monthly usage of Libguides for the past three years.

Table 7

Libguides Monthly Usage, 2019-2020 to 2021-2022

Month	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
March	1	88	1183

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April	29	50	1118
May	18	157	1021
June	17	135	497
July	43	277	636
August	53	187	880
September	49	429	1586
October	96	639	1521
November	64	610	2477
December	91	358	692
January	58	297	789
February	117	307	1731
Total	636	3534	14130

Meanwhile, the Law Library's online reference service using the e-mail and chat and Libanswers facilities produced almost the same curves when graphed. The highest frequency of use before and during the pandemic was the topic of Services (Borrowing, Returning, Document Delivery Service, and SDI). But the similarity in use patterns between the two modes of service differs in their 2nd most used topic. The E-mail facility recorded Library Account Activation as the 2nd most used, especially during the pandemic. This is understandable because students must activate their library account before accessing all the online resources that the library is subscribing to.

Chat & Libanswers recorded Library Policies as its 2nd highest point of discussion. 3rd most used topic on both facilities was Access to Online Resources, which is very understandable. The topic Information Literacy ranked last using e-mail facility, while Clearance ranked last using chat & Libanswers facilities. The two subjects ranked lowest because they are seasonal in nature. While Information Literacy usually is a concern at the beginning of the semester, Clearance is an important topic at the end of a semester.

Moreover, only a few students would need assistance in information literacy. Usually, it is their professors who seek IL sessions with librarians. Same with the concern on clearance. Only graduating or transferring students seek clearance, which made its frequency of use lower than most of the topics of discussion. Figure 6 presents the graph comparing the patterns of use of the two online reference services.

As mentioned, Libguides were treated as a service by librarians because they prepare these documents. In contrast, law students treat them as resources because Libguides give information about the library's holdings related to the topic of interest. Because of the students' treatment of Libguides, studying its patterns of use will help librarians not only in improving the said service. Patterns of use of Libguides will also guide librarians in preparing circulation, collection development, and acquisition activities in the library. It will also help design marketing programs to increase the usage of resources and services of the library.

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Law students' use of Libguides mirrors their research interests. The top three most used libguides were (1) Money laundering, (2) Law of the Sea, and (3) Restorative justice. These top three libguides have total usage of 8,442, 1,846, and 1,248 in three successive years, respectively. The students' choices mean they are keener on discovering more information about these subjects. The three topics with the least usage are (1) Legal Writing, (2) Analysis of democracy, and (3) Legal research; these subjects are very basic and are not research subjects unless associated with other law topics.

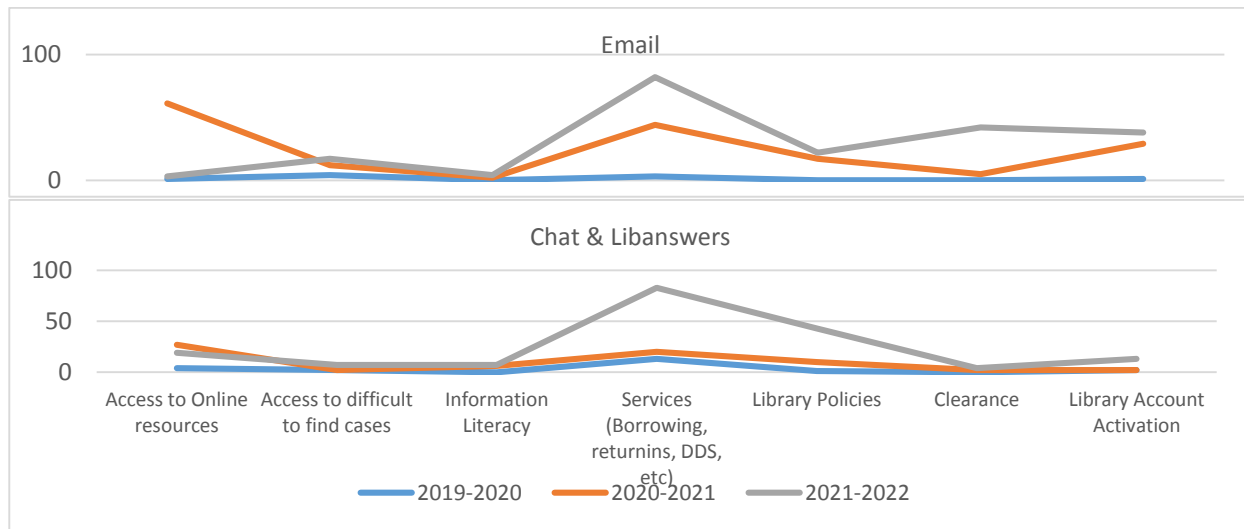


Fig. 6. Patterns of Use of Online Reference Assistance, 20219-2020 to 2021-2022

Only 5 out of 21 (23.82%) were used more than one thousand times in 3 years, another five libguides were used for less than one hundred times in 3 years, and 11 libguides (52.38%) were used more than one hundred times in three years. This data means that around 75% of the library's libguide topics were useful to the law students. Figure 7 presents the behavior of Libguide use per subject.

