



## **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN LIBRARIES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study aims to explore the opportunities and challenges in the management of collection development policy in libraries. Collection development is considered a critical factor in the provision of adequate and relevant information resources in the library. In order to develop a balanced and un-bias collection, libraries formulate a policy that will serve the interest of the entire clientele. Collection development or acquisition librarians encounter challenges (both internal and external) in the process of formulating collection development policy. An extensive review of the relevant available literature on the concepts of collection development and collection development policy was made to conduct this study. The study found that acquisition librarians play a vital role in ensuring access to library information resources through the formulation of policies that guide them through this process. The study also discovered that while some libraries have written collection development policies, some have unwritten, and others do not have at all. A good number of literature consulted on the subject matter identified inadequate funding, internal and external interference, issues bordering on preservation, donations/gifts, vendors, intellectual property rights and inadequate knowledge of ICT as major impediments militating against the maintenance of balanced collection development policy. The study suggested adequate funding, adequate training and retraining of acquisition librarians in the areas of modern information technology as it relates to formulating guidelines for selecting electronic information resources and minimal interference from the libraries' parent organizations. Libraries and enjoyed to lobby their parent bodies for more funding and create avenues for internally generated revenue. The provides an overview of collection development policy issues and how they influence the management of the policy.*

**Keywords:** Management, Collection development policy, Libraries, Opportunities, Challenges



## **Introduction**

The history of library is as old as the history of mankind. Man has been known for his struggle to know the unknown. It was this eagerness to know the unknown that made man to go in search of information that was durable enough to be kept as permanent sources of knowledge to be transmitted from one generation to another. As information resources accumulated, there was the need for them to be housed in one place for the use of the intended users. The action of gathering the information resources for the use of users is referred to as collection development. Okolo, Eserada, Ugboh and Ngbo (2019) described collection as the sum total of all materials that make up a library. Therefore, library resources-whether made of clay, stone, palm leaves papyrus, bamboo strips, paper or digital devices, are collected for information, research and study requirement of the host communities.

The concepts collection development and collection development policy have been explored by several scholars of library and information science. This is because of the importance of collection development in ensuring adequate and balanced library resources. To collect is to take, receive or bring something together, especially of the same kind. The process or action of collecting or bringing something or items together can be termed as collection. Collection can also be seen as group of things, people or objects put together to serve certain purpose. Collection development is the process of acquiring books and other information resources for the information needs of the library patrons. It is the process of meeting library patron information needs by offering the right library items, replacing or repairing worn or lost items and creating policies and programs that involve the collection.

Ameyaw, Florence and Asante (2016) defined Collection Development as the process of making sure that the information needs of the people are met in a timely and economic manner using information resources that have been produced both within and outside the organization. It is the process by which the strength and weaknesses in the collection is ascertained-an exercise based on meaningful data, rather than subjective choice (Okogwu & Ekere, 2018). Collection development includes all activities involved in assessing the users' needs, evaluating the present collection, determining the selection policy, coordinating the selection of items, re-evaluating and storing parts of the collection and planning for resource sharing.

Collection development is the systematic building of library collections for the purpose of serving study, teaching, research, recreational, and other needs of library users. The process includes selection and deselection of current and retrospective materials, the planning of strategies for continuing acquisition, and evaluation of collections to determine how well they serve user needs (Mir, 2016). Ravikumara and Sawlan (2016) viewed collection development as an effective way of assessing users' needs and all the processes of selection, evaluation, weeding and resources sharing. The process of collection development involves planning and building collection that is useful over a period of time, taking into consideration users assessment of needs, analysis of usage statistics and demographic projections, which are normally constrained by budget limitations (Sisimwo, 2016). For the purposes of this study, collection development is the process of acquiring books, periodicals, documents, dissertations, maps, atlas... etc, and non-book materials such as slides, pictures, databases, electronic books etc., into the



library, either by purchase, gift or donation for the purpose of meeting the information needs of current and potential library users.

