

APPLICATION OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY AS A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

By

ASOM FAGA

and

HINDAN HENRY TSEDOO

Abstract

Collection development involves evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of a library's collection and devising a strategy to address weaknesses while maintaining strengths. This article on the application of collection development policy as a tool for effective service delivery in University Libraries dwells on the concepts of Collection development which is the methodical construction of a library collection based on objective data rather than personal preference. The paper further looked at collection development policy as a purposefully formed set of values and directives by the library administration to improve the process of developing a collection for the library. In addition, the discussed the application of collection development policy as one of the most deliberated on but still not properly understood in the field of Library and information science. Despite its benefits as an internal library document to provide guidance to staff in the selection of resources, to assist with focus on user needs and to aid in the orientation of new staff, its application is not without constraints such as time-consuming, difficult to compile and review. Hence the paper recommended for the training and retraining of Librarians who will be in the better position to make effective contribution towards collection development policy in resource collection among other.

Introduction

Collection development encompasses the systematic process of building a library collection to fulfill the diverse needs of users, including studying, teaching, research, and leisure. It involves selecting, acquiring and processing library materials in various formats to meet both current and future users' needs. This process utilizes selection tools like publishers' catalogs, books in print, selection coupons, and recommendations from subject experts. Effective collection development requires a well-structured policy to guide this carefully planned activity. It applies to libraries of

all kinds, aligning with their mission to serve as information hubs for scholars and to preserve the intellectual legacy of the current culture for the benefit of future generations of learners.

Collection development policies, according to Ozioko and Ekere (2011), are written or unwritten rules that specify a plan and relevant information for the choice and purchase of library materials. These policies are useful instruments for determining topic areas that require further attention. Documented collection development strategies provide rationale for the selection of particular items, guaranteeing consistency and balance in the growth of collections. In order to achieve this, collection development policies have to be in line with the library's mission and overall collection development plan. The ultimate goal is to ensure that library patrons are offered effective and efficient services.

The notion of service delivery in university libraries pertains to providing products or activities that fulfill the requirements of library users. Effective service delivery should be accessible and prompt, available at the appropriate time, location, and scale as per the user's needs. It must also be dependable and trustworthy, delivered according to the user's specifications in a timely manner. Furthermore, it should be user-friendly, presented in formats tailored to the user's preferences to ensure full comprehension by library staff. Service delivery must be useful for adequately addressing the needs of library users and should be deemed credible, allowing users to confidently utilize the information for decision-making purposes. Additionally, it should be authentic and acceptable within the given decision contexts, while also being responsive and

adaptable to the changing needs of library users. Moreover, it should be sustainable, affordable, and consistent over time, with the capability to expand and to accommodate various types of library services. Effective service delivery is crucial in libraries to ensure that users' needs are met, and that they have a positive experience. For these to be achieved, there must be a well-articulated collection development policy.

Concept of Collection Development

The term "collection development" has gained widespread usage in libraries and information centers, reflecting the necessity for a well-rounded and effective collection. It encompasses all aspects of acquiring resources, including selection, ordering, and payment, and serves as a cornerstone for various library services. According to Igiamoh and Duro (2012), collection development serves as a means of communication for management, librarians, users, and other libraries; it delineates collecting levels and outlines collection development responsibilities, serving as a budgeting tool to aid librarians in resource allocation decisions. Elaturoti (2016) views collection development as the process of assessing the relevance of library materials to address the needs of library users and finding solutions to meet those needs.

Collection development can make or break a library collection and its services. Ozioko and Ekere (2011), went on to say that the competence of those in charge of collection development is crucial because the results either directly or indirectly affect how useful the collection is. For this reason, a collection must be thoughtfully curated with users' interests and requirements in mind in order to maximize its potential for use. Collection development is therefore typically the most

important task in any library. The main advantage of a strong collection, according to Owolabi and Akintola (2010), is that it enables the library to assess the strengths and weaknesses of its holdings.

In developing a library's collection, Adekanmbi (2017) asserts that it is imperative for librarians to grasp the fundamental aspects of collection development, including the formulation of policies to provide a rationale for the inclusion of each resource. Ukejiana (2017) outlines five distinct processes and criteria for selection within collection development: Community Analysis, Selection Policies, Acquisition, Weeding, and Evaluation. The term "community analysis" refers to the examination of the group of individuals for whom the library is established to serve, encompassing both active and potential users.

The ultimate duty of collection librarians is collection development. They must guarantee that a suitable and well-balanced collection is available to satisfy the requirements of library patrons. Planning and overseeing the collections' expansion, as well as providing materials that further the library's goals, fall within the purview of professional librarians. In order to have an exceptional library and information service collection, Nnadozie further demonstrated that the operation of a clearly defined established collection development policy in academic libraries is closely tied to the necessity for a well-developed library collection. A well-articulated collection growth strategy can help academic libraries fulfill their mandate to choose, preserve, and make accessible pertinent and representative information resources.