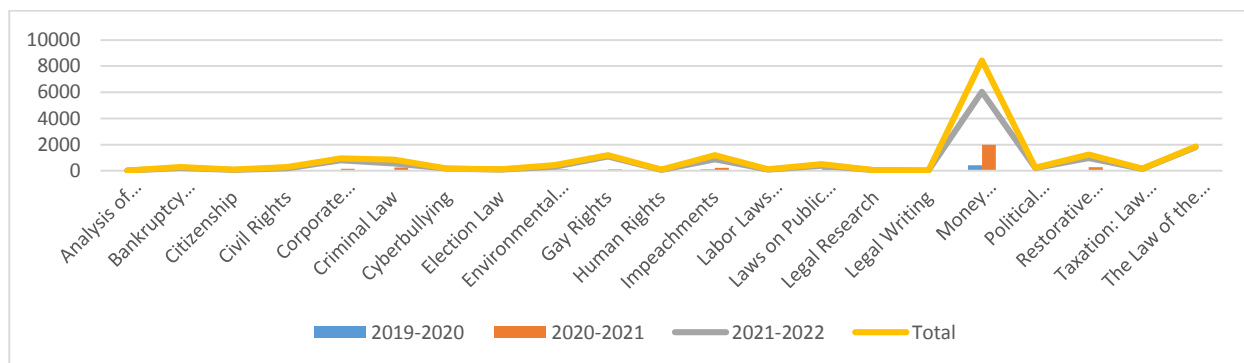


Fig. 7 Law Students' Libguide Patters of Use, 2021-2020 to 2021-2022

B. Extent of Use

Unlike online resources, law students' use of online services is not very high. Online reference assistance did poorly. Even during the pandemic, when students are expected to use the said service to ask for assistance and information, the said service did not pick up much usage. The highest usage was only 36.97% in 2021-2022 for Chat & Libanswers service. Law students are not yet keen on using the online reference service to obtain instructions and information about the Law Library, its collections, and its services.

Since Libguides can be treated as an information resource (on the part of the students), it is understandable that its extent of use is much greater than the hardcore online reference service. Libguides' extent of use was at the highest in 2021-2022, where it posted 2,968.49% extent of use, which means each law student used libguides close to 30 times in the said year. The upward trend of the extent of use of Libguides is a very promising scenario. The inclination to use lib. 2.0, such as synthesized information like libguides, means that students are now ready for the hyflex learning modality (Sivankalai, 2021). Table 8 presents the data on the extent of the Law Library's online services use.

Table 8

Online Services Extent of Use, 2019-2020 to 2021-2022

Online Services	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
	(%)		
E-mail Service	1.76	26.79	32.98
Chat & Libanswers	4.31	13.77	36.97
Libguides	124.46	742.44	2968.49

Summary

The pattern of monthly use of online databases before and during the pandemic was generally the same, although statistics were understandably higher during the pandemic. In both scenarios, law students' choices of legal databases were significantly affected by their academic activities, which also affected the monthly patterns of use. Contents of legal databases play an essential role in students' preferences, which is why CD Asia Online, a legal database that contains local legal information, tops all other legal databases in usage, both before and during the pandemic. There is an evident change in the types of materials law students prefer. Although case laws were the top choice of materials before and during the pandemic, journal articles have surpassed newspapers and magazines as their second choice of material types. And in both scenarios, law students also used blogs and other websites as the least information sources.

The use of e-books, on the other hand, was higher during the onset of the pandemic, when temporary leniency in holding classes between March to May 2020 was experienced, than when the law students got used to the situation and regular online classes resumed. Human Rights, Criminal Law, and International Law, the top three subjects with the most number of e-books, were coincidentally the most used e-books. While e-books on Medical Law, Legal Ethics, and Jurisprudence were the subjects with the least number of e-books and the least used.

As expected, all online resources experienced an increase in usage during the pandemic. E-books have the lowest extent of use, as every student used an e-book a little more than once during the pandemic. While law students used CDA Asia Online 144 times per student, HeinOnline was used 51 times per student, and Nexis Uni was used eight times per student during the pandemic.

Moreover, Online reference service is also on an upward trend. The same patterns were observed between emails and Chat & Libanswers. Queries about the library's services topped the list, followed by account activation, library policies, and access to online databases. Questions on clearances and information literacy were the least asked.