Collection development activities vary from one library to another. The type of exercise depends on the type of library. Public libraries are established to serve the generality of population regardless of age, religion, race, status or area of specialization. In such libraries the collection development librarian collects information resources that will cover every field of knowledge. The situation is not the same in academic libraries. In academic institutions such as colleges of education, polytechnics, or universities, collection development exercise focuses on the curricular activities of the institutions, since the libraries are established to support teaching learning and research of the institutions. In a nutshell, whether a library is academic, public, private or special, the purpose of the library determines the collection it keeps.

### **Collection Management**

Management is defined as an act of creating and maintaining an organization wherein the members of the organization can work together to achieve the mission and vision of the organization. It is not limited to the administration of people alone, rather it encompasses managing processes and operations, using the concept of '5M's, i.e. men, machine, material, money and methods to achieve the optimum goals of the organization or operation. Management has seven characteristics: universal, goal-oriented, continuous process, multi-dimensional, group activity, dynamic function and intangible force (Business Jargons, n.d.). Applying these characteristics to collection development, it is obvious that collection development is an activity that is carried out by all libraries in the world, regardless of jurisdiction. It is a global phenomenon that ensures all libraries grow their collection to meet the objectives of their parent bodies, hence the need for management of collection.

Of course, it is also goal-oriented. It is aimed at support the organization to achieve its aims and objectives. Collection must be a continuous process since the library is a growing organism. A static or an un-growing collection cannot serve the interest of the organization that establish it. The diversity of collection rests on the various types of libraries and subject disciplines. Every library owns its collection. The method of development collection depends on the type of library. Developing collection is an assiduous task. It requires librarians with objective minds and broad knowledge of subject areas. The success of the exercise depends on the caliber of the staff involved and honest division of labour.

### ***Collection Development Policy***

Policy is defined as an official authoritative statement of rules, judgments, decisions and guidelines that are used to define, describe, interpret and describe long-range objectives, intentions, functions and procedures; and guide and regulate activities of a group or organization (Patel, 2016). It is also defined as 'a set of ideas or plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed to officially by a group of people, a business organization, a government, or a political party' (Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary & Thesaurus, n.d.). Policies can be guidelines, rules, regulations, laws, principles, or directions. They say what is to be done, who is to do it, how it is to be done and for (or to) whom it is to be done (Food for Thought, n.d.). Collection development



policy is the document that defines the scope of a library's existing collections, plans for the continuing development of the resources, identifies collection strengths, and outlines the relationship between selection philosophy and the institution's goals, general selection criteria, and intellectual freedom (Okwu & Echem, 2019). It entails such steps as analyzing the information needs of the users; formulation and implementation of selection policy as it supports the objectives of the library; acquisition, resource sharing and evaluation (Patel, 2016).

Collection development policy should be the product of the library staff, the library committee and the users. The acquisition librarian cannot alone bear the burden of formulating the policy and managing it. The library committee drafts the policy with input from the entire library staff, inclusive of those in charge of information technology units. The library committee is vested with the responsibility of formulating the collection development policy. In academic libraries, the library committee is a very important organ of the academic council, though an adversary rather than administrative organ. There is no definite rule as to who should head the committee. In academic institutions such as universities, polytechnics and colleges of education, the committee may be chaired by vice chancellor, the rector or the provost, as the case may be. Delegation can be made to other senior members of the academic community to head the committee. In either case, members of the faculty and the bursary are appointed to sit in the committee. This is to ensure equitable distribution of information resources amongst the various departments.

Like membership of the committee, its functions depend on the institution involved. The general functions of the Library Committee are to:

1. guide the librarian in formulating general library policies and regulations which govern the functions of the library;
2. provide for proper documentation services and updating the library collection;
3. work towards modernization and improvement of library and documentation services;
4. formulate policies and procedures for efficient use of library resources;
5. review library readership department-wise;
6. adopt measures to enhance readership;
7. prepare budget and proposals for the development of the Library;
8. recommend to the authorities the fees and other charges for the use of the library
9. seek feedback on library functions from readers; and
10. submit the annual report on the functioning of the library (Functions of Library Committee, n.d.).