Collection Development Policy

A library or information center's collection growth policy is a mission statement outlining how the organization plans to grow its holdings. It is a purposefully formed set of values and directives by the library administration to improve the process of developing a collection for the library. A policy cannot be implemented until it has been authorized by the relevant authorities in that specific organizational structure, such as the library acquisition committee. The philosophy, scope, goal, and operational procedures of the policy should all be made explicit in accordance with the specific purposes that each library was founded to fulfill. The primary goal of the library is to choose, preserve, and make accessible pertinent and representative information sources. In order to achieve this, there is the need for every library to have a forward-looking written collection development policy. A policy is a guide to the successful implementation of a process.

A collection development policy represents a documented declaration outlining a library's strategy for enhancing its collection. Referred to by different names such as development policy statement, selection policies, collection statements, or collection development plans, these policies have proven to be invaluable tools for numerous collection development librarians in university libraries. Several authors have contributed their perspectives on collection development policies. Ozioko and Ekere (2011) assert that a collection development policy serves as a written blueprint detailing the approach to evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of a collection, aiming to formulate a plan to rectify weaknesses and uphold strengths within the collection. In other words, a collection development policy serves as a manual for library employees, outlining a course of action and providing data for use in the selection and purchase of library books. Policies pertaining to the selection, de-selection, purchase, arrangement,

appraisal, and preservation of library collections should be included, according to Wood and Hoffman (2016). In support of collection development policies in university libraries, Baughman (2011) notes that responses to collection development in libraries will be dynamic and positive if important groups involved in educational planning are included in the formulation of collection development policies from a position of commitment, dedication, and excitement. Baughman (2011), also note that five factors are in determining and designing a collection development policy statement in an academic institution. These are generally, academic library goals, their curriculum, use of library materials, and content value of books, periodicals etc. and research interests.

Collection development documents provide a framework for coordinated collection development programme throughout university libraries. Collection development policies also function as a guide to library resources for faculties, library users and other libraries by describing the scope and nature of the collection. In any written collection development policy, relevant information resources should be considered alongside other resources, such as e-journals, books, and databases especially in this era of information communication technology.

The acquisition section of the library takes charge of purchasing the relevant information resources in the library. It is important that this section in libraries adhere to the policies because it is the blueprint to guide against poor library collections which may result in user's dissatisfaction. Sambo, Abu-udenyi, Enite and Musa (2014), opined that collection development policies are the vehicle through which the library achieves the goals of its readers' services. Unfortunately, many libraries do not follow these policies in building their collections, perhaps,

due to lack of standard and uniformity in the application of these collection development policies among the staff concerned which seems to be the issue. This in turn affects the provision of effective service delivery and the information need of the user.

Collection development Policy implementation can strategically be used to attain desired results of effective service delivery. Morris (2014) hints that as a result of collection development policies implementation, university libraries improve service delivery and the intellectual content of university's academic programmes. In the same vein, collection development policies (CDP) improve the university libraries' stock of information resources thereby enhancing effective service delivery in university libraries. University libraries as agents of information dissemination must thus be subjected to sound collection development policies (CDP) formulation and effective implementation to enhance users' satisfaction with its use. The collection development policies statements of university libraries as a matter of importance are very strong against lack of standards. There must be a set standard for university libraries and their services geared towards offering effective and efficient service delivery to users of libraries of which university libraries are no exception. These standards must include building, staffing, collections, funding, services and also how to manage them.

The necessary professional librarians, non-professional librarians, technical and other auxiliary university library staff should be planned for and employed to adhere strictly to the formulation, application and full implementation of collection development policies in the university libraries ensuring that effective service delivery to the users is achieved. Collection development policies (CDP) in university libraries must ensure equitable access to resources for library user's thereby

encouraging effective service delivery in university libraries especially as it relates to university libraries in Benue State.

Application of Collection Development Policies in University Libraries

On the application of collection development policies in university libraries, Fombad and Murtala (2013), observed that, collection development is one of the most deliberated on, but still not properly understood in the field of Library and Information Science. According to these researchers, collection development is an area of endeavor that has arisen out of professional desire to get a specialist to identify and locate needed information resources and ensure that the university library is effective in enhancing service delivery to the users.

