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Collections and Collection Development Exercise in Libraries: A Perspective in View

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This paper examines what collection is all about and the concept collection development exercise in libraries stating the methods used in actualizing the collection development which are community need assessment, selection, and placing order, receiving/checking. This study also outlines some procedures for acquiring information resources in the collection development department which are: purchase, exchange, legal deposit, gift/donation, subscription, photocopies, inter-library loan and weeding. It also states some problems associated with the collection development department as: relegation of the library to the background; poor numeration of the library staff; glory driven consciousness of the library staff; lack of required information resources and lack of financial resources. This paper pointed out some relevant impact that collection development department can accrue to any of the libraries practicing it. The study thus concluded by proffering some recommendations that will help to make the library and the collection development department vibrant.

Keywords: Collections, Collection Development, Collection Development Policy, Problems of Collection Development, Importance of Collection Development.

INTRODUCTION

A collection is the sum total of all the materials that make up a library holdings which includes books, periodicals, documents, dissertations, maps, atlas... etc, and non-book materials such as slides, pictures, databases, electronic books etc. The essence of naming a place a library, it is because of its collection and it is this collection that necessitated the existence of the librarianship profession where librarians are being trained to man the library collections in the bid to meet the needs of information seekers. In the work of Nwosu and Udo-Anyanwu (2015) citing Ifidon (2007) stated that “Beautiful buildings, well-trained staff and modern information storage and retrieval systems can only be appreciated if excellent services are given to users. These services cannot be given without live collections”.

Collection development as the term implies, it is the process involved in building up the total collection of a library and it comprises areas such as policy formation, selection, acquisition, maintenance and weeding of library materials. According to Ranganathan fifth law of the library, we are made to understand that the library is a growing organism; hence, the library cannot grow if the needs of the collection development department are not met or put in place. Evans (2000) defined library collection development as the process of meeting the information needs of the people (a service population) in a timely and economical manner using information resources locally held, as well as from other organizations. Collection development exercise varies from one library to another. For example in public libraries where it is set up with the aim to provide services to the generality of the citizen of a given area not minding their race, age, religion, status and area of specialization, political affiliation the scope are unlimited. Under these circumstances the collection development exercise is therefore diverse and it is intended to cover every field of human knowledge. Thus, the collection must be as numerous as the number and type of its patrons.

In an academic setting, the aim of the collection development is to gather enough information resources to supplement the curricula activities of that institution such as Universities, Polytechnics, and College of education etc. same thing goes to special and private libraries, their purpose and their scope determine the collection development coverage.

THE CONCEPT COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The term collection development has been defined variously by different scholars. According to 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. The librarians' glossary of terms defined collection development as the process of planning a stock acquisition programme not simply to cater for immediate needs but to build a coherent and reliable collection over a number of years, to meet the objective of the service. In similar vein, Bitagi (2010) defined collection development as the activities that enhance the assemblage and the provision of a variety of information materials to meet the desperate needs of library users.

This concept collection development is a crucial department in a given library, it is so important because it is the medium by which the information resources that are stocked in library passes through. Johnson (2004) sees as a term representing the process of systematically building library collections to serve study, teaching, research, recreational, and other needs of library users. The process includes selection and deselection of current and retrospective materials, planning of coherent strategies for continuing acquisition, and evaluation of collections to ascertain how well they serve user needs. Collection development is concerned with the formulation of a systematic plan to build a library collection which will meet the needs of its users. It encompasses a number of activities related to the development of the library's collection

including the determination and coordination of selection policy, assessment of current and potential user needs, collection use studies, collection evaluation, identification of collection needs, selection of materials, planning of resource sharing, collection maintenance and weeding (Gorman and Howes, 1989; Clayton and Gorman, 2001).

