

Public And Private Law Textbooks Collections: Accreditation Issues And Imperatives For Law Libraries

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the development of public and private law textbook collections in the law libraries South East Universities in relation to the Council of Legal Education standards. The scope consisted of 163 titles of local and foreign public and private law textbooks listed by Council of Legal Education as accreditation benchmark and involve seven law faculty libraries in the universities South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria that offer law programme. The instrument for data collection was the standard check list released by Council of Legal Education. This check list was found appropriate and was adopted for this study. Two research questions were formulated for the study. The findings showed that only two law libraries in the South East Geographical zone of Nigeria, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (NAU) and University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus (UNEC) met the Council of Legal Education accreditation standards in Law of Evidence and Law of Contract respectively in Public and Private Law textbook collections. Recommendations were made which include among others, the need for periodic assessment of the collections by the regulating bodies to ensure improved collections.

Keywords: Law library, library collections, accreditation issues, standards, public and private law books, Council of Legal Education.

Introduction

Law library is a library designed to assist law students, attorneys, judges and their clients and anyone else who finds it necessary to correctly determine the state of the law. A law library, according to Ukpahan and Afolabi (2011), is a collection of legal information organized for use of those seeking to qualify as or who have qualified as Lawyers, and those enacting or administering law. The contents of a law library are broadly divided into two, namely, primary and secondary sources. Primary sources consist of books that contain the law itself. They include Acts of Parliament, Gazettes, Reports of Cases, digests, books of law rather than books on law. Secondary sources include treatises, commentaries, journals and other type of publication which are about law and are not in themselves sources of legal authority. They include textbooks, encyclopedia, casebooks, practice books and periodicals.

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.

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). During accreditation exercise of any faculty of law programme, the law library plays significant and prominent role in assessing and judging the faculty. In building a law library collection, 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.

In order to put in place an adequate library for any academic programme, there must be adequate funding by the university. According to Nwangwu, (2000) under-funding has been a serious problem facing university education in Nigeria. The Council of Legal Education has provided university law libraries' collections standards. Both National Universities Commission and Council of Legal Education laid emphasis on accreditation requirements. While National Universities Commission's emphasis was on the requirements to enable students pass their first degree (LL.B), the Council of Legal

Education's emphasis covers all law programmes up to the Doctorate degree (Ph. D). They both stressed on the provisions of certain collections which are mandatory requirement for a successful accreditation. To ensure that faculty law libraries meet the accreditation requirements, the standard list of the law library minimum requirements was released by the Council of Legal Education. The list covered the laws and statutes (local and foreign), law journals (local and foreign), law reports (local and foreign) and law text books (local and foreign).

While studies by researchers such as Tuhumwire and Okello-Obura (2010), Thanuskodi (2012) and Khan and Bhatti (2012) have dealt into issues of legal information needs and seeking behaviours of law library users, the aspect of 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 seems to be nonexistent. 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.

- What is the extent of the development of public law textbook (local and foreign) collections based on the Council of Legal Education standards in faculty law libraries in universities in South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria?
- To what extent have faculty law libraries in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria developed their private law textbook (local and foreign) collections, an accreditation requirement by the Council of Legal Education?

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, according to Ukpanah and Afolabi (2011) is a collection of legal information organized for use of those seeking to qualify as, or who have qualified as, lawyers and those enacting or administering law. It is the pivot on which the faculties of law revolve for attainment of their educational excellence, goals and objectives. It is imperative that 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. 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. Collections involve 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).

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) said 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.

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.

Accreditation 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. As a process, accreditation reflects that in achieving recognition by the 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 (American Psychological Association, 2009).

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. On law library building, 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.

The National Universities Commission (1989) Approved Minimum Standards in Law for all Nigerian Universities stated that "every law faculty should have a law library which is separate, and distinct from any other library that the university may have". It went on to recommend that the law library should be a completely separate building or at least one or two floors of a library complex. It is also the provision of the Council of Legal Education that the law faculties be housed in their own physical facilities. 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.

There should be standard in classification and arrangement of materials for easy dissemination. This involves the use of a common and standard classification scheme - Moys Classification Scheme, by all law libraries in Nigeria. This brings for uniformity of arrangement of materials in all the law libraries.

Equally covered by the standard is the sitting arrangement which should be such that it would be close to the collections on the shelves. It is also recommended that the library should be air-conditioned but where this could not be afforded, a well ventilated accommodation without compromising on security. The table and chairs provided should be durable as well as being comfortable. In addition, as we are in the IT age, Tuyo (2007) said that time has come for the law library to be connected to a network whereby interested readers would have access not only when they are in the library but also when they are outside the library.

To achieve these standards requires a lot of funds. Tuyo (2007) suggested that to achieve these standards, the budget for the law library should be added to the budget of the faculty. 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.