Perhaps, there seems to be no consensus among librarians in the application of a collection development policy, as different library scholars have expressed their views on the application of a policy in developing collections in libraries. Some scholars are of the view in support of the use of an approved standard policy in collection development in academic libraries; others see no need for a guide when developing a library collection. An observation of libraries in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, suggested that most of the academic libraries lag a collection development policy. Commenting on this, Ifidon (1990) noted that most African university libraries do not have collection development policies, mainly because librarians think that the primary objectives of the libraries are quite clear and that they could be guided by such objectives. For example, reporting a six-month exercise aimed at rejuvenating the reference collection of the University of Mauritius Library, Ephraim (2001) in Nwosu and Udo-Anyanwu, (2015), notes that his team was faced with the daunting situation where there was no collection development policy with clear guidelines on stock building. Also, according to a study embarked

upon by Flatley and Prock (2009), the results of the survey generally expressed that most libraries reported having no collection development policy in place for selecting materials. Similarly, in a study carried out by Nwosu and Udo-Anyanwu (2015), confirmed the lack of written comprehensive collection development policy in most academic libraries in Nigeria. In addition, Ojebode, (2009) in Nwosu and Udo-Anyanwu, (2015) found that gifts constituted the main means of acquisition for the libraries he studied in Nigeria but these libraries had no policy guidelines on gifts. The absence of a written comprehensive collection development policy in the studied libraries implies a lack of systematic approach in the discharge of the various facets of the collection development function.

This is why Johnson (1994) in a general but brief statement maintains that “libraries without collection development policies are like businesses without business plans”. This is because one has to understand what the business is/or is doing at the moment and where it is heading. Even though a collection development policy can be written or unwritten, without either, Librarians and collection developers are likely to go into excesses in some areas to the neglect of other areas. The implication is that such libraries may have numerous information materials, but cannot satisfy the information needs of the community they serve, and the aim of setting up such institution will be defeated. These results are worrisome in the light of the numerous benefits of collection development policy as a guide in discharging the collection development function.

Benefits of Application of Collection Development Policies for Effective Service Delivery in University Libraries

Collection development Policies are generally conceived as rules which are made to be accorded the much needed recognition in university libraries. According to Gorman (2011), written

collection development policies are meant set very clear the objectives as well as coordination and cooperation, within the university libraries, library and other libraries that are engaged in interlibrary cooperation activities to serve as veritable working tools for the university library's collection building process. Thus, according to Donald (2018), a collection development cannot be articulately applied in the university libraries but must be targeted towards the larger picture of the objectives and mandate of the university library concerned at the same time putting into consideration its authentic and potential users it is meant to serve. Above all for collection development policies to be operational according to Donald (2018), such should secure the positive nod of the authorities responsible with timeframe clearly spelt out. At any particular situation collection development are developed and approved, university libraries are bound to put same into practical use. Gardener (2011), put forth benefits of collection development policies. These include the following; collection development policies impose mandatory directives to the profession librarians, paraprofessionals and other supportive staff to work round the clock in achieving the set goals and objectives of the university libraries.

According to Theodore (2011), the benefits of the application of collection development policy in university libraries in particular is that: It is an internal library document to provide guidance to staff in the selection of resources, to assist with focus on user needs and to aid in the orientation of new staff, It is a public document to provide information on existing collection strengths and future collecting activity to inform academics and students, the wider academic community, funding bodies and other libraries in the area. Ameyaw (2020) pointed out that, the two broad functions or purposes of a collection development policies application are, on the one

hand, communication, and on the other, planning. Communication includes both internal communication intended for professional librarians, paraprofessional and other university library staff. One of the major role plays by applying a collection development policy is that, it makes it abundantly clear what should be retained, discarded, weeded and preserved at each stage. Herein lays the role of collection development policies to the survival of university libraries' collections.

Oyelude (2014) confirm this as one of the best qualities of university libraries. This explains the rationale for university libraries scramble for the selection, acquisition and well organized information resources for accessibility and utilization by the users. According to Yusuf (2011), availability of requisite information resources such as textbooks, journals, newspapers among others are very relevant to the university libraries such that their relevant cannot be overemphasized. Thus, university libraries should make concerted efforts towards selecting; acquiring and organizing relevant information materials for the overall benefit of the library users.

In discussing the perceived benefits of application of collection development policy on effective service delivery in university libraries, Gorman (2011) confirmed that, adequate and effective collection development policies achieve all that is needed in university libraries. Gorman (2011) further asserts that, such can be made possible if the collection development policies are available to be consulted from time to time by the professional librarians, paraprofessionals, and other supportive staff of university libraries. Commenting on benefits of application of collection development policies in university libraries, Dawning (2017), posited that, proper application of collection development policies in university libraries ensures that the university libraries would

have achieved a balanced collection of information resources that will serve the information needs of the teeming users. Dawning (2017), further maintains that for any university library be able to offer effective service delivery to its numerous users it needs a balanced, functional collection development policies, and such must be put into practice by those charged with the responsibility of using such.

Constraints to the Application of Collection of Development Policies in University Libraries

The effective use of collection development policy in University libraries is a simple but most difficult task to embark upon. Tokpe (2016) observed that closely related to attitudes of some librarians themselves who feel that written collection development policies are not necessary and that such compare those responsible for the bibliographic work to concentrate on selection and evaluation of university library's collection rather than writing policies that become outdated and irrelevant quickly. Issues such as this discourage those responsible for developing university libraries collections to be discouraged from their duties.