METHODS USED IN COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The stocking of a library is achieved by a variety of methods. Given below are some of the methods:

- Community need Assessment
- Selection
- Placing orders
- Receiving/Checking

COMMUNITY NEED ASSESSMENT

Collection development as the term might be, it is a process whereby the library collection is been built up in order to increase the sum total of the collections. In doing this, there are stakeholders that are involved in the process and that has to do with the community the library is established to serve. It is expedient at this junction that the community is been checked to ascertain areas where information resources are lacking so that they can be met. In academic libraries, the stakeholders are: academic staff, students and the librarian. The academic staff, they are the lecturers and they know the necessary books that are needed for effective execution of their job that is the teaching and learning process, the students on the other hand do have contact with their fellow students in other institutions who can get them informed of the current information materials readily available or been used in their field of study.

Librarians and the library staff being the final bus stop for this community need assessment is vested with the responsibility of presenting a form requesting the other stakeholders to fill as appropriate and thereafter as professionals in the field of librarianship, they will streamlined the suggested information resources either in book or not book format in accordance to the fund provided for their purchase so that none of the departments will be left out. This is been made possible by the provision of a policy known as the collection development policy. It is a document stating the dos and don'ts in terms of selecting and acquiring the necessary information resources for meeting the information needs of the library users.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Collection development policy is a plan of action adopted for developing the collection or stock in a library. A policy can be unwritten or a written document. Johnson (2009) posited that, collection development policy is an officially written document of the principles leading to the selection of books and other collections that a library intended to add. It comprises the criteria used in selection, weeding and acceptance of donations. Fourie (2001) opined on the wide variety and nature of collection development policy as written document that offers opportunity for organizing, planning, controlling, directing and implementation guidelines for library collection building responsibilities. Preparation and review of a written policy should also encourage the library and institution to define or refine their goals and help the library collection to conform to the aims and objectives of the institution and of the library, by translating those aims and objective into clear and specific guideline, for each stage of materials handling – Selection, acquisition, processing, housing, weeding and discard. These guidelines should cover all subject fields and all types of library material. The library has to acquire materials in various formats to assist the academic staff in preparing course materials for various media and students

to earn through them (Chopra, 1994). Patel (2016) stated in his work that several author like Katz, MA grill and Hickey” mentioned the advantages of a written collection development policy. Their view can be summarized as follows:

1. Expresses openly its relationship with the objectives of the parent organization / library.
2. Forms the basis for planning collection development.
3. Provides practical guidance in day to day selection of reading material free from personal bias.
4. Helps in determining the best method of acquisition.
5. Support and assists in justifying the selection a collection.
6. Acts as a rational guide for budget allocation and also helps in long range budget planning by stating priorities and outlining growth and development goals

SELECTION

This is the process whereby the librarian and other stakeholders choose from the numerous alternative of a material to boost the information resources that support the activities of the parent organization for which the library belong. This is the avenue whereby after the need of the community has been assessed; the onus is now on the librarian and the stakeholders to pick out of the plenty information resources suggested so as to satisfy users need. To do this therefore, there is the need for a principle to be followed; this principle is a guiding tool that will direct the librarian and other stakeholders in deciding which materials is to be selected. Below are the following ideas presented in the work of Bitagi (2010) that should be seen as the guiding principles:

1. Availability of financial resources: the total number of books to selected and purchased will be determined by the amount of money made available for that purpose.

2. The content of the book to be purchased
3. There should be freedom from bias. That is, the book should provide fifty-fifty percent idea on all the issues treated.
4. The information resources should be a current material
5. The publisher of the information resource should be a well-known publishing company
6. The selectors should make use of selection tools such as: bibliographies, indexes, books in print, book review digest publishers' catalogue etc
7. Consideration should be given to the quality of the material used for the making of the information material
8. The authority of the author should be considered in order to know if the person is an expert in what he or she has written.

PLACING ORDER

After the information materials have been successfully selected, it is now the duty of the librarian to place order from a vendor. This order placing is to employ the services of the publishers or book sellers to supply the required information resources sent to them. The suppliers are therefore directed to supply the books contained in the list sent to them within a specified period of time. It is very important from the word go that the acquisition of library materials require a great knowledge of publishers when placing orders, it is advisable to choose a publisher because of the inherent economic advantage accrue to it.

