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ABSTRACT:
The study investigated the collections and development of law journals in the South East Universities in relation to the Council of Legal Education standards. The scope consisted of 119 titles of local and foreign law journals listed by Council of Legal Education as accreditation benchmark. It involves seven law faculty libraries in the universities South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria that offer law programme. The standard check list which is the benchmark released by Council of Legal Education serves as the instrument for data collection. This check list was found appropriate and was adopted for this study. Two research questions were formulated and guided the study. The findings showed that no law library in the zone met the Council of Legal Education standards in both local and foreign law journals. Recommendations were made which include among others, the need for adequate funding of law libraries, periodic assessment of collections, and constant review and revision of the list.

INTRODUCTION

A law library is a collection of legal materials consisting of law information organized for use of those seeking to qualify as, or who have qualified as lawyers and those enacting or administering law (Ukpanah and Afolabi, 2011). It is a special library serving the specific needs of its users. The users include members of the legal profession, that is, practicing lawyers, judges, magistrates, state counsels, law teachers, law students, members of the House of Assembly, House of Representative and Senate. The primary mission of the academic law library is to meet the information needs of the law faculty staff and students of the institution it supports.

Library collections are total accumulation of books and other information materials owned by a library, and are expected to be geared towards meeting the objectives of the parent institution. Oseghale (2008), observed that developing a balanced and useable collection is an important aspect of library services. Library collections, therefore, are built to meet the information and research needs of any academic programme. The primary objectives of the
collections of any faculty law library is directed towards serving the educational, research and community needs of the faculty of law.

To show how important law libraries are, Dada (2007), said that law is a profession which is literally unable to exercise its work without the use of books. He said that it is important to conclude that as an operating theatre is important to a Surgeon, a workshop to an Engineer and a laboratory to a Scientist, so is a law library central to the work of a lawyer or a legal researcher.

The National Universities Commission as well as the Council of Legal Education made it a pre-requisite to full accreditation that all universities that offer law as a degree course must have functional well stocked law libraries, (Ejimofo & Anaeme, 2005). In the past, efforts on library development were centred on books and journals, but in recent times and since the era of Information Communication Technology (ICT), reasonable efforts have been made to include electronic materials in the list. The collections should be based on the academic programme/course contents. Failure to provide the necessary collections and in their required numbers negates the recommended minimum standards. Law journals come in frequent and regular series. It is required that no collection gaps should be created. The law library materials can be in the following forms: text books, laws and statutes, law reports, law journals, reference tools, non-legal materials, non-book materials – computer facilities, internet facilities.

The Council of Legal Education has provided university law libraries’ collection standards. To ensure that faculty law libraries meet the accreditation requirements, the standard list of law library minimum requirements was released to the law faculties by the Council of Legal Education. The list has 23 law classes which was subdivided into 535 titles. The classes were broken into
* the local and foreign laws and statutes;
* local and foreign law journals (which is the subject of this study);
* local and foreign law reports and
* local and foreign law text books. These materials are expected to be built into each law library’s collections through direct purchase/acquisition, donations, university/faculty publications, exchanges, subscriptions and inter-library loans.

Accreditation is the tool used around the world to monitor, assess, and evaluate the standards and quality of the education a student receives at a college, university or other
institutions of higher learning (National Universities Commission, 1989). Accreditation of
degree and other academic programmes by the National Universities Commission means a
system for recognizing tertiary educational institutions (universities and programmes offered in
these institutions) for a level of performance, integrity and quality which entitles them to the
confidence of the educational community, the public they serve and the employers of labour.
Accreditation is usually based on minimum acceptable standards.

During accreditation exercise on any faculty of law programme, the library plays
significant and prominent role in assessing and judging the faculty. In building a law library
journal collections, efforts should be made to expose collection gaps which in some cases may or
may not be totally filled during such accreditation visits which usually come up every five years.
For the faculty of law libraries to maintain a balanced collection, meet the demands of students,
lecturers and law professionals and pass accreditations conducted by the regulatory bodies - the
National Universities Commission and the Council of Legal Education, there must be adequate
collections and other law programme requirements put in place.

Some institutions in the past have failed accreditation because of their inability in
meeting the accreditation requirements with regards to the law libraries’ collections. The failure
of accreditation by any institution or faculty means loss of confidence by students, parents and
the general public in the university concerned. According to National Universities Commission
(1989), in any faculty of law accreditation exercise, if all the facilities, equipment and personnel
are put in place and are adequate, but the law library collections are inadequate, the academic
programme must fail accreditation.