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:

- Public Law textbooks (local and foreign) collections; and
- Private Law textbooks (local and foreign) 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 the 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 125 titles of Public law textbooks (local and foreign) and 38 titles of Private law textbooks (local and foreign) which were regarded as core titles by the Council of Legal Education. The researchers 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 collections of every faculty law library within the area of the study. Every public and private law textbook title listed in the check list was checked against all the law libraries' author/title and subject catalogues, the checklist catalogues and the accessions registers to verify if such 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 titles available or observed, from the expected titles (CLE standards) for each law library.

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

V.P.	Very Poor	0 - 20%
P.	Poor	21 - 40%
Mod.	Moderate	41 - 60%
G.	Good	61 - 80%
V.G.	Very Good	81 - 100%

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 and 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

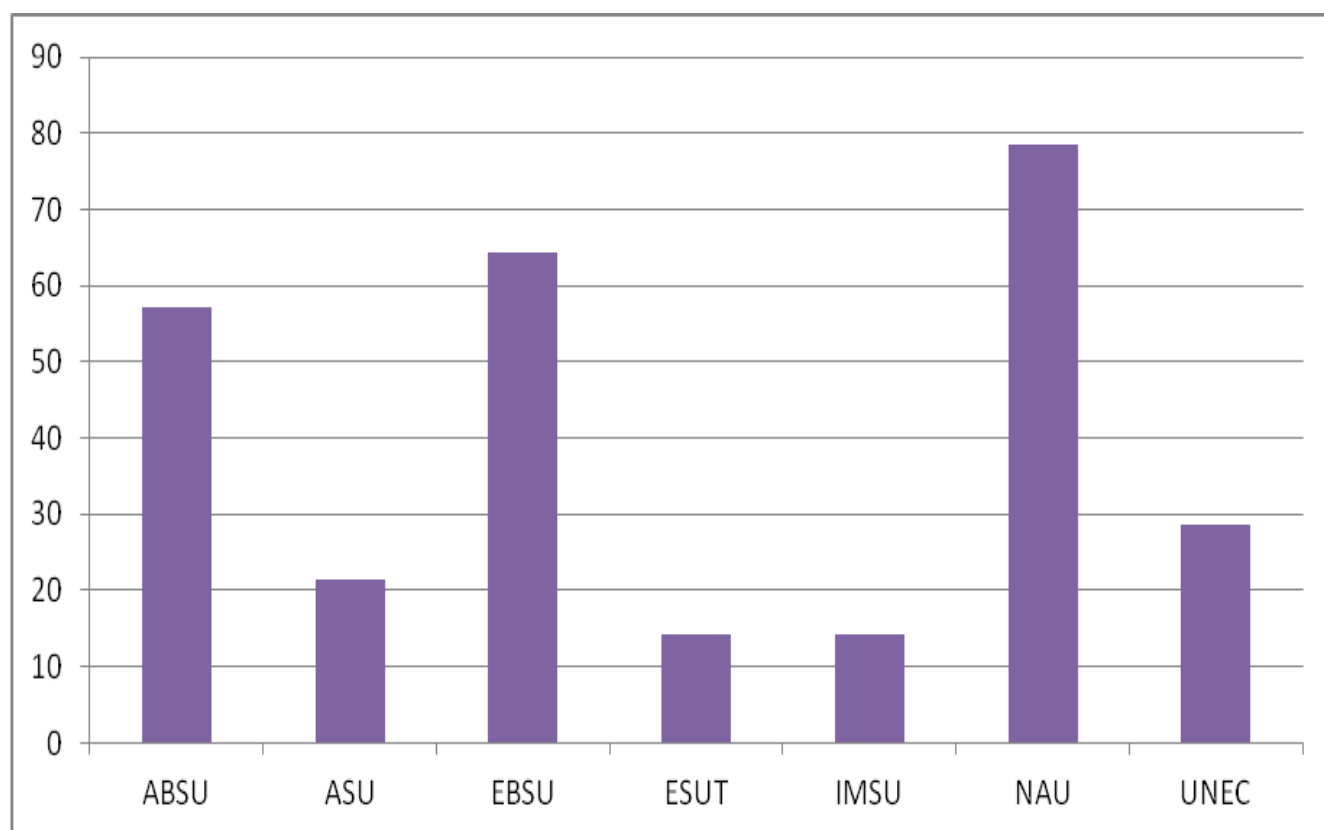
What is the extent of the development of public law textbook (local and foreign) collections based on the Council of Legal

Education standards in faculty law libraries in universities South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria?

Tables 1 - 4 were used to answer the above research question.