RECEIVING/CHECKING

When the supplied information resources ordered for arrive the library, it is the responsibility of the collection development librarians to receive and check their appropriateness. The vendor or the suppliers of the information resources usually accompany the books or the materials supplied

with a proforma invoice. The proforma is a list that gives information of books supplied or about to be supplied as the case may be since some suppliers prefer to send it in ahead of the information resources. The following are the areas that are usually covered: number of copies per title; the author; title; edition; place of publication; publisher; date; unit and total cost of each title. The collection development librarians usually cross check the materials by comparing the duplicate list with the proforma invoice to ascertain if everything ordered for were supplied and to also know if the materials are in perfect condition if not a message is sent back to the supplier telling them the shortcomings of the transaction thus far. After all the said and done had been attended to, the books will be moved to the collection department for processing and this processing involves stamping with the ownership stamp to show that the material belongs to the library. This stamping is usually done in various part of the book especially the one chosen by the library in question.

As soon as the stamping work is concluded, the book is accessioned. The accessioning of a book is the process whereby a unique number is assigned to a book showing the order for which the books are acquired into the library, no two books is expected to carry the same accession number irrespective of the similar title they might be bearing. There is a book called the accession register, on this register, the bibliographic information about the document are recorded which are: serial number of the work, its author, title, place of publication, publisher, date of publication, source of supply and the price of each book.

Thereafter, labeling is performed on the book. This is when a date due slip, book card and book pocket are pasted.

PROCEDURE FOR ACQUIRING MATERIALS

Given below are some of the procedures by which information resources are acquired or gotten into the library environment.

1. Purchase
2. Exchange
3. Legal deposit
4. Gift/Donation
5. Subscription
6. Photocopies
7. Inter-library loan
8. Weeding

PURCHASE

Purchase forms the major means of acquiring documents in any library. Strictly speaking, purchasing must be resorted to only when no other means is open to the library. When the required item is not available through other means, then purchases against specific orders becomes the most usual practice for collection development in all the libraries.

EXCHANGE

This is another possible means of collection development of the reading materials. In this case the recipient library or its parent body is expected to have publication of its own to exchange with those of the other institutions. Exchange is also possible between two libraries with spare copies against items needed.

LEGAL DEPOSIT

Deposit system entitles some specially designated libraries to receive free copies of the publications brought out by the government, national and international organizations etc. There are many University libraries and state central library's enjoying these types of benefits.

GIFTS/DONATIONS

Many libraries receive donations of books and other materials from members of the community. While donations are generally welcomed by libraries, accepting donations can be a tricky business, depending on who is making the gift, the needs of the library, and the donor's wishes for the gift. Gifts or donations are always welcomed in any library collection development. There are many cases where personal collections bequeathed to libraries have become the main stay of collection. Gifts are possible also in the case of individual title that are needed, particularly old and out of print books. Unprized publications that are distributed free of cost makes another important category in gifts.

SUBSCRIPTION

A subscription is a method of collection development whereby an amount of money is paid regularly in order to belong to an organization, to help a charity or campaign, or to receive copies of a magazine or newspaper or have access to electronic textbook in the form of database such as Ebscohost, Proquest, Jstor, Hinari, Ardi etc.

PHOTOCOPIES

This is a form of collection development in libraries; its availability does not breach the copy right law. This is the process of duplicating of an original document by the use of photocopier

machines. This collection development method is however encouraged in libraries to avoid mutilation and outright stealing of library materials.

INTER-LIBRARY LOAN

This is a method in collection development whereby the two libraries concern loan each other materials and this process involve an understanding between two or more libraries to come together in order to share their resources through the provision of material on loan to each other. In this respect, an agreement is usually reached and signed between cooperating libraries especially in terms of the number of books to be loaned and the specified period for the books to be returned or renewed.

WEEDING

Weeding (also known as deselection) is a periodic or continual evaluation of resources intended to remove items that are no longer useful from the collection. Weeding is one of the most controversial aspects of collection development. A carefully prepared and fully documented policy on weeding (as part of your overall collection development policy) can lessen or alleviate some misunderstandings. This section discusses the rationale for weeding, presents the benefits of weeding as well as some reasons it is difficult to accomplish, provides practical information for use in planning and conducting weeding, and options for the materials you remove.