Collection development policy may be written or unwritten. Written collection development policy is preferred because when a number of persons set policy without written guidelines, slightly different views of the library's purpose emerges. Without written statements, the divergence of opinion creates confusion. With a policy statement, everyone has a central reference point. Flexible policy is recommended. This is to allow changes to be effected when the need arises. Certain steps are required for formulating a viable collection development policy. Some of them include: (a) setting the guidelines. The guidelines should answer the questions 'what is to be included in the policy?', 'who is to be consulted?', and 'how are the decisions to be made?' (b) Analyzing community



needs. Consulting the community of the library can be done through surveys and interviews. The community of the public library is the generality of the citizens in the community. It includes all the literate and the illiterate. While the literate is provided with reading materials, the illiterate can serve with pictorial resources or audio-visual materials on say, farming, trading opportunities, etc.

This type of library has a large community that must be consulted in order to formulate an all-encompassing policy. Academic libraries serve enlightened patrons. As such their community is the academic and non-academic departments. Special and private libraries usually have simple communities that can be reached easily. In any case, user needs assessment is as important as the policy itself. (c) Preparation of the draft document of users' needs. The result of the user assessment will be used to prepare a draft of the policy based on the suggestions obtained from the survey or interview. In the case of academic, special or private libraries, the draft document can be circulated to obtain confirmation of the correct representation of the input submitted by users. The guidelines/elements of the policy vary from one library to another. Generally, most libraries consider the following in their guidelines:

- a. *Mission statement*- of the library- the mission statement of the library is usually connected to the mission and vision of the parent institution. The mission statement is to guide selectors in selection of materials for the library. No policy statement can be definitive for all time, since a library is not a static institution. Innovation in information technology or modification in the curriculum of the institution can warrant a change of in mission statement. (Canadian Town Library, n.d.).
- b. *Purpose of the policy*- the motive behind the formulation of the policy, such as the provision of adequate and relevant information to all in the community of the library, the effect of information explosion, budgetary limitations, etc., which necessitate for policy guidelines for selection of useful materials that are cost effective to the organization, should be stated. An example of collection development policy provided by Chipola College library reads thus: "This policy is designed to guide the systematic growth and management of the Chipola College Library's collection of print, audio visual and electronic materials. Rising information costs, increased demand for a variety of dissemination formats and budgetary constraints require careful materials selection based on a thorough knowledge of the missions of both the Library and Chipola College" (Chipola College, n.d.).
- c. *Responsibility statement*-the policy should state who is responsible for selection of materials. In most libraries the librarian takes responsibility. Although he shares the responsibility with other staff (especially the acquisition librarian), he bears the ultimate responsibility of explaining the pattern of selection to the library committee or the general public.
- d. *Material selection*- selection is the process whereby the librarian, with the assistance of staff and other stakeholders choose from numerous for the information needs of the library patrons. Selection of library materials is important





in a library. The process comes after the information needs of the community must have been ascertained. In order to select relevant materials, the library follows the laid-down collection development policy. Selection is an important aspect of collection development. The effectiveness and efficiency of the library depend on the right selection of the library materials. Certain criteria are put in place to discover what potentially relevant items are available for selection, and selectors arm themselves with selection criteria to help them consider in a sound and systematic way whether each individual item should be selected or not (Business Jargons, n.d.). It requires a well-thought planning and knowledge of different publications on different subject areas through book reviews, selection of vendors of repute (it is advisable to deal with registered vendors, although the policy should specify conditions for return of unaccepted materials and or discontinuation of business with a vendor), knowledge of exchange rates, publishers' catalogues, bibliographies, brochures, users' requests, etc. The criteria to be considered include: authoritativeness of the author (i.e., the author's expertise) and publisher, content, price of the material, physical characteristic, indexing, whether or not it complements the existing collection, and most importantly, the budget at the disposal of the library. Materials supplied by vendors must be carefully checked against the order list.