For National Universities Commission and Council of Legal Education to give a pass
mark or grant accreditation to any academic programme, the law library collections and/or
resources must match effectively and efficiently with all the courses being taught by the
department/faculty. This makes it necessary for law libraries to have collection development
policy that guides one in the selection and acquisition of law materials to ensure that materials
are geared towards the curriculum of the faculty.

No faculty law library can perform its functions satisfactorily without adequate funds.
According to Nwangwu (2000), underfunding has been a serious problem facing university
education in Nigeria. Underfunding may create the problem of back-log of materials in
acquisition of law journals which may be difficult for faculty law libraries to fill in the future.
There is also the problem of foreign exchange. Most of the law books are authord and published abroad, and usually law libraries find it difficult to acquire them because of the problems associated with foreign exchange. The National Universities Commission and Council of Legal Education has provided university law libraries’ collections standards. National Universities Commission’s emphasis lies more on requirements to enable students to pass their first degree (LL.B) while Council of Legal Education’s emphasis covers all law programmes up to Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.)

While studies by researchers such as Khan and Bhatti (2012), Tuhumwire and Okello-Obura (2010) and Thanuskodi (2012) have dealt into issues of legal information needs and seeking behaviours of law library users, the aspect of law journal collections: an accreditation issues in faculty of law of Nigerian Universities appears not to have been explored. A study in this important area with reference to South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria seems to be non existent. This is the motivation for this study and the gap in body of knowledge in legal literature that it intends to fill.

**Research Questions:**

The following research questions guided the study.

* To what extent have faculty law libraries in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria developed their local law journals collections, (an accreditation requirement), based on the Council of Legal Education standards?

* What is the extent of the development of foreign law journals collections (an accreditation requirement), in faculty law libraries in universities South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria based on the Council of Legal Education standards?

**Review of Related Literature:**

Libraries have passed through series of historical development. During the developmental process, various kinds of definitions have been given to library in consonance with its original purpose. According to Olanlokun and Salisu (1993), library is a place entrusted
with the acquisition, organization, preservation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information in whatever format it might appear.

A law library is a library designed to assist law students, attorneys, judges and their clients and any one who finds it necessary to correctly determine the state of the law. Law libraries have been recognized as the ‘heart’ of every law faculty in every university. It is the pivot on which the faculties of law revolve for attainment of their educational excellence, goals and objectives. To achieve the above objectives, law libraries must strive to build adequate law collections that are adequate in both quality and quantity.

Collection is the sum total of the materials a library has at a particular time. Collection involves discovering weak areas of the collection that need to be empowered as well as the strong areas that need to be evaluated with a view to reaffirming their relevance in satisfying users demands (Dunu and Onwuama, 2006). Ezema (2004), explained that collection refers to the size of materials in terms of volumes a library has in its possession at a time noting that the collection may include books in various subjects and recreational reading, reference books, periodicals, pamphlets, documents and manuscripts, and archival materials.

Kotso (2007), argued that the need for standard collection for the law libraries in terms of quality and quantity cannot be over emphasized. He further said that they must have the depth of the subject of law as well as the disciplinary diversities. Other issues related to a standard law collection focus on how current and how relevant they (journals) are. The quantity should be such that the library users should not have to struggle before they can get the books to use. Tuyo (2006), said that a law library that intends to be relevant in any academic institution must ensure that its collections are adequate.

Accreditation, according to National Universities Commission (1989), is the tool used around the world to monitor, assess, and evaluate the standards and quality of education a student receive at a college, university or other institution of higher learning. Accreditation, according to American Psychological Association (2009), is both a status and a process. As a status, accreditation provides public notification that an institution or programme meets standards of quality set forth by an accrediting agency, the institution or programme is committed to self study and external review by one’s peers in seeking not only to meet standards but to continuously seek ways in which to enhance the quality of education and training. It is to determine if the particular programme, discipline or sub-discipline to be accredited in the
university has in all respect met the approved Minimum Academic Standards. It is only through the process of accreditation that new students, returning students, and families of students can trust that the education they are paying for is valuable and worth their time, money and effort. Accreditation status indicates that a college, university, or programme meets the standards of quality set by the accreditation organization in terms of faculty, curriculum, administration, libraries, financial well-being, and student services.

The National Universities Commission (as cited in Akomolafe, 2009) stated that the objectives of accreditation of academic programmes in Nigerian universities are to ensure that at least the provision of Minimum Academic Standards documents are attained, maintained and enhanced. It is also to assure employers and other members of the community that Nigerian graduates of all academic programmes have attained an acceptable level of competency in their areas of specialization. International communities are assured that the programmes offered in Nigerian universities are of high standards and their graduates are adequate for employment and for further studies.