Table 1: Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Development of Law of Evidence texts (local & foreign) in the Faculty Law Libraries

LAW OF EVIDENCE TEXTS (LOCAL AND FOREIGN)						
S/No	Universities	Expected Number	Available Number	Percentage Availability	Extent of Availability	Decision
1	ABSU	14	8	57.14	Mod	Below Standard
2	ASU	14	3	21.43	.P	Below Standard
3	EBSU	14	9	64.29	G	Below Standard
4	ESUT	14	2	14.29	V.P	Below Standard
5	IMSU	14	2	14.29	V.P	Below Standard
6	NAU	14	11	78.57	G	Above Standard
7	UNEC	14	4	28.57	P	Below Standard

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

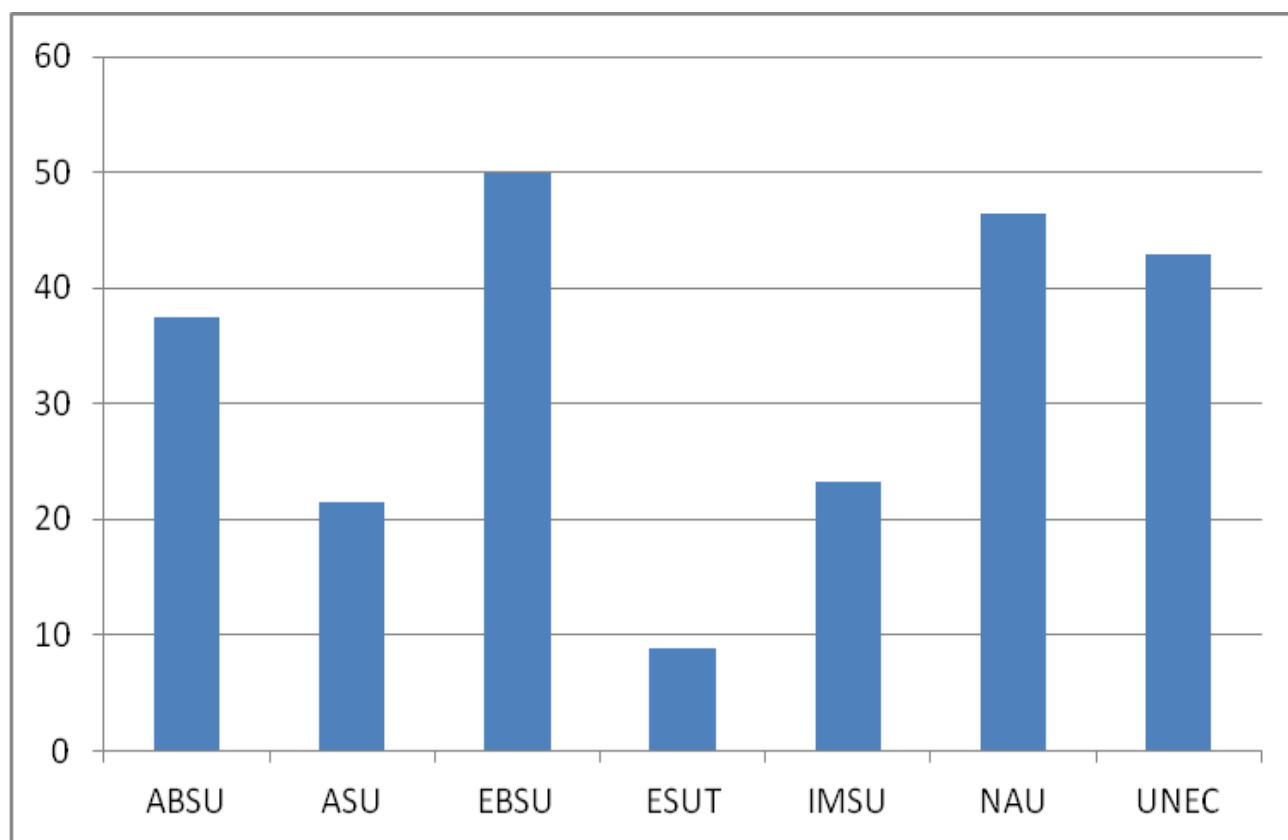
Findings and Discussions

It can be deduced from Table 1 that only NAU law library in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria met the Council of Legal Education standards in Law of Evidence texts (local and foreign) collections. However, the result showed that some law libraries have more collections of Law of Evidence texts collections than the others. The collections of ABSU (57.14%),

EBSU (64.29%) and NAU (78.57%) were more than those of ASU (21.43%), ESUT (14.29%), IMSU (14.29%) and UNEC (28.57%). The above differences also showed that while EBSU and NAU have good developed collections; ABSU has moderately developed collections; ASU and UNEC have poorly developed collections; and IMSU and ESUT have very poorly developed collections.

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Development of Criminal Law texts (local & foreign) in the Faculty Law Libraries

CRIMINAL LAW TEXTS (LOCAL AND FOREIGN)						
S/No	Universities	Expected Number	Available Number	Percentage Availability	Extent of Availability	Decision
1	ABSU	57	21	37.5	P	Below Standard
2	ASU	57	12	21.43	P	Below Standard
3	EBSU	57	28	50	Mod	Below Standard
4	ESUT	57	5	8.93	V.P.	Below Standard
5	IMSU	57	13	23.21	P.	Below Standard
6	NAU	57	26	46.43	Mod	Below Standard
7	UNEC	57	24	42.86	Mod	Below Standard

