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Resource Acquisition and the Role of Collection Development Policy in the Development of
Ghana Communication Technology University Library Collection

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to ascertain the significance of collection development policy in some public academic libraries in Ghana with Ghana Communication Technology University as the case study. The study adopted a case study design and used a qualitative method in its examinations. A self-designed interview schedule was used to solicit information from the staff library. The study participants included the head librarian, deputy librarian and four (4) assistant librarians. The face-to-face interview method was used as a data collection instrument for this study– content analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings indicated that the university library has a CDP which is reviewed biennially. However, further findings revealed that even though CDPs exist in the library it does not feature much when it comes to acquisitions. It was recommended that management of the library should make a conscious effort to use the policy to guide acquisitions.

Keywords: academic libraries, collection development policy, Ghana Communication Technology University library

INTRODUCTION

Collection development is a library activity that is specifically created to give the library a source of information that satisfies the needs of its target audience. Each section of the collection must be created with an application of resources compatible with its relative importance to the mission of the library and the needs of its users in order to achieve this goal. University libraries concentrate their collection development efforts on materials that support the curricula. In light of this, the library needs to respond to these research requests in a timely manner (Dilani, 2015).

Libraries serve their parent institutions all throughout the world. Regardless of the type or location, their roles are the same: to select information resources in both print and electronic formats, to organize and distribute the resources to the immediate users, and to educate the users on how to use the resources (Omeluzor, Manidele, Ukangwa & Amadi, 2013). Sun, Xie, & Wang (2019) defined library collection development as the process of meeting the information needs of the people (a service population) in a timely and cost-effective manner by utilizing information resources held locally, as well as, those held by other organizations. However, there are numerous challenges confronting collection development practices in academic libraries around the world.

Collection development policy is the strategy for expanding a library's collection or stock. A policy can be either an unwritten convention or a written document. By translating those goals and objectives into clear and specific guidelines for each stage of materials handling - selection, acquisition, processing, housing, weeding, and discard - the preparation and review of a written policy should also encourage the library and institution to define or refine their goals and assist the library collection to conform to the goals and objectives of the institution and of the library. (Patel, 2016). In addition to increasing the library's visibility, promoting use of the collection, and improving services to library users, a robust marketing program that makes use of all available resources, including the collection development policy, also conveys to campus administrators and other key stakeholders the library's long-term worth and value (Fought, Gahn and Mill, 2016; Taylor 2018)

A collection development policy, according to Sanchez-Rodriguez (2018), is essential for a well-rounded and reliable collection. It details the collection's boundaries, the selection processes authority, the standards by which funds are allocated and which materials are chosen, the selection processes order of importance, and the weeding standards. Despite how crucial it is, some libraries lack thorough collection development policies. The primary goal of creating a collection development policy is to stop the library from being influenced by external factors, such as events or individual passions, and from amassing a collection of materials at random that might not serve the library's purposes. Additionally, electronic resources are taking an ever-increasing portion of library budgets and are becoming more and more crucial to libraries of all shapes and sizes.

In light of this, selection decisions for electronic information sources ought to be made as part of a clear collection development policy. This could be an integrated policy or a distinct one. The goal of the policy is to improve communication between librarians responsible for collection development and teaching faculty, allowing them to track their success in achieving collection objectives. It ought to offer fundamental details on how to organize and distribute cash for library materials (Bevis, Knight, & Taylor, 2015).

Many research findings, such as those from (Chaputula and Boadi, 2010; Morin-Robinson, 2018; Masenya, 2019; Khumalo, 2020), have shown that inadequate budgetary allocations had significantly impacted collection development in some libraries and as a result had somewhat

rendered the CDP useless. All of these difficulties added up to bad customer service, and GCTU was not exempt from this trap. Determining the influence collection development policy plays in the collection development of GCTU library is the goal of this study

Objectives

The study seeks to:

1. To examine the existence of collection development policy (CDP) in the GCTU library.
2. To ascertain the frequency of review of the CDP.
3. To determine the role of the policy in the process of acquisition of materials.
4. To identify the challenges associated with the use of CDP in the library.

Research Questions

1. Does the library have a CDP?
2. How often is the policy reviewed?
3. What role does the policy play in the collection development activities of the library?
4. What challenges does the library face in the use of the CDP?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Collection development policy (CDP)

Collection development policy is the strategy for expanding a library's collection or stock. CDP is defined by Reitz (2013) and Khan & Bhatti, (2021) as a formal written statement of the principles/policies guiding a library's material selection, including the criteria used in making selection and de-selection decisions.