For any accreditation exercise to be successful and approved, it must follow a set standard. There are standards in law libraries’ management which covers the collections, staffing, physical structure, security, funding, services and others. Tuyo (2007), said that the Council of Legal Education, mindful of the importance of a standard law library made it an important condition that a faculty of law must have a separate standard law library before accrediting the law faculty. The library building’s layout should be such that would make administration of the library easy and efficient. Photocopying facilities, for example, should be in place, easily accessible to the users without it being too close to the entrance for security reasons, and the fees charged should also be affordable to the students.

There should be standards in classification and arrangement of materials for easy dissemination. On this, the Council of Legal Education recommended the use of a standard and common classification scheme – Moys Classification Scheme for all law libraries in Nigeria. This makes for uniformity of arrangement and easy dissemination of materials. The sitting arrangement should be such that it would be close to the collections on the shelves. The tables and chairs should be durable as well as being comfortable. It is the opinion of Tuyo (2007), that since we are now in the IT age, that time has come for the law libraries to be connected to a
Internet network whereby interested readers should have access not only when they are in the library but also when they are outside the library.

The National Universities Commission which is the regulatory body and clearing house for universities in Nigeria has stressed the importance of good and adequate staffing in her approved document which seeks to set uniform standards for law libraries, both in terms of staffing and holdings (National Universities Commission, 1989). Marafa (2001), stated that for a law librarian, academic and professional qualification are important factors that would facilitate the execution of professional responsibilities from a position of strength… The librarian should be a hybrid professional – a lawyer and a librarian. Harrison (as cited in Idowu, 2006), said that the best stocked library in the world cannot give an efficient and comprehensive service to its users if it does not at the same time possess a keen efficient and highly trained staff capable of exploiting the stock to its fullest advantage.

It is one of the requirements of the NUC that every law faculty should have a law library which is separate, and distinct from any other library the university may have (National Universities Commission, 1989). It is also the provision of the Council of Legal Education that the law faculties be housed in their own physical facilities (Council of Legal Education, 2002). The law library in the same way should be distinct from the main library and other campus libraries. This is one of the major requirements for accreditation of a law faculty by the Council of Legal Education.

The American Bar Association (ABA) standards require that the law library should have sufficient autonomy to direct the growth and development of the library collections, and that the Dean of the law school and the library director determine the law library policies in consultation with the faculty, (ABA, n.d.). This requirement also applies to Council of Legal Education in Nigeria.

The law library should be well funded to enable for adequate law collections, as it is not possible to discuss the issue of the holdings of the law library collection without relating it to funding of the library and to autonomy, either partial or full. Idowu (2006), is of the opinion that no matter what standards are being set for the composition of materials, the flow of adequate funding is paramount. Some measure of autonomy on the part of the law librarian to make decisions on what to acquire and how to acquire them should be a settled matter in all universities. A situation whereby unsolicited or unimportant materials, Idowu (2006), said are
acquired and stocked to gather dust should no longer be allowed to exist in our law libraries. Adequate funding is a sine qua non to an effective law library management.

To achieve these standards requires a lot of funds. Tuyo (2007), suggested that the budget for the law library should be added to the budget of the faculty in order to achieve these standards. This would ensure that the faculty would have control in the acquisition of law materials for the library. Tuyo (2007), also argued that where the budget of the law library is subsumed into the overall budget of the university library, there is the likelihood that the faculty library would not be able to acquire most of the materials it is expected to acquire for it to discharge its primary assignment of rendering up-to-date services to the faculty members and the students.

**Purpose of the Study:**
The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which university law libraries in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria developed their:

* Local Law Journal collections; and
* Foreign Law Journal collections, (accreditation requirements) based on the Council of Legal Education standards.

**Methodology:**
The design of the study was descriptive survey. The survey was carried out in the universities of the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria and in those universities offering law programmes. They are, Abia State University Law Library, Uturu; Anambra State University Law Library, Igbariam Campus; Ebonyi State University Law Library, Abakaliki; Enugu State University of Science and Technology Law Library, Agbani Campus; Imo State University Law Library, Owerri; Nnamdi Azikiwe University Law Library, Awka and University of Nigeria Law Library, Enugu Campus. The population of this study was the seven Faculty law libraries in the South East zone of Nigeria.

The instrument for data collection was the check list provided by the Council of Legal Education as accreditation bench mark. The check list contained 119 titles of Law Journals (local and foreign) which were regarded as core titles by the Council of Legal Education. The
researcher personally visited the university law libraries within the area of the study with the authenticated check list and checked the collections against the check list. The check list was used to crosscheck the journal collections of every faculty law library within the area of the study. Every law journal title listed in the check list was checked against all the law libraries’ serials catalogue, author/title and subject catalogues, the checklist catalogues and the accessions registers to verify if the journal title was listed among the holdings of the law library.