Libguides also followed an upward trend. Its monthly patterns differ before and during the pandemic since usage was not much before the pandemic hit the country. But no matter how small the use was before the pandemic, it still follows the same curve as the usage during the pandemic as far as usage pattern per subject is concerned. Money Laundering, Law of the Sea, and Restorative Justice were the top three most used Libguides for the past three years, while the least used Libguides were Legal Writing, Analysis of Democracy, and Legal Research.

Lastly, except for Libguides, all online services were used to a lesser extent. When equated with the College's population, the email and chat & Libanswers were only used 0.64 and 0.51 times per student during the pandemic. Libguides on the other hand presented use statistics that are comparable to the usage of online resources.

Conclusion and recommendations

The online learning modality brought about by the pandemic is here to stay. It is, therefore, necessary for every library to adjust and adhere to this norm. To do this, the library must gauge the readiness of its users to hyflex library resources and services and look for more ways to support them in their quest for knowledge through library research.

The high frequency and extent of use of the different online resources attest to the aptness of law students in using the said resources. The steady growth of usage statistics in all the legal databases presents students' adherence to the online research modality and thus demonstrates readiness to hyflex modality in accessing resources. Also, Sivankalai (2021) claim that the inclination to use library 2.0, such as synthesized information like libguides, means that students are now ready for the hyflex modality in accessing online library services.

The law students did not maximize the use of the hardcore online reference service during the pandemic. Very few law students availed of online reference assistance. This result is in contrast with the studies claiming that online reference services are maximized to inquire about accessing online databases (Baskaran, 2019; Fuller & Dryden, 2015; Kathuria, 2021). The said contrast and the great extent of use of the different online databases of the Law Library prove that law students are ready for the hyflex library modality.

To sustain law students' great extent of use of online resources and increase the use of online reference services, this paper recommends the following:

1. Conduct regular information literacy sessions every beginning of the semester;
2. Create infographics and video tutorials on the use of the different online resources and services;
3. Market online resources and services in different modalities (printed and online);
4. Tap faculty members to introduce online resources and services to their students;
5. For online reference service, develop Q&A for Chat & Libanswers service;
6. Purchase/subscribe to more e-books on law subjects with very few titles;

7. Develop more Libguides to include more subjects related to TDCOL's curricular offerings;

8. Develop more online reference services, such as online DDS and ILL, subject to prevailing intellectual property law; and,

9. Develop a webpage that features all the online resources, services, and information about the Law Library.

Lastly, this study also recommends conducting the following studies to continue developing the Law Library's online resources and services:

1. Conduct a survey on the usability of online resources and services to law students and correlate it to the results of this study;

2. Assess the Law Library staff's capability in providing hyflex library service;

3. Study the usability of newly introduced online and hyflex services, such as online information literacy and by-courier mode and touchless circulation modality; and,

4. Conduct a study on the law faculty's use of resources and services of the Law Library to provide more data on improving the Library's online resources and services.

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Готуємось до гіфлексу: оцінка використання студентами-правниками Університету Де Ла Салль ресурсів онлайн-бібліотеки

Мета. Початок пандемії у 2020 році змусив освітню галузь перейти до модальності онлайн-навчання. Метою цієї статті є визначення фактичного рівня використання студентами-правниками онлайн-ресурсів та послуг, а також моделей їх використання. **Методика.** Для досягнення основної мети цього дослідження було використано кількісний метод і зібрано статистику використання всіх онлайн-правових баз даних та онлайн-послуг, що пропонуються Юридичною бібліотекою. У цьому документі проаналізовано зібрані статистичні дані із застосуванням різних статистичних вимірювань, таких як обчислення середнього значення, середніх величин та відсотків. **Результати.** Це дослідження показало, що студенти-правники значною мірою використовують онлайн-ресурси. Факторами, що впливають на частоту використання онлайн-ресурсів, є академічна активність, зміст баз даних та доступність видань. Результати цього дослідження стануть основою для планування постійного вдосконалення ресурсів та послуг юридичної бібліотеки в рамках підготовки до постійної пропозиції гіфлексної форми навчання в юридичному коледжі Танада-Діокно Університету Де Ла Салль. **Висновки.** Низький рівень використання довідкових онлайн-сервісів та високий рівень використання різних онлайн-баз даних доводить, що студенти-правники можуть самостійно отримувати доступ до онлайн-інформації, що є ще одним доказом того, що вони вже готові до гібридного способу бібліотечного обслуговування.

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Ключові слова: студенти-правники; оцінка бібліотечних фондів; оцінка бібліотечних послуг; модальність навчання hуflex; аналіз використання; порівняльний аналіз

Received: 02.08.2022

Accepted: 14.12.2022