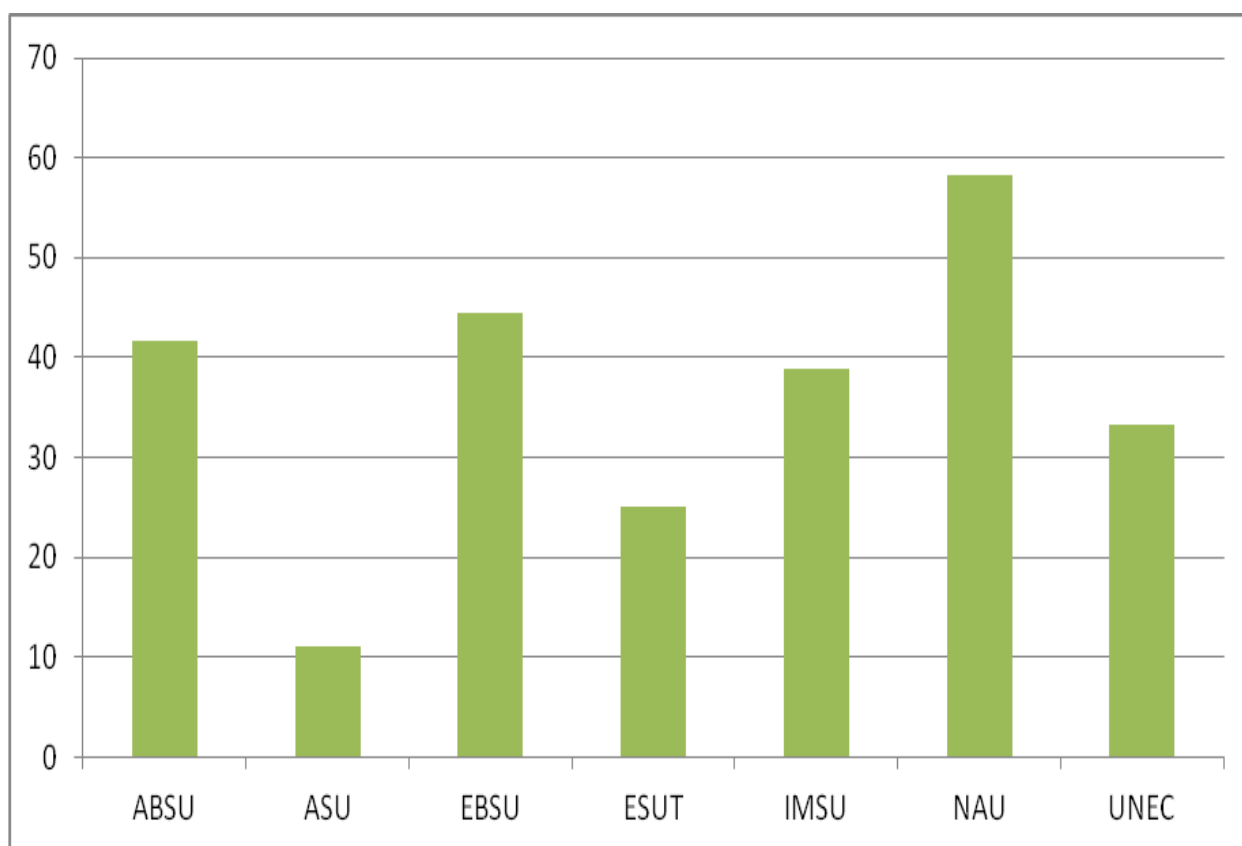
**Figure 2:** Bar Chart showing Percentage Availability of Legal Resources - Criminal Law texts (local and foreign) in the Faculty Law Libraries in South East Nigeria

It can be deduced from Table 2 that none of the law libraries in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria met the Council of Legal Education standards in Criminal Law texts (local and foreign) collections. However, the result showed that some law libraries have more collections of Criminal Law texts than the others. The collections of EBSU (50.00%), NAU (46.43%)

and UNEC (42.86%) were more than those of ABSU (37.50%), ASU (21.43%), ESUT (8.93%) and IMSU (23.21%). The above differences also showed that while EBSU, NAU and UNEC have moderately developed collections, ABSU, ASU and IMSU have poorly developed collections and ESUT has very poorly developed collections.

Table 3: Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Development of Constitutional Law texts (local & foreign) in the Faculty Law Libraries

CONSTITUTION LAW TEXTS (LOCAL AND FOREIGN)						
S/No	Universities	Expected Number	Available Number	Percentage Availability	Extent of Availability	Decision
1	ABSU	36	15	41.67	Mod	Below Standard
2	ASU	36	4	11.11	V.P	Below Standard
3	EBSU	36	16	44.44	Mod	Below Standard
4	ESUT	36	9	25	P.	Below Standard
5	IMSU	36	14	38.89	P.	Below Standard
6	NAU	36	21	58.33	Mod	Below Standard
7	UNEC	36	12	33.33	P	Below Standard