Existence of collection development policy (CDP) in Academic libraries

The presence of CDP in academic libraries is the anchor that guides and directs collection development activities by assisting in the selection and acquisition of resources for the library. According to Sanchez-Rodriguez (2018), the availability of a CDP is an essential document for a balanced and robust collection; however, despite the importance of the policy in selection, the majority of libraries lack detailed CDP to guide them in their selection process. Studies on the collection development of e-resources in university libraries and public library development in West Bengal by Das (2015) and Maity (2018) revealed that most libraries did not have comprehensive CDPs for resource acquisition, resulting in insufficient resources, particularly e-resources. The collection development policy serves as a guidance for collection development in the majority of libraries. To ensure objectivity in developing the library collection, a clear collection development policy is required. For a well-rounded and strong collection, a collection development policy is necessary. It details the collection's scope, decision-making authorities, funding allocation rules, criteria for choosing particular resources, selection priorities, and weeding criteria (Sun, Xie and Wang 2019).

Despite its significance, several libraries lack detailed collection development policies. Taylor (2018) for instance, writes in his report on a six-month project to revitalize the reference

collection at the University of Mauritius Library that his team was "fronted with the daunting position where there was no collection development policy with defined criteria for stock weeding." Similar to this, Yakubu, Khalid, and Samsuddin (2022) notes that the majority of the libraries examined for his study of collection management procedures in Nigerian university libraries lacked a written weeding strategy. Similarly, Kratz, & Strasser (2015) reported that, even though majority of the respondents of his study admitted having a written policy in their libraries; they were not well-documented. Norman (1997 as cited in Jan, and Ganiae, 2019) also revealed that half of the University libraries studied did not have any CDP at all.

Frequency with which Collection Development Policy (CDP) is reviewed

According to Jan and Ganiae (2019), the content of a CDP should be frequently evaluated to guarantee consistency and customer-focused, so that library users have access to current, relevant, and authoritative material in their preferred formats. According to Khan and Bhatti (2015), there are no updated CDPs in Pakistani university libraries. Most academic libraries in Kenya, according to Kavulya (2004), lack a thorough policy for both print and electronic resources. The study continued that, those who have policies do not regularly update them, which causes them to become inactive. Ameyaw and Entsua-Mensah (2016) revealed in their assessment of collection development practices at the Walton Whaley Library of Valley View University in Ghana that the library has a CDP, but it has not been reviewed since it was written some years ago, despite the fact that it guides them during the selection of materials for the library. Muzzammil, (2020) emphasizes the importance of having a Collection Management Policy (CMP) and keeping it up to date on a regular basis. Maske (2012); Mwilongo, (2020) state that the viability of any collection is dependent on a viable CDP. Khan & Bhatti, (2021) believes that collection development must be based on an agreed-upon, regularly reviewed collection development policy for it to be effectively formulated after an assessment of user needs and an evaluation of the existing collection.

Acquisition of Library Materials and the role of CDP

All libraries are created to meet the users' needs for knowledge as well as to carry out the parent institution's vision and goal. Since library collections are intended to meet the demands of users, one of the technical duties performed by library professionals is the process of obtaining materials for the academic library.

According to Yakubu, Khalid, and Samsuddin, (2022), many university libraries continue to use the traditional process of choosing materials for their collections. They also emphasized how unfair the role of faculties and librarians is in the selecting process. According to Adesanya (2015), the collection development policy of any library should serve as the basis for the selection of resources for the library as it directs selectors during the selection process. Johnson (2009) opined that CDPs offer standards within which the library chooses and administers its collection. Khan and Bhatti (2015) also posit that, the function of CDPs varies depending on the specifics of the library in question. In the view of Lorenzen (2009), Jan and Ganiae, (2019), CDPs serve as planning tools or communication tools that direct selectors and maintain consistency in the collection development and management policies and procedures. Patel (2016) reports that ,

CDP is transparent about its relationship to the parent organization's goals, serves as the foundation for collection development planning, and offers helpful advice for daily reading choices that is devoid of bias. University libraries in Pakistan are missing an opportunity to make their collection growth strategies, internal workflows, and external communications clear and consistent by not having documented CDPs, according to Khan and Bhatti's (2015) study.

In the study of Fought, Gahn, and Mills (2016), collection development policy instructs librarians on what materials to add and exclude during the selection process. Regarding the ongoing usefulness of the library and its materials, it helps to better serve library users. The policy also serves as guidance for librarians who are responsible for collection development; it aids them in monitoring their success in achieving collection objectives. Additionally, it offers fundamental details on how to prepare and allocate library funding (Bevis, Knight & Taylor, 2015).