In the views of Hazen (2015), not all university libraries are engaged in these policies due largely because they do not seem to be relevant. According to him, these collection development policies do not seem applicable in libraries because of the following reasons: They are not realistic; they prevent university librarians from responding to changes or campus needs; they are time-consuming; they are difficult to compile and review; they impose unneeded limitations on the acquisition of materials. Hazen (2015) prefers a general statement of purpose as an alternative to collection development policies in university libraries and thought of engaging in a more relaxed alternative to the university libraries stocks. Hazen (2015) sees no rationale why collection

development policies in university libraries should be utilized in university libraries. Some university professional Librarians, paraprofessional and other supportive staff seems to embrace that direction.

Globalization is another dangerous constraint to the application of collection development policies in university libraries. Orti (2017), consider globalization as manipulative tendencies of international integration, the process by which the people of the world are unified into a single society and functioning together. Internet access is one of the greatest technological advancements being experienced in this 21st century. Covi and Cragin (2014) stated that, in the last couple of years, students and lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions have increasingly demanded and preferred access to electronic sources delivery and networked information from their respective libraries. The central place of university libraries is called into play because it is the duties of these university libraries to make available to the users all the necessary information resources so as to enable them accomplish their academic pursuit.

To this end, Arthur (2016) opines that many university libraries in Nigeria still operate in the traditional service pattern where inexperienced librarians are in charge, in main service of acquiring resources for university libraries without considering the implication on academic disciplines. There is a sad affirmation of a similar complaint made by Afullo (2016), that Nigeria was rated among the lowest in Africa in globalization and so, not much is expected of university libraries in Nigeria. In the light of the foregoing, the quest to go globally with the current trend of materials available for learning and research online is a big threat to application of collection development policy in general, and middle belt areas, Nigeria in particular, as many information

pasted on different websites do not undergo much scrutiny, thereby defeating the aim of collection development policy and its application. As a matter of fact, some drastic measures have to be taken to minimize this menace especially in university libraries.

Strategies for Enhancing the Application of Collection Development Policies in University Libraries

Focused positive and consistent collection development policy strategy according to Donald (2016), is a necessity for any meaningful university library development. The Librarians must ensure that no race, nationality, profession, trade, religion, school of thought or local customer is over-looked during drafting a selection policy, as the collection is built according to the policy, and patron's demands must also be considered. To enhance collection development policies in university libraries, Chukwusa (2012), recommended proper funding by way of appropriate budgeting allocation for library collection development. Chukwusa suggested that, in order to enhance the application of collection development policies in academic libraries, the training of Librarians who will be in the better position to make effective contribution towards collection development policy in resource collection is very vital in library services.

In support of this, Sivathaasan (2013), opines that, collection development Librarians must be well educated to the level of a university degree and masters in library and information science, and must have a deep knowledge in budgeting, statistics, accounting, and management as these are vital to the understanding of policy, its application leading to effective library collection development. According to Olajojo and Akewukereke (2006), the policy should specify who is responsible for selection. They suggested a combination of users and Librarians, methods of selection, treatment of gifts and donations, weeding, and collecting assessment should be

specified in the policy. They further suggested that materials to be selected should meet high standard quality in content, expression, and format. They suggested that, the selector should not hesitate to acquire a mediocre book that will be read in preference to a superior book that will not be read. In addition, Norfolk Public Library (2018), explains that, in order to ensure that current library collections provide timely services to the public, the policy should include that, outdated materials which are no longer of regional interest, and damaged materials, whose physical condition make them unsuitable for circulation be removed from the collection or be preserved for archival use to create space for current materials on shelves.

Conclusion

It is obvious from literature that collection development policy is key to a successful library service delivery. Despite the enormous challenges confronting academic libraries in the application of the collection development policy, the benefits far outweigh the challenges. Hence if the policy is religiously utilized, the strength and weaknesses in a collection of library materials would be identified and there would be plan to correct the weakness and maintain the strength. Thus, the selection, acquisition, and processing of library materials in varied formats meant for users' current and future needs would be ensured.

Recommendations

Based on the challenges and strategies for Enhancing the Application of Collection Development Policies in University Libraries, the following recommendation are made

1. There should adequate funding by the financing authorities by way of appropriate budgeting allocation for library collection development

2. University librarians should ensure that only experience librarians are in charge of the main service of acquiring resources for university libraries
3. There should be training and retraining of Librarians who will be in the better position to make effective contribution towards collection development policy in resource collection.
4. The Librarians must ensure that no race, nationality, profession, trade, religion, school of thought or local customer is over-looked during drafting a selection policy, as the collection is built according to the policy, and patron's demands must also be considered.

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