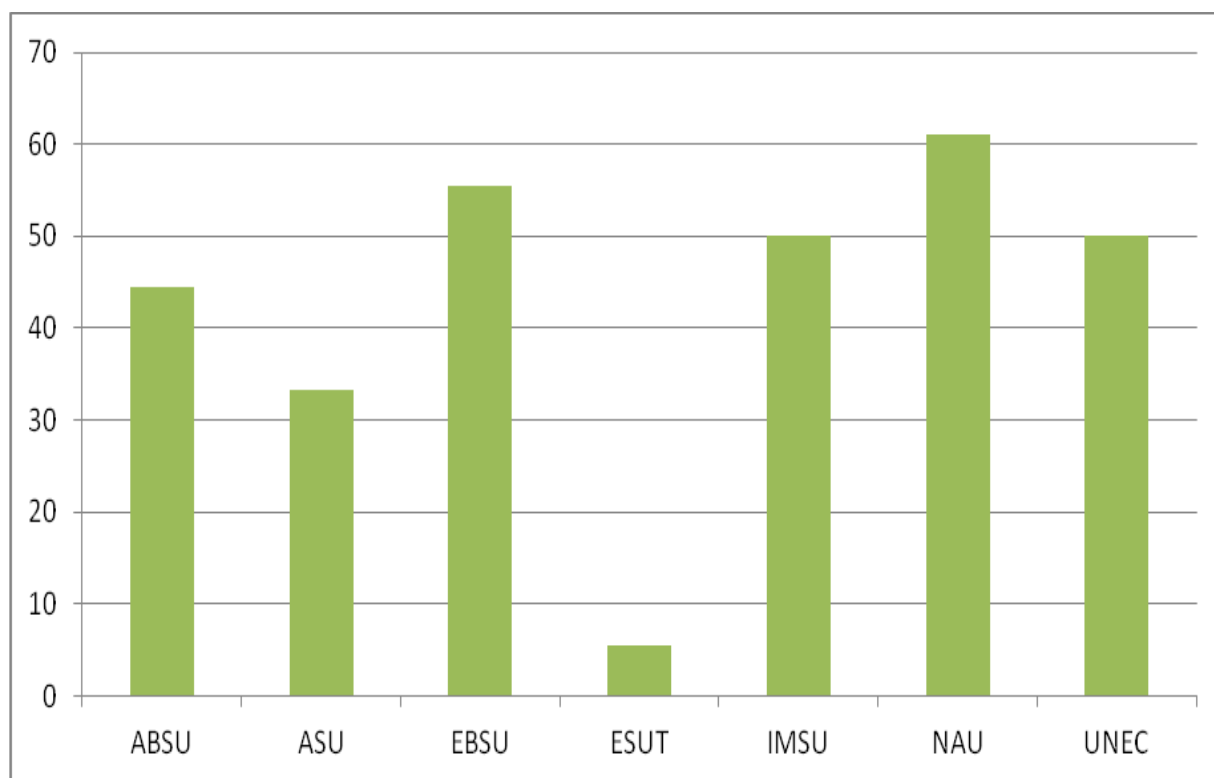
**Figure 3:** Bar Chart showing Percentage Availability of Legal Resources - Constitutional Law texts (local and foreign) in the Faculty Law Libraries in South East Nigeria

It can be deduced from Table 3 that none of the law libraries in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria met the Council of Legal Education standards in Constitutional Law texts (local and foreign) collections. However, the result showed that some law libraries have more collections of Constitutional Law texts than the others. The collections of ABSU (41.67%),

EBSU (44.44%) and NAU (58.33%) were more than those of ASU (11.11%), ESUT (25.00%), IMSU (38.89%) and UNEC (33.33%). The above results also showed that while ABSU, EBSU and NAU have moderately developed collections, ESUT, IMSU and UNEC have poorly developed collections and ASU has very poorly developed collections.

Table 4: Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Development of Law of Equity and Torts texts (local & foreign) in the Faculty Law Libraries

LAW OF EQUITY AND TORTS TEXTS (LOCAL AND FOREIGN)						
S/No	Universities	Expected Number	Available Number	Percentage Availability	Extent of Availability	Decision
1	ABSU	18	8	44.44	Mod	Below Standard
2	ASU	18	6	33.33	.P	Below Standard
3	EBSU	18	10	55.56	Mod	Below Standard
4	ESUT	18	1	5.56	V.P.	Below Standard
5	IMSU	18	9	50	Mod	Below Standard
6	NAU	18	11	61.11	G	Below Standard
7	UNEC	18	9	50	Mod	Below Standard

**Figure 4:** Bar Chart showing Percentage Availability of Legal Resources - Law of Equity and Torts texts (local and foreign) in the Faculty Law Libraries in South East Nigeria.

It can be deduced from Table 4 that none of the law libraries in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria met the Council of Legal Education standards in Law of Equity and Torts texts (local and foreign) collections. However, the result showed that some law libraries have more collections of Law of Equity and Torts texts collections than the others. The collections of ABSU (44.44%), EBSU (55.56%), IMSU (50.00%), UNEC (50.00%) and NAU (61.11%) were more than those of ASU (33.33%) and ESUT (05.56%). The above differences also showed that while NAU has good developed collections; ABSU, EBSU, IMSU and UNEC have moderately developed

collections; ASU has poorly developed collections; and ESUT has very poorly developed collections.