Challenges encountered in the use of CDP in the Libraries

In order to aid academic staff members in their academic endeavors and to assist teaching, learning, and research activities, academic libraries were developed. It collects a wide range of resources in order to accomplish this. In this context, the absence of a thorough CDP presents a significant difficulty to the selection committee and library professionals. Additionally, this results in inconsistent collections of materials for the library. According to Farkas, Hinchliffe, and Houk (2015), librarians in the United States encounter numerous difficulties, including lack of time, lack of assessment knowledge, lack of support, lack of explicit standards, and lack of confidence in their ability to improve students' learning. Khan (2015) and Aman (2010) established that inadequate assistance, instruction, and direction cause retardation. Ameyaw (2020) cited the absence of CDPs, the lack of regular training for librarians, lack of staff, lack of administrative assistance, and libraries' failure to include users in policy formation as some of the difficulties facing CDP usage in Ghana.

Academic libraries in Ghana have numerous obstacles, including a limited budget, high inflation, lack of resources, and the country's collapsed book industry, making it challenging to adhere rigorously to the CDP to build a library's collection. Rasul and Singh (2010) noted that due to budget restrictions and the global economic downturn, which forced governments to place financial restrictions on libraries, academic libraries have historically struggled to meet user and institutional expectations and demands.

Morin-Robinson (2018); Rowley and Black (1996 as cited in Khan and Bhatti (2016); Evans and Saponaro (2012) all noted that academic libraries are striving to continue to do what they did in the past and that there is constant pressure on the materials budget of academic libraries due to high rate of inflation, escalating cost of print journals and books, and declining funding from the parent institution. According to Yakubu, Khalid, and Samsuddin, (2022), there are several factors that prevent CDPs in Africa from operating effectively, including lack of funding, access to resources, and human resource shortages.

Jan and Ganiae (2019) list a number of reasons that lead to inefficient collection development, such as lack of a CDP, problems with the selection and acquisition processes, failure to analyze user needs, lack of collection review procedures, and lax weeding and preservation procedures. Although some authors have noted issues with the usage of CDPs in academic libraries, scholars

and researchers including Evans and Saponaro (2012), Johnson (2014), and Gregory (2011) favor written CDPs. The issue many African libraries face, according to Msonge (2013), is the absence of a thorough and documented collection development policy.

METHODOLOGY

In order to conduct this study, the research used a qualitative approach. The data was gathered using a self-made interview schedule as the data collecting tool. The five themes that were covered in the interview schedule were: the respondent's biographical information, the existence of a collection development policy, the importance of the CDP in libraries, the frequency of CDP reviews, the policy's role in the selection process, and difficulties associated with using the CDP in libraries. Each interview lasted about an hour and a half and took place at the offices of the respondents. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. According to the main themes, the interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. The population of the study comprised one (1) head librarian and one (1) deputy librarian who are all professionals and four (4) assistant librarians two (2) of which are also professionals and 2 para professionals. The entire population for the study was fifteen (15) and six (6) were sampled to be the participants for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Existence of CDP in the Library

In order to build an effective, strong and well-balanced collection, a library requires an effective policy that spells out the mission, vision and objectives of the parent institution. The policy helps the library achieve its goals in supporting teaching, learning and research.

The research sought to find out from respondents if the library has CDPs or not. In response, all participants admitted that the libraries have CDPs. The Head librarian responded that; *“Yes, we have a collection development policy, the policy covers every aspect of the collection and we try as much as possible to let it guide the acquisition process even though we face a lot of challenges in its use.”*

Deputy librarian *“... yes there is a CDP which is supposed to guide us in the selection process, but it does not influence selection so much.*

Rep. 1 confirmed the statements of his colleagues when he said *“... yes, we do have a CDP and somehow apply it when it comes to the selection of materials for the library.”*

Rep.2 indicated that his library has a CDP *“... yes, we have a collection development policy but it does not guide the development of the collection so much, especially when it comes to acquisition through purchase.”*

Resp. 3: *“... yes, we have a collection development policy. It was developed a few years back to help guide the collection development processes.”*

Resp. 4 said: *“... Yes, there is a policy; however, its application during the selection is not felt due to the economic situation in the country and the low budget allocation to the library.”* The

findings on the existence of a CDP revealed that both libraries have CDP. This result of the study is in contrast with and Msonge (2013), Chukwusa 2012, Lamptey and Agyen-Gyasi, (2015), Yakubu, Khalid, and Samsuddin, (2022) which indicated that most academic libraries in developing countries lacked a comprehensive CDP and that its absence has affected the collection development activities in those libraries. The results however, confirm Ameyaw and Entsua-Mensah (2016) Gangadharaiyah (2014); Somashekara, Mariswamy & Dhruvakumar, (2014); that many academic libraries have CDP even though it might not be fully utilized.

