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Effects of Federal Government Interventions on Collection Development in Nigerian Universities

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Introduction and Historical Background

University education began in Nigeria in 1948 with the establishment of University College, Ibadan (UCI). Prior to this, the Yaba College was the highest institution of learning in Nigeria. With the establishment of UCI, many Nigerians had the opportunity for university education at their doorsteps and it remained the only institution of university standing in Nigeria for more than a decade. Since then, university education in Nigeria has taken giant strides (Agboola, 2000). From one university in 1948, Nigeria has gone to more than seventy universities scattered all over the country, and more are being established. Individuals, religious organizations, and state governments are all participating in establishing universities.

Until recent years, when private universities were allowed, governments have been the sole sponsors. Federally-sponsored universities are funded through the National Universities Commission (NUC) while their state-owned counterparts receive their funds directly through the state ministries of education or the governors' offices (Agboola 2000). This situation is different from that in other parts of the world, especially Europe and the US, where libraries can obtain grants from private individuals and corporate organizations like the Carnegie Corporation, McArthur Foundation, etc., in addition to government funding and students fees.

Statement of the Problem

The university library is an important component of any university community. No university can lay claim to academic excellence without a good library to back up its teaching, research, and public service mandates (Agboola, 2000). Nigerian university libraries have also been a major component of the university organizations and programmes.

According to Omotayo (1997), the Nigerian university system enjoyed general support from the Federal Government of Nigeria in the 70s, which were years of oil boom. Nigeria experienced a sharp decline in oil revenue in the 1980s, as a result of the world oil glut and poor internal management of resources. Since all the federal universities depended heavily on the government for their funds, the economic downturn took its toll on these institutions. The effect was so bad that the basic needs for teaching and research could not be met and the universities soon became a shadow of their past. The economic situation of the country in general prevented the working out of any reasonable acquisition

programme by university libraries (Ibadan University Library Annual Report, 1984). This decline lasted through the 1980s and early 1990s.

The federal government recognized this decline and its debilitating effects on the quality of university education, and began to look for alternative means of funding the universities. Toward the end of the 1980s with a World Bank loan was obtained, which was finally used early in 1990s. Since then, there have been various government intervention policies and programmes aimed at improving Nigerian university library acquisitions. The paper evaluates the effects of these interventions on the acquisition of books in federal university libraries, using Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria as a case study.

The Historical Background of Obafemi Awolowo University

The then regional government of Western Nigeria announced its intention to start a university in 1960. The university was established in Ibadan in 1962 and relocated to Ile-Ife in 1967, where it was renamed the University of Ife. The University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) had an initial student population of 244, but presently has more than 25,000 students. The federal government took over the university in 1975. The university library, Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, has a total of 689,253 book volumes and subscribes to 500 foreign journals and about 200 local titles presently. The university, along with five others, forms what are commonly referred to as first generation universities in Nigeria.

World Bank Loan Intervention: 1992-1994

The Federal Government of Nigeria entered into a 120 million-dollar agreement with the World Bank. The loan agreement and its execution were between the Federal Government and International Development Association (IDA). The agreement, the Development Credit Agreement, was to last four years with a thirty-five year moratorium. The loan was to support the “Federal Universities Development Sector Adjustment Operation” (Shajobi, 1994). The funds were for the supply of library books, journals, and equipment, staff development, and recruitment of expatriate staff. (Table 1). In recognition of the needs of the university libraries, 37.1 percent of the fund was earmarked for library materials and equipment. For first generation universities, library books and journals were allocated the lion's share of their allotted funds. The loan was executed through the NUC.

All twenty federal universities benefited from the loan. They were classified into three divisions: first generation (six universities established before 1975), second generation (seven established between 1975 and 1976), and third generation (seven established between 1979 and 1988) (Omotayo 1997).