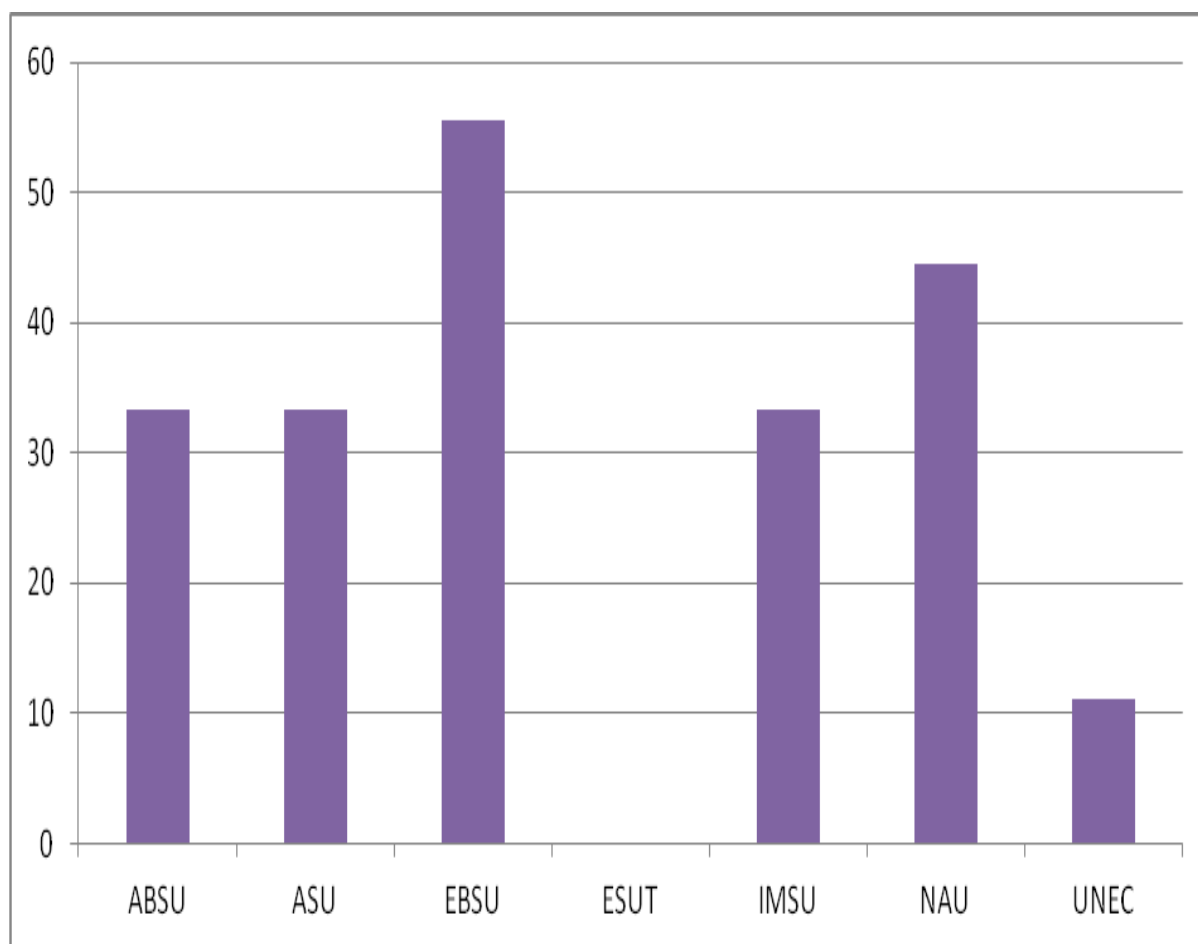
Research Question 2:

To what extent have faculty law libraries in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria developed their private law textbooks (local and foreign) collections, an accreditation requirement by the Council of Legal Education?

Tables 5 - 7 were used to answer the above research question.

Table 5: Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Development of Labour Law texts (local and foreign) in the Faculty Law Libraries

LABOUR LAW TEXTS (LOCAL AND FOREIGN)						
S/No	Universities	Expected Number	Available Number	Percentage Availability	Extent of Availability	Decision
1	ABSU	9	3	33.33	P	Below Standard
2	ASU	9	3	33.33	P	Below Standard
3	EBSU	9	5	55.56	Mod	Below Standard
4	ESUT	9	0	0	V.P.	Below Standard
5	IMSU	9	3	33.33	P	Below Standard
6	NAU	9	4	44.44	Mod	Below Standard
7	UNEC	9	1	11.11	V.P.	Below Standard