Frequency of Review of CDP

On the frequency of review of the CDP, it was revealed that even though the policies have been in existence for some years now they have never been reviewed. When asked how often the policy has been reviewed, the head librarian remarked “...well, I am not too sure if the policy has been reviewed before since it was written by my predecessor. Since I assumed office, it has never been reviewed but I believe it is important so it would be taken into consideration.”

Deputy librarian ...*"I am not too sure if it has ever been reviewed."*

Resp. 1 ... *"I don't know about the frequency of the review of the policy since it is the duty of the head librarian to do it."*

Resp. 2 opined that since its inception the CDP has never been reviewed. He also agreed to the fact that, it is not good enough and that the time has come for the CDP to be reviewed. He put it this way: *"... the policy has never been reviewed after eight (8) years of its existence, but I think it is time for me to get to work at reviewing it."*

Resp.3 ...*" I don't have any idea as to how often the CDP is to be reviewed, what I do know is that the librarian has been doing a good job and so I think he knows what to do."*

Resp.4; *I don't really know how often it is supposed to be reviewed or if it has ever been reviewed but I think it would be good to review it regularly.*

The study found that there exists written CDP in both University libraries; however, all the participants admitted that the policy had never been reviewed since their formulation many years back, despite its role during selection and other collection practices. The finding is consistent with Khan and Bhatti (2015) and Morin-Robinson (2018) whose studies revealed that CDPs in the libraries they studied were not updated or reviewed since their inception. On the other hand, it does not support Aman, (2010) and Sanchez-Rodriguez (2018) statements that CDP should be reviewed periodically to ensure its consistency.

Acquisition of Library Materials and the role of CDP

Selection of materials for a library's collection is the most essential activity in building a library's collection. It requires the involvement of all stakeholders in the academic community like library professionals, students and faculty to be able to select materials that will satisfy the needs of the various users of the library and meet the core objectives of the parent institution. Although all these people are involved in the selection process one thing that can't be overlooked is the CDP. It is supposed to guide the whole selection process. The respondents

were asked to indicate how the policy influences the processes of selecting materials in their libraries. It became clear from their responses that even though the policy is there its influence in selection of materials for the libraries is minimal. They do consult it alright but due to the economic situation in the country, the low budgetary allocation to the libraries and the attitude of stakeholders, the role of the policy is not felt that much. The head librarian intimated “...yes we do consult the CDP in our selection processes to guide our selection of materials but due to the economic situation, high inflation and the low budgetary allocation to the library, coupled with the fact that the book industry is not doing well in the country it makes it very difficult to follow strictly what the policy dictates. So even though we consult the policy during selection it does not influence the process that much.”

When asked to indicate his opinion of the role that the CDP plays in the process of selection of materials for the library collection;

Deputy librarian revealed that “... the CDP does not play any major role in the selection of materials for the library.” When asked why he intimated, “it is because the money given to the library is not enough if we go by what is stated in the policy, we will never be able to develop our library’s collection.”

Resp.1 on her part supported the assertions of her colleagues when she said “...yes the policy guides the selection process to a point, like prioritizing what to buy due to the inadequate budget that is always allocated to the library.”

When put the same question, Resp.2 just like her counterpart indicated that “... even though the CDP is there to help in the selection of materials for the library, to be honest with you, we don’t follow the policy during the selection of materials for the library at all.” When asked why she said, “... the answer is simple, our budget is woefully inadequate so if we follow the dictates of the policy, we will never get anything done. So we buy what our budget can afford.”

Resp.3 also in answering the same question reiterated the response of the head librarian by saying “... the policy does not play a major role in the selection process.”

Resp.4 corroborated the statements of the two respondents when he said “the CDP does not influence the selection of materials for the library’s collection though in some areas like weeding we do minimally apply it, especially when it comes to torn books.”