PROBLEMS OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Below are some of the challenges encountered by Collection Development Department

1. Relegation of the library to the background
2. Poor numeration of the library staff

3. Glory driven consciousness of the library staff
4. Lack of required information resources
5. Lack of financial resources

RELEGATION OF THE LIBRARY TO THE BACKGROUND

The library is an entity of its own established by the parent organization with the sole purpose of working to actualize the vision and the mission of that organization, but in most libraries especially private universities, they are relegated to the background thereby making them (Libraries) not to have a voice in the organization. The relegation makes it difficult for the collection development unit of the library not been able to push forward its demands and whenever it is done, it is not been attended to as required.

POOR NUMERATION OF THE LIBRARY STAFF

The bible rightly made us to understand that a labourer is worthy of his or her wages that they are due. It is true that the library staff are been paid but they are been under paid as such it makes them not to be enthusiastic about their job. They work because they feel they are answerable to God but the still have to be told, a library collection is something that deserves building up but when the staff are not well taking care of it will make them relax after they must have made their first efforts. It breeds in them the non-challant attitudes. They exhibit what we call sit and watch attitude over issues that affect the development of their libraries.

GLORY DRIVEN CONSCIOUSNESS

Some librarians tend to be glory driven, they want to be heard, seen and be identified with forgetting that a tree cannot make a forest. All they are concern about is how they can be seen on

the top front or forefront despising the other librarianship job they are supposed to be involved. This is so because the library is not departmentalized, they tend to be everywhere and not be present anywhere. They are at logger head in the library and such confuses the management and the entire library users.

LACK OF REQUIRED INFORMATION RESOURCES

It has often been emphasized in the body of literature that books especially those in the area of science and technology are not written and published in Nigeria. The cost and procedure of bringing them into the country and clearing them constitutes a serious problems to collection development by many libraries in Nigeria

LACK OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

This is seriously seen by several researchers as a thorn in the flesh of human being or a cog in the wheel of progress as far collection development is concerned in Nigerian libraries. It is assumed that libraries play an important role in enhancing the attainment of prescribed objectives that led to their establishment by institutions, organizations and even individuals. Unfortunately, libraries hardly survive their initial welcome before they are partially neglected. In Nigeria, all types of libraries are suffering from financial handicap which makes it impossible to performing the services according to expectations.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Ratha (n.d) outline some crucial roles collection development department plays in actualizing the goal and the mission of the library and the parent organization for which the library is established and they are as follows:

1. It helps in giving a base for accurate planning of collection development.
2. It helps in best selection and acquisition of books and other reading material
3. It helps to appropriate use of money for purchasing books and other reading material
4. It helps in weeding out the waste reading material
5. It helps in fulfilling the first, second and third law of Library science.

Conclusion

The place of the collection development in a library cannot be over ruled. In fact, some scholars see it as the heart of the library profession just as the library is seen as the heart of the parent organization that establishes it. For any institution to really work up to the level of rubbing shoulder with the international schools, library must be giving its place, it should not be relegated to the background any more, it should be allowed to have a voice in the institution.

Moreover, for it to have an effective and efficient collection development librarians in the institution, the staff wages should be addressed, that is, the librarians should be paid what they are due according to their qualifications and they shouldn't be underpaid so as not to make them have non-challant attitudes towards their job and as such the collection development will be vibrant.

In addition to the above, the library staff should know that the term TEAM is a very powerful acronym which means Together Each Can Achieve More, they should see themselves as team irrespective of the position they might be occupying, work together to make the library great than working independently just to get glory from or just to be seen by everyone that you are the man thereby killing the library department as a body. It is also imperative at this junction that fund or finance should be made available as at when it is requested for by the collection development

department so as to be able to foster the proper building up of the library with the necessary information resources. More so, every author and potential author in Nigeria should be encouraged to write in their various area of specialization so that there will be availability of information resources in book and non-book format for every information seekers.

These and many more, if they are strictly adhere to, the collection development will be so effective and efficient to the point that it will turn the academic library to a beehive of information resources where everyone would love to visit for the purpose of research, teaching and learning.

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