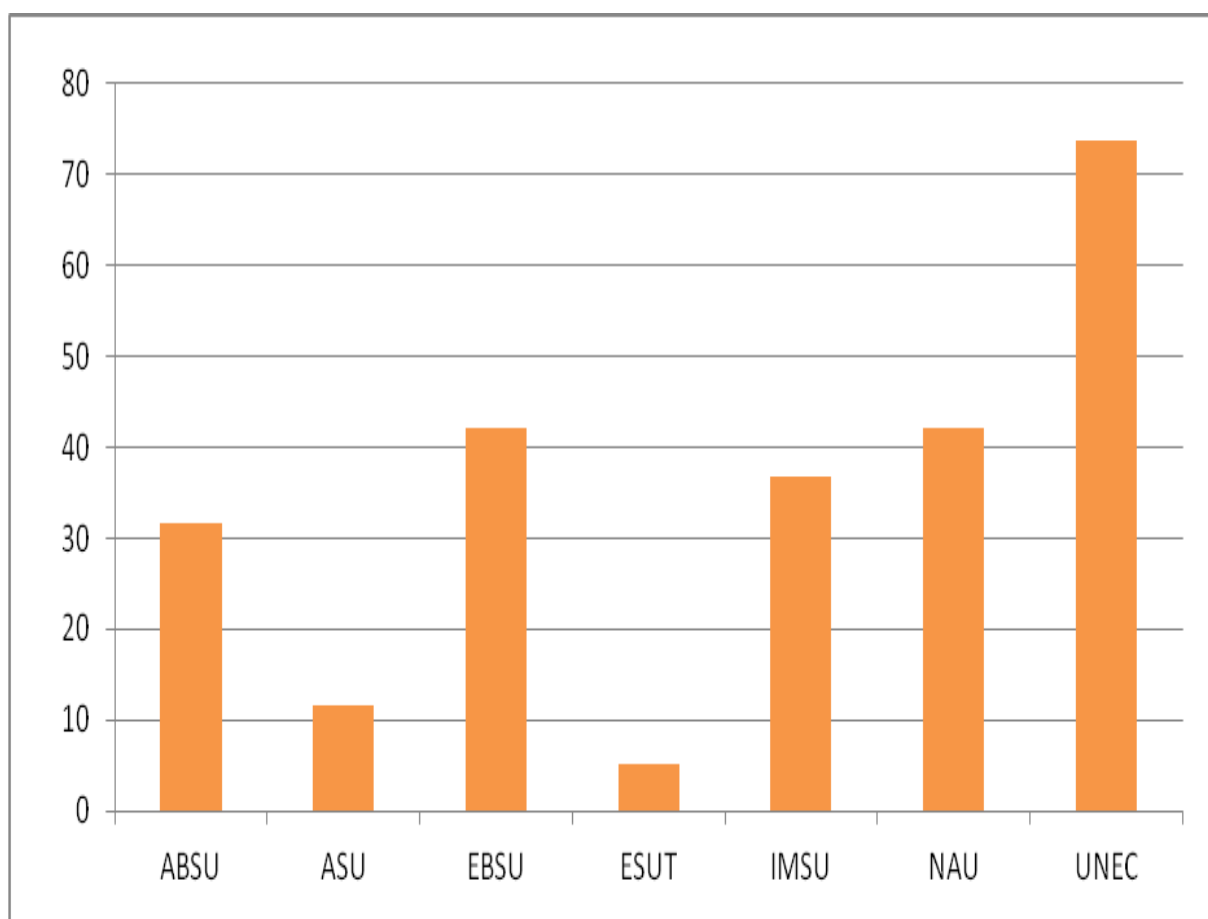
**Figure 5:** Bar Chart showing Percentage Availability of Legal Resources - Labour Law texts (local and foreign) in the Faculty Law Libraries in South East Nigeria.

It can be deduced from Table 5 that none of the law libraries in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria met the Council of Legal Education standards in Labour Law texts (local and foreign) collections. However, the result showed that some law libraries have more collections of Labour Law texts collections than the others. The collections of EBSU (55.56%)

and NAU (44.44%) were more than those of ABSU (33.33%), ASU (33.33%), ESUT (0.00%), IMSU (33.33%), and UNEC (11.11%). The above differences also showed that while EBSU and NAU have moderately developed collections; ABSU, ASU and IMSU have very poorly developed collections; and ESUT and UNEC have very poorly developed collections.

Table 6: Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Development of Law of Contract (local & foreign) in the Faculty Law Libraries

LAW OF CONTRACT TEXTS (LOCAL AND FOREIGN)						
S/No	Universities	Expected Number	Available Number	Percentage Availability	Extent of Availability	Decision
1	ABSU	19	6	31.58	P	Below Standard
2	ASU	19	2	10.53	V.P	Below Standard
3	EBSU	19	8	42.11	Mod	Below Standard
4	ESUT	19	1	5.26	V.P.	Below Standard
5	IMSU	19	7	36.84	P	Below Standard
6	NAU	19	8	42.11	Mod	Below Standard
7	UNEC	19	14	73.68	G.	Above Standard

**Figure 6:** Bar Chart showing Percentage Availability of Legal Resources - Law of Contract texts (local and foreign) in the Faculty Law Libraries in South East Nigeria

It can be deduced from Table 6 that only UNEC law library in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria met the Council of Legal Education standards in Law of Contract texts (local and foreign) collections. However, the result showed that some law libraries have more collections of Law of Contract texts collections than the others. The collections of UNEC (73.68%), EBSU (42.11%) and NAU (42.10%) were more than those of

ABSU (31.58%), ASU (10.53%), ESUT (05.26%) and IMSU (23.21%). The above differences also showed that while UNEC has good developed collections; EBSU and NAU have moderately developed collections; ABSU and IMSU have poorly developed collections; and ASU and ESUT have very poorly developed collections.