The finding that the CDP does not guide the selection process that much is in contrast with Fought, Gahn, & Mills, (2016) and Bevis, Knight and Taylor (2015) whose studies suggest that the collection development policy should guide library professionals during selection process on what material to add and not to add. And that it helps to better serve library patrons with regards to the continual usefulness of the library and its resources. The same finding however, confirms Yakubu, Khalid, and Samsuddin, (2022) that, limited funds, lack of access to resources, and inadequate human resources hinder the efficiency of CDPs in Africa.

Challenges encountered in the use of CDP in the Libraries

The main purpose of an academic library is to serve the information needs of its users, it is therefore, necessary for academic libraries to have a comprehensive CDP to guide the processes of selection and the dictates of the policy should also be followed as much as possible otherwise

it would pose a challenge to library professionals and the selecting team. It will also lead to inconsistency and poor collection of library materials. CDP guides library professionals and selectors on what to select for a library; it also provides consistency and helps in building a strong collection. Factors such as inadequate funding for purchasing library materials, qualified library professionals, and lack of consistency in the selection process with the CDP, non-participation of faculty in the selection process, pose a great challenge in the exercise. On the challenges faced by the library in the use of the CDP, the Head Librarian had this to say; *"...honestly, the biggest challenge facing collection development activities in this library is the insufficient funds to purchase current and relevant learning resources, inadequate funding has made it impossible to subscribe to learning resources both electronic and print ones. We cannot even join the consortium where subscription to e-resources are a bit cheaper than subscribing as an individual library. Another challenge is not having qualified staff to assist in the selection process; the economic situation and total collapse of the book industry in the country, which make it difficult to get the needed resources to acquire locally also make it difficult to implement to the letter the part of the CDP which deals with selection, these negatively affect the collection development process."*

The Deputy librarian of the same institution revealed *"... Yes, as for the challenges we have many, we don't have enough funds to buy needed books to support teaching and learning, we don't have enough qualified staff to help in the selection process. These and many others make it difficult to build a strong collection for user needs."*

In the view of Resp.1, *"Delays in submitting list of needed or recommended books on the part of faculty members, coupled with the fact that there is not enough funds sometimes affect selection of resources for the library collection."*

Resp.2 in answering the question of challenges faced in the selection process in her library listed challenges that are not different from what her counterpart in GCUC had enumerated. She intimated thus; *"... our challenges are numerous, some are inadequate funding, lack of interest in the selection process on the part of faculty, difficulty in getting the needed materials to buy in the country, inadequate and unqualified staff, just to mention a few, are some of the challenges facing the effective use of the CDP in our library."*

Resp.3 of MUC expressed ... *"frankly speaking, the current instability in the country's economy is a big challenge hindering the acquisition of needed materials for this library. There is a greater demand for current and relevant books than the funds that are available can provide; inadequate funds have therefore, negatively affected collection development activities."*

According to Resp.4 of MUC, *"... inadequate budget allocation to the library has hindered the development of the library and its activities. We cannot implement the CDP as is expected when it comes to selection and purchases. For this reason, we accept all kinds of donations with the hope of acquiring enough to satisfy user needs which ends up to be the opposite as many of the donations that come in are either not relevant or useful to our client needs. There is also the fact that we cannot get the needed materials to buy in the country. This also hinders the smooth development of the collection." "Space is also a bit of a challenge to the library, there is the need for a bigger library space as the student population increases."*

On the challenges facing the use of CDP in the library, both head librarians and the library staff outlined some challenges: inadequate staff, lack of qualified personnel to assist in the selection

process, space constraints, low budget allocation to the library, high inflation in the country, scarcity of needed resources as a result of the collapse of the book industry. These findings affirm the studies of Yakubu, Khalid, and Samsuddin, (2022) and Ameyaw (2020) which enumerated similar challenges as being the reason for the non-functioning of CDPs in academic libraries in Africa.

CONCLUSIONS

A CDP is an official written document that spells out the process of selection of books and other collections that a library intends to add, the criteria used in selection, weeding, and acceptance of donations; hence, it must be handled by a professional librarian. It was established that the GTUC Library has a well-written CDP; and the policy is reviewed biennially. The study identified inadequate budget allocation and inadequate library staff as some of the challenges as well as the inability of faculty members to submit their recommended titles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

- It is recommended that the policy should be reviewed periodically or annually to ensure its effectiveness and consistency.
- The library should reinforce the use of CDP in all its selection processes.
- All library staff, as well as the stakeholders, should be involved in the selection process.
- Management of the university should employ qualified library staff, and if possible subject librarians to take charge of selections.
- Management of the university should allocate adequate funds for all activities concerning library operations and development.
- Lastly, it is recommended that management should constitute a review committee as soon as possible for periodic review.

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