- e. *Language*- of the material is also considered. In university or college libraries where foreign languages are taught, the selection will include materials on foreign languages. Religious institutions like churches and mosques may exclude materials that are "fundamentally antithetical to the Christian Faith" (Covenant University: Centre for Learning Resources (Canaan Town Library, n.d., p.12).
- f. *Censorship*- Selection is without partisanship regarding matters of race, sex, sexual preference, religion, or moral philosophy.
- g. *Duplication*- conditions for duplication of materials are to be stated. Duplication may occur with print and electronic resources. Collection development librarians avoid duplications when possible to allow for purchase of items not included in the collection and which are relevant to the mission of the library. But be that as it may, duplication is sometimes warranted either due to importance of the item, use, request by faculty, etc.
- h. *Format*-the policy will specify whether the library will go for paper edition of printed works or clothbound edition or both. Reference materials such as encyclopedias, handbooks and almanacs may or may not be purchased, depending on the type of library. Most libraries purchase reference materials because of their easy access to quick reference questions. The policy will also indicate the pattern of acquisition of periodicals such as journals, newspapers, etc., and in which format. Depending on the nature of library, conditions for acquiring books (authenticity of reporting, editorial board, etc.) can also be applied to serials. Some libraries do not go for out of print materials unless there is loss of copies or withdrawal due to poor physical condition. Other formats include audio-visual, electronic, online resources, etc. can



also be part of the policy for purchase if there is availability of funds. The emergence of information and communication technology has repositioned the resources and services that libraries offer. Today users like to browse through the internet for information resources. They expect libraries to subscribe to these resources. Digital information resources also have their collection development policies. Example of elements of such policies are Coverage of the policy, Selection personnel, Collection funding, Selection criteria, Duplication checks, Purchasing model preferences, Collection access and maintenance, Download ability, Reading devices, and Weeding (Xie, Krystyna, & Matusiak, 2016, p.3). relevancy of sources and material must be utmost priority of selectors. There are authentic and relevant information resources online that the library can subscribe to. A 2015 study by Benny on criteria for selecting e-resources, 'subject relevance' was rated 100%. (as cited in Xie et al, 2016, p. 4).

- i. *Gifts and donations*-gifts and donations are important part of library collection development. The policy must state conditions for collecting or accepting gifts and donations of books and other information resources. Generally, conditions such as duplication, appropriateness to the existing collection and the library mission, currency, shipment, as the case may be, no conditions attached to the donated material(s), etc., are usually stated in the acquisition policy. Money donations and the type of items to be purchased with such donations can also be specified. It is possible for a library to include source of the money as a re-condition for acceptance of money. There are solicited donations and unsolicited donations. Solicited donations implies that the library request for assistance from the donor (whether as an individual or cooperate organization). Gifts and donations are usually acknowledged. The right to dispose of gift/donated materials by the receiving library can also form part of the policy.
- j. *Legal deposit*-the policy will state how many copies of published materials by the institution should be deposited in the library. In academic libraries, faculty publications as well as students' theses and dissertations and undergraduate projects form part of legal deposit.
- k. *Interlibrary loan*-no library is self-sufficient in terms of collection because of limited budget. Interlibrary loan is a method whereby libraries exchange their resources with other libraries. Libraries specify in their policy whether or not to engage in interlibrary loans. Libraries that offer the same services and have identical patrons-academic, public, private or special libraries accept materials from each other as loans. Libraries are free to include conditions for acceptance of loans. Such conditions may include physical features of the materials, shipment issues, etc.
- l. *Copyright*-the policy will also state whether the library will comply with copy right provisions or not. Although copyright issues are issues that are of concern to all libraries, a statement about it must be included in the policy, especially the use of 'Fair Use' provisions which permits researchers the right to reproduce copyrighted works for the purpose of scholarship.



## **Collection Management**

Managing collection is as important as the collection itself and a vital component of collection development process. It is the process that covers collection development and decisions about withdrawal, cancelling, storage and preservation (Sisimwo, 2016). Collection management usually denotes the administrative responsibilities and tasks linked with collection development (Mehra, & Elder, 2018). Collection Management is the systematic evaluation of the collection designed to facilitate the repair or withdrawal of damaged, unused, or obsolete materials from the collection (ECRL, 2019). Without maintenance, collection development policy is a policy statement in principle. Therefore, collection management is a key factor in the implementation of collection development policy. It entails evaluating the existing (or the proposed) collection and considering how they meet users' needs. It includes delimiting the existing collection, discovering which items in the existing collections are the most popular, and which could be weeded, identifying or creating one or more "best lists" for items that could be included in the new collection; describing and commenting on the state of the collection (Mehra & Elder, 2018). Placing the items on shelf is not enough. The collection manager should constantly evaluate the resources against the current needs of the user community. This is important to keep the collection growing and current. This can be done through weeding, preservation, judicious use of library budget, resource sharing, etc.