Table 7: Summary of Descriptive Analysis of Development of Family Law texts (local & foreign) in the Faculty Law Libraries

FAMILY LAW TEXTS (LOCAL AND FOREIGN)						
S/No	Universities	Expected Number	Available Number	Percentage Availability	Extent of Availability	Decision
1	ABSU	10	1	10.00	V.P	Below Standard
2	ASU	10	3	30.00	.P	Below Standard
3	EBSU	10	4	40.00	P	Below Standard
4	ESUT	10	1	10.00	V.P.	Below Standard
5	IMSU	10	2	20.00	V. P	Below Standard
6	NAU	10	5	50.00	Mod	Below Standard
7	UNEC	10	3	30.00	P	Below Standard

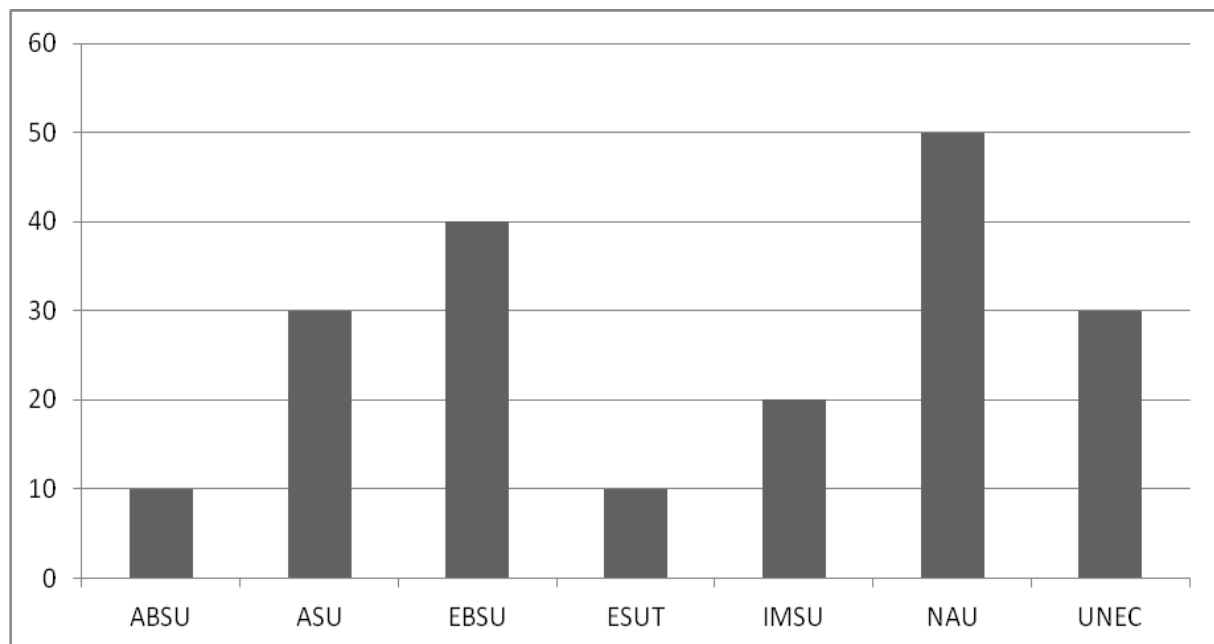
**Figure 7:** Bar Chart showing Percentage Availability of Legal Resources - Family law texts (local and foreign) in the Faculty Law Libraries in South East Nigeria

Table 7 showed that none of the law libraries in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria met the Council of Legal Education standards in Family Law texts (local and foreign) collections. The results showed that some law libraries in the zone have more collections of Family Law texts collections than the others. The collections in NAU (50.00%) were more than those of ABSU (10.00%), ASU (30.00%), EBSU (40.00%), ESUT (10.00%), IMSU (20.00%) and UNEC (30.00%). The above differences also showed that while NAU has moderately developed collections of Family Law texts collections, ASU, EBSU and UNEC have poorly developed collections, while ABSU, ESUT and IMSU have very poorly developed collections.

Conclusion

Only two of the law libraries in the South East zone of Nigeria, NAU and UNEC met the Council of Legal Education

accreditation standards in Law of Evidence and Law of Contract respectively in Public and Private Law textbook collections. These findings have thrown light in the adequacy and inadequacy of information materials reflecting the curricula of the courses being taught in our law faculties, (Onwudinjo, 2014).

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made.

- 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.
- 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.
- Law libraries should draw up acquisition policy to guide them in the selection and acquisition of books.

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