During the checking, a title was ticked “YES” if found in the library and “NO” if not found. The data that were obtained from the study were analysed using descriptive statistic. The simple percentage (%) was used to obtain the percentage of collections owned by each law library, and this was done by finding the percentage of the journal titles available or observed, from the expected journal titles (CLE standards) for each law library.

The following 5 point scale were used to arrive at the extent/level of development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V.P.</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>0 – 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>21 – 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mod.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>41 – 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>61 – 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.G.</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>81 – 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Decision Rule:** Any law library which scored 70% and above was regarded as meeting the Council of Legal Education standards, while any law library which scored 69% and below was regarded as not meeting the Council of Legal Education standards. The mid point between 61 – 80 = 70 and this is the bench mark and pass mark required by both the National Universities Commission and the Council of Legal Education for passing accreditation for law programme.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:**

**Research Question 1:**

*To what extent have university law libraries in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria developed their local law journals collections, (an accreditation requirement), based on the Council of Legal Education standards?*

**Table 1: Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Development of Law Journals (local) in the Faculty Law Libraries**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>Expected Number</th>
<th>Available Number</th>
<th>Percentage Availability</th>
<th>Extent of Availability</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>ABSU</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37.50</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>ASU</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.43</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>EBSU</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>42.86</td>
<td>Mod</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>ESUT</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>V.P.</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>IMSU</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>V.P.</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>NAU</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>Mod</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>UNEC</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>56.36</td>
<td>Mod</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1:** Bar Chart showing Percentage Availability of Legal Journals
Resources - Law Journals (local) in the Faculty Law Libraries in South East Nigeria

Research Question 2:
What is the extent of the development of foreign law journals collections (an accreditation requirement) in faculty law libraries in universities South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria based on the Council of Legal Education standards?

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Development of Foreign Law Journals in the Faculty Law Libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>Expected Number</th>
<th>Available Number</th>
<th>Percentage Availability</th>
<th>Extent of Availability</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>ABSU</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20.31</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>ASU</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>V.P.</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>EBSU</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>39.06</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>ESUT</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>V.P.</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>IMSU</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>V.P.</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>NAU</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>V.P.</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>UNEC</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>46.88</td>
<td>Mod</td>
<td>Below Standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings and Discussions:

Table 1 showed that none of the law libraries in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria met the Council of Legal Education standards in local law journals. The results also showed that some law libraries in the zone have more collections of local journals than the others. The collections in ABSU (37.50%), EBSU (42.86%), NAU (50%) and UNEC (56.36%) were more than those of ASU (21.43%), ESUT (0%) and IMSU (3.57%). The above differences also showed that while EBSU, NAU and UNEC have moderately developed collections of local law journals, ABSU and ASU have poorly developed collections, and ESUT and IMSU have very poorly developed collection.

Table 2 that none of the law libraries in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria met the Council of Legal Education standards in foreign law journals collection. The results showed that some law libraries in the zone have more collections of foreign law journals than the others. The collections in ABSU (20.31%), EBSU (39.06%) and UNEC (46.88%) were more than those
of ASU (4.69%), ESUT (6.25%), IMSU (4.69%) and NAU (18.75%). The above result also showed that while UNEC have moderately developed collections of foreign law journals, ABSU and EBSU have poorly developed collections, and ASU, ESUT, IMSU and NAU have very poorly developed collections.

**Conclusion:**

None of the law libraries in the South East zone of Nigeria met the Council of Legal Education accreditation standards in both local and foreign law journals. The findings have thrown light in the adequacy of information needs and materials reflecting the curricula of the courses being taught in our law faculties. It is also in line with Koleosho’s (2006) when he said that many law libraries are not really worth their salt because of various problems facing them as follows: lack of funds, unavailability of materials, size and status of staff, and services offered by the library.

**Recommendations:**

The following recommendations were made.

- Law libraries should draw up acquisitions policy to guide them in the selection and acquisition of books/journals.
- Serious efforts should be made by law librarians to comply with the Council of Legal Education bench mark in the selection and purchase of law books.
- As new editions and revised editions of standard law books/journals are published, Council of Legal Education should include them in the standard list.
- Periodic assessment of the collections by the regulatory bodies should be ensured to enable law libraries to improve in their collections.
- Collections should match with the curricula of the faculties.
• Efforts should be made to adequately fund the law libraries to enable them purchase the recommended core and other relevant materials.

• Law library accreditation minimum requirements should from time to time be reviewed and revised so as to increase or include important materials published newly or after the release of the minimum standards.

**References:**


Nigerian Links, 2 (2).


http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/786.