Table 1

Expenditure subhead	1st Generation	2nd Generation	3rd Generation	Total
Library Books and Journals	17.5	13.9	5.7	37.1
Staff Development	2.5	6.7	8.9	18.1
Topping of expatriate staff salary	1.7	3.4	3.5	8.6
Maintenance of Spare Parts	11.9	10.45	1.85	24.3
New Equipment	2.2	5.8	16.2	24.3
Library Equipment	1.7	1.7	0.9	24.3
Total	37.5	41.95	37.05	116.50

Source: *World Bank Project News* Vol. 1, No. 1. Jan. 1994, P. 16.

The universities were given the responsibility of selecting the books they needed. The government appointed agents for the supply of the books and journals. Funds were delivered in three batches. Universities in each category received $656,907, $447,233, and $183,398 respectively per batch. Obafemi Awolowo University is a first generation university and received $656,907. The loan was successful for acquiring books, but a failure for journals. At the Obafemi Awolowo University, very few journal titles were supplied by the agent appointed by the government. Things improved when the contract was rewarded to another company. Ikegbune (1994) observes that funds for the procurement of journals were solely for current issues and could not be expended on backfiles. Each of the six first generation universities committed $315,315 to journal procurement during the World Bank Loan period.

Table II

Total number of books purchased by Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library under World Bank Loan

Date of Delivery	No of Volumes	Total Cost of Books
July 21, 1993	3,903	$201,109.93
October 8, 1993	2.138	$111,542,35
November 24, 1993	555	$42,268.03
January 28, 1994	584	$28.790.67
April 8, 1994	2,043	$106,288.12
June 30, 1884	612	$32,078.15
June 30, 1994	4,369	$32,078.15
March 26, 1995	1,068	$44,130.99
Total	15,372 Vols	$796,841.37

The loan brought an appreciable increase in the number of volumes acquired by the library, compared with the near zero acquisition of previous years. Many staff members and students who had stopped using the library started patronizing it again to consult new additions to the collection.

Direct Allocation from NUC, 1994-2001

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) vehemently opposed the way the World Bank loan was administrated. ASUU, when negotiating with the Federal Government in 1992, made direct allocation to libraries one of its demands. According to Sowole (1995), NUC stipulated that 8 percent of each university's recurrent expenditure be allocated to the library. Obafemi Awolowo University library got up to 8 percent at that period. The government agreed to ASUU's demand by deducting 10 percent of each university's recurrent expenditure and remitting it separately as a Library Development Fund (LDF). This fund was released directly to the university libraries by the NUC. Library funds had been lumped with university funds, with the result that most of the funds were spent on other university projects to the disadvantage of the libraries. A minimum of 60 percent of the allocation had to be spent on books and journals while staff salaries were paid from the rest of allocation. The 10 percemt allocation was released directly to the libraries.

Direct allocation from NUC sustained the tempo of acquisitions. Library unspent funds did not lapse as is the case with other departments of the university. This policy started as an internal arrangement between the library and the administration during the days of Prof. Hezekiah Oluwasnmi (in whose honor the library is named) as Vice Chancellor in the 1970s. As a result, a substantial amount of money was saved, and this has sustained the Library in the lean years that started in 2002.

Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund (PTF) 2001 – 2002

Nigeria is the sixth largest world producer of petroleum. The Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) was created by the Federal Government to manage excess revenue, which accrued to it from increase in the prices of petroleum products consumed in the country in 1994. The PTF intervention covered provision of books for federal and state university libraries. University libraries fared worse under this scheme than under the World Bank loan period. This was because no library ordered or bought its own books and journals. Books and other materials were dumped on them. The NUC played no role in the business of PTF. Federal university libraries witnessed rapid growth in collections during this period, but not in quality, appropriateness, or usefulness.

The PTF bought books and other materials for federal and state university libraries during the time the libraries were enjoying the 10 percent direct allocation from NUC. Both state and federal universities were given PTF books as gifts. PTF directors and managers never asked the libraries what their needs were. They sent few titles with multiple copies, sometimes of up to 100 or 150 of one title to each university library.

Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library had to give out many of PTF books as gifts to state secondary schools, polytechnics, and recently established universities. For example, two copies of seventy-five titles, selected from an array of other titles, were donated to Bowen University, Iwo, Nigeria, a newly established private university. In another case, after taking 10 copies for the library, there were still 227 copies of *Introduction to Computer Science* , a book meant for secondary school pupils. There were 115 copies of *Groundwork of Nigerian History* , and 180 copies of *Introduction to Agricultural Mechanization* left after cataloguing 10 copies of each for the library.

Central Book Purchase by NUC, 1999- 2001

The idea of a central book purchase was hatched by the then Executive Secretary of NUC. It was conceived to be a consortium to serve the needs of many university libraries in the country. The scheme did not appeal to a majority of Nigerian universities, except a few, of which Obafemi Awolowo University was one, because the university administration was interested. The scheme was not popular because selection was made centrally without regard to the peculiar needs of the participating university libraries.

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife was one of those who gave the scheme a trial, not without stiff opposition from the library administration. As expected, the scheme had a short life span. Since the purchase was made by the NUC without input from the participating libraries, no data was available as to the cost of books purchased. A total of 2,988 titles and 5,570 volumes were sent to Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library between January 1999 and July 2000 before the scheme was jettisoned.

While the scheme lasted, NUC appointed contractors to buy books and had them distributed to the universities. This was without regard to the curricular needs of universities coerced into the scheme. The costs of those books were deducted from the direct allocation of each participating university library.

Table III

Summary of Acquisition under Various Government Interventions

Interventions	Year	No of Vols.	Total Cost
World Bank	1992-94	15,372	$796.841.32
Direct Allocation	1994-2001	13,283	N90,760,421.66
PTF	2001-2002	3,625	Free
Central Purchase	1999-2003	5,570	NA*
ETF	2002-2003	5,570	N3,500080.25
Post 10% Era	2002-2005	5,180	N51,683830.27

*The cost of books purchased under this regime was not known because the NUC awarded the contract and made direct deduction from the allocation of the library.

Education Trust Fund (ETF) 2001 – To Date

Education Trust Fund (formerly Education Tax Fund) also came into existence as a result of ASUU/FG negotiations of 1992. The fund was established under Education Tax Act No. 7 of 1993 and amended by Act No 40 of 1998, with the objective of using funds that accrue to it to improve the quality of education in Nigeria (Saidu, 2006). Companies are mandated by law to pay 2 percent of their profit before tax to ETF. The body has been managing the fund for developmental projects and library acquisitions at various educational levels in the nation.

ETF gave universities a free hand to acquire textbooks and other materials according to their needs. Each university library would submit its selection list and the publisher's catalogue for approval at ETF Head Office in Abuja. University libraries also have a free hand to choose their procurement agents or vendors. Thereafter, 80 percent of the money approved by ETF for each university library per annum will be given to it as part-payment and after auditing by ETF officials , the 20 percent balance would be paid to the procurement agent.

Funds from ETF have also been used to set up a computer laboratory with forty-six computers at Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library. Odusanya and Osinulu (2004) claim that the intervention of ETF helped the Olabisi Onabanjo University library at Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria, to purchase computer equipment and library processing tools needed for effective functioning of the library.

Post 10 Percent Era in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, 2002-2005

The 10 percent allocation to federal universities from NUC stopped in November, 2001. At Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, a substantial amount of money was saved from unspent library allocations over the years of stable 10 percent allocation. Between 2002 and 2005, the library purchased 5,180 volumes worth N51,683,830.25 from funds saved during the years of stable subvention from the NUC.

Conclusion

In order to meet the demands of higher education, the government has intervened through various programmes. These interventions have helped university libraries; however, that some of these interventions have not been beneficial, as in the case of central book purchase and the PTF. Future interventions must involve the end users—librarians and library administrators, so that the best results can be achieved.

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