**Weeding-** Weeding is the process of discarding materials that are no longer desired or transferring them to another part of the collection (for example, from the reference collection to circulation stacks). It is the process by which acquisition librarians remove, withdraw or move items from active areas of the collection to storage. The print collection is periodically reviewed to decide what can be withdrawn or relocated, especially if there are changes in institutional goals or programs, availability of electronic format of the same item, obsolescence, duplication, or space limitations. Regular weeding helps maintain a useful, current, and authoritative collection that supports the mission of the library.

Continuous replacement and withdrawal process helps libraries to keep up-to-date and attractive collection. When there is availability of newer editions or current demands, replacement becomes imperative. Weeding is the responsibility of the librarian. Withdrawn materials can be handled as donated materials. They can be donated to other libraries where may be useful (provided they are weeded on the condition of availability of newer editions). Some weeded materials that can be retained can be sent to technical or printing department for repairs. The policy must state what materials are to be weeded, who should do the weeding, when and how to weed, and what will happen to the weeded items.

Patel (2016) gave example of the statement of weeding thus: "Many works lose their value within one generation, say in twenty-five years. By that time, their thought-content of same may even turn out to be wrong. In a service library no useful purpose is served by retaining such pedestrian books and providing self-space for them after they have become obsolete. The proper course is to weed out periodically. They should give place to current variations" (p. 65). It is part of collection management to continue to search for lost books or books on loan that have been kept beyond overdue date. The policy specifies when such search should stop, and a replacement made for the lost item.





**Consortium/resource sharing**-it is an established fact that that no library, no matter how rich, can provide all the information resources needed by its clientele. In order to complement the meager resources being allocated to them, acquisition librarians engage in resource sharing. Resource sharing is a sort of arrangement among libraries whereby each library agrees to spare it resources to other participating libraries and vice versa. Resource sharing is an important aspect of collection management. The main objective of resources sharing is for a library to provide access to information resources that are not available in the library but can be found in other partner libraries to satisfy users' needs. With the advent of information communication technology, Resource sharing is made easy. Libraries can now form a Local Area Network (LAN), Wide Area Network (WAN), national or international network. However, cooperative acquisition can also assist in building collection. In this arrangement, each cooperating library purchases and keeps different kinds of resources for the benefit of all members. Users are directed to other libraries for items not found in their registered libraries.

**Library budget**-The word 'budget' is derived from the French word *bougette* which means purse (Mir, 2016, p.3443). Budget is a statement of financial plan which shows the estimated revenues and expenditures. Library budget is the financial allocation given to the library for the procurement of library resources and services. Libraries in agencies of government are funded by government through their parent organizations. Usually the librarian is asked to prepare the library budget. All financial engagement of the library will be incorporated in the budget. Private libraries are funded by individuals who established them. Library budget is to provide information about the revenue and expenditure of the library. It is the life wire of all library activities. It is common knowledge that libraries never get adequate finance for procurement and other library activities.

Whenever there is cut in budget of the parent organization, the library is the worst hit. The librarian is saddled with the responsibility of allocating the meager resources amongst different items such as books and other information resources. The librarian is guided by the library collection development policy. The library may have other sources of revenue such as overdue charges (for lending libraries), photocopying and binding services, organizing seminars and workshops, etc. it is important to note that library is not a revenue generating institution, rather it is a service institution. It requires adequate funding for its operations. The library can also solicit for grant. This can be in cash or kind. The grant can be used for other purposes, thereby reducing too much dependence on the budget.

**Preservation**- Preservation is the appropriate housing, protection, care and maintenance of archives, records and manuscripts. (Oluwaseun, Ottong, & Ottong, 2017). Preservation is everything which contributes to the physical well-being of library resources and it includes the protection, maintenance and restoration of library and archive information resources (Timothy, Dangwaran, & Oluwabunmi, 2017). It encompasses "all efforts and actions taken to elongate the lifespan of information material. The efforts for preservation may include planning, following principles and practices directed at preventing deterioration, or restoring damaged materials to a usable condition" (Oluwaniyi, 2015, p. 7). Preservation is also defined as "all managerial, technical and financial considerations applied to retard deterioration and extend the useful life of materials to ensure their

continued availability” (Walker as cited in T. Y. Project Work, 2018). Preservation is a vital element of collection development. As indicated above, it ensures that library materials remain useful perpetually. As such it forms part of collection development policy. There must be a statement specifying how to preserve deteriorated materials to ensure their continuous use. Preservation can be by photocopying, migration, refreshing, replication, encapsulation, emulation, etc. (Kelly, & O’Gara, 2018)). Digital resources are also preserved for future use.

### **Challenges and opportunities**

Collection development librarians encounter a lot of challenges in the process of formulating and implementing collection development policy. Budget shortage is the first major challenge for implementing an effective collection development policy. Libraries are the worst hit whenever the parent organization suffers budget cut. Often times you find items that are very relevant but not affordable. It is important to provide the librarian some level of discretion in the implementation of the CDP. The selection librarian should enforce internally-generated revenue like over dues and compensation for lost items. There is also for soliciting for grant to complement the shortfall in budget.

Another challenge is lack or inadequate skilled collection personnel. Collection development requires skilled personnel in selection, acquisition, computer operation, etc. (Jensen, 2017). Managing the e-resources without adequate skilled manpower is a challenging task for the librarians. The library staff needs different types of training as and when the new e-resources are acquired. Since the kind of e-resources available in the market is different and the technology is changing rapidly, the training of the staff is an ongoing process. If the library staff is not well versed with the available e-resources, they may not be in a position to assist the users in using the e-resources properly. Having a good collection of e-resources without enough skilled staff is wastage of money and space.

Unlike print materials, licensing agreement is very important for acquiring e resources. The license agreement of electronic resources is a complex issue that needs attention. The librarian should be able to identify the issues that need to be addressed while negotiating a contract. A well drafted license agreement is mandatory for the fair use of e-resources. Unfortunately, the present study revealed that the majority of the college libraries do not have a license agreement for e-resources (Benny, 2015). Information explosion poses another challenge. There is increased number of books published. Selection librarians are kept in a dilemma which information to select for which subject. This threat can be overcome by constant users’ needs assessment. The library will work only with the recommendations emanating from the users.

Other challenges include: increase in the cost of books and journals, security in library environment, problems related to check the reliability and authenticity of the digital information, control over the copy right act, availability of library materials in various physical medium, increased demand of the readers, fluctuation in the exchange rate, etc. to overcome these challenges, the librarian should always go for materials that are relevant and cost effective, depending on the budget, electronic security gadgets are preferred. The library can go for CCTV device to tract any threat of theft. It is advisable to emphasize on purchase on local but relevant resources when the exchange rates are high.



## **Conclusion**

Collection development in libraries is a very important exercise. Selection policies and practices play fundamental role in developing an un-bias collection that will serve the interest of clientele based on their requirement. Hence in order to develop the resources of the library in a more usable manner, users should be involved in the process of collection development. Developing an all-encompassing policy for selection is a herculean task. Aside the fact that it must keep with the mission and vision of the parent institution; it is a continuous and never-ending activity that requires never-ending flow of finances that is never achieved. Selection librarians should explore other means of generating revenue such as enforcement of overdue charges, soliciting for grants to complement library budget for improved services to their patrons.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that selection librarians ensure development and implement written collection development policy the can serve the information requirement of their users. The written document should always be evaluated to take care of changes in the mission and vision of the parent body. While the paper recommends for improved budgetary allocation to the library, selection librarians should explore other avenues to improve on their internally-generated revenue by engaging in little but important businesses such as photocopying and binding services, indexing and abstracting services, and soliciting for internal and